GEF-8 REQUEST FOR CEO CHILD ENDORSEMENT/APPROVAL

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General Child Project Information

Child Project Title	
Reducing Single-use Plastics on Small-island Economies (RESPONSE - Plastic IP)	
Region Cook Islands	GEF Project ID 11185
Country(ies) Cook Islands	Type of Project FSP
GEF Agency(ies) UNEP	GEF Agency Project ID
Project Executing Entity(s) National Environment Service (NES)	Project Executing Type Government
GEF Focal Area (s) Multi Focal Area	Submission Date 6/27/2024
Type of Trust Fund GET	Project Duration (Months) 60
GEF Project Grant: (a) 6,222,018.00	Agency Fee(s) Grant: (b) 559,982.00
PPG Amount: (c) 200,000.00	PPG Agency Fee(s): (d) 18,000.00
Total GEF Financing: (a+b+c+d) 7000000	Total Co-financing 35,074,779.00
Project Sector (CCM Only)	

Rio Markers

Climate Change Mitigation	Climate Change Adaptation	Biodiversity	Land Degradation
Significant Objective 1	No Contribution 0	Significant Objective 1	No Contribution 0

Project Summary

Provide a brief summary description of the project, to offer a snapshot of what is being proposed. The summary should include: (i) what is the problem and issues to be addressed? ii) as a child project under a program, explain how the description fits in the broader context of the specific program; (iii) what are the project objectives, and if the project is intended to be transformative, how will this be achieved? and (iv) what are the GEBs and/or adaptation benefits, and other key expected results. (max. 250 words, approximately 1/2 page)

With the economy and livelihood heavily dependent on marine resources, the Cook Islands is disproportionately affected by plastic pollution both directly, as plastic waste accumulates in the environment due to an increase in imported packaged goods coupled with an inadequate waste management system, and indirectly, through the contribution of plastic production to climate change.

While the Government of the Cook Islands has committed to a “2045 Zero Waste” goal, current policy and regulatory framework is weak, fragmented and ineffective, many alternatives to (single-use) plastics are not available, and local capacity for innovation is low.

The project aims to reduce the amount of plastics entering the Cook Islands via the F&B and tourism sectors and to support enabling environments for circular solutions, with the intention of reducing the burden on the Cook Islands waste management system, as well as reducing pollution and harmful impacts of plastic.
This will be achieved by strengthening legislation to restrict F&B-related plastics imports and disincentive their consumption domestically, in line with Plastic IP Component 1; by engaging and supporting local and global stakeholders in the (co-)design and implementation of sustainable gender-responsive alternative solutions to SUPs adapted to the local context, in line Plastic IP Components 2 and 3; by enhancing capacity, knowledge exchange, and regional cooperation to put pressure on global players, hold them accountable and steer tangible progress on environmental and social justice, in line with IP Component 4.

Building on relevant national policies and initiatives, the project is expected to deliver the following Global Environmental benefits (GEBs): 57 metric tons of avoided residual plastic waste (CI 9.8), in turn resulting in 0.0068 gTEQ POPs to air reduced (CI 10) and 234 metric tons of CO2e reduced (CI 6.7).

Child Project Description Overview

Project Objective

To reduce the amount of plastics entering the Cook Islands via the F&B and tourism sectors and to support enabling environments for circular solutions, with the intention of reducing the burden on the Cook Islands waste management system, as well as reducing pollution and harmful impacts of plastic.

Project Components

Component 1 Enabling a Regulatory and Policy Environment

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing ($)	Co-financing ($)
595,960.00	3,000,000.00

Outcome:

Outcome 1.1

Upstream policy instruments to limit plastic pollution in the Cook Islands are updated, strengthened or developed, adopted and ready for implementation by Y5.

Output:

Output 1.1.1 - At least 2 targeted policy instruments to reduce the consumption of single-use plastics (SUPs) updated, strengthened or developed, adopted and ready for implementation by Y5.

Output 1.1.2 - A fully inclusive, participatory and gender responsive National Strategy and Action Plan (SAP) on Plastics developed and endorsed by Y4.

Component 2 Support in identifying suitable alternative products

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing ($)	Co-financing ($)
405,150.00	3,000,000.00

Outcome:

Outcome 2.1

Sustainable and viable alternative solutions to reduce & replace harmful, avoidable or unnecessary F&B packaging and packaged goods commonly imported into the Cook Islands identified and ready for pilot-testing.

Output:

Output 2.1.1 - At least 2 programs established to reduce & replace harmful F&B packaging and packaged goods commonly imported into the Cook Islands identified and ready for pilot-testing by Y2.

Component 3 Engaging with F&B private sector.

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing ($)	Co-financing ($)
2,784,538.00	16,074,779.00

Outcome:

Outcome 3.1

Local private sector (including domestic agriculture sector and MSMEs), NGOs and communities are engaged and supported to pilot and scale up innovative solutions.

Output:

Output 3.1.1 - At least 10 sustainable and viable alternative solutions/interventions, including at least 2 short food supply chain initiatives, to reduce & replace harmful F&B packaging and packaged goods commonly imported into the Cook Islands pilot-tested or up-scaled by Y5.

Component 4 Improving national data and capacities

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing ($)	Co-financing ($)
1,459,310.00	5,000,000.00

Outcome:

Outcome 4.1

National data and capacities on plastics is enhanced to inform and improve decision making by Y5.

Output:

Output 4.1.1 - A National Source Inventory and Monitoring system established and populated with the data from National Plastics Audits by Y3, incorporating gender-disaggregated data collection and analysis.

Output 4.1.2 - Relevant authorities and stakeholders trained on at least 3 areas of intervention by Y5.

Output 4.1.3 - At least 2 international & South-South gender responsive knowledge exchange activities or events with Pacific Island Countries and other SIDS organized, and at least 2 attended by Y5.

Component 5 Knowledge management, Communications (including National and Program-level Coordination)

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing ($)	Co-financing ($)
574,590.00	5,000,000.00

Outcome:

Outcome 5.1

Best practices, innovative solutions and lessons learned are documented and exchanged through Knowledge Management and knowledge transfer.

Output:

Output 5.1.1 - Gender-responsive Knowledge Management and Communications Strategy developed and implemented using Global Project and other relevant platforms.

Output 5.1.2 - Gender- responsive knowledge and information products on processes, best practices, innovations, lessons learned, and project findings developed and disseminated to stakeholders.

Output 5.1.3 - Gender-responsive Knowledge, Attitudes & Practices (KAP) surveys throughout the project demonstrate quantifiable changes in public understanding & consumer behaviour.

Output 5.1.4 - Participatory monitoring and evaluation, including gender mainstreaming, informs project implementation, decision-making and lessons learned.

Output 5.1.5 - Contribution to the Global Project Knowledge Management and Communication.

Output 5.1.6- National Level Coordination mechanism established/ implemented.

Output 5.1.7- Coordination and active participation and contribution to Global Project meetings and working groups.

M&E

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing ($)	Co-financing ($)
186,170.00	1,000,000.00

Outcome:

Efficient and timely project execution, monitoring and evaluation processes carried out, and corresponding improvement of project execution as appropriate.

Output:

M&E Output 1: Documented monitoring and reporting process throughout the entire project execution life cycle ensuring successful project delivery, with a focus on gender data, indicators and reporting.

M&E Output 2: Independent evaluations to assess the progress, success, and effectiveness of the project undertaken and recommendations reflected in project implementation.

M&E Output 3: Regular contribution to the Global Project M&E Reporting.

Component Balances

Project Components	GEF Project Financing ($)	Co-financing ($)
Component 1 Enabling a Regulatory and Policy Environment	595,960.00	3,000,000.00
Component 2 Support in identifying suitable alternative products	405,150.00	3,000,000.00
Component 3 Engaging with F&B private sector.	2,784,538.00	16,074,779.00
Component 4 Improving national data and capacities	1,459,310.00	5,000,000.00
Component 5 Knowledge management, Communications (including National and Program-level Coordination)	574,590.00	5,000,000.00
M&E	186,170.00	1,000,000.00
Subtotal	**6,005,718.00**	**33,074,779.00**

Project Management Cost	216,300.00	2,000,000.00
Total Project Cost ($)	**6,222,018.00**	**35,074,779.00**

Please provide Justification

CHILD PROJECT OUTLINE

A. PROJECT RATIONALE

Describe the current situation: the global environmental problems and/or climate vulnerabilities that the project will address, the key elements of the system, and underlying drivers of environmental change in the project context, such as population growth, economic development, climate change, sociocultural and political factors, including conflicts, or technological changes. Since this is a child project under a program, please include an explanation of how the context fits within the specific program agenda. Describe the objective of the project, and the justification for it. (Approximately 3-5 pages) see guidance here

A.1 the global problem of plastics marine litter

In less than a century, plastic pollution has become one of the most pressing environmental issues, as rapidly increasing production of disposable plastic products overwhelms the world's ability to deal with them. Plastic pollution is ubiquitous impacting the health and functioning of communities, wildlife, and habitats,[1] with adverse consequences for climate and the economies across the world.[2]

Globally, the annual production of plastics has doubled, raising from 234 million tons in 2000 to 460 million tons in 2019. Plastic waste has more than doubled, from 156 million tons in 2000 to 353 million tons in 2019. Only 9% of plastic waste was recycled, while 19% was incinerated and almost 50% went to sanitary landfills. The remaining 22% was disposed of in uncontrolled dumpsites, burned in open pits or leaked into the environment.[3] Under a Baseline as Usual scenario, plastics use is estimated to continue to grow, leading to a 50% increase in leakage of (macro)plastics to the environment by 2040 (30 million tons per year, of which 9 million tons would enter aquatic environments).[4]

Up to 99% of today's plastics is made from polymers derived from – often subsidized – non-renewable hydrocarbons, mostly oil and natural gas,[5] following a linear take-make-waste economic model. The durability, flexibility, and convenience of plastics have led to a throw-away culture: today, approximately 36% of all plastics produced are used in packaging, including single-use food and beverage containers, with a lifespan of a few minutes to hours. Approximately 85% of this packaging ends up in landfills or as unregulated waste, persisting in the environment for hundreds of years.[6]

In the Food and Beverage (F&B) sector, single-use plastics (SUPs) represent a cost-effective marketing solution that protects food and extends shelf life. As food supply chains have grown global and with high degree of complexity to better serve consumers' convenience, plastic packaging has become an essential component in supporting the safe distribution of food over long distances, while minimising food waste. Over the last decade, the F&B sector has also witnessed steady innovation and evolution in last mile delivery. The pandemic in 2020 has accelerated this transformation, with emergence of new models to meet flooding consumer demand. The most dramatic last mile disruptions have revolved around digital customer engagement, touchless/contactless delivery, hybrid operating models with high levels of automation, and industry collaborations.

As a consequence, recent analyses of worldwide litter-type inventories across major aquatic environments have found that take-out consumer SUP items (mainly plastic bags and wrappers, food containers and cutlery, and plastic bottles) largely dominates global litter[7], followed by those resulting from fishing activities.[8]

There is increasing recognition of the need to take a systemic, transformational approach to the plastic pollution crisis, as evidenced by the international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution currently in negotiation. This will require a substantial shift in investment away from the use of virgin plastic and to upstream and midstream measures.[9] So far,

most commitments and investments have focused on downstream solutions such as collection and recycling, and a lot more effort is needed on upstream solutions such as reduction, substitution, reuse, and redesign.[10]

A.2 The "Business as usual" scenario (baseline)

The Cook Islands, a self-governing Pacific Island country (PIC) identified by the United Nations (UN) as a Small Island Developing State (SIDS), is exposed to marine plastic pollution disproportionate to its land area and domestic contributions. This is due to its position within the trade winds and at the outer edges of the Pacific Ocean gyre,[11] as well as to an increasing dependency on a wide range of imported packaged goods (including plastics). And yet, as many other Pacific Island states, the Cook Islands are dependent on a clean and healthy marine environment for their biophysical, economic, and cultural survival.[12]

Despite contributing less than 1.3 percent to plastic pollution, Pacific Islands populations are disproportionately affected by the crisis of plastic pollution as the Pacific Ocean is a major recipient of the world's washed-away plastics[13]. For these reasons, the Cook Islands have recently joined the global community to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution including in the marine environment and continue to seek solutions to end plastic pollution and minimize the impacts the ecosystems, biodiversity, the climate, and human health.

2.1 Plastic Waste Generation

The Cook Islands comprises 15 islands, 3 of which are uninhabited.[14] Total land area is approximately 236.7 km² (23,670 hectares), spread across roughly 2 million km² (200million hectares) of ocean space that constitutes its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The 15 islands are separated into a Northern Group of low, vulnerable coral reef islands and atolls, and a more populous Southern Group of slightly higher islands, each with six and nine[15] islands respectively. In 2017, the entire Cook Islands EEZ was designated[16] as the Marae Moana multi-use marine park.

The population of the Cook Islands is about 15,040. Residents speak Cook Islands Māori and English, with 77% identifying as Cook Islands Māori, who are considered the Cook Islands' Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs). Over 74% of the population (10,898 people) live on Rarotonga where the capital, Avarua, is located. Aitutaki is the second most populated island, with about 1,900 people.

Despite the relatively small population, the Cook Islands generates a significant amount of waste. An estimated 1.1 tons of plastic waste enters the Cook Islands' marine environment each day, mostly from uncontained disposal sites or littering (Pacific Region Infrastructure Facility 2018). Much of this comes from the tourism industry, which effectively increase the local population by an average of around 25% at any given time over the year.[17] In particular, the average tourist's reliance on bottled drinking water would add significantly to the single use plastic waste stream.

The 2023 Cook Islands National Waste Audit Analysis Report,[18] which was based on an analysis of the 2021 report of a waste audit conducted by Tonkin and Taylor in 2020,[19] found the following:

- In 2020, about 115 kg of waste have been generated per capita. However, it is to be noted that the audit was conducted only in Southern Islands, where 84% of the household waste generated is captured by waste management services. 75% of businesses and 69% of the population on the Southern Islands had indeed access to some form of waste collection service, while only 36% on the Northern Islands. The uncollected waste is usually burned, littered, buried, or dumped in the environment.
- Plastics represented 12.5% of the Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) generated in the main islands. Plastics were a dominant waste category across business types, particularly accommodation and retail. Waste composition of businesses was 23.6% plastics (17-42% range) and 5.7% SUPs (4-11% range).
- Of the 2,805m3 total volume of waste to landfill, 20% is plastics and 5% is SUPs.

In 2019, the 'World Oceans Day Muri Beach clean-up' event covered a coastal stretch of 0.91 ha and collected around 2,520 L of plastic waste (Te Ipukarea Society, 2019). This included plastic bottles, large pieces of plastic and washed-up

ropes. Also in 2019, in the Avarua township costal area 45 volunteers collected and sorted litter: the most items accumulated composed of Woodstock cans, plastic forks, takeaway containers and polystyrene foam pieces.[20]

In 2022, the International Coastal Clean-up Day focused on the popular Nikao Social Centre site covering an area of 1.18 ha.[21] 500 L of plastic waste, including most branded plastic bottles and packaging that can be found in local stores were collected (locally sourced). In the Northern group islands, the collected waste comprised more foreign labelled products which reach the islands through more prominent currents and are the likely contribution of foreign fishing vessel illegally dumping overboard. Of all plastic waste found during clean-ups, plastic water bottles are assumed to mostly come from industrial fishing fleets fishing inside and outside the Cook Islands Exclusive Economic Zone. For example, on the uninhabited atoll of Suwarrow in the northern Cook Islands, the small islets on the western side of the atoll act as a sieve for flotsam as it drifts across the ocean surface. These islets are littered with thousands of discarded plastic drink bottles, as well as other waste from the industrial fishing operations[22].

2.2 Plastics Production, Import and Consumption In The Cook Islands

The Cook Islands is not considered a producer of plastics. The only aspect of production is a local water company that imports pellets which are blown up to plastic bottles. Otherwise, plastics are mainly imported as packaging for locally produced food and beverage items, such as bakeries, hydroponics, fruit, and vegetables, or as packaged goods. As of today, no accounting of plastic flows across the economy exists in the Cook Islands.

Single use, non-recyclable plastic containers are prevalent across the Cook Islands. Plastic containers and products are widely available and convenient for retailers and consumers. In Rarotonga, masses of lightweight plastic shopping bags are used at the markets, supermarkets and shops every day. Even when consumers use their own reusable bags, it is difficult to shop for fruit, vegetables, and bread without accumulating small plastic bags. Plastic straws, cocktail stirrers and plastic-lined coffee cups are commonly given out at most restaurants, bars and eateries, and plastic cutlery, containers and cups, and polystyrene containers and cups are regularly used by market vendors to serve food. Single-use plastics (SUPs) are estimated to account for 20% of total plastic products imported, 1.5 million plastic bottles were imported in the 1-year report period.

2.3 Main Drivers of Plastic Pollution

Driver 1: Demographic growth and changes
Beside a temporary reduction in population growth as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic that forced many Cook Islanders to seek employment opportunities overseas as the tourism-reliant economy was severely impacted by border closures for extended periods of time, the population of the Cook Islands has been steadily growing over the past decades. Estimated at 20,200 for June quarter 2023, increasing by 12.8% over March quarter 2023 (17,900), 16% from 2016 and 34% from 2021 population counts[23]. This demonstrates rapid returns to, and even increases beyond, pre-COVID population numbers.

Additionally, the Cook Islands has also experienced important demographic changes resulting from the emigration of working age people from the outer islands to Rarotonga in search of better job opportunities, with only 14.4% of the 2021 population living elsewhere in the Cook Islands in 2016. This is further supported by data in the 2019 Labour Force Survey[24] demonstrating higher unemployment rates in the Northern Group (7%) and Southern Group (1.1%) compared to Rarotonga (0.9%), as well as higher average monthly wages in Rarotonga (NZ$1,667) compared to the Outer Islands (NZ$1,105) and more private sector employment.

The changes in composition and location of the population, with a growing urbanized population concentrated in the Southern main islands, have challenged traditional cultural food and sustainability practices, reduced the delivery of core services to remote islands and atolls, and increased the dependency on imported goods.

Driver 2: Dependence on imported Food and Beverages (F&B)

The growing urbanized population has become increasingly dependent on imported, processed packaged foods and beverages. In 2023,[25] NZ$10.76 million in exports were reported compared to NZ$282.9 million in imports. F&B products represented approximately a third of total imports into the Cook Islands. Many single use plastics products are imported along with these, including 1.5 million plastic bottles in 2020.[26] This severe deficit in trade balance results in the Cook Islands importing more F&B packaging waste without generating an equal trade revenue in exports to fund its proper waste disposal and management. Furthermore, since the COVID pandemic, imports have increased and exports have decreased, creating a further divergence in these trends, thus likely an increased pressure on our national waste systems and capacity to effectively manage them.

- *Impacts on agriculture*
  As Cook Islanders of working age have increasingly moved from the Outer Islands to Rarotonga and from Rarotonga to New Zealand, participation in the agricultural activities has fallen dramatically. Over the last 30 years, the agricultural sector has moved from being a major export earner and employer to a sector struggling to sustain its commercial significance. Despite 87.7% of the working-age population being engaged in some form of own-use production work, 10.7% of which were classified as subsistence food producers (39% of these being women), the local agriculture sector (including forestry and fishing) only makes up 2.6% (205 jobs) of formal employment. In addition, there are significant gender imbalances in this sector with only 3.4% of agriculture sector employment being women, though interestingly they earn 3.2% more than men. However, it is to be noted that more women than men were working in food service activities (i.e. postproduction, preparation, and retail).

  Growth in the tourist and the service sectors of the economy has effectively raised wages higher than the agriculture sector can profitably pay, resulting in the migration of labour to other sectors. In addition, increased investment in these industries has resulted in rising land values and the conversion of agricultural land into land for the tourism and residential property developments.

  Whilst a small but vibrant agribusiness sector remains, competition from more efficient producers in Asia and the Pacific Rim have priced primary sector products from the Cook Islands out of export markets, and many domestic markets. The agricultural sector is today struggling to sustain its commercial significance, to recruit young Cook Islanders and to access new land. At the same time, while the growing tourism industry contributes to the reduction of land availability for agriculture production, it demands more local fresh produce.

- *Impacts on health of local communities*
  Additionally, as the Cook Islands has moved away from traditional lifestyles, practices and diets towards more modern, sedentary, inactive lifestyles over-reliant on imported, processed, and packaged F&B, the population's health has dramatically deteriorated. In the 2023 annual indicator report[27] of the 2020+ National Sustainable Development Agenda (NSDA), Goal 7 (Health & Healthy Lifestyles) is reported to be 'of concern' with the rate of premature deaths from non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as cardiovascular diseases and type-2 diabetes, being 'off track and regressing'. The Cook Islands has the highest rate of childhood obesity globally at 30%[28], with NCDs accounting for 70% of total deaths and 25% of total deaths considered to be premature NCD-related causes.[16] While causing a significant strain on the health services and possibly also on the economy due to a reduction in available workforce due to poor health and premature death, these alarming health trends call for ensuring good access and promoting the consumption of local fresh produce, while minimizing the dependency on imported foods.

Driver 3: Tourism

Tourism is the country's main industry and economic driver. Although it struggled during the COVID pandemic, the industry is now rebounding, accounting for 75% of GDP at the end of 2023[29]. In 2023, total arrivals were 157,040 (x10 local population), up on the 2022 figure of 122,154.[30] Significant re-growth in the tourism industry is being seen with trade up by 37.7%, accommodation up by 31.4%, restaurants and bars up by 28.4%.

Since its deregulation in 1998, the tourism industry is led by the private sector. Nearly half of the Cook Islands community either works in or owns a tourism business. Around 46% of businesses are accommodation providers and 17% are classified as visitor activities or tours. The Cook Islands Tourism Industry Council (CTIC) is the main representative body

for the tourism industry, with support from the Chamber of Commerce. Tourism businesses, such as hotels and tour operators, fall under the general business regulatory framework and are registered like any other enterprise through the Ministry of Justice. This lightens the burden on businesses but also limits the government's control over the nature and direction of tourism growth. The Cook Islands does not have a Ministry of tourism: the government appoints a Minister of tourism each term who has discretion over appointments to the CITC Board. The Cook Islands Tourism Accreditation and Quality Assurance Program - introduced to improve the quality of tourism products and services - is voluntary, but businesses that join enjoy increased promotion via websites, roadshows, and visitor information centres.

In 2019, the Cook Islands had more than 800 accommodation providers, ranging from family home stays and backpacker hostels to high-end self-catering villas and luxury hotels. Most are located on Rarotonga. There are eight large hotels (more than 35 rooms), 108 smaller hotels (35 rooms or less), and 690 holiday homes (SPTO 2020 and Cook Islands Tourism Corporation, consultations with author, 2020). There are no internationally branded hotels. Annual accommodation occupancy is estimated to average 60%– 80% of capacity. Though there are no high-end accommodation, visitors consistently report high satisfaction, with daily spend in-country per visitor constantly increasing.

Women account for 60.5% of the workforce in the tourism sector.

Tourism has fuelled the expansion of F&B establishments (e.g. takeaways, cafes, bars, restaurants, etc.), leading to an increase in the consumption of disposable single-use plastics and packaged goods not only within the tourism sector but across the local population. In the Cook Islands, there is also a well-established local catering industry (both formal and informal) that serves meetings, functions and events as well as selling conveniently prepared yet often plastic-packaged food and beverage items to communities. Additionally, there is a strong cultural norm to provide extensive catering at any local family, community or traditional ceremony or event with take away packaging provided that often includes single use plastics (e.g. cling film, etc.).

While contributing to the local economy, tourism is straining the local environment. Development is occurring in fragile coastal zones and water catchment areas, and growth in visitation is increasing demand for water, sewerage infrastructure, and solid waste disposal. This sector is a key driver of single use plastics consumption as tourism providers are linked with the supply of SUPs in several ways:

- Firstly, tourists have F&B demands that cannot be met by local production, forcing higher levels of importation than would be required for solely the resident population.
- Secondly, education levels of tourists will vary. Although many visitors are from New Zealand, a country considered to be 'clean and green', many visitors may not fully understand the strained waste management systems and harmful environmental impacts of single use plastic, especially as a small island. A lack of education is a key driver to single use plastics in tourism sector.
- Thirdly, tourists engage with business in the F&B sector that use single use plastics. Resorts, restaurants, and F&B establishments are specific businesses that use plastics and that this project is targeting. Increases in tourism numbers will result in increases in single use plastics.
- Lastly, tourists may behave differently when they are on holiday, namely for convenience. Tourists may be less likely to use reusable options whilst away from home for several reasons, including cost, convenience, and less familiarity to know where to find more sustainable options. Mainstreaming alternative solutions may increase accessibility and alleviate reliance on single use plastics.

The findings of a five-year International Visitor Survey for the Cook Islands in February 2018 indicate tourists to Rarotonga are becoming increasingly aware of the shortfalls with current waste management practices.
In 2022, 7% of international visitors reported that waste management and littering were the least appealing aspects of their visit, and 9% reported the same for F&B,[31] indicating that efforts to reduce waste through more responsible F&B packaging, circular solutions and increased short food supply chains would also positively impact the country's main economic driver providing a positive feedback loop whereby solutions could become more mainstreamed and through scales of economies more affordable.

Driver 4: Inadequate Waste Management System
Plastic waste produced by the growing urban population and tourism sector represents both a technical and an economic challenge. Rarotonga has a single landfill, which has neared its capacity limit and before 2010, it was compromised by a fire that destroyed most of its protection liner leading to possible leaching into surrounding soil of substances of concerns. There are currently no alternative landfill sites planned due to the limited land available. Weekly household roadside collections are done by Infrastructure Cook Islands.

Aitutaki also has a partially lined landfill (only the sides are lined) that receives household waste including recyclables through weekly collections made by infrastructure Cook Islands. Most of the collected waste items are put directly into the landfill, despite sorting at household level, due to costs to export off island. This creates frustration within the community and a lack on incentive to continue sorting. A bailing machine is on site, but it is uncertain as to whether it is operational and being used for bailing purposes.

In the remaining outer islands, there are no lined landfills established. Waste is often dumped in a specific place via government services or by personally dropping off waste at a known or designated dumping site. Some of these sites include deep limestone crevices where waste is pushed into and impacts the surrounding environment. There is also the possibility that the disposed waste affects the quality of the islands' ground water supplies presenting health and water security risks, but this has not been studied.

Recycling options are limited in the Cook Islands. A recycling centre exists in Arorangi at the Rarotonga Waste Facility. The centre is equipped with a sorting area for plastic and glass bottles at the rear, along with an industrial baler for compacting plastic, aluminum, and tin cans, and a glass crusher is housed within the recycling centre building. However, no export of recyclables is currently undertaken. Private sector business 'Cook Islands General Transport' previously exported plastics generated from households and local businesses, but recently stopped to reorganise their recycling site and improve their recycling system. High export costs for consolidated recycled material are a barrier to expanding current recycling operations. The Rarotonga Landfill managed by infrastructure Cook Islands has recently signed a trial recycling programme with 'Coca Cola' who will pay for the export costs of a 40-foot container of plastic PET bottles to New Zealand for recycling. The future of the trial programme will depend on the quality of plastics being sent, which have to be clean and not degraded.

Driver 5: Social Behavior
Flooded with imported packaged goods without being given the possibility to dispose of their waste sustainably, local consumers contribute to the plastic pollution problem as they continue to dump their waste in the open air, bury it, or burn it as they are accustomed to do. Plastic waste prevention measures are not yet the norm or an economic option. In some cases, the burning and burying of plastic waste are perceived to be a positive behavior, as they reduce the amount of waste going to the at-capacity landfill. The burning and burying of plastic waste are also common across the F&B sector to avoid paying roadside collection costs for businesses.

2.4 Direct and Indirect Impacts of Plastic Pollution

While the Cook Islands has become dependent on a wide range of imported products (including plastics), it is also dependent on a clean and healthy marine environment for their biophysical, economic, and cultural survival. Plastic pollution poses a serious threat to the integrity of the very ecosystems and resources that uphold its economy.

Plastic litter
Accumulating plastic debris not only directly affects natural habitats and the survival of animal species (through entanglement, suffocation, destruction, etc.), but they are now becoming ubiquitous in food chains. A recent study in the Pacific found plastic debris in 97% of examined fish species and 25% of all individuals.[32] This is of extreme concern given how plastics can bleach harmful toxic chemicals into the environment and that consumption of fish in the Pacific is three to six times higher per capita than the global average.

There are also concerns around plastic bottle waste being deliberately thrown overboard from commercial fishing vessels operating within the Pacific. Washed up plastic bottles with foreign packaging labels were commonly seen along the coastline of Northern group islands during the 2021 Taua e Moana Voyage and the 2018 Rat eradication project.

Plastic waste disposed in non-lined landfills, dumped and buried in the soil
The Cook Islands features only one lined landfill on the main island. Plastic waste, particularly in the outer islands, is thus piled or buried directly in the soil. As it breaks down, plastics can generate microplastics and leach toxic substances into the soil, surface water and groundwater. Leachates represent complex mixtures of substances including dissolved organic matter, inorganic macro-components, heavy metals, and a wide range of xenobiotic organic compounds. Many of these substances are hazardous and toxic to human health and the environment. Moreover, some of these chemicals can bioaccumulate in organisms and be passed along the food chain, eventually reaching humans.[33]

Uncontrolled burning of plastic waste
Plastic waste is often burned. The burning of plastic waste adds to the emission of toxic substances, polluting the air and contaminating the soil, the groundwater, and the food chain with negative health impacts within the community. The uncontrolled burning of waste in open fires releases hazardous substances, including but not limited to brominated flame retardants (BFRs), phthalates, dioxins and related compounds, bisphenols, and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), atmospheric particulate matters (PM), GHG such as carbon dioxide (CO2) and black carbon (BC), which has a global warming potential (GWP) up to 5000 times greater than carbon dioxide (CO_2). The open burning of plastic waste is associated with an increased risk of heart disease, respiratory issues, neurological disorders, nausea, skin rashes, numbness or tingling in the fingers, headaches, memory loss, and confusion.

Economic impacts
The economic cost (i.e. revenue losses to fisheries, and tourism industries) associated with ocean-based consumer plastic pollution can be severe. With the economy and livelihood heavily dependent on marine resources, the Cook Islands is disproportionately affected by the plastic pollution both directly, as plastic waste accumulates in the environment, and indirectly through the contribution of plastic production to climate change. Despite contributing insignificantly to the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, the Cook Islands is on the frontline of the climate change crisis. Extreme and unpredictable weather patterns are destabilising fragile livelihoods and rising sea levels threaten to render some islands uninhabitable, with the lifecycle impacts of plastic representing a significant contributor to the problem.

Social Environmental Justice (SEJ)
Indigenous People and Local Communities (IPLCs) living on the most remote islands of the Cook Islands bear the brunt of plastic waste mismanagement and are disproportionately vulnerable to its negative impacts due to their reliance on limited land and marine environment for food & water security, the chronic lack of adequate infrastructure to safely dispose of plastic waste, and limited access to safe alternatives to plastic packaging. The piling and burning of plastic waste in open air dumps, as well as in towns and villages, affects people living in the most remote communities. To these implications for human health, mismanaged plastic waste can increase the spread of water- and vector-borne diseases, as discarded plastics also offer ideal breeding conditions for mosquitos which can acts as vectors for diseases such as dengue fever. Dengue is a viral infection caused by the dengue virus, transmitted to humans through the bite of infected mosquitoes. In 2021, Rarotonga declared a dengue outbreak. Efforts to control the outbreak included initiatives from the Ministry of Health under their Operation Namu21 duties. Activities involved a mass island rubbish clean up, to which most government officers were involved with for one full day, collecting rubbish from the beach and side of the road which was mostly plastics.

2.5 Today's Responses to Plastic Pollution

Faced with mounting challenges around the management of solid waste, including plastics, the Government of Cook Islands has committed to a "Zero Waste Cook Islands" goal to be achieve by 2045 through a systematic reduction of the amount of solid waste both generated and disposed of. To attain this goal, a set of public regulations and policies have been developed, adopted, or are currently planned, as briefly presented in Table 3. In addition, the Cook Islands operates within a range of regional instruments that address some aspect of plastic pollution in the Pacific. These can be broadly

grouped into two categories: i) the regional conventions that provide the legal basis for managing plastic pollution and ii) regional strategies that aim to coordinate efforts across the region. However, despite providing a valuable foundation on which to build, regional instruments over-emphasise waste management and have little scope to regulate the overwhelming quantities of plastic produced and imported into the Pacific region (Table 1). The private sector and the local civil society are also contributing, through sectoral strategies and local efforts targeting plastics and packaged goods, as summarized in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 1 – Public responses

Organization	Initiative	Description
Regulations and Laws		
National Environment Service	EnvironmentAct 2003 -	Section 11 establishes an Island Environment Authority (IEA) for each island, a function of which is to formulate and publish guidelines on specific issues of environmental protection and improvement and environmental quality and wastewater standards for the purposes of the Act. Part 7 relates to the control of litter. Section 46 allows the Minister to designate or approve any land as an area to be used by the public for the disposal of waste. It is noted in Section 46(6) that this section is subject to Section 36(13), requiring an EIA. Section 47 allows Environment Officers to issue notices requiring occupiers of private land to clear litter Section 51 makes pollution of Cook Islands waters and inland waters an offence. Section 56 makes an offence to dispose of any toxic chemical or its waste in a manner likely to harm the environment. Section 70 allows the creation of regulations.
Ministry of Transport	Prevention of Marine Pollution Bill 1998	Prohibits the discarding at sea of any garbage, excluding fish and fish waste, and including plastics
Ministry of Health	Operation Namu21	Aimed at halting the 2021 dengue outbreak on Rarotonga, a one-day mass island cleaning campaign took place where most government departments were involved. The initiative involved the collection of all rubbish lying on the beach or side of the road in an attempt to reduce mosquito breeding and resting sites.
	Public Health Act 2004	Part 6 (Sections 35–41) relates to waste, the purpose of which under Section 35 is to ensure that waste is safely stored, collected, treated, removed, transported, disposed of, and otherwise dealt with. Other provisions of the legislation deal with building health standards, including for waste disposal and wastewater.
	Food Act 1992-1993	The Food Act was passed by Parliament on 13 July 1993 to control the importation, processing, packaging, preparation, storage, transport, advertising and sale of food in the Cook Islands. An amendment to the Food Act was passed on 10 October 2005 to include the regulation and licensing of fish and fish products.
Infrastructure Cook Islands	Infrastructure Act 2019	In Section 6, 'infrastructure' is defined to include: wastewater networks, solid and hazardous waste facilities, storm water drains and storm water networks.
	Solid & Hazardous Waste Bill	A Solid & Hazardous Waste Bill was supposed to be passed in 2023 and includes a Schedule with 10 SUP items [lightweight plastic bags including shopping bags, plastic straws and cocktail stirrers, plastic cutlery , plastic containers with no PET number or with numbers 3, 4, 5, and 7, including plastic plates and seal-able food containers ,plastic and polystyrene cups, including plastic-lined coffee cups, polystyrene containers and meat trays , single-serve butter and spreads, products containing microbeads] that will be banned from importation. Innovative financial waste management schemes are currently in the pipeline. This includes the Advanced Recovery and Disposal Fee scheme within the Hazardous Waste Bill. Here, every item to be purchased at the shops i.e. cars, whiteware canned food will have extra cost charged to it. This % fee will then deal with exporting costs for that item once it reaches its end of life.
	Passage of Solid and Hazardous Waste Bill (Delayed several times)	
	Introduction of ban on Single Use Plastics (incorporated as part of Solid and Hazardous Waste Bill)	
	Introduction of sustainable waste financing mechanism (Incorporated as part of Solid and Hazardous Waste Bill)	
Policies		

Organization	Initiative	Description
Office of the Prime Minister	National Sustainable Development Agenda (NSDA) 2020+	
National Environment Service	National Environment Policy (2022-2032)	
	National Implementation Plan for Stockholm Convention in the Cook Islands 2011	
	Advanced Recovery & Disposal fee (ARDF) policy	This policy should also be passed in 2024 and will include the launch of the ARDF Fund to provide a sustainable financing mechanism for the Cook Islands to manage its waste. The policy will add a fee to all imported items to cover their end-of-life disposal, including plastics.
Ministry of Health	National Water Policy 2016	
Infrastructure Cook Islands	Solid Waste Management Policy 2016 - 2026	
Ministry of Agriculture	Agriculture Sector Action Plan (2020-2025)	
Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)	Pacific Marine Litter Action Plan (MLAP)	The Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), in partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment) Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA), has prepared a Pacific Marine Litter Action Plan (MLAP). The primary focus of MLAP is marine sourced litter, but it also covers terrestrial based marine litter point sources as outlined in the Cleaner Pacific 2025. The action plan sets out the policy context and key actions to minimise marine litter across the Pacific islands countries and territories. The Pacific MLAP represents a significant opportunity for Pacific island countries and territories to take a major step forward to protect the Pacific Ocean from marine litter.
Cook Islands Tourism Corporation (CITC)	Tourism Marketing Corporation Act 1998 (Amendment 2007)	The Government of the Cook Islands acknowledges the importance of tourism and advocates for the sector's increased growth through the Cook Islands Tourism Corporation (CITC). The CITC was created by the Tourism Marketing Corporation Act 1998 (Amendment 2007) and is led by a tourism board comprised predominantly of industry members, partly funded by the Government of New Zealand. It is responsible for destination development and marketing.
	Fiscal policies in support to waste management	Government fiscal support to waste management is considered under 'environmental protection' and has reduced in recent years, from estimated actuals of NZ$296.5k in 2016/17 and $327k in 2020/21, to $157k in 2021/22 and $182k in 2022/23. Budget estimates for the near-term financial years indicate this is planned to increase to $241k annually from 2023/24 through to 2026/27 but is notably still below pre-covid levels despite increased urbanisation and tourism pressures since that time.
Strategies, Action Plans, Guidelines		
National Environment Service	National goal of Zero Waste by 2045	The National Sustainable Development Agenda 2020+, Te Ara Akapapa'anga Uki 25, the goal is to have zero waste in the Cook Islands by 2045. However, no clear national plan has been defined to reach this goal.
	National goal of Food Import Free by 2045	In 2020, a national goal was established to reduce food imports by 2045 by getting to below 5% of 2020 import levels for vegetables, root crops, fruits, livestock or crops and meat, but currently there is no cohesive plan in how to achieve this goal.
	National Plan for Implementation of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants in the Cook Islands.	This National Pan outlines the Cook Islands' response to POPs. Amongst pesticides and industrial chemicals, it covers complex organic chemicals known as dioxins and furans. These are formed as by-products from combustion. The National Implementation Plan produced an inventory of dioxin and furan releases in the Cook Islands. The most significant sources of dioxin releases were waste incineration, landfill fires, domestic rubbish burning, and the burning of green wastes. Although prohibited by the Public Health Act, burning household rubbish, including plastic, still occurs

Organization	Initiative	Description
		in the Cook Islands. As this is illegal, obtaining statistical evidence about burning rubbish is challenging. The goal of the Action Plan for Unintentional POPs is to develop and implement actions for the minimization and ultimately elimination of unintentionally produced POPs. This will be addressed through the following activities: 1. Discouraging the burning of domestic and commercial wastes and green wastes, through education and/or regulation; promoting recycling and composting where feasible, and improvements to the existing waste collection and disposal systems; 2. Eliminating landfill fires by promoting appropriate design and management practices so as to minimise the potential for fires; and reviewing and upgrading waste disposal facilities on Aitutaki and other outer islands, as appropriate; 3. Reviewing the disposal options for airport and hospital wastes including possible replacement of the incinerators with state of the art low-emission units or more benign alternative systems such as steam sterilization. 4. Developing capacity within the National Environment Service for identifying and estimating unintentional releases of POPs; promoting the application of best available techniques and best environmental practices for new and existing sources; and the assessment and monitoring of new and existing sources.
	National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP)	Goal 3 in the National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP) states: "Promote sustainable practices and effectively manage solid and hazardous waste". ICI is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the Rarotonga Waste Facility and to progress Goal 3, ICI is working through a range of initiatives to improve solid waste management through: - Establishing partnerships with the private sector and other Government organizations; - Implementing new processes at the Rarotonga Waste Facility; - Communications and Awareness via Facebook, newspaper, and presentations. Like the Infrastructure Cook Islands Facebook page to receive regular updates and articles (both local and international), and best practices in waste management.
	The Cook Islands National Solid Waste Management Strategy 2013 – 2016	Currently under review.
Cook Islands Tourism (CIT)	The Cook Islands Tourism Development Strategy (CITDS) (2022)	The CITDS provides a roadmap for this approach to tourism and destination development in the Cook Islands over the next five years. The Strategy also aligns with national, regional, and global sustainable development aspirations outlined in the National Sustainable Development Agenda 2020+, Pacific 2030 Sustainable Tourism Policy Framework and UN Sustainable Development Goals. Regenerative tourism provides pathways to rethinking and rebuilding the tourism industry. It also aims to improve local economies and preserve culture and biodiversity while offering guests memorable, authentic, fulfilling experiences and allowing destinations to improve. This Strategy provides a roadmap towards a more regenerative approach to tourism development for the Cook Islands, focusing on holistic well-being across the '4C's' – Community – Cultural – Conservation – Commerce. The CITDS also ensures that the people of the Cook Islands are engaged, empowered and benefit from tourism. A pilot program has been rolled out and will be operational from July. Consequently, the CIT Destination Development team has mainstreamed the strategy in their operations and work plan. This includes identifying and prioritising practical projects to reflect the four aspirations in the strategy. The Strategy identifies waste and water management as key industry weaknesses and encourages

Organization	Initiative	Description
		regenerative tourism practices as a main aspiration, but currently lacks plans on how to achieve this.
	The National Policy On Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment And Action Plan 2019-2024	It included a section on Women's Economic Empowerment.
Global and Regional binding multilateral Agreements, Strategies and Projects		
National Environment Service	Plastic Pollution Treaty (in progress)	NES is part of the negotiations of the new legally binding global treaty to end plastic pollution, which final negotiations are planned for the end of 2024.
	Noumea Convention (1990)	A comprehensive umbrella agreement for the protection, management and development of the marine and coastal environment of the South Pacific Region.21 It is the Pacific component of the UN Regional Seas Programme.
	Noumea Emergencies Protocol (1990)	An instrument intending to enhance cooperation between contracting parties with relation to pollution incidents and through which contracting parties can meet the obligations of the Noumea and London Conventions.
	Noumea Dumping Protocol (1990)	An instrument intending to minimise and control the dumping of wastes in the region and through which contracting parties can meet the obligations of the Noumea and London Conventions.
	Waigani Convention (1995)	An instrument aiming to reduce and eradicate movements of hazardous, radioactive, and toxic wastes in the Pacific region.
	Conservation Management Measure on Marine Pollution (CMM 2017-04)	A binding measure adopted by the WCPF Commission seeking to protect marine ecosystems and fisheries productivity from degradation by addressing marine (including plastic) pollution from fishing vessels.
Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)	The Pacific Ocean Litter Project (POLP)	The POLP project - funded by the Australian Government through the Secretariat of the Pacific Environment Programme (SPREP) - aims to reduce the volume of single-use plastics (SUPs) that pollute the marine environment in the Pacific. The POLP will run for 7 years in collaboration with 14 Pacific islands countries. The Cook Islands allocation is $1 million for a period of 2 years. The project will support the development and strengthening of an integrated, multi-sectoral approach to SUP management as well as enable local businesses and communities to develop creative approaches for plastic alternatives and reduction. The proposed activities under this project range from developing national strategies, supporting grassroots initiatives to reduce plastic consumption, education and awareness activities, research, and data collection to inform decision making and improving waste management facilities.
Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)	Clean Pacific Roundtable	
	Pacific Regional Waste and Pollution Management Strategy 2016-2025 (Cleaner Pacific 2025)	Cleaner Pacific 2025 is the comprehensive regional framework for sustainable waste management and pollution prevention in the Pacific region up until 2025. It was developed and endorsed by all 21 Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) member PICTs in 2016, integrating strategic actions and past learnings to address all forms of waste and pollution in the region, including marine plastic pollution. The framework is guided by four strategic goals: to prevent the generation of waste and pollution; to recover resources from waste and pollutants; to improve management of residuals; to improve monitoring of the receiving environment. These goals are being implemented through operationalising 15 strategic actions aimed at strengthening institutional capacity; promoting public-private partnerships promoting sustainable best practices in waste, chemicals and pollution management; developing human capacity; improving dissemination of outcomes and experiences; promoting regional and national cooperation. Under its first strategic goal,

Organization	Initiative	Description
		Cleaner Pacific 2025 strives to prevent the generation of wastes yet holds limited scope for reducing the quantities of plastic entering the Pacific. Instead, the strategy is limited to tackling certain single-use plastics, addressing the data gap, national policies and material recovery. The mid-term review is due later this year.
	Pacific Marine Litter Action Plan 2018-2025 (MLAP)	The MLAP is the primary means through which the region is collaborating to address the plastic pollution crisis and sets out the key actions to minimise marine pollution across PICTs. It is a subset of both Cleaner Pacific 2025 and the pollution component of the Noumea Convention – the Pacific Oceans Pollution Prevention Programme (PACPOL) – which were developed in the context of the 'Blue Pacific' identity under the 'Framework for Pacific Regionalism' and the 'Pacific Oceanscape Framework'. The action plan forms part of the United Nations Regional Seas Programme and the Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPML), for which SPREP is the Pacific Regional Node. There can be no doubt that SPREP and other national and regional bodies have done exceptional work in recent years to tackle the issue of marine plastic pollution through both the MLAP and other strategies. Funded partially through the Pacific Ocean Litter Project, the MLAP rightly intends to reduce the sources of certain single-use plastics such as straws and food containers. Under Activity 1.1., the MLAP boldly commits to support the development of a global legal framework to address marine plastic pollution and microplastics. However, despite significant evidence that marine plastic pollution is mostly derived from land-based activities,32 the MLAP focuses primarily on sea-based sources and, like Cleaner Pacific 2025, holds limited scope for regulating the quantities of plastic entering the Pacific region.
	MARPOL Convention and Protocol	Prohibits the disposal of all fishing gear and plastics, including plastic drink bottles, at sea,
	Protocol concerning Co-operation in combating Pollution Emergencies in the South Pacific Region (Protocol on Pollution Emergencies) - Signed and Ratified by the Cook Islands	
	Protocol for the Prevention of Pollution of the South Pacific Region by Dumping, with Annexes I-IV (Protocol on Dumping) – Signed and Ratified by the Cook Islands	
	International Convention for the Prevention of Marine Pollution from Ships, 1973 as modified by the Protocol of 1978 relating thereto – Signed and Ratified by the Cook Islands (for annexes I and II, which are mandatory).	
	The Protocol of 1997 to amend the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, as modified by the Protocol of 1978 relating thereto (MARPOL PROT 1997) – signed and ratified by the Cook Islands	
United Nations	United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14, 5-9 June 2017, New York	The need to prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds through the adoption of paragraph 13(g) of the 'Our ocean, our future: call for action' declaration.
Waste audits		
Infrastructure Cook Islands / National Environment Service /	National Waste Audit 2021	

Organization	Initiative	Description
Pacific Regional Infrastructure Facility		

Table 2 - Private sector initiatives

Organization	Initiative	Description
Tourism sector		
	Mana Tiaki Eco Certification	Accredited tourism operators can apply for this certification which provides an official green assessment and allows compliant businesses to use an eco-certified logo in promotion activities. It provides points recognising good waste management practices, including minimising plastic waste from the F&B sector
Food and Beverage sector		
Tour Company	Reusable water bottles	local tour company switching to reusable water bottles for guests
Local market	Washing station	plate washing pilot at the local market
Retailers	Basket waving	using traditional skills such as basket weaving
Beer company	Refill options	the local beer company providing only refillable options
Financial sector		
Asian Development Bank (ADB)	Supporting Sustainable Economic Recovery Program	ADB is the only multilateral creditor that can provide budget support to the Cook Islands. The country has no access to international credit markets, lacks developed local financial markets for government debt, is not a member of the International Monetary Fund nor of the World Bank, and does not have a central bank to provide emergency assistance. The ADB, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), and the Government of New Zealand teamed up to help the Cook Islands recover from the severe economic impacts of COVID-19 and address other challenges that limit the country's recovery and economic growth, through the COVID-19 Active Response and Economic Support Program and the Supporting Sustainable Economic Recovery Program, which provided the country with the funds it needed to meet its immediate and medium-term financing needs for COVID-19 response, public sector operations, services to vulnerable households, and private sector recovery.

Table 3 – NGOs - Civil Society's responses

Organization	Initiative
Te Ipukarea Society (TIS)	▪ Rent a Plate Portable Dishwashing Station to minimise packaging/cutlery waste generated at food vendor sites - funded by GEF SGP (currently taking place). ▪ Mauke/Mangaia behavioural change educational programme on minimising plastic waste within schools - funded by GEF SGP (completed 2023). ▪ Reusable feminine hygiene awareness raising programme in schools and wider community 2021-2023 – funded by Nia Tero, UNESCO, UN Spotlight Programme, Internal Affairs (social impact fund) ▪ On-going educational landfill visits with local schools in partnership with ICI. ▪ Waste Audit Mangaia & Mauke 2021 – funded by GEF SGP. ▪ Awareness raising television advertisement on minimising plastic waste 2022 – US Embassy funded ▪ On-going awareness raising 'plastics' articles written for local Cook Islands Newspaper. ▪ 'Plastic Free July' social media awareness – 2022 ▪ Nationwide schools educational programme on the impacts of plastics and local solutions to minimising plastic waste 2021 funded by Nia Tero.
Muri Environment Care	Annual 'World Oceans Day Beach Clean Up Event' includes waste audit post event supported by ICI
Korero o te orau	On-going community, youth educational programmes on traditional practices i.e weaving, taro planting, utu plantation, organic material used as plates

Organization	Initiative
Kuki Time 4 Kidz	Created a sing-along awareness raising jingle on plastic waste and the need practice 'refuse & reuse' 2021 – supported through TIS funded by US embassy
Avarua Primary School	'Fruit Day Wednesday' initiative for health awareness raising purposes as well as reducing plastic packing waste

Several solutions to prevent plastic waste at source have also been introduced by the hospitality sector, local retailers and farmers, as listed in Table 4.

Table 4 - Private sector plastic waste minimization initiatives, derived from stakeholder consultation

Organization	Solutions
Accommodations, restaurants & service suppliers	Dispensers for breakfast jams to reduce single use one portion plastic containers
	Reusable lids for plastic containers to reduce gladwrap use
	Reuse ice cream containers for food storage in fridge room
	Use paper straws rather than plastic
	Use biodegradable gloves
	Biodegradable coffee capsules
	Post-mix machine[34]
	No plastic cups
	16L carboard ice cream
	Removal of plastic bottles in room for guests on arrival
	On-site treating of water, all tap water is drinkable
	Purchase and on sell aluminium cans rather than plastic sodas
	Cotton covers for buffet food
	Breakfast services reduce plastics through using ramakins for butter, jams and spreads are provided in large jars and refilled.
Wholesalers & Retailers (supermarkets)	Encouraging consumer to bring own bags through signage
	Meat served in sugarcane trays
	Paper bags for groceries
	Bulk refill systems for products such as cooking oils
	Supporting local growers as they have less packaging
	Suppliers are moving to paper alternatives such as paper plates, cutlery and cups
Agriculture	Reusing of plastic cups for lettuce until they break
	Marcotting process reuses plastic bread bags

2.6 Barriers and Gaps to Effective Plastic Waste Prevention

The "2045 Zero Waste" Goal encapsulates the aspirations of Cook Islanders to become a more resilient and sustainable nation. To achieve this goal for plastics, all stakeholders, from individuals to businesses, civil society and the Government must rise to the occasion and overcome the major barriers to effective plastic waste prevent and seize the opportunities in them.

The main barriers assessed to date are:

1. *No or limited reliable data on plastic flows in the Cook Islands.*
   As of today, there is no clear mandate and limited financial and technical resources and capacity at institutional level over plastic-related data collection, management, and analysis to inform policy-making processes. Important knowledge gaps exist along the plastic value chain, including statistics on production, import and consumption, waste management and export, illegal disposal, and leakage into the environment. No research is performed on macro and microplastics in water bodies, and impact of plastics pollution on biodiversity, ecosystems, livelihood activities and human health at local and national level. The accounting of plastic flows across the economy is pivotal

to assess circularity of production/import and consumption and to define policies/measures to eliminate/reduce plastics and transition to a just circular plastic economy.

2. *The Cook Islands is failing to address plastic pollution beyond a traditional and siloed approach to waste management. No integrated regulatory and policy framework exists to address the sociocultural, economic, environmental, public health and political aspects of plastic pollution.*
While the Cook Islands might have ratified, signed or acceded to regional and global instruments, protocols and conventions related to plastics pollution, the implementation of these obligations is rarely reflected in the country-level policy framework. Where the transposition is made, this is usually aimed at waste management - when plastics have already become waste or pollution - rather than preventative measures. This is, in part, the result of limited capacity of the Government to draft new regulatory measures taking a whole-of-sector approach to the plastics life cycle is coupled with an overall weak mechanism for compliance, monitoring and enforcement. In addition, the Government has limited access to and understanding of the latest science-based evidence on plastic pollution as well as a clear guidance on what should be included to achieve a comprehensive policy framework that fosters sustainable consumption and production. There appears to be also a lack of guidance on sustainable funding mechanisms to ensure that national and regional plastic prevention solutions are effectively implemented. As the Cook Islands rely heavily on imported goods and many of these either contain or are packaged in plastic, a range of mandatory measures with inbuilt financial mechanisms could aid in setting and meeting ambitious and measurable national plastic waste elimination targets.

3. *Few alternative solutions to single-use plastics for the F&B and tourism sectors are available that ensure a cost-effective and efficient way to protect food from decaying under the tropical weather conditions of the Cook Islands.*
From the stakeholders' consultation process, it has become clear that while some viable alternatives for the F&B and tourism sectors exist, the remoteness of the Cook Islands and their warm and humid climate make it difficult to recruit best practices from overseas. There is a lack of information on alternative solutions, such as reuse/refill, return schemes, or short food supply chains, and on the economic incentives to promote them. There seems to be also limited understanding of what solutions are falsely promoted as sustainable (greenwashing), such as biodegradable bio-based plastics, with the risks of perverse outcomes that come with locking investment into these responses. Traditional and local knowledge, values and alternatives to plastics seem to be underutilized.

4. *Limited engagement and collaboration among stakeholders across the F&B plastics value chain, coupled with inadequate support from public and financial institutions, hamper the development and scaling up and out of viable alternative solutions to single-use plastics.*
Tourism and F&B operators are still largely relying on single-use plastics and packaging, as sustainable alternatives - such as reuse/refill systems - require more labour, are considered too expensive or unfit on hygiene, health, and safety grounds. Despite significant gaps in the local labour pool, businesses' ability to access foreign workers is indeed unduly difficult and costly. While there have been gains toward gender equality targets, constraints remain, including gender pay inequity and biases or gaps in legislation, further preventing optimal use of available labour resources. Access to finance is also reduced for several reasons, including challenges to effectively use land as security for loans.

5. *Despite the increasing number of corporate sustainability strategies, global commitments[35] and public pledges, major multinational companies in the F&B sector are slow and inconsistent in transitioning to sustainable packaging.*
Post-consumer initiatives are more prevalent than solutions-at-the-source, and recycling is still the dominant narrative in how companies address packaging waste, with little consideration of markets lacking waste management infrastructure, such as the Cook Islands. Despite producer responsibility concerning packaging is growing, most companies are doing very little to reduce plastic waste at source and tend to report on collection and recycling, rather than sustainable packaging solutions aimed at systemic change.[36]

6. *Opportunities for local produce on domestic and tourist markets in the Cook Islands to reduce food import dependence are still largely unrealized.*
As for the majority of the SIDS, the agricultural sector and its related value chains in the Cook Islands have not progressed at the same pace as other economic sectors due to multidimensional challenges[37] such as:

- limited physical land mass, hence a low share of the total land area devoted to agriculture;
- scarce freshwater sources facing increasing competition from urban populations and tourism;
- low employment rates in agriculture and high cost of agricultural labour;
- high reliance to the tourism sector, which can lead to a skewed focus on importing food products to cater to the demands of tourists, sidelining local food production and driving up food prices. Overuse of natural resources, pollution, and waste generated by the tourism industry further degrades local agricultural productivity;
- high vulnerability to climate risks, such as raising temperatures, flooding, drought, erosion, and extreme weather events such as hurricanes and cyclones which disrupt food supply chains, devastate crops, and damage agricultural infrastructure. The encroachment of saltwater further degrades agricultural land.

Evidence from other SIDS, such as Fiji, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, shows that local food production is further hindered by few and slow investments by local governments, dated technology, and lack of knowledge, coupled by rising preferences for imported foods in the population and increasing disinterest in employment in the sector. Despite these challenges, building a strong agricultural sector can increase the resilience of these vulnerable countries to food security, reduce plastic pollution, and enhance national pride in local produce and local diets.

Unlocking the potential of the agriculture sector to reduce food import dependence requires significant reorientation towards the sustainable production of high-value produce (such as fruit and horticultural products) for domestic markets, including tourism. Critical to servicing these markets, however, is the adoption of sustainable farming systems capable of producing a consistent, high-quality supply. The development of the Agriculture Sector Action Plan 2020-2025 was welcome and timely as the Cook Islands moved into an economic recovery phase post the COVID-19 pandemic. However, more work and support are needed to establish domestic Short Food Value Chains (SFVCs) that are ecologically and economically sustainable. To realize import substitution opportunities through increased agricultural productivity and extended growing seasons will require a transformation to knowledge intensive, land and labour-saving approaches to farming. Capital investments will be needed to adopt new farm technologies, higher interest in agriculture-related studies and cultural link with the land will have to be promoted among young Cook Islanders, and public-private sector dialogue and collaboration will have to be improved between the agriculture sector, tourism, and key partner Ministries. It will be also important to develop and implement adaptation and mitigation strategies that integrate climate-resilient agricultural practices and technologies and develop sustainable, climate-resilient food and agricultural production that addresses water availability, reduces food loss and waste, and improves food supply, distribution, and resilience against food price volatility and crises.

7. *Global and Regional collaboration and knowledge sharing are limited.*

As with climate change, tackling plastic pollution requires an urgent and coordinated global response that reflects the needs of countries most directly affected by it. This holds particularly true in the Pacific region, where only a coordinated regional (or global) action can prevent growing volumes of increasingly problematic types of plastics entering the Pacific countries. Regional coordination can help individual countries address the transboundary flow of marine plastic litter, develop harmonized standards for reporting and monitoring at national level, ensure the industry standards required to promote safe and truly sustainable alternative solutions to plastics. These responses sit outside the national jurisdiction of the individual state. So, cross-regional knowledge exchanges and collaborations are necessary to facilitate scientific, financial and technical exchanges, raise awareness, build capacities, promote regional participation and ways to harmonize policies and approaches to manage, control and reduce plastic pollution, and most importantly build the critical mass required to negotiate

The Cook Islands has one of the highest female labour force participation rates in the Pacific Islands region. The gender gap has been narrowing over the years, with successes in health, education, and employment. This positive trend will be sustained throughout the project by ensuring participation of women in the project activities and supporting women-led businesses or business employing a majority of women.

The Cook Islands 1964 Constitution affords all individuals equality before the law regardless of individual characteristics such as sex, race, nationality, or religion. In addition, several mandates and frameworks have been established to address gender issues. These include the Law on the Electoral Act; Family Protection Act 2017; Employment Relations

Act and the Crimes Bill. These instruments serve as a legal and strategic foundation to combat gender-based violence and integrate gender perspectives across various sectors. However, effective implementation requires dedicated resources and robust monitoring processes. A few organizations have played a crucial role in promoting gender equality in the Cook Islands see including the Ministry of Internal Affairs gender equality and women's empowerment projects and NGOs like the National Council of Women and Punanga touturu work specifically with women providing support in women empowerment. The National youth council represents youth groups. Te Punanga Oraanga Matutu focuses on support for men (see Appendix 3a and 3b). It should be noted that There has been a steady increase in women representatives who make up parliament from (4/24 or 17% female representation) in 2018, to 6/24 or 25% female representation) in 2024.

Gender will be fully included through gender-disaggregated indicators and data collection, as well as specific activities that prioritize women and vulnerable populations. Project governance and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) will include gender mainstreaming to ensure equitable representation and outcomes. Acknowledging women's roles as influencers, determinators of expenditures, SME and entrepreneur developers, links to markets and direct distribution channels, dedicated efforts will be made to ensure they are at the forefront of the project's private sector and community engagement and implementation activities. Most importantly, the project will support women's participation and leadership in piloting the alternative solutions to F&B-related SUPs. This will be done by promoting quotas for women's participation and leadership, that improve equitable access to decision-making processes and business opportunities, by researching and drawing on women's (and men's) traditional knowledge related to agriculture, natural resource management, and the way of preserving and serving food, strengthening added value and marketing of staples, fruits, vegetables and livestock products, prioritizing those produced by women to break the vicious cycle of unhealthy food imports, declining local food production, biodiversity loss, and the rapid deterioration of human and environmental health.

A.4 Project Cost-Effectiveness

The PMC cost of 5% of the total project budget provides a cost-effective approach regarding the implementation of the project. Cost-effectiveness will also be achieved by the PMU's role in coordinating the day-to-day project management tasks and by being hosted and co-financed by the National Environment Service (NES). NES will build upon their current work on plastics and its overall mandate – which covers environmental management, conservation and protection across land, freshwater and marine, including: policy & legislation; permitting, monitoring & compliance; information, advisory & education; data & research; and local & international partnerships across government entities, non-government organisations (NGOs), private sector, academia, etc. - to ensure the contribution of GEF funds through the project provide cost-effective additional interventions in line with national commitments. The PMU will be hosted through co-financing at NES premises. Additionally, as the Cook Islands GEF Operational Focal Point, NES is highly familiar with GEF reporting processes and requirements. Hence it is well positioned to effectively manage the coordination and implementation of the various components of this child project, with close support and involvement from co-executing partners.

UNEP, as Implementation Agency will ensure that the project fully aligns and benefits from UNEP's current work on plastic includes developing authoritative and science-based knowledge products to inform policy and business action on plastic pollution (including the 2023 report on circular economy and plastics); supporting multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and convening the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) meetings convening stakeholders and leveraging partnerships through UNEP's One Plastics Initiative and other global initiatives such as the New Plastics Economy Global Commitment, the Global Tourism Plastics Initiative, UNEP Finance Initiative, and the Global Partnership on Marine Litter; and implementing circular economy related projects at global, country and city level. Highlights of UNEP's knowledge products include the assessment of global, regional and national status quo of plastic pollution, life cycle assessment to compare different products and alternatives, existing national measures (regulation, policy) and solutions, methodologies and tools to monitor and track plastic pollution including marine litter, impacts of different future scenarios, as well as systemic approach, national action plans, roadmaps, priority settings and toolkits based on life cycle thinking and circular economy. The development of UNEP's knowledge products has taken a consultative and collaborative process with relevant stakeholders and has successfully raised global awareness, and supported the development of national policies and actions, such as banning single-use plastic products, extended

producer responsibility, waste segregation, collection and recycling. UNEP's plastic knowledge is developed and widely disseminated through initiatives and knowledge platforms such as Global Partnership On Marine Litter, Life Cycle Initiative, World Environment Situation Room, Green Growth Knowledge Platform, International Resource Panel, and One Planet Network.

UNEP leverages strong partnership through multi-stakeholder engagement to achieve bigger impacts, together with governments, academia, civil society, and the private sector. Stakeholders are aligned behind a common vision and concerted set of actions to transform the plastic economy, to improve strategic planning and decision-making; strengthen enabling policies; support innovation and knowledge sharing; and enhance collective monitoring and accountability at all levels. UNEP's partnership is organised through global initiatives, as well as direct engagement with the private sector:

- The New Plastics Economy Global Commitment (led by Ellen MacArthur Foundation, in collaboration with UNEP) has united more than 500 organisations behind a common vision of a circular economy for plastics to tackle plastic pollution at its source. Companies representing 20% of all plastic packaging produced globally and 21 governments have committed to ambitious 2025 targets to realise that common vision; 33 additional governments are in the process of joining in 2022.
- The Global Tourism Plastics Initiative, where over 100 leading tourism companies, suppliers, business associations, NGOs and certification schemes commit on the elimination of unnecessary single-use plastics, transition to reuse models and use of reusable, recyclable, or compostable plastic packaging and items.
- UNEP Finance Initiative works with over 460 banks (representing about 40% of global banking assets), institutional investors (representing 10.6 trillion USD) and insurers to help create a financial industry. UNEP FI develops a number of initiatives to support the finance sector in tackling plastic pollution, such as assessing their baseline and setting targets on circular economy, supporting the implementation of the Sustainable Blue Economy Finance Principles, and analysing liability risks associated with plastic pollution to the insurance industry.

UNEP also has implementation experience in the area of circular economy and plastic pollution at country and city level. UNEP has implemented at least eight GEF circular economy related projects in 35 countries (1 country specific, 4 regions, and 2 global) in the sectors of plastics, textiles, and electronics, totalling 61.5 million USD of GEF funding.

UNEP has a track record at the regional level to advance planning, management and policy transformation efforts through the Regional Seas Programme. UNEP also works on a variety of awareness raising campaigns and activities. The Clean Seas campaign engages governments, the general public, civil society, and the private sector in the fight against marine litter and plastic pollution. Since 2017, 63 countries (representing 60% of the world's coastlines) have joined the Clean Seas Campaign with ambitious pledges and important commitments to prevent marine litter and plastic pollution.

[1] Landrigan PJ, Raps H, Cropper M, Bald C, Brunner M, Canonizado EM, Charles D, Chiles TC, Donohue MJ, Enck J, Fenichel P, Fleming LE, Ferrier-Pages C, Fordham R, Gozt A, Griffin C, Hahn ME, Haryanto B, Hixson R, Ianelli H, James BD, Kumar P, Laborde A, Law KL, Martin K, Mu J, Mulders Y, Mustapha A, Niu J, Pahl S, Park Y, Pedrotti M-L, Pitt JA, Ruchirawat M, Seewoo BJ, Spring M, Stegeman JJ, Suk W, Symeonides C, Takada H, Thompson RC, Vicini A, Wang Z, Whitman E, Wirth D, Wolff M, Yousuf AK, Dunlop S. The Minderoo-Monaco Commission on Plastics and Human Health. Annals of Global Health. 2023; 89(1): 23, 1–215. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5334/aogh.4056

[2] OECD (2022), Global Plastics Outlook: Economic Drivers, Environmental Impacts and Policy Options, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/de747aef-en

[3] OECD (2022), Global Plastics Outlook: Economic Drivers, Environmental Impacts and Policy Options, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/de747aef-en

[4] OECD, & Tyndall, J. (2023). Towards Eliminating Plastic Pollution by 2040: A Policy Scenario Analysis - Interim Findings. https://www.oecd.org/environment/plastics/Interim-Findings-Towards-Eliminating-Plastic-Pollution-by-2040-Policy-Scenario-Analysis.pdf

[5] Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL). (2023) Fossil Fuels & Plastic.

[6] For more information: https://www.unep.org/interactives/beat-plastic-pollution/

[7] Take-out consumer SUP items (mainly plastic bags and wrappers, food containers and cutlery, and plastic bottles) made up the largest share of plastics across environments (from 50% to 88%), except for the open ocean, where most of the items resulted from

ocean-based activities (66%). The top ten products, in descending order, were bags (14% ± 8% across environments), plastic bottles (12% ± 5%), food containers and cutlery (9% ± 13%), wrappers (9% ± 14%), synthetic ropes (8% ± 11%), fishing-related items (for example, strings, threads, buoys; 8% ± 8%), plastic caps and lids (6% ± 5%), and industrial packaging (3% ± 3%). Plastic bags appeared among the two highest positions of the rankings for all the environments, with the exception of riverbeds and open waters (top seven and eight, respectively). Plastic bottles consistently ranked among the top five items in every environment and were particularly frequent on deep seafloors (23%). Wrappers and packaging were abundant in coastal environments and relatively scarce in the open ocean. Plastic food containers and cutlery were the most-reported items found in river waters and were very common on shorelines.

[8] Morales-Caselles, C., Viejo, J., Martí, E., González-Fernández, D., Pragnell-Raasch, H., González-Gordillo, J. I., Montero, E., Arroyo, G. M., Hanke, G., Salvo, V. S., Basurko, O. C., Mallos, N. J., Lebreton, L., EchevarríA, F., Van Emmerik, T., Duarte, C. M., Gálvez, J. A., Van Sebille, E., Galgani, F., . . . Cózar, A. (2021). An inshore–offshore sorting system revealed from global classification of ocean litter. Nature Sustainability, 4(6), 484–493. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41893-021-00720-8

[9] Upstream measures are designed to help eliminate unnecessary, avoidable, and problematic plastic packaging, shift to sustainable alternatives, eliminate hazardous additives in the polymers to increase recyclability/reusability, and use recycled plastics as feedstocks for plastic production.

Midstream measures are designed to support innovation to extend the life of products where plastics are necessary, by creating reusable or recyclable packaging & by creating circular systems (reuse, refill, repair, resell, repair, repurpose); as well as reducing unnecessary consumption of plastics by consumers and commercial users, especially for single-use plastic packaging; the midstream include the design, production, trade, and consumption of packaging across the F&B value chain.
[10] The Pew Charitable Trusts and SYSTEMIQ (2020). Breaking the Plastic Wave: A Comprehensive Assessment of Pathways Towards Stopping Ocean Plastic Pollution

[11] Richardson, K.; Haynes, D.; Talouli, A.; Donoghue, M. Marine pollution originating from purse seine and longline fishing vessel operations in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean, 2003–2015. Ambio 2017, 46, 190–200.

[12] Farrelly, Trisia A., Stephanie B. Borrelle, and Sascha Fuller. 2021. 'The Strengths and Weaknesses of Pacific Islands Plastic Pollution Policy Frameworks' Sustainability 13, no. 3: 1252. https://doi.org/10.3390/su13031252

[13] For more information: SPREP, 2023

[14] Suwarrow, Manuae, Takutea

[15] Rarotonga, Aitutaki, Manuae, Mangaia, Atiu, Takutea, Mauke, Mitiaro, Palmerston

[16] Marae Moana Act 2017

[17] Based on 160000 tourists per year staying an average of 8 days.

[18] For more information: https://pacwasteplus.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Cook-Islands-National-Waste-Audit-Analysis-Report.pdf

[19] For more information: https://www.theprif.org/sites/default/files/documents/PRIF_WasteAudit-CookIslands_web.pdf

[20] For more information: https://www.cookislandsnews.com/environment/the-ocean-beach-clean-up-day/

[21] For more information: It is time to clean up our act (tiscookislands.org)

[22] For more information: https://www.cookislandsnews.com/opinion/taua-e-moana-the-ocean-and-i/

[23] Cook Islands Statistics Office - https://stats.gov.ck/vital-statistics-and-population-estimates-june-quarter-2023/.

[24] For more information: https://www.intaff.gov.ck/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/WEB_LFS-Report-2019.pdf

[25] Cook Islands Statistics Office https://stats.gov.ck/overseas-trade/#40-464-wpfd-2023-international-merchandised-trade-statistics

[26] For more information: https://www.theprif.org/sites/default/files/documents/PRIF_WasteAudit-CookIslands_web.pdf

[27] For more information: https://www.pmoffice.gov.ck/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/NSDA2020-Indicator-Report-Final-Digital.pdf

[28] CI News 4 Mar 2024, https://www.cookislandsnews.com/uncategorised/internal/national/health/cook-islands-grapples-with-highest-childhood-obesity-rates-in-the-world/

[29] CI News 2024 https://www.cookislandsnews.com/internal/national/economy/cook-islands-tourism-rakes-in-75-of-gdp/

[30] For more information: https://stats.gov.ck/tourism-and-migration-statistics-december-2023/

[31] The Cook Islands International Visitor Survey, 2022

[32] Markic, A., Niemand, C., Bridson, J. H., Mazouni-Gaertner, N., Gaertner, J. C., Eriksen, M., and Bowen, M. (2018). Double trouble in the South Pacific subtropical gyre: Increased plastic ingestion by fish in the oceanic accumulation zone. Marine pollution bulletin, 136, pp.547-564. Available at: https://www.sciencedirect.com/ science/article/abs/pii/S0025326X18306702

[33] Vaverková, M. D. (2019). Landfill Impacts on the Environment— review. Geosciences, 9(10), 431. https://doi.org/10.3390/geosciences9100431

[34] Postmix refers to the system in which a flavored syrup (concentrate) of the soft drink is shipped to the retailer, usually in a returnable tank or a disposable bag-in-box container.

[35] Such as, the Global Commitment Led by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, in collaboration with the UN Environment Programme (https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/global-commitment-2022/overview).

[36] Phelan, A., Meissner, K., Humphrey, J., & Ross, H. (2022). Plastic pollution and packaging: Corporate commitments and actions from the food and beverage sector. Journal of Cleaner Production, 331, 129827. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2021.129827

[37] https://www.forbes.com/sites/daphneewingchow/2024/06/09/small-island-developing-states-highly-vulnerable-to-food-insecurity/

B. CHILD PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This section asks for a theory of change as part of a joined-up description of the project as a whole, including how it addresses priorities related to the specific program, and how it will benefit from the coordination platform. The project description is expected to cover the key elements of good project design in an integrated way. It is also expected to meet the GEF's policy requirements on gender, stakeholders, private sector, and knowledge management and learning (see section D). This section should be a narrative that reads like a joined-up story and not independent elements that answer the guiding questions contained in the guidance document. (Approximately 3-5 pages) see guidance here

B.1 changes from the original concept

The project design has not deviated from the Child Project Concept other than some small adjustments to Component 2 to ensure only plastic prevention measures that are truly economically, socially and environmentally adapted to the local context are pilot-tested and promoted in the Cook Islands.

Given the specific and challenging context of the Cook Islands and to avoid failure, Outcome 2.1. is now focused on assessing the economic, social and environmental feasibility of alternative solutions, including Short Food Supply Chains, to the most common F&B single use plastic items consumed in the country (particularly by the tourism sector) and on designing too programs to promote the pilot-testing and adoption of the most promising solutions by local business, communities and producers.

The original "Outcome 2: Large scale regional producers are identified to replace harmful F&B packaging commonly imported into the Cook Islands" in the Concept Note has been improved to "Outcome 2.1: Sustainable and viable alternative solutions to reduce & replace harmful, avoidable or unnecessary F&B packaging and packaged goods commonly imported into the Cook Islands identified and ready for pilot-testing."

B.2 The Theory of Change

The remote location, the small population size, the lack of local plastic production, an economy largely dependent on tourism all contribute to make the Cook Islands an ideal case study to address the root causes of plastic pollution. The example set by the Cook Islands can have regional implications, providing guidance for other SIDS to follow and contribute to the reduction of marine plastic pollution in the Pacific Ocean.

The project aims to contribute to the reduction of the amount of single use and unnecessary plastic products in the F&B industry entering the Cook Islands, and support enabling environment for reuse and other alternative solutions, thus reducing the burden of end-of-life waste management, pollution, and other harmful plastics impacts. The project aligns with and will contribute to the achievement of the ambitious national goal of "Zero Waste Cook Islands" by 2045.

The Theory of Change (TOC) is summarized in the Figure 1 below. This illustrates how the project will build on key assumptions to address the barriers - identified and described in the Project Rationale (A.4 Barriers and gaps to effective plastic waste prevention) - to the reduction of the impacts of plastic waste management, pollution, and other harmful plastic impacts in the Cook Islands by promoting the transition to a just and equitable Circular Economy for plastics in the F&B and tourism sectors. Achieving change at scale requires alignment between knowledge of the current problem, potential solutions, institutional arrangements and rules, and societal values. In alignment with the Integrated Program's Theory of Change and to tackle the root causes of plastic pollution, the Child project will:

- **address the chronic lack of reliable national data on plastics and packaged goods production and import, plastic pollution, and waste management, as a prerequisite for informed, effective, inclusive and just decision and policy-making processes (Component 4);**
- **ensure key stakeholders' groups (public, private and civil society, including women and marginalised groups living in the outer islands) across the F&B plastics value chain have the understanding and the capacity to enable plastic prevention and circularity (Component 4);**
- **build on improve data and capacity to leverage political will and establish a robust gender-transformative regulatory and policy framework to prevent plastic pollution (Component 1);**
- **improve the understanding of the way the F&B plastic value chain is organized and operates to better align interests and activities to reduce the use of the most problematic single-use plastics (SUPs) and to co-design cost-effective alternative solutions suitable to the local environmental and social context and promoting local and traditional productions (Components 2);**
- **engage the private sector, along with NGOs and communities, in pilot-testing the identified alternative solutions and ensure a context-sensitive and gender-transformative scaling up and out of the most promising alternatives through workshops and trade events (Component 3);**
- **ensure knowledge created is effectively shared through Regional & South-South exchange activities with other Pacific Island Countries and other SIDS to develop and scale out solutions adapted to the specific geopolitical contexts of these countries and to align and amplify legal and societal pressure on large F&B corporations (Component 4);**
- **ensure real transformation occurs by challenging established norms and institutions through gender-responsive and inclusive behaviour change interventions specifically targeted to relevant actors across the F&B plastics value chain (Component 5).**

The key assumptions underpinning this theory are that: (i) tackling plastic pollution becomes a high priority in the Government's agenda, and the Government passes the required legislation to ensure the changes are made; (ii) viable, safe, and cost-effective alternatives to the most problematic SUPs can be found and are socially accepted; (iii) local Short Food Supply Chains can realistically be developed on the islands; (iv) an effective knowledge management system is in place and fully coordinated with the Global Project Knowledge Management and Communication; (v) sufficient volume of viable SUPs alternatives and approaches and associated markets supports a just and equitable transition towards a circular plastics economy; (vi) private sector fully supports and embraces any changes in legislation that are made; (vii) there is an effective collaboration among government ministries and agencies, e.g. statistics dept, customs, etc.

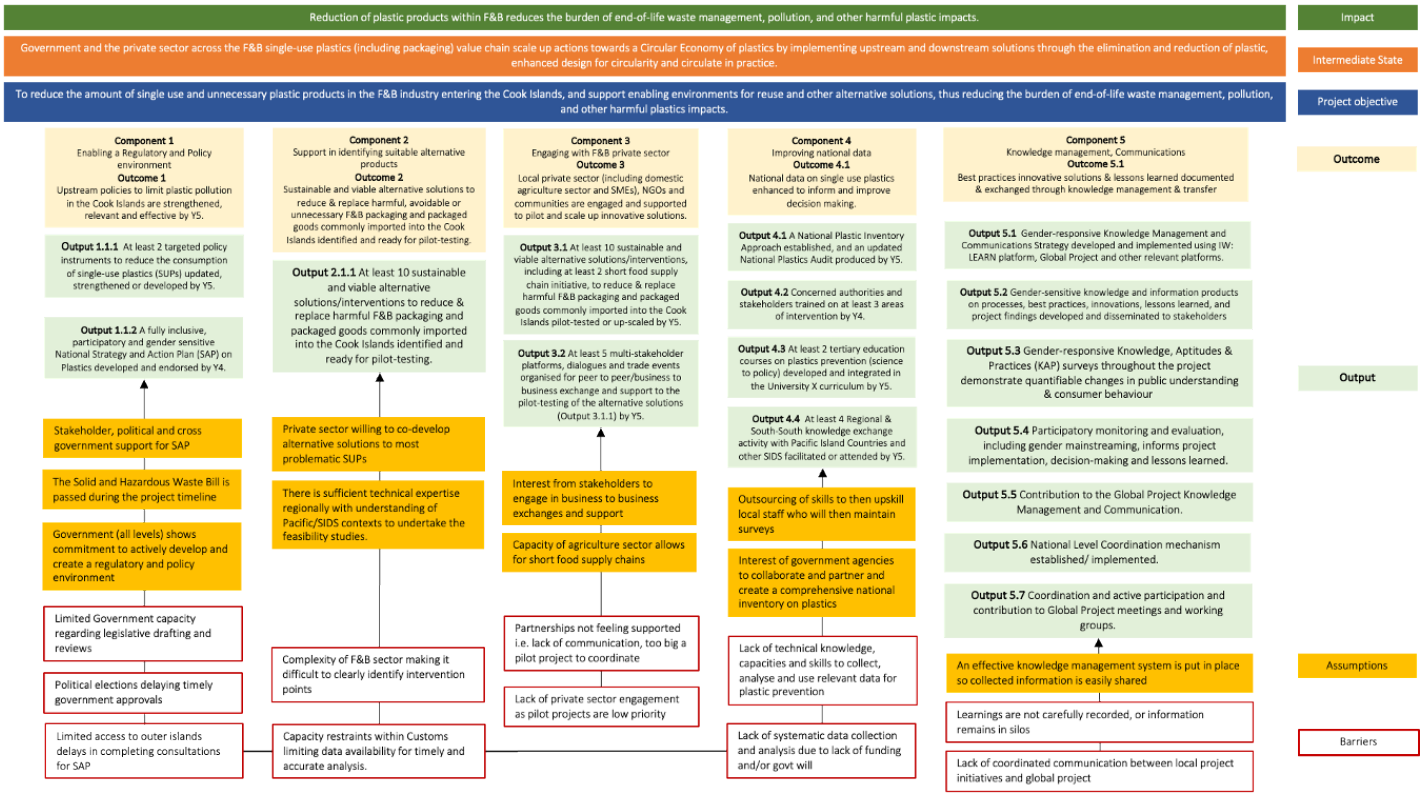


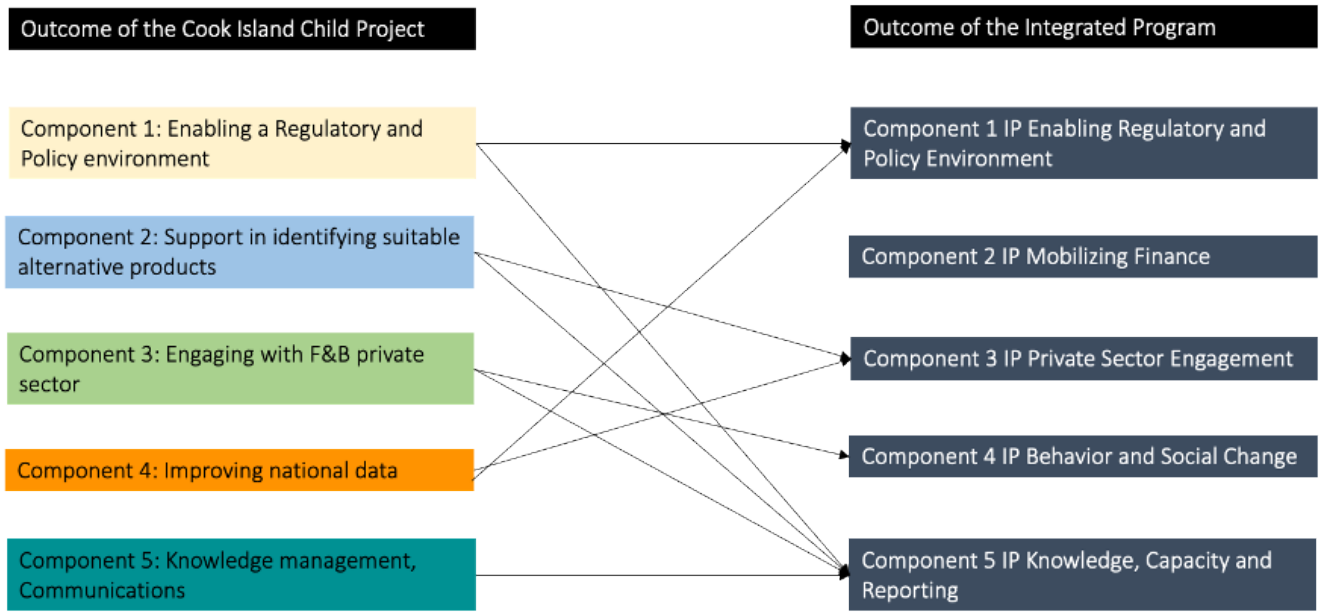
Figure 1 – Theory of Change

B.3 Project description

This child project aims to reduce the amount of plastics entering the Cook Islands via the Food and Beverage sector and to support enabling environments for reuse options and other circular solutions, with the intention of reducing the burden on the Cook Islands waste management system, as well as reducing pollution and harmful impacts of plastic.

This will be achieved through a set of Outcomes and Outputs under five interlinked Components, each one contributing to Outcomes of the Integrated Program, as follows:

Cook Islands Child Project Outcomes and their relationship to the Outcomes of the Integrated Program



Component 1 Enabling a regulatory and policy environment.

The growing recognition that plastic pollution is an issue of national concern, and that the existing legal framework is unfit to tackle it at the source, has opened a window of opportunity for the Government of Cook Islands to rise to the challenge and address existing regulatory and policy gaps and develop a comprehensive and coordinated response to prevent and reduce plastic pollution. Preventing plastic pollution will not be possible in the absence of a comprehensive policy framework. This framework should be designed to foster local sustainable production and consumption models, penalise imported plastic and/or packaged goods, and address the transboundary flow of marine litter by pushing for a global reduction of plastic production. The Government will also have to ensure the effective and timely implementation of these policies and regulations to protect the health of its community (including consumers and workers) and the environment from the chemical and physical harms specific to plastic pollution.

The project will help the Government assess the existing gaps through a Policy Gap Analysis and facilitate a stakeholders consultation process to inform the drafting or update of at least 2 policy instruments and the development of a gender-responsive National Plastics Strategy and Action Plan.

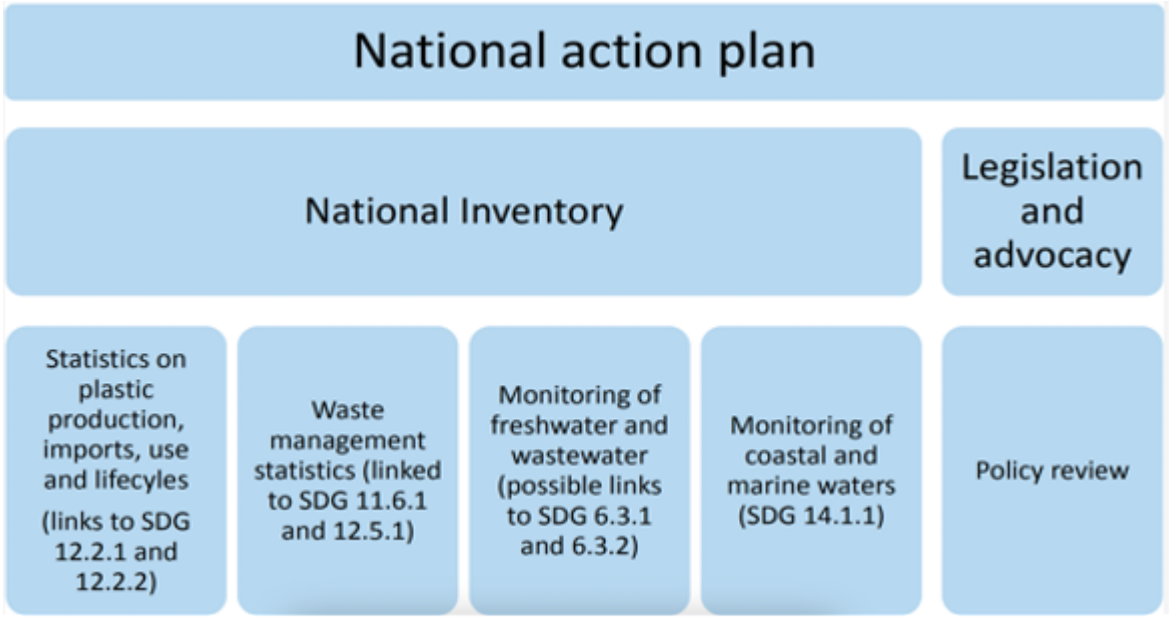
At the completion of the GEF Child Project, the Cook Islands is expected to have a stronger regulatory and policy framework penalising the import and consumption of unnecessary and problematic single-use plastic products, particularly in the F&B and tourism sectors, and incentivising sustainable circular solutions (Outcome 1.1). At least 2 policy instruments will have been updated, strengthened, or developed to integrate and complement the existing plastic-related regulations (Output 1.1.1).

Careful selection of the policy priorities and the regulatory approach will be based on rigorous evidence and an improved understanding of plastics flows and impacts on the Cook Islands' economy, society and environment obtained through a Policy Gap Analysis (Output 1.1.1), an extensive gender- responsive multi-stakeholder consultation process (Output 1.1.1), and the establishment of a National Source Inventory (NSI) (Output 4.1.1).

The Policy Gap Analysis will ensure the regulatory updates or new developments relate to the country's strategic priorities and are fully aligned and contribute to the achievement of regional and global commitments. The extensive consultation process will bring together stakeholders from across the plastics value chain, as well as communities'

leaders and local NGOs and associations, as a necessary step to determine the perceptions of consumers, industry and other stakeholders regarding single-use plastics and their alternatives, as well as their willingness to accept regulatory interventions. This is important for anticipating potential implementation challenges or public backlash.

The NSI will inform the development of a gender- responsive National Strategy and Action Plan (SAP) on Plastics, following the example of the SEA Circular Project as depicted in the diagram below (Output 1.1.2).



The National SAP will be guided by the overall ambition of the Government and informed by the global vision to end plastic pollution. The most impactful actions, policies and measures will be prioritized by estimating the expected impacts on indicators such as jobs, GDP, plastic pollution and related emissions, while a wide multi-sectorial, inclusive, participatory and gender-responsive consultation process will help generate buy-in across government departments, private sector, civil society and communities both in the major islands and the most remote islands.

Component 1: Enabling a Regulatory and Policy Environment	Component 2 - Support in identifying suitable alternative products.	Component 3: Engaging with F&B private sector	Component 4: Improving national data	Component 5: Knowledge management, Communications
Outcome 1.1: Upstream policy instruments to limit plastic pollution in the Cook Islands are updated, strengthened or developed, adopted and ready for implementation by Y5.				
Output 1.1.1: At least 2 targeted policy instruments to reduce the consumption of single-use plastics (SUPs) updated, strengthened or developed, adopted and ready for implementation by Y5.				
Output 1.1.2: A fully inclusive, participatory and gender responsive National Strategy and Action Plan (SAP) on Plastics developed and endorsed by Y4.				

Outcome 1.1: Upstream policy instruments to limit plastic pollution in the Cook Islands are updated, strengthened or developed by Y5.

Over the past few years, the Government of Cook Islands has advanced in the development of ambitious legislation in attempts to restrict the import and trade of some of the most problematic single use plastics into the country. It has also ratified, signed or acceded to regional and global instruments, protocols and conventions related to plastics pollution (Table 1 in the Project Rationale). However, the implementation of these obligations is still lagging with little transposition of an international convention into national law. Existing national legislation is variably monitored

and enforced, with other legislation remaining in draft form. Policy focus is often aimed at waste management – when plastics have already become waste – rather than preventive measures. While the "Zero Waste by 2045" goal reflects an ambition to tackle plastics issues through a circular economy approach, existing government policies and initiatives have a decidedly downstream focus and are far from being effective in preventing plastic pollution.

The project will help the Government conduct a Policy Gap Analysis to identify limitations of current regulatory and policy framework in the ability to prevent plastic pollution, and to draw key recommendations on how to improve the coherence and expand the framework beyond the predominant focus on waste management, overcome the multiple issues associated with the life cycle of plastics and address global and regional obligations. Policy coherence will be promoted to foster synergies across the plastic value chain, better manage trade-offs, and align objectives and interests of critical actors.

To complete and strengthen the work on policy and regulations, the project will support the development of National Strategy and Action Plan (SAP) on Plastics. The SAP will provide a progressive, multistakeholder, multisectoral and holistic approach to achieve the "Zero Waste by 2045 goal" for plastics. To avoid duplication and ensure linkages with in-progress measures by the government, the SAP will be harmonized with existing work plans and regulations. The SAP will be aligned with the government's commitment to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 (conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development), particularly SDG target 14.1 (prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, particularly from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution, by 2025). Although the project is focused on SDG target 14.1, the project has co-benefits linked to SDG 3 (good health and well-being), SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities), SDG 12 (sustainable consumption and production), and SDG 13 (climate action). Implementation of the SAP thus will identify policy and regulatory reforms and economic instruments, technology and infrastructure, and capacity building necessary to design sustainable products, promote circular economy processes, encourage sustainable consumption, and ensure that plastic waste is prevented. The project will build and draw inspiration from ongoing or past initiatives, the 'Towards a Multisectoral Action Plan for Sustainable Plastic Management in Bangladesh' produced by the World Bank or the National Action Plan on Plastic Waste Management 2021–2030 developed by UNEP. The development of the SAP will be informed by the data on plastic imports, production, consumption and disposal/litter generated within Outcome 4.

An Inter-ministerial Working Group (IWG) will be created to supervise, review and facilitate the implementation of Component 1, to avoid counteracting policy development, ensure full alignment with national priorities/policies/strategies and ensure full representation in the decision-making process. The IWG will include representatives of key stakeholder groups and relevant local experts. The IWG will meet at least twice per year.

The policy-making process will be informed by and build upon the data of the National Plastics Inventory (Component 4).

Output 1.1.1: At least 2 targeted policy instruments to reduce the consumption of single-use plastics (SUPs) updated, strengthened or developed, adopted and ready for implementation by Y5.

- Activity 1.1.1.1: Define the methodology to be followed to run a Policy Gap Analysis.
  An analytical methodology will be developed to examine national legislation, policies, strategies and plans relevant to plastic pollution, use available data and integrate stakeholders' insights. The methodology will be developed following the guidance provided by UNEP or other international organizations, such as OECD.[1]

- Activity 1.1.1.2: Conduct the Policy Gap Analysis through extensive gender-responsive consultations.
  The Policy Gap Analysis will be based on a combination of desktop research and semi-structured interviews and consultation workshops with strategic stakeholders, consultations with regional and global initiatives with similar objectives (e.g. the resources provided by the Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL), World Wildlife

Fund (WWF) – Pacific, Pacific Ocean Litter Project (POLP) regional assessments, and, in particular, UNEP[2]) and expert support (TA).

- **Activity 1.1.1.3: Produce a Policy Brief with key recommendations and guidance from the Policy Gap Analysis.**
  The findings of the Gap Analysis will be summarised in a Policy Brief and will inform the update of existing policy instruments or the development of new ones.

- **Activity 1.1.1.4: Draft or update existing policy instruments following the Policy Brief guidance and submit them for approval.**
  When reviewing the policy framework, attention will be given to:
  - **the relevant international obligations by which the Government is bound, such as those of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (Stockholm Convention) and others**
  - **key domestic factors such as local policy priorities, consumer habits, industry and business concerns, etc.**
  - **how different instruments can be used to complement one another to address the entire plastic life cycle**
  - **the time frame for implementation of the measures, as more ambitious legislative initiatives, such as a total ban on certain products, may not be immediately feasible. A gradual or incremental approach may sometimes be preferable to allow for shifts in the economy or in public sentiment.**

Output targets	Activities
- (Y1 Q3) 1 Policy Gap Analysis conducted. - (Y1 Q4) 1 Policy Brief, including recommendations, produced. - At least 2 consultation meetings with government partners and relevant stakeholders organised per year. - At least 10 representatives of key stakeholder groups are actively engaged in consultation meetings per year. - (Y5 Q3) At least 2 policy instruments updated, strengthened, or developed, adopted and ready for implementation (disaggregated by type: bans, taxes, incentives, fiscal policies, Acts, guidelines, etc.). Gender-specific target: At least 40% of participants involved in the project's consultation activities are women.	Activity 1.1.1.1: Define the methodology to be followed to run a Policy Gap Analysis. Activity 1.1.1.2: Conduct the Policy Gap Analysis through extensive gender-responsive consultations. Activity 1.1.1.3: Produce a Policy Brief with key recommendations and guidance from the Policy Gap Analysis. Activity 1.1.1.4: Draft or update existing policy instruments following the Policy Brief guidance and submit them for approval.

The following key partners were identified as a preliminary list:
- **National government for their role in development, approval, and enactment of policies, regulations and other measures (particularly ICI, CLO, OPM-CPPO, MFEM-RMD (tax & customs);**
- **Private sector, civil society, local communities, and academia for their input and buy-in;**
- **International partners (including SPREP, POLP and UNEP) for their input and sharing of lessons learned, best practices and methodologies from other countries.**
- **Local and international consultants for the provision of technical assistance to undertake some of the activities.**

Output 1.1.2: A fully inclusive, participatory and gender- responsive National Strategy and Action Plan (SAP) on Plastics developed and endorsed by Y4.

- **Activity 1.1.2.1: Define the methodology including a SAP consultation plan by Y1.**
  A methodology will be developed building on the experience of previous national plans (e.g. JNAP, NBSAP, etc.) and other countries[3] tailored to the specificities of the Cook Islands. The methodology will outline how the secondary and primary data will be collected, analysed, and used to inform the development of the SAP, as well as how the stakeholder consultation will be organised and conducted.

- **Activity 1.1.2.2: Conduct extensive gender- responsive consultations by organising at least 10 meetings in total by Y4.**

At least 10 meetings will be organised to capture the expectations and views of all stakeholder groups across the country to inform the SAP development, as well as to report back and test the conclusions. International experts (TA) might be used to help analyse data, formulate patterns and integrate concepts into the final SAP.

- **Activity 1.1.2.3: Produce a first draft of the National Strategy and Action Plan (SAP) on Plastics and share it for review by Y3.**
  Under the supervision of the IWG and with the support of international experts (TA), compiled data will be analysed, patterns formulated, and concepts developed into a draft SAP. The draft will be shared with key stakeholders for review and further input and refinement.

- **Activity 1.1.2.4: Organize a consultation/validation workshop to present the draft SAP by Y3.**
  The workshop will be instrumental to obtain stakeholder input, concerns and feedback as a valuable source of information that can improve SAP design and outcomes. It will help identify and control external risks while building the grounds for new collaborations and partnerships necessary to the SAP effective implementation.

- **Activity 1.1.2.5: Finalise the SAP and submit it for approval.**

Output targets	Activities
- (Y1 Q4) 1 SAP consultation plan developed. - At least 10 consultation meetings by Y4. - At least 10 representatives of key stakeholder groups are actively engaged in consultation meetings per year. - (Y3 Q2) 1 consultation/validation workshop organised to present the draft SAP on Plastics. - (Y4 Q4) 1 SAP on Plastics completed and endorsed. Gender-specific target: - At least 40% of participants involved in the project's consultation activities are women. - At least 1 chapter of the SAP includes gender specific actions, measures, recommendations.	Activity 1.1.2.1: Define the methodology including a SAP consultation plan by Y1. Activity 1.1.2.2: Conduct extensive gender-responsive consultations by organising at least 10 meetings in total by Y4. Activity 1.1.2.3: Produce a first draft of the National Strategy and Action Plan (SAP) on Plastics and submit it for review by Y3. Activity 1.1.2.4: Organise a consultation workshop to present the draft SAP by Y3. Activity 1.1.2.5: Finalise the SAP and submit it for approval.
Partners: The following key partners were identified as a preliminary list: - National government for their role in development, approval, and enactment of policies, regulations and other measures (particularly ICI, CLO, OPM-CPPO, MFEM-RMD (tax & customs), Island Governments); - Private sector, civil society, local communities, and academia for their input and buy-in; - International partners (such as SPREP, CIEL and including UNEP) for their input and sharing of lessons learned and best practices from other countries. - The Secretariat of the Plastics Treaty and countries, organisations and experts involved in its negotiations for the application of national SAPs on Plastics and relevant resources. - Local and international consultants for the provision of technical assistance to undertake some of the activities. - Local media platforms to enhance communications, awareness, understanding and buy-in of the SAP on Plastics.	

Component 2 Support in identifying suitable alternative products

To contribute to the reduction of land-based sources of plastic pollution in the Cook Islands, the project will facilitate and support the identification and readiness by the F&B and tourism sectors of concrete measures and sustainable and viable alternative solutions to prevent the consumption of the many problematic and unnecessary single use plastic (SUP) items, including packaging.

To this end, the project will support the design of a "Plastic Smart" program targeting local businesses in the hospitality/tourism sector, as well as large F&B corporations, retailers and shops, and local communities. Building on the experience and tools developed in other countries (e.g., the Plastic Free Balearics in Spain, the Plastic Free

Communities in UK, the Turnkey Method for Plastic Free in France, etc.), the program will help interested businesses/organisations assess their current consumption of SUPs, identify the SUPs that could be more easily eliminated, substituted with plastic free alternatives or through redesigned reuse/refill systems. The program will ensure businesses/organisations have the capacity and resources to put in place the alternative solutions most adequate to their needs and context.

The project also aims to support the strengthening of Short Food Supply Chains (SFSCs) through a secondary dedicated program to reduce local dependency on imported packaged food and beverages. Building on previous national projects and initiatives (e.g. MFEM's Smart Agritech scheme) and from across the world (a good starting point is the virtual platform developed by the EU-funded H2020 project SMARTCHAIN), tailored technical and financial support will be provided to interested local producers and F&B processors to help them deliver a more sustainable food system while addressing plastic pollution. The support will include training opportunities, technical assistance, exchange visits, public-private or private-private partnership creation and/or access to finance.

Leveraging the support of the Global Programme, the project will seek the active participation and direct engagement of at least one major international F&B corporation with economic interests in the Cook Islands to the pilot testing of alternative solutions to single use plastics. In particular, at least one reuse/refill system should be tested within the "Plastic Smart program" with the collaboration of local businesses in the tourism and HoReCa sector and targeting at least one of the most problematic SUPs identified (e.g. water bottles).

Component 1: Enabling a Regulatory and Policy Environment	Component 2 - Support in identifying suitable alternative products.	Component 3: Engaging with F&B private sector	Component 4: Improving national data	Component 5: Knowledge management, Communications
Outcome 2.1: Sustainable and viable alternative solutions to reduce & replace harmful, avoidable or unnecessary F&B packaging and packaged goods commonly imported into the Cook Islands identified and ready for pilot-testing.				
Output 2.1.1: At least 2 programs established to reduce & replace harmful F&B packaging and packaged goods commonly imported into the Cook Islands identified and ready for pilot-testing.				

Outcome 2.1: Sustainable and viable alternative solutions to reduce & replace harmful, avoidable or unnecessary F&B packaging and packaged goods commonly imported into the Cook Islands identified and ready for pilot-testing.

The project will identify and engage with all relevant target groups (e.g. hotels, restaurants, bars/cafes, retailers, importers, wholesalers, international F&B corporations, etc.). It will inform them about the business risks associated to the use of single use plastics and the opportunities/benefits that transitioning to sustainable alternative solutions might bring, and ultimately raise their awareness and interest through a series of face-to-face meetings, round tables/workshops and communications products.

As part of the process to establish a National Plastics Inventory (Output 4.1.1), the project will help identify a list of F&B single use plastic items (including packaging and packaged goods) commonly imported and used in the Cook Islands to be addressed as a priority because problematic and/or unnecessary. A list of priority SUPs for intervention will thus be defined and agreed upon by interested parties based on clear/shared criteria.

This list will be used to identify the most viable alternatives to be tested in the Cook Islands to reduce plastic pollution from the F&B and tourism sectors. A set of practical and 'honest' solutions for each one of the priority SUPs will be identified - either locally or regionally/globally. 'Honest' solutions are those that truly contribute to the reduction of plastic waste while avoiding shifting the environmental burden. Unfortunately, many alternatives that are marketed as sustainable generate impacts equal or even greater than the SUP item they are replacing. As a general rule, substituting a single-use product for another single-use product, regardless of the material from which it is made, should be avoided. Existing guidelines[4] for the F&B and tourism sectors will be used/adapted to the needs of the project.

The project will assess the technical, legal, social, environmental, and economic viability of the identified solutions to the local context. It is crucial that the proposed solutions are viable and easily adoptable by local businesses and organisations: for this to happen, they need to be reasonably easy to adopt at a reasonable cost given the particular context (e.g., availability of local labor, social norms, humid and hot tropical weather, existing regulations, etc.).

Implementation Frameworks will be developed for the effective and timely pilot-testing of the solutions identified. As mentioned before, the implementation might be ensured through two programs: the "Plastic Smart" program and the Short Food Supply Chains program. A system to monitor progress (MT of plastic waste avoided), results, lessons learned, and best practices will be built into the programs.

A Technical Working Group (TWG) will be created to supervise, review and facilitate the implementation of Component 2 and 3 and ensure full representation in the decision-making process. The TWG will include representatives of key stakeholder groups and relevant local experts. The TWG will meet at least twice per year.

Output 2.1.1: At least 2 programs established to reduce & replace harmful F&B packaging and packaged goods commonly imported into the Cook Islands identified and ready for pilot-testing.

- **Activity 2.1.1.1: As part of the process to establish a National Source Inventory and Monitoring system (Outcome 4.1), identify a set of F&B single use plastic items to be addressed as a priority because problematic and unnecessary.**
  The TWG will supervise and coordinate this process to ensure the items listed are relevant and applicable across stakeholder groups.

  Activity 2.1.1.2: Building on existing good practices in the Cook Islands, as well as on those in other regions with similar environmental, socio-economic contexts (e.g., other SIDS countries, Sea-Circular project, etc.), run a feasibility study to identify a set of viable alternative solutions for each one of the SUPs identified (Activity 2.1.1.1).

  The project will assess the technical, legal, social, environmental, and economic viability of the potential solutions by researching existing solutions, including international examples if appropriate, and consulting widely with practitioners and experts, to gather the set of data and information relevant to the objectives and scope of the project; analysing the data to understand significant impacts, requirements, and drivers throughout the lifecycle, including the end-of-life options for the chosen alternative; developing and considering radical options that may not become part of the formal appraisal but can be helpful to test the parameters of feasible solutions (well-run brainstorming sessions can help think "out of the box"); from the research, identifying the most viable practice solutions. The economic viability of the solutions will be assessed by considering not only the short-term costs or savings, but (to the extent possible) the environmental and socio-economic impacts that these solutions will bring about (in the longer term). The economic benefits are a measure of the value the solutions will deliver to society as a whole. For example, the solution may enhance local economic activities and quality of life for the broader community (or specific groups such as women and marginalised populations) through the revitalisation of traditional productions (e.g., weaved baskets) to replace SUPs.

- **Activity 2.1.1.3: Produce a report with key findings of the feasibility study (Activity 2.1.1.2).**

- **Activity 2.1.1.4: Organise one or more round tables (sub-sectors) with all interested parties to discuss the outcomes of the viability assessment (Activity 2.1.1.2 and 2.1.1.3) and plan the way forward.**

  Activity 2.1.1.5: Design a "Plastic Smart" and a "Short Food Supply Chain" program, including objectives, scope, processes, criteria, work plan, tools, communications and training activities, roles, and responsibilities, budget, and a gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation system.

Depending on the target group, the pilot-testing will require the establishment of a program, to which individual organisations may apply on a voluntary basis, or direct support be provided to individual organisations. Building on the experience and tools developed in other countries (e.g., the Plastic Free Balearics in Spain, the Plastic Free Communities in UK, the Turnkey Method for Plastic Free in France, etc.), a "Plastic Smart" program will be established to help businesses in the hospitality and F&B sector reduce and eventually eliminate specific single-use plastics from their operations. The program should ensure that interested businesses assess their current consumption of SUPs (this could be supported by the Global Tourism Plastics Initiative or other similar international organisations/initiatives), identify the SUPs that could be more easily eliminated (ideally aligned to the priority list in 2.1.1.1), substituted with plastic free alternatives or through reuse/refill systems (ideally those identified in 2.1.1.2 and 2.1.1.3), have the capacity and resources to put in place the alternative solutions most adequate to their needs and context (identified through 2.1.1.4 and 2.1.1.5).

The project also aims to support the establishment of "Short Food Supply Chains" program to reduce local dependency to imported packaged food and beverage. Building on previous national projects (e.g., MFEM's Smart Agritech scheme) as well as on initiatives from across the world (e.g., the EU-funded H2020 project SMARTCHAIN, the World Bank's OECS Regional Agriculture Competitiveness Project, etc.), tailored technical and financial support will be provided to interested local producers and F&B processors to help them deliver a more sustainable food system while addressing plastic pollution.

It is indeed important to learn from other countries, particularly SIDS, to avoid possible problems down the line. 'Going local' can be a political endeavour of small-scale producers and organisation against corporate practices and large-scale production, and alternative models such as farm-to-table establishments could emphasise sustainable practices and the importance of relationships with local consumers. For example, in Fiji, the NGO FRIEND runs a commercially successful restaurant with healthy local dishes cooked in traditional ways that is very popular with the local population. Stakeholders' appeal to engage more with young people and harness creativity and innovation in a new generation also points towards opportunities in this direction.[5]

The support provided through both programs might materialise as training opportunities, technical assistance, exchange visits, or access to finance. A system to monitor progress against the GEB Core Indicators (specifically in terms of metric tons of plastic waste avoided), and to compile lessons learned, and best practices will be built into the programs. Specifically, a gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation system will be developed, including socio-economic indicators to assess cost-effectiveness and financial/economic sustainability, and explicit gender equality indicators to strengthen accountability in terms of the progress made on gender equality issues. Both qualitative and quantitative data will be included to measure the impact on gender relations. Without sufficient data, a meaningful analysis of the impact on gender equality is very difficult. This also implies that, as a minimum, all data should be collected, presented and analysed in a sex-disaggregated manner.

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Output targets	Activities
- (Y2 Q1) At least 10 SUP priority items for intervention identified. - (Y2 Q3) At least 10 alternative solutions/interventions, including at least 2 short food supply chain initiatives, identified as technical, social, and economic viable. - (Y2 Q4) 1 feasibility study report completed. - (Y2 Q4) At least 1 roundtable discussion organised. - At least 1 representative of each of the key stakeholder groups (government, traditional leader, private sector, NGO, other) represented in the roundtable discussions. - (Y3 Q1) A "Plastic Smart" and a Short Food Supply Chain program designed and ready for implementation.	Activity 2.1.1.1: Identify a set of F&B single use plastic items to be addressed as a priority because problematic and unnecessary. Activity 2.1.1.2: Run a feasibility study to identify a set of viable alternative solutions for each one of the SUPs identified (Activity 2.1.1.1). Activity 2.1.1.3: Produce a report with key findings of the feasibility study (Activity 2.1.1.2). Activity 2.1.1.4: Organise one or more round tables with all interested parties to discuss the outcomes of the assessment and feasibility study and plan the way forward. Activity 2.1.1.5: Design a "Plastic Smart" and a "Short Food Supply Chain" program, including objective, scope, processes, criteria, work plan, tools, communications and training activities, roles, and responsibilities, and a gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation system.

Gender-specific target: - At least 40% of participants involved in the roundtable are women.	

Partners:
The following key partners were identified as a preliminary list:

- National government for their role in providing public technical support and facilitating access to finance (particularly ICI, CIT, MOA, Chamber of Commerce, BTIB, MFEM, etc.);
- Businesses operating in the F&B and/or the tourism sector for their direct involvement in the pilot-testing of alternative solutions to SUPs (e.g. hotels, restaurants, bars/cafes, retailers, importers, wholesalers, international F&B corporations, etc.), as well as business or organisation bodies that represent the interests of the broader group (e.g. tourism industry council, growers associations, etc.);
- Private sector, including local farmers, civil society, and academia for their contribution to the assessment phase;
- National and international financial institutions (e.g. BCI, ANZ, BSP, ADB, etc.) who may be able to support additional access to finance beyond direct project support
- International partners (including SPREP, FAO, WWF and UNEP) for their technical input and sharing of lessons learned and best practices from other countries.
- Local and international consultants for the provision of technical assistance to undertake some of the activities.
- Local media platforms to enhance communications, awareness, understanding and buy-in of activities, problematic products and potential solutions identified.

Component 3 Engaging with F&B private sector.

Component 3 will ensure the effective and timely implementation of the alternative solutions identified in Component 2. Through the operationalisation of the "Plastic Smart" program, at least 10 alternative solutions tailored to the environmental and socio-economic context of the Cook Islands will be tested by local businesses and organisations in the F&B and tourism sectors, with the support of local communities and institutions, in an effort to contribute to the reduction of plastic pollution at source.

Through the operationalisation of the "Short Food Supply Chains" program, local farmers and F&B processors will be invited to test direct ways of increasing or expanding local production through sustainable and SUP free methods to increase import substitution options, as well as delivering food to restaurants, hotels, other private and public food services, through traditional or more innovative types of distribution systems, ensuring direct links between producers and consumers.

In 5 year's time, at least 10 alternative solutions to single-use plastics in the F&B and tourism sectors will have been tested to the specific conditions of the Cook Islands (Outcome 3.1), following in-depth feasibility studies and consultations to assess the technical, social, and economic viability and acceptance of each option (Outcome 2.1). In particular, the project will explore the possibility to promote Short Food Supply Chains (SFSCs) to reduce the country's reliance on packaged food import and ultimately curb the generation of plastic waste. While "short" and "local" do not necessarily translated in good environmental practices, there is evidence that SFSCs favour a higher uptake of environmentally sound practices and help reduce food packaging and waste by maintaining close geographical and social relations between food producers, processors, and consumers. However, the small scale, the possible higher costs of production, coupled with market volatility, usually undermine the longevity of these schemes. To build resilience, non-local goods - produced and traded according to values shared by the scheme, such as organic, artisan or fair-traded, might be considered to integrate the local offer.

The long-term viability of the piloted circular solutions will rest on the active contribution of all key players across the plastics value chain: (i) wholesalers and importers will have to acknowledge the pivotal role they play as key entry point of packaged and plastic goods in the Cook Islands and become enablers of change; (ii) local businesses in the F&B and tourism sectors will have to seek guidance and support to build their capacities to innovate and transition to sustainable practices. They will also have to learn how to communicate sustainability to their employees and clients; (iii) global and regional food processors, consumer goods companies, and brand owners will have to rise to the challenge, be accountable vis-à-vis their global commitments, and help deliver low plastic solutions adapted to

the Cook Islands context; (iv) financial institutions will have to support local businesses transitioning to circular solutions; (v) local producers and processors will have to support domestic short food value chains by making agriculture more sustainable, innovative and technologically smart; (vi) the Government will have to sustain the transition by building its capacity and educating its citizens, building partnerships, benefiting of knowledge exchange opportunities, ensuring the timely and effective enforcement of plastics prevention regulation, and mainstreaming sustainability into education system; (vii) civil society will have to facilitate collaborations and communication among stakeholders, keeping each of them accountable; (viii) while consumers, including tourists, will have to understand the need for change and sustain it through their purchasing choices.

Component 1: Enabling a Regulatory and Policy Environment	Component 2 - Support in identifying suitable alternative products.	Component 3: Engaging with F&B private sector	Component 4: Improving national data	Component 5: Knowledge management, Communications
Outcome 3.1: Local private sector (including domestic agriculture sector and MSMEs), NGOs and communities are engaged and supported to pilot and scale up innovative solutions.				
Output 3.1.1: At least 10 sustainable and viable alternative solutions/interventions, including at least 2 short food supply chain initiatives, to reduce & replace harmful F&B packaging and packaged goods commonly imported into the Cook Islands pilot-tested or up-scaled by Y5.				

Outcome 3.1: Local private sector (including domestic agriculture sector and MSMEs), NGOs and communities are engaged and supported to pilot and scale up innovative solutions.

The project will provide the technical and financial support to operationalise the Plastic Smart and Short Food Supply Chain programs and ensure the effective and timeline implementation of the alternative solutions. To enrol organisations in the programs, communications across various fora including face-to-face meetings, roundtables and workshops will be organised to raise awareness, inform, educate and engage. Public-private and private-private partnerships will be explored and facilitated where feasible, as well as opportunities to leverage additional financing will be pursued.

Output 3.1.1: At least 10 sustainable and viable alternative solutions/interventions, including at least 2 short food supply chain initiatives, to reduce & replace harmful F&B packaging and packaged goods commonly imported into the Cook Islands pilot-tested or up-scaled by Y5.

- **Activity 3.1.1.1: Through the "Plastic Smart" and the "Short Food Supply chains" programs, participating organisations will be able to receive tailored training and direct technical and financial assistance throughout the duration of the pilot-/expansion-phase (Y2 Q3 to Y5 Q2).**

- **Activity 3.1.1.2: Monitor the implementation of the pilot tests and assess their gender-responsive cost-effectiveness and long-term sustainability.**
  Participating organisations will have to conduct at least 3 plastic audits, one at the beginning of the pilot phase, one mid-term and one at the end of the pilot test (by Y5 Q1). This will allow monitoring progress and assess the impact of the solutions in terms of the amount of plastic waste avoided. In addition, specific gender-responsive socio-economic indicators will be developed and monitored throughout the piloting phase to better understand the broader impacts of the selected solutions, ensure long-term sustainability, and inform future scaling up/out.

- **Activity 3.1.1.3: Organise facilitated meetings/workshops for businesses and organisations engaged in the programs so they can exchange and learn from each other.**

Output targets	Activities
- (Y5 Q4) At least 20 organisations (hotels, restaurants, cafes/bars, etc.) are enrolled in the "Plastic Smart"	Activity 3.1.1.1: Provide support to the organisations enrolled in the "Plastic Smart" and "Short Food Supply

program and have reduced their consumption of SUPs (MT of plastic waste avoided). - (Y5 Q4) At least 3 local producers/farmers are enrolled in the “Short Food Supply Chains” program. Gender-specific target: - Number of women-led initiatives (or initiatives that employs a majority of women) that have proved to be legally, technically, socially, economically viable and gender responsive.	Chains” programs through training and direct technical and financial assistance. Activity 3.1.1.2: Monitor the implementation of the pilot tests and assess their gender-responsive cost-effectiveness. Activity 3.1.1.3: Organise facilitated meetings/workshops for businesses and organisations engaged in the programs so they can exchange and learn from each other.
Partners: The following key partners were identified as a preliminary list: - National government for their role in providing public technical support and facilitating access to finance (particularly ICI, MOA, CIT, BTIB, Chamber of Commerce, MFEM, Island Governments, etc.); - Businesses operating in the F&B and/or the tourism sector for their direct involvement in the pilot-testing or up-scaling of alternative solutions to SUPs (e.g. hotels, restaurants, bars/cafes, retailers, importers, wholesalers, international F&B corporations, growers, etc.), as well as business or organisation bodies that represent the interests of the broader group (e.g. tourism industry council, growers associations, etc.); - Private sector, including local farmers, civil society, and academia for their support and involvement to the pilots; - National and international financial institutions (e.g. BCI, ANZ, BSP, ADB, etc.) who may be able to support additional access to finance beyond direct project support - International partners (including SPREP, FAO, WWF and UNEP) for their input and sharing of lessons learned and best practices from other countries. - Local and international consultants for the provision of technical assistance to undertake some of the activities. - Local media platforms to enhance communications, awareness, understanding and buy-in of activities, problematic products and potential solutions identified.	

Component 4 Improving national data and capacities

Consistently applying a harmonized methodology for collection and monitoring of nationally representative data of plastics import, production, consumption, waste generation, composition, collection and leakage into the environment (freshwater, terrestrial, coastal and marine ecosystems) can help governments to select, fund, and operate public programs more strategically. In the Cook Islands, data on plastics, plastic packaged goods, plastic waste and marine plastic litter are not systematically collected and monitored, neither is there sufficient capacity to manage and analyse these datasets. Current data collection efforts are often fragmented and mainly focused on Rarotonga and Aitutaki.

The project will help build national capacity to create and implement a simple harmonized National Plastics Monitoring System that allows to track plastics flows in the Cook Islands and to analyse these data for improved policy and decision-making processes. The project will also populate the system by running a National Plastics Audit. Findings of the audit will be summarised in a National Source Inventory with clear recommendations for Governmental institutions, private sector, civil society and local communities.

As a central repository of knowledge and data on plastics, the NSI will facilitate the production of statistics and indicators by identifying and measuring major flows from the environment to the economy (natural inputs), flows within the economy (production, consumption, trade and circularity) and flows from the economy into the environment (residuals and plastic pollution). The NSI will be managed by the NES, whose capacity will be strengthened to compile, organize and manage data on plastic products import, production, consumption, waste generation, composition and disposal flows, including results arising from monitoring/clean-ups in freshwater, coastal and marine environments (Outcome 4.1). The NSI will help understand which single-use plastics are most prevalent and problematic, what alternatives are already known and available, and will facilitate the monitoring and measuring of the effectiveness of the policy interventions. It will help centralize and strengthen data pipelines, engage with existing national statistical systems and harmonize definitions and classifications in measuring flows across the environment and economy while establishing baselines and ensuring the transparency needed to track progress and measure the impact of any action taken by the government (at all levels), private sector, civil society or the academia.

Component 1: Enabling a Regulatory and Policy Environment	Component 2 - Support in identifying suitable alternative products.	Component 3: Engaging with F&B private sector	Component 4: Improving national data	Component 5: Knowledge management, Communications
Outcome 4.1: National data and capacities on plastics is enhanced to inform and improve decision making by Y5.				
Output 4.1.1: A National Source Inventory and Monitoring system established and populated with the data from National Plastics Audits by Y3, incorporating gender-disaggregated data collection and analysis to understand differential impacts of plastic pollution on men and women.				
Output 4.1.2: Relevant authorities and stakeholders trained on at least 3 areas of intervention by Y5.				
Output 4.1.3: At least 2 international & South-South gender responsive knowledge exchange activities or events with Pacific Island Countries and other SIDS organized, and at least 2 attended by Y5.				

Outcome 4.1: National data and capacities on plastics is enhanced to inform and improve decision making by Y5.

A National Source Inventory (NSI) and Monitoring system will be established following the UNEP blueprint provided in the 2023 "Turning off the tap" report, learning from the experience of the UNEP SEA circular Project, and with the technical support of the Community of Practice of the Global Partnership on Plastic Pollution and the IP Global Project. NES officials will be trained (Output 4.1.2) on how to set up a plastic monitoring system and how to analyze data to inform policymaking. The data required for developing an NSI will be drawn from various sources, such as statistical surveys from national statistical offices, administrative records from different related agencies, and the National Plastics Audits.

Output 4.1.1: A National Source Inventory and Monitoring system established and populated with the data from National Plastics Audits by Y3, incorporating gender-disaggregated data collection and analysis to understand differential impacts of plastic pollution on men and women.

- **Activity 4.1.1.1: Train concerned staff of the NES, as well as of other relevant government departments, on how to establish and maintain a National Source Inventory and Monitoring system.**
  Appointed representatives of the NES and other key government departments will be duly trained on how to establish and maintain a National Source Inventory and Monitoring System. The training will help define the scoping and definitions, data collection instructions, and modelling approaches, allowing government officials to establish through the National Source Inventory and Monitoring system a baseline for benchmarking and tracking the progress of interventions. Participants to the training are expected to walk out with a reproducible workflow, with a set of tools and templates for data collection, analysis, diagnosis, planning and implementation. The training will be designed following the UNEP "National Guidance for Plastic Pollution Hot spotting and Shaping Action"and associated tools and modules.

- **Activity 4.1.1.2: Establish a National Source Inventory and Monitoring system.**
  Drawing on the experience and technical guidance of past initiatives, such as the UNEP SEA circular Project and UNEP "National Guidance for Plastic Pollution Hot spotting and Shaping Action", the project will support the development of a National Source Inventory and Monitoring system to identify plastic leakage 'hotspots', find their impacts along the entire plastic value chain, and then prioritise effective actions to stop the leakage at each hotspot.

- **Activity 4.1.1.3: Develop and agree on a methodology to conduct a National Plastics Audit.**
  To ensure standardization, accountability and transparency, a methodology will be designed for the National Plastics Audit following the guidance provided by UNEP "National Guidance for Plastic Pollution Hot spotting and Shaping Action", which proposes a simplified economy-wide material flow analysis (MFA) framework for plastic accounting to understand the national plastic economy and identify relevant hotspots and interventions. The intention is not to generate complex material flow analysis but to provide a guidance on how to answer some of the key questions that will be useful to understand the national plastic economy and identify relevant hotspots and interventions.

- **Activity 4.1.1.4: Conduct at least one National Plastics Audit.**
  Following the methodology developed in Activity 4.1.1.2, a National Plastics Audit will be conducted to gather data on key types, sources and leakage points for plastics in the Cook Islands. The audit will be conducted with the support and the engagement of all relevant governmental institutions, private sector, including importers and wholesalers, NGOs and communities through citizen science initiatives.

- **Activity 4.1.1.5: Populate the National Source Inventory with the findings of the National Plastics Audit.**

Output targets	Activities
- (Y2 Q4) At least 1 National Plastics Audit designed and conducted. - (Y3 Q4) A National Source Inventory and Monitoring system - following the UNEP National Source Inventory Approach – established and populated with the data from the National Plastics Audit(s). - (Y4 Q4) At least 10 concerned stakeholders trained (disaggregated by gender (as self-assessed)) on the National Plastic Audits, Inventory and Monitoring System.	Activity 4.1.1.1: Train concerned staff of the NES, as well as of other relevant government departments, on how to establish and maintain a National Source Inventory and Monitoring system. Activity 4.1.1.2: Establish a National Source Inventory and Monitoring system. Activity 4.1.1.3: Develop and agree on a methodology to conduct a National Plastics Audit. Activity 4.1.1.4: Conduct at least one National Plastics Audit. Activity 4.1.1.5: Populate the National Source Inventory with the findings of the National Plastics Audit.
Partners: The following key partners were identified as a preliminary list: - National government and relevant departments and agencies with key roles and responsibilities for hosting, managing and contributing data to the National Plastics Monitoring System (e.g. ICI, Statistics, MFEM-RMD (customs); - Importers, wholesalers, and local F&B processors importing plastics and packaged goods; - Waste management agency (ICI) and contractors for their role in monitoring plastic waste collection, composition and management; - Private sector, civil society, local communities, and academia for their support to the National Plastics Audit; - International partners (including SPREP and UNEP) for their technical support and sharing of lessons learned and best practices from other countries.	

Output 4.1.2: Relevant authorities and stakeholders trained on at least 3 areas of intervention by Y5.

- **Activity 4.1.2.1: Conduct a stakeholder analysis and mapping.**
  Identify all key stakeholders involved in the collection, contribution, management, monitoring, hosting and communication of data to the National Plastics Audits, Inventory and Monitoring System, as well as any other relevant areas under the project for key interventions, with roles and responsibilities clearly identified, defined and agreed.

- **Activity 4.1.2.2: Conduct a capacity building needs assessment targeting the identified stakeholders.**
  As per the stakeholder analysis and mapping conducted in 4.1.2.1, assess and map out capacity needs to fully achieve each relevant step in Outcome 4.1.1 and other relevant project areas and interventions, including implementation plan(s).

- **Activity 4.1.2.3: Develop at least 5 training modules addressing the top priority capacity building needs.**
  Training modules to be developed to deliver on priority capacity building needs identified in 4.1.2.2.

- **Activity 4.1.2.4: Organise at least 5 training workshops on priority areas of intervention by Y5.**
  Training workshops to be developed to provide capacity building opportunities identified as priorities in 4.1.2.2 and deliver the training modules developed in 4.1.2.3.

- **Activity 4.1.2.5: Enroll selected key stakeholders in at least 5 training courses on priority areas of intervention.**
  In addition to Activity 4.1.2.4, the project will support the enrolment of selected key stakeholders in relevant pre-established courses relevant to capacity building needs identified and priority areas of intervention with international and online institutions (e.g., Ocean Plastic Pollution Online Course, Plastic Waste and the Basel Convention, Beyond Plastics, etc.).

- **Activity 4.1.2.6: Assess the effectiveness of the training workshops and courses through the development of evaluation surveys and the analysis of responses.**
  An evaluation survey will be designed and administered following all training workshops delivered in 4.1.2.4 and courses enrolled in under 4.1.2.5, to all training participants. Responses will be analysed to determine effectiveness of the training material developed and modes of delivery for continued adaptive management and improvement.

Output targets	Activities
- (Y1 Q4) 1 stakeholder analysis and mapping conducted. - (Y1 Q4) 1 capacity building needs assessment targeting key stakeholders conducted. - (Y3 Q2) At least 5 training modules addressing the top priority capacity building needs of targeted stakeholders developed. - (Y4 Q4) At least 5 training workshops on priority areas of intervention organised and delivered. - (Y4 Q4) At least 5 training courses on priority areas of intervention to strengthen the capacity of targeted stakeholders identified and enrolled in. - (Y4 Q4) At least 70% completion rate of training courses enrolled in. - (Y4 Q4) At least 50 stakeholders trained (disaggregated by gender [as self-assessed], occupation, etc. and by type of training, topic, etc.). - (Y4 Q4) 1 Evaluation survey designed for each training workshop organised or attended or course enrolled in. - (Y4 Q4) At least 70% of respondents complete the evaluation survey per training/course. Gender-specific target: - At least 40% of stakeholders trained are women. - At least 40% of evaluation survey respondents are women. - At least 40% of trainers are women.	Activity 4.1.2.1: Conduct a stakeholder analysis and mapping. Activity 4.1.2.2: Conduct a capacity building needs assessment targeting the identified stakeholders. Activity 4.1.2.3: Develop at least 5 training modules addressing the top priority capacity building needs. Activity 4.1.2.4: Organise at least 5 training workshops on priority areas of intervention by Y5. Activity 4.1.2.5: Enrol selected key stakeholders in training courses on priority areas of intervention by Y5. Activity 4.1.2.6: Assess the effectiveness of the training workshops and courses through the development of evaluation surveys and the analysis of responses.
Partners: The following key partners were identified as a preliminary list: - National government and relevant departments and agencies with key roles and responsibilities for hosting, managing and contributing data to the National Plastics Monitoring System (e.g. ICI, Statistics, MFEM-RMD (customs); - Importers, wholesalers, and local F&B processors importing plastics and packaged goods; - Waste management agency (ICI) and contractors for their role in monitoring plastic waste collection, composition and management; - Private sector, civil society, local communities, and academia; - International partners (including SPREP and UNEP) for their technical support and sharing of lessons learned and best practices from other countries.	

Output 4.1.3: At least 2 international & South-South gender-responsive knowledge exchange activities or events with Pacific Island Countries and other SIDS organised, and at least 2 attended by Y5.

- **Activity 4.1.3.1: Ensure the participation of at least 10 stakeholders in total to at least 2 regional or international events on plastics.**

The project will support the attendance of selected participants to attend overseas meetings/events/workshops/forums in key areas of relevance to the project. This is to ensure lessons learned through the child project and its piloted activities are shared and extended beyond the Cook Islands. Given we are the only Pacific Island Country and just one of two SIDS involved in the IP, this will enable further opportunities for replication, upscaling and sharing successes and lessons learned. Additionally, it will allow for increased capacity building opportunities beyond the national context to increased exposure, understanding and application of plastics solutions in the Cook Islands.

- **Activity 4.1.3.2: Host at least 2 regional events on plastics.**
  To showcase the work of the project and the Cook Islands in its efforts to reduce plastics, as well as build awareness, understanding and knowledge exchange opportunities, the Cook Islands will host at least 2 events on plastics by Y5 of the project.

- **Activity 4.1.3.3: Ensure that participants to the events (either abroad or hosted) complete a post-attendance report documenting event content, learnings, potential application opportunities within the Cook Islands and recommendations.**
  To ensure that attendance to events in 4.1.3.1 as well as those hosted in 4.1.3.2 are relevant, effective and adequately transfer knowledge gained to others, a post-attendance report will be required to be produced by attendees to synthesise and document their findings and learnings so that these can be shared with others and recommendations can be explored.

Output targets	Activities
- At least 2 activities or events organised by Y5. - At least 2 activities or events attended by Y5. - At least 20 stakeholders attending the knowledge exchange activities or events (either abroad or hosted, disaggregated by gender (as self-assessed), occupation, etc.). - At least 1 post-attendance report with learnings and recommendations following each knowledge exchange activity or event. Gender-specific indicator: - At least 40% of the stakeholders attending the knowledge exchange events are women.	Activity 4.1.3.1: Ensure the participation of at least 10 stakeholders in total to at least 2 regional or international events on plastics. Activity 4.1.3.2: Host at least 2 regional events on plastics. Activity 4.1.3.3: Ensure that participants to the events (either abroad or hosted) complete a post-attendance report documenting event content, learnings, potential application opportunities within the Cook Islands and recommendations.
Partners: The following key partners were identified as a preliminary list: - National government relevant departments and agencies for their role in the project implementation; - Businesses operating in the F&B and/or the tourism sector for their direct involvement in the pilot-testing of alternative solutions to SUPs; - Private sector, civil society, local communities and academia for their engagement in the project activites; - International partners (including UNDP and UNEP) for their input and sharing of lessons learned and best practices from other countries.	

Component 5 Knowledge management, Communications (including National and Program-level Coordination)

Component 5 will ensure project activities and learnings, including solutions, successes and challenges, are documented, highlighted and widely shared with both national and international stakeholders to maximise the potential impact, reach and benefit of the project investment. This will be guided by the gender-responsive Knowledge Management and Communications Strategy, with various communications products developed and made available across multiple platforms and fora. Knowledge, Attitudes & Practices (KAP) surveys will be developed and applied at key stages of project implementation to provide quantifiable documentation of community sentiments, and evidence of how this may change over the life of the project as a result of the project's communications, engagement and capacity building efforts and activities.

This Component will also ensure linkages between the Child project and the Global Platform are realized and effectively aligned, with project activities appropriately monitored, evaluated and adaptive management measures applied where necessary to ensure the goals of the project are achieved.

Component 1: Enabling a Regulatory and Policy Environment	Component 2 - Support in identifying suitable alternative products.	Component 3: Engaging with F&B private sector	Component 4: Improving national data	Component 5: Knowledge management, Communications
Outcome 5.1: Best practices, innovative solutions and lessons learned are documented and exchanged through knowledge management and knowledge transfer.				
Output 5.1.1: Gender-responsive Knowledge Management and Communications Strategy developed and implemented using the Global Project and other relevant platforms.				
Output 5.1.2: Gender- responsive knowledge and information products on processes, best practices, innovations, lessons learned, and project findings developed and disseminated to stakeholders.				
Output 5.1.3: Gender-responsive Knowledge, Attitudes & Practices (KAP) surveys throughout the project demonstrate quantifiable changes in public understanding & consumer behaviour.				
Output 5.1.4: Participatory monitoring and evaluation, including gender mainstreaming, informs project implementation, decision-making and lessons learned.				
Output 5.1.5: Contribution to the Global Project Knowledge Management and Communication.				
Output 5.1.6: National Level Coordination mechanism established/ implemented.				
Output 5.1.7: Coordination and active participation and contribution to Global Project meetings and working groups.				

Outcome 5.1: Best practices, innovative solutions and lessons learned are documented and exchanged through knowledge management and knowledge transfer.

Output 5.1.1: Gender-responsive Knowledge Management and Communications Strategy developed and implemented using the Global Project and other relevant platforms.

- **Activity 5.1.1.1: Develop a Gender-responsive Knowledge Management and Communications Strategy.**

Output targets	Activities
- (Y2 Q2) 1 Gender-responsive Knowledge Management and Communications Strategy developed & under implementation. Gender-specific indicator: - At least 1 chapter of the Gender-responsive Knowledge Management and Communications Strategy includes gender specific actions, measures, recommendations.	Activity 5.1.1.1: Develop a Gender-responsive Knowledge Management and Communications Strategy.
Partners: The following key partners were identified as a preliminary list: - National government relevant departments and agencies for their role in the project implementation; - Businesses operating in the F&B and/or the tourism sector for their direct involvement in the pilot-testing of alternative solutions to SUPs; - Private sector, civil society, local communities and academia for their engagement in the project activities; - International partners (including UNDP and UNEP) for their input and sharing of lessons learned and best practices from other countries.	

Output 5.1.2: Gender-responsive knowledge and information products on processes, best practices, innovations, lessons learned, and project findings developed and disseminated to stakeholders.

- **Activity 5.1.2.1: Develop and disseminate at least 20 knowledge and information products.**

Output targets	Activities
- At least 20 knowledge and information products on processes, best practices, innovations, lessons learned and project findings (e.g. case studies, factsheets, videos, guidelines, newsletters, social media posts, etc.) developed and disseminated to stakeholders by Y4 Q4. Gender-specific indicator: - At least 1 gender- responsive knowledge & information product developed & disseminated to stakeholders	Activity 5.1.2.1: Develop and disseminate at least 20 knowledge and information products.
Partners: The following key partners were identified as a preliminary list: - National government relevant departments and agencies for their role in the project implementation; - Businesses operating in the F&B and/or the tourism sector for their direct involvement in the pilot-testing of alternative solutions to SUPs; - Private sector, civil society, local communities and academia for their engagement in the project activites; - International partners (including UNDP and UNEP) for their input and sharing of lessons learned and best practices from other countries.	

Output 5.1.3: Gender-responsive Knowledge, Attitudes & Practices (KAP) surveys throughout the project demonstrate quantifiable changes in public understanding & consumer behaviour.

- **Activity 5.1.3.1: Develop and conduct 2 KAP surveys, with an initial one by Y1 Q4 as a baseline and a final one for comparison by Y4 Q2.**

Output targets	Activities
- At least 2 KAP surveys completed by (1) Y2 Q2 as a baseline and (2) repeated by Y4 Q2. - Repeated KAP survey results demonstrate positive changes in at least 25% of questions. Gender-specific indicator: - At least 1 gender- responsive KAP survey question - At least 40% of the KAP survey respondents are women.	Activity 5.1.3.1: Develop and conduct 2 KAP surveys, with an initial one by Y1 Q4 as a baseline and a final one for comparison by Y4 Q2.
Partners: The following key partners were identified as a preliminary list: - National government relevant departments and agencies for their role in the project implementation; - Businesses operating in the F&B and/or the tourism sector for their direct involvement in the pilot-testing of alternative solutions to SUPs; - Private sector, civil society, local communities and academia for their engagement in the project activites; - International partners (including UNDP and UNEP) for their input and sharing of lessons learned and best practices from other countries.	

Output 5.1.4: Participatory monitoring and evaluation, including gender mainstreaming, informs project implementation, decision-making and lessons learned.

- **Activity 5.1.4.1: Develop and conduct at least 20 participatory monitoring and evaluation activities.**

- **Activity 5.1.4.2: Document at least 5 lessons learned.**

Output targets	Activities
- At least 20 participatory monitoring and evaluation activities conducted & documented - At least 5 lessons learned documented	Activity 5.1.4.1: Develop and conduct at least 20 participatory monitoring and evaluation activities. Activity 5.1.4.2: Document at least 5 lessons learned.

Gender-specific indicator: - At least 40% of participatory monitoring and evaluation activities conducted by or involving women.	
Partners: The following key partners were identified as a preliminary list: - National government relevant departments and agencies for their role in the project implementation; - Businesses operating in the F&B and/or the tourism sector for their direct involvement in the pilot-testing of alternative solutions to SUPs; - Private sector, civil society, local communities and academia for their engagement in the project activites; - International partners (including UNDP and UNEP) for their input and sharing of lessons learned and best practices from other countries.	

Output 5.1.5: Contribution to the Global Project Knowledge Management and Communication.

The Global Project includes Component 3 on Knowledge Management and Communication which aims to integrate across all participating child projects for program coherence and enable synergies through Knowledge Management and Coordination actions. These will foster the sharing of project lessons and experiences among and beyond the National Projects. It will also promote coherence of indicators and implement a cohesive communications strategy to drive the uptake of solutions beyond the National Child Projects and amplify impact and behaviour change to a broader audience. The following outputs are planned:

- **3.1.1 Integrated communications strategy: website, branding materials, communication products, and stakeholder engagement events developed.**
- **3.2.1 Integrated knowledge management strategy: Annual conferences, knowledge sharing sessions, webinars, capacity development activities organized**
- **3.2.2 Best practices and success stories from all projects of the Program and other knowledge products developed**

The Global Project will be responsible for program-level Knowledge Management and Communications. In addition to accessing the knowledge shared and generated by the Global Project for uptake at the country level, the following activities will be undertaken to ensure the project fully contributes to the Program's Knowledge Management and Communications Strategy:

- **Ensure alignment with the IP branding guidelines and the communications strategy.**
- **A designated project staff from PMU will be responsible for liaising with the Global Project on communications matters related to the Program.**
- **Sharing of key knowledge and communication products (in English) to the Global Project Web-site; if needed, translate Global Project content for national partners and stakeholders to increase uptake.**
- **Provide updates and inputs to the project webpage (to be hosted on the Program website).**
- **Share challenges and successes with the broader IP (through virtual meetings and online forum) and the contribution to the broader community via knowledge sharing with relevant external fora (e.g. participation in events, panels, conferences, contributing to external websites, the Global Project, etc.).**

Output targets	Activities
- At least 5 contributions to the Global Project Knowledge Management and Communication strategy and workplan by Y4 Q4 - Participate in at least 75% of relevant annual conferences, knowledge sharing sessions, webinars, capacity development activities offered. - At least 5 best practices and success stories prepared in English and uploaded on GP platform. Gender-specific indicator:	5.2.2.1 Alignment with the Global Project Communication and knowledge management strategy during Inception phase and identify key knowledge products/best practices etc to be shared. 5.2.2.2 Production and sharing of key knowledge and communication products (in English) to the Global Project website. 5.2.2.3 Attendance to virtual meetings and other activities to be defined in cooperation with the Global Project.

- At least 40% of participants in annual conferences, knowledge sharing sessions, webinars and capacity development activities that are women. - At least 1 best practices and success stories that highlights women-led activities.	
Implementation and partners	
Project PMU with the support of NESREA, with inputs as relevant from other partners	

Output 5.1.6: National Level Coordination mechanism established/ implemented.

- **Activity 5.1.6.1: Establish a PMU by Y1 Q2.**
- **Activity 5.1.6.2: Organise the Inception workshop by Y1 Q2.**
- **Activity 5.1.6.3: Produce the Inception workshop report.**
- **Activity 5.1.6.4: Organise and chair at least 2 PSC meetings per year and produce meeting reports.**

Output targets	Activities
- PMU operational by Y1 Q1. - An Inception workshop is organised & held by Y1 Q2. - At least 10 stakeholders in Inception workshop (disaggregated by gender [as self-assessed], key stakeholder group [government, traditional leader, private sector, NGO, other], - An Inception report with detailed workplan, budget and institutional arrangements is produced by Y1 Q3. - At least 2 actively-engaged PSC meetings held per year. Gender-specific target: - At least 1 of the project team is a woman. - At least 40% of inception workshop participants are women. - At least 30% of PSC members are women.	Activity 5.1.6.1: Establish a PMU by Y1 Q2. Activity 5.1.6.2: Organise the Inception workshop by Y1 Q2. Activity 5.1.6.3: Produce the Inception workshop report. Activity 5.1.6.4: Organise and chair at least 2 PSC meetings per year and produce meeting reports.
Partners: The following key partners were identified as a preliminary list: - National government relevant departments and agencies for their role in the project implementation; - Businesses operating in the F&B and/or the tourism sector for their direct involvement in the pilot-testing of alternative solutions to SUPs; - Private sector, civil society, local communities and academia for their engagement in the project activities; - International partners (including UNDP and UNEP) for their input and sharing of lessons learned and best practices from other countries.	

Output 5.1.7: Coordination and active participation and contribution to Global Project meetings and working groups.

The Global Project's objective is to optimize the delivery of a cohesive program across 15 countries to enhance replicability and address global barriers to reducing plastic pollution in the food and beverage sector. As such various mechanisms are envisaged to ensure regular coordination with each of the National Child Projects. These include the participation of relevant staff and consultants to in-person and virtual meetings and the contribution and review of documents, with the overall aim to ensure alignment and exchange across the national projects.

The Global Project will host events, webinars, and meetings to ensure regular coordination across the Program. Budget and staff resources have been allocated to actively participate and engage in the following activities.

- **Participation and contribution of inputs (to documents, agenda, etc) in the Annual Conference, starting in 2025, in order to share and exchange experiences, knowledge and best practices. Representation from government and the Project Management Unit have been budgeted.**

- **Attendance and contributions to at least 2 virtual learning sessions on relevant topics per month, in order to apply IP assets to national planning and adapt these to the local national context.**
- **Participation and contributions to working groups organized by the Global Project, in particular the Advisory Committee, Private Sector Working Group and Technical Working Group meetings.**

Output targets	Activities
- Key project staff participate in at least 4 IP Annual Conferences and key events - PMU participate in at least 75% of relevant virtual events and working groups - PMU and national experts provide contributions to at least 75% of relevant Global Project reports Gender-specific indicator: - At least 40% of participants to annual meetings are women.	5.1.2.1 Attendance/presentations at 4 IP Annual Conferences 5.1.2.2 Contribute/attend IP working groups and relevant online meetings (to be further elaborated at the Inception Phase) 5.1.2.3 Review and inputs to IP Global Project reports (to be defined at the Inception Phase)
Partners: Project PMU with the support of NESREA, with inputs as relevant from other partners	

B.4 Sustainability, Uptake, Replicability

Sustainability

The project's very raison d'être is sustainability, and this is central to its strategy and approach. In addition, the project has the following elements to increase sustainability:

- ***Ecological Sustainability*: Given that an overall aim of the project is to prevent plastic waste from the F&B and tourism sectors to ultimately reduce plastic pollution in the Cook Islands, all elements of the project approach will contribute to an improved management of freshwater, coastal and marine resources and ecosystems. By maintaining ecological balance and supporting integrated management, the project should directly contribute to ecological sustainability. Finally, the project will build capacity for sustainable resource use at both county and national level.**
- ***Institutional Sustainability*: Institutional Sustainability will be built through tailored training and direct technical support to officers in relevant ministries and agencies; the empowerment of local communities and decision-makers; and extensive multisectoral and multistakeholder consultation and decision-making processes. All project activities will be designed/approved using existing and/or new consultation and decision-making structures (technical working groups, roundtables, etc.). They will build on and align with existing (approved) development and sectorial plans/policies and streamlined into a clear roadmap - the National Strategy and Action Plan (SAP) on Plastics – based on sound data on plastic flows. Through the SAP, the National Source Inventory and Monitoring System, and the training activities, the project will leave behind a strong cadre of experts able to plan, design, build, and monitor effective and cost-efficient plastics prevention measures. This cadre will be able to sustain project impacts after the project has been completed. In addition, collaborations with stakeholders along the full life cycle of plastics and across regions (particularly with other SIDS) will also pave the way for sustainability. Finally, the project will facilitate this increased understanding and awareness through stakeholder engagement at global and regional fora.**
- ***Financial/Economic Sustainability*: The project will take many steps to achieve financial and economic sustainability. First, the alternative solutions to to F&B-related SUPs to be demonstrated are to be achieved at costs which are largely affordable in the Cook Islands. Building capacity to undertake all steps in constructing these measures locally will lower the cost of these measures; in addition, all capacity will be searched to the extent possible locally. The economic viability of the alternative solutions will be also assessed by considering not only the short-term costs or savings, but (to the extent possible) the environmental and socio-economic impacts that these**

solutions will bring about (in the longer term) through a monitoring and evaluation system build in the "Plastic Smart" and the "Short Food Supply Chains" programs. Further, the project will build local organizational capacity to demonstrate that, in the local context, communities can maintain the solutions pilot-tested. Another step taken by the project is to build capacity in the Government to mobilize financial resources to plastic prevention measures (particular in support to the Short Food Supply Chain program). Elements of this include (i) strengthening data and information management capacity, so that future designs can be improved and better targeted; and (ii) developing capacity to prepare proposals and designs, notably economic analysis capacity. It is important to note that the 'demonstration' aspect of the project has implications for sustainability. In part, the project aims to demonstrate innovation and to capture lessons learned. Both are processes that require financing. Once something has been 'demonstrated', it does not require demonstrating again, so the costs associated with demonstration can be one-off (and do not need to be recovered).

Replicability

Plastic prevention is at a very early stage of development in Cook Islands - this being perhaps the first project in this sector in the country. This project can therefore identify new and innovative solutions adapted to the challenging environmental context, mainly characterized by remoteness and a humid and hot weather. These solutions may be of interest to other small islands countries facing similar challenges. Accordingly, this project is explicitly designed to facilitate the replication of successes and lessons learned. The strategy for this replication is two-fold: First, the project will demonstrate the viability of a range of solutions. This will lead to the generation of a sizeable body of lessons and experience; Also, the project will document and actively and strategically disseminate the lessons learned from its implementation.

Uptake

The project aims to build an environmental, social, and business case for plastic prevention to maximise the uptake of sustainable alternative solutions to plastics across the F&B plastic value chain in the Cook Islands. This will be achieve by increasing national understanding of the benefits of plastic prevention, by creating policies or guidance to encourage and enable sustainable practices in the F&B and tourism sectors, particularly amongst small and medium enterprises, and local farmers, by supporting the consolidation of plastic-related data into a National Source Inventory and Monitoring System, as a means to reflect the sources of plastic pollution and highlight the most important ones across the plastic life cycle, and by aligning stakeholders' efforts with the national "2045 Zero Waste" vision. The contribution to the Global Project (Component 5) will enhance efficiency and ensure coherence among the actions across countries, contributing to achieving collective impact.

B.5 Monitoring and Evaluation

The project M&E plan is consistent with the GEF Monitoring and Evaluation policy and is fully detailed in Appendix 4: Costed Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Budget and Workplan. The Project Results Framework presented in Annex C includes Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound (SMART) indicators and targets for each expected outcome and output. Annex G Budget tables, include the breakdown of costs of M&E activities.

The M&E Outcome "Efficient and timely project execution, monitoring and evaluation processes carried out, and corresponding improvement of project execution as appropriate" and will be achieved through three outputs:

M&E Outcome: Efficient and timely project execution, monitoring and evaluation processes carried out, and corresponding improvement of project execution as appropriate.	M&E Output 1: Documented monitoring and reporting process throughout the entire project execution life cycle ensuring successful project delivery, **with a focus on gender data, indicators and .reporting**.
	M&E Output 2: Independent evaluations to assess the progress, success, and effectiveness of the project undertaken and recommendations reflected in project implementation.
	M&E Output 3: Regular contribution to the Global Project M&E Reporting

The M&E plan will be presented to the first meeting of the Project Steering Committee (PSC) to ensure project stakeholders understand their roles and responsibilities vis-à-vis project monitoring and evaluation. The PSC will be responsible for proposing to UNEP management any necessary amendments to the M&E plan during project implementation. NES will be responsible for monitoring day-to-day project activities under the guidance of UNEP as the Implementing Agency.

M&E Output 1: Documented monitoring and reporting process throughout the entire project execution life cycle ensuring successful project delivery.

The project Executing Agency, the National Environment Service (NES), will ensure systematic monitoring of the project in line with the GEF's Guidelines[1] ("Guidelines on the GEF project and program cycle policy: GEFC.52.Inf.06._Rev.01") and GEF's Policy on Monitoring. This is fully elaborated in Appendix 4: Monitoring and Evaluation Budget and Workplan.

NES will be responsible for monitoring day-to-day project activities under the guidance of UNEP as the implementing agency and will develop and submit annual and quarterly progress and financial reports. These reports will track the progress according to the workplan and budget and identify any obstacles faced during implementation and mitigating actions to be taken.

The main M&E reporting activities will include:

- **Inception Phase Meeting and Report (within first 6 months)**
- **Baseline, mid-point and final monitoring of GEF Core Indicators/GEBs**
- **Yearly Project Implementation Review (PIR) to UNEP and GEF**
- **Yearly Co-financing Report**
- **Quarterly progress and financial reports**
- **Monitoring of Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS) Risks**
- **Semi-annual Progress/ Operational Reports to UNEP**
- **Monitoring visits to pilot sites**
- **Final Project Operational Completion Report**

Output targets	Activities
• Inception Report with M&E activities, roles and responsibilities and templates agreed by Y1 Q2 • Quarterly progress and financial reports submitted in a timely manner • Yearly Project Implementation Review (PIR) to UNEP and GEF • Yearly Co-financing Reports • Baseline, mid-point and final monitoring reports on GEF Core Indicators/GEBs and other core indicators • Gender-specific indicator: • Number of progress reports include a gender section to review progress on gender-specific indicators and targets Gender-specific target: • All progress reports include a gender section to review progress on gender-specific indicators and targets	• M&E Activity 1.1: Kick-off project implementation through the project inception meeting. • M&E Activity 1.2: Carry out project oversight and governance through the functioning of the Project Steering Committee (PSC).
Partners: The output partners are mainly the PSC members, including: • UNEP IW Task Manager • NES (GEF OFP & Executing agency) • MFEM-DCD • ICI (co-executing partner)	

• Tourism sector representative • Private sector representative • NGO representative • Traditional leader representative

M&E Output 2: Independent evaluations to assess the progress, success, and effectiveness of the project undertaken and recommendations reflected in project implementation.

In line with the GEF Evaluation requirements and UNEP's Evaluation Policy, GEF Full-Sized Projects and any project with a duration of 4 years or more will be subject to an independent Mid-Term Evaluation or management-led Mid-Term Review at mid-point. All GEF funded projects are subject to a performance assessment when they reach operational completion. This performance assessment will be either an independent Terminal Evaluation or a management-led Terminal Review.

Full details are provided in Appendix 4.

Output targets	Activities
• Mid-Term Review completed by YR2 Q4 • Terminal Evaluation completed by YR5 Q2 • 100% of key stakeholders and partners engage in evaluation process • 100% of recommendations from MTR addressed and reflected in revised results framework, workplan and budget Gender-specific target: • Midterm report and Terminal Evaluation include a gender section	• M&E Activity 2.1: Hire project mid-term and final evaluation, including an assessment of the implementation of the Gender Mainstreaming Plan.
Partners: The output partners are mainly the PSC members, who will support the hiring of the evaluation teams, including: • UNEP IW Task Manager • NES (GEF OFP & Executing agency) • MFEM-DCD • ICI (co-executing partner) • Tourism sector representative • Private sector representative • NGO representative • Traditional leader representative	

M&E Output 3: Regular contribution to the Global Project M&E Reporting

The M&E framework has been designed to ensure alignment with the wider program's guidance. This includes following the Global Project's methodologies on the core indicators.

The project will share key reports (PIR, Results Framework Tracking, etc) to the Global Project, and provide inputs to the Global Projects M&E reporting including the Annual Report and Mid-term Evaluation and Terminal Evaluation if appropriate.

The project will also coordinate with the Global Project on M&E requirements as needed, including incorporation and tracking of program-level indicators.

The project is also committed to following the Private Sector Engagement Guidelines to ensure good partnerships and an aligned vision.

Output targets	Activities
• Min 4 Integrated Program Annual Reports include contributions from PMU • PMU participate in GP M&E kick-off meeting • PMU responds to all requests for contributions to contribute to mid-term and final evaluation and other reports as required Gender-specific target: • All contributions to the Global Project M&E Reporting include gender-specific data and information regarding progress on gender-specific indicators and targets	• M&E Activity 3.1: Undertake regular reporting and contributions to M&E processes.
Partners: The output partners are mainly the PSC members, including: • UNEP IW Task Manager • NES (GEF OFP & Executing agency) • MFEM-DCD • ICI (co-executing partner) • Tourism sector representative • Private sector representative • NGO representative • Traditional leader representative	

[1] UNEP and WRI (2020) TACKLING PLASTIC POLLUTION: Legislative Guide for the Regulation of Single-Use Plastic Products

https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/34570/PlastPoll.pdf.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y; Cornago, E., Börkey, P., & Brown, A. (2021). Preventing single-use plastic waste. OECD Environment Working Papers. https://doi.org/10.1787/c62069e7-en

[2] UNEP TACKLING PLASTIC POLLUTION: Legislative Guide for the Regulation of Single-Use Plastic Products (2020)

https://www.unep.org/resources/toolkits-manuals-and-guides/tackling-plastic-pollution-legislative-guide-regulation

[3] For example Towards Reducing Single-Use Plastics in Lao PDR: Options for a National Policy Strategy and Action Plan developed within the SwitchAsia

[4] For example: The GUIDE TO HONEST ALTERNATIVES TO SINGLE-USE PLASTICS of the Spanish Foundation Save the Med; UNEP Rethinking single-use plastic products in travel & tourism.

[5] Guell, C., Brown, C.R., Navunicagi, O.W. et al. Perspectives on strengthening local food systems in Small Island Developing States. Food Sec. 14, 1227–1240 (2022). https://doi.org/10.1007/s12571-022-01281-0

Institutional Arrangement and Coordination with Ongoing Initiatives and Project.

Please describe the Institutional Arrangements for the execution of this child project, including framework and mechanisms for coordination, governance, financial management and procurement. This should include consideration for linking with other relevant initiatives at country-level (if a country child project) or regional/global level (for coordination platform child project). If possible, please summarize the flow of funds (diagram), accountabilities for project management and financial reporting (organogram), including audit, and staffing plans. (max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

Implementation Arrangements

The implementation arrangements of the project and their relationship to the Global Project are presented in Figure 1 and the flow of funds diagram is presented in Figure 2 below.

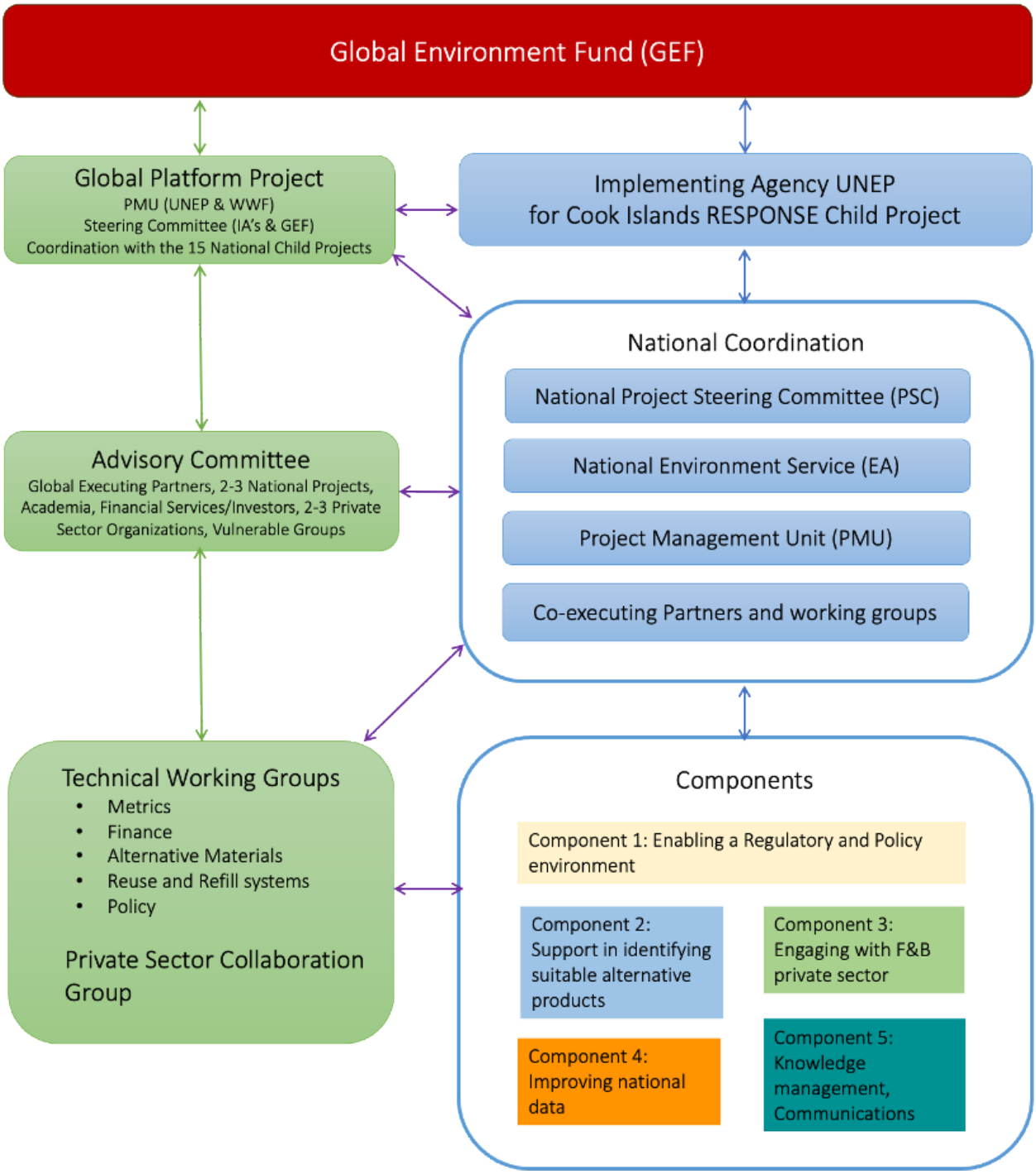

Figure 2 - Implementation Arrangements

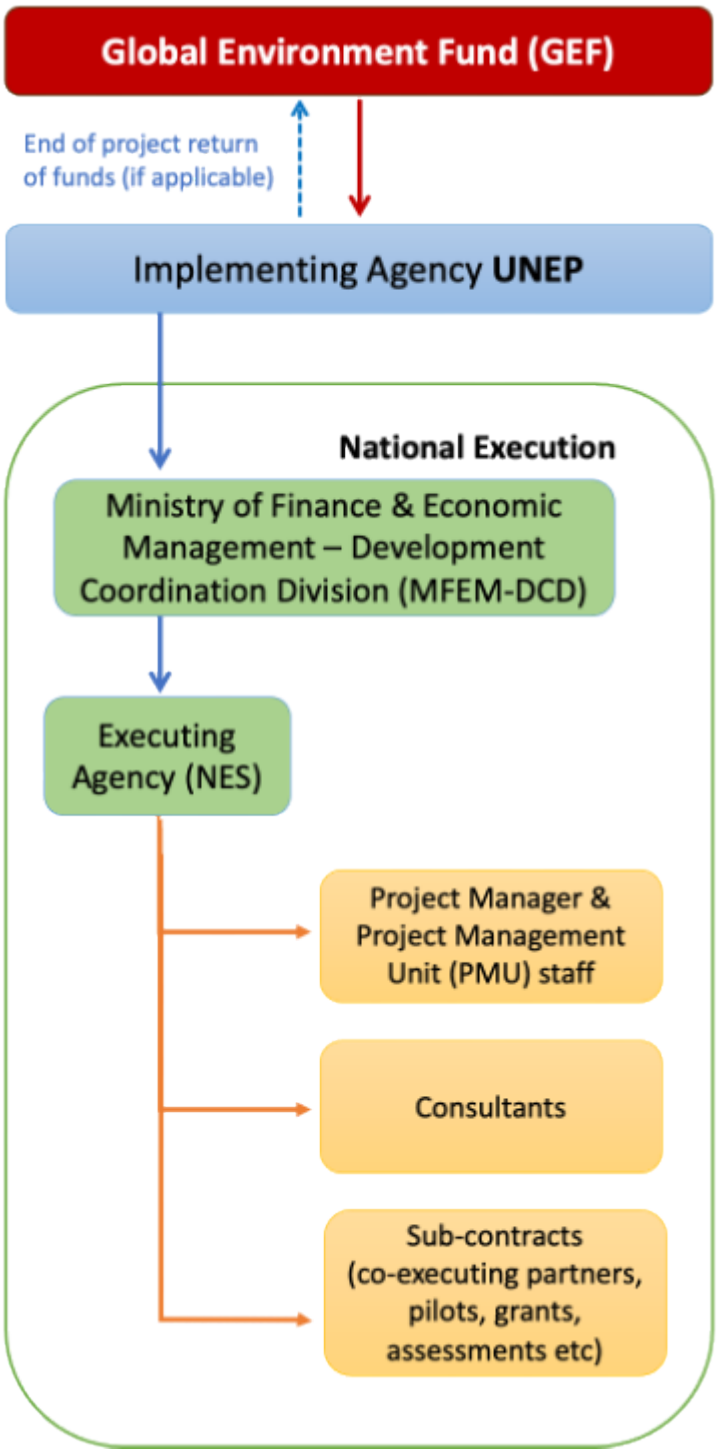

Figure 3 – Flow of Funds

Implementing Agency (IA)

The Implementing Agency (IA) of this project is the GEF unit in the Ecosystem Divisions of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). The IA will be responsible for the overall project supervision, overseeing the project progress through the monitoring and evaluation of activities and progress reports of the established components. It will be responsible for quality assurance procedures, organize contracting with Executing Agency (EA), approve progress reports and clear disbursement. The IA will be responsible for contracting independent evaluators for undertaking the mid and terminal evaluations. The IA will also monitor progress to ensure the proper quality of outputs. UNEP will report project implementing progress to GEF. The IA will also take part in the Project Steering Committee (PSC) and can request PSC to meet outside of the planned schedule as deemed necessary. The IA will also ensure close coordination between the project and the Global Platform Project.

Executing Agency (EA)

National Environment Service (NES) of the Cook Islands will be the Executing Agency for the project and will host the Project Management Unit (PMU) which will coordinate, manage and be responsible for the project on a day-to-day basis. It is responsible for the overall management of the financial and human resources directly related to project execution in the countries. It will function as the general coordinator of the execution of the project and will be accountable to the implementing agency and the Project Steering Committee (PSC) for the achievement of project outputs and outcomes. The EA will take guidance from the GEF implementing agency and the PSC in all matters concerning the project. In the delivery of its functions, it will be a member of the PSC and the National Working Groups.

The Environment Act 2003 (which repealed the Rarotonga Environment Act 1994/95 and the Conservation Act 1975 and 1987) formalised the establishment of the National Environment Service (NES) or Tu'anga Taporoporo (Cook Islands Maori name) as a statutory agency of the Crown and expanded the Permitting Authority to include the members of Parliament of the respective island, NGOs and Government Ministries. The NES is established to protect, conserve and ensure the Cook Islands environment is managed sustainably. The agency is headed by a Director with delegated powers to carry out the functions of the Environment Act 2003.

NES' mandate covers environmental management, conservation and protection across land, freshwater and marine, including policy & legislation; permitting, monitoring & compliance; information, advisory & education; data & research; and local & international partnerships across government entities, non-government organisations (NGOs), private sector, academia, etc. Its National Environment Policy 2022-2032 highlights waste as one of its six key policy objectives, with several of the concerns, challenges, goals and policy instruments specifically relating to plastics. NES has also been strongly involved in the plastics treaty negotiations including a member of the High Ambition Coalition. Additionally, as the Cook Islands GEF Operational Focal Point, NES is highly familiar with GEF reporting processes and requirements. Hence it is well positioned to effectively manage the coordination and implementation of the various components of this child project, with close support and involvement from co-executing partners.

Project Management Unit (PMU)

The Project Management Unit (PMU) will be established by the EA at the start of the project implementation and will be led by the Project Manager, who will manage the project on a day-to-day basis and will include the following staff (see also Appendix 3f: TORs for key project staff):

a. Project Manager

The Project Manager will be responsible for overall implementation and progress of the project and will approve all key documents and reports prior to finalisation. They will manage the PMU team to ensure efficient and effective allocation of resources and timely completion of project activities against the approved project budget. Full details can be found in the TOR in Appendix 3f.

b. Project Coordinator

The Project Coordinator will lead the day-to-day activities, coordination and planning of the project, and will report directly to the Project Manager. They will provide guidance and oversight to the Project Officers and lead general and routine activities. Full details can be found in the TOR in Appendix 3f.

c. Project Officers x3

The Project Officers will lead the on-the-ground implementation and engagement activities of the project, including communications efforts and project reporting (including financial). They may spend time based at co-executing partner institutions (e.g. Infrastructure Cook Islands) or otherwise work closely with existing teams to support project activities and partnerships. Full details can be found in the TOR in Appendix 3f.

In addition, a part-time Gender-Safeguards Consultant will be recruited for the project duration to support all components of the project.

The PMU will serve as the secretary to the Project Steering Committee (PSC) and will be accountable to the PSC meeting, which is organized bi-annually to ensure the delivery and quality of activities and outputs and to approve budget.

NES will host the PMU office and its personnel; however, budget will be allocated to support office supplies, equipment, furniture, operating and remuneration costs.

National Project Steering Committee (PSC)
The Project Steering Committee (PSC) meeting is held bi-annually to ensure the delivery and quality of activities and outputs and to approve budget and ensure country ownership and governance. The PSC will include relevant ministries, UNEP as IA, the project manager of the Global Platform Project (and representative of the Advisory Committee if appropriate), major co-financers and partners (including private and informal sectors), civil society, etc. The PSC members will review the project execution against the scope of project activities and review annual workplans and budget in accordance with the approved project document. The members will also select and nominate relevant project stakeholders; and provide advice, policy and institutional guidance to the implementing and executing agencies. The decision-making members of the PSC will be representatives of the governments and the Implementing Agency. Further key stakeholders will participate in the PSC to provide guidance but without decision rights. The PMU will act as the secretary to the PSC and provide regular project updates to the PSC.

The PSC will include the following:
- UNEP IW Task Manager
- NES (GEF OFP & Executing agency)
- MFEM-DCD
- ICI (co-executing partner)
- Tourism sector representative
- Private sector representative
- NGO representative
- Traditional leader representative

PSC meetings will be organised on a bi-annual basis to discuss the progress of activities and amendments to the schedule, as needed. The PSC will make decisions alongside the UNEP and GEF as part of the monitoring and evaluation activities.

Co-executing partners and working groups
Infrastructure Cook Islands will be a key co-executing partner in this project due to shared mandates in waste management and prevention. They hold the Solid & Hazardous Waste Bill that includes a schedule to ban certain single use plastic items and establish a sustainable financing mechanism through the Advanced Recovery & Disposal Fee (ARDF), plus various waste policies relating to plastics. They will therefore play a pivotal role in supporting or leading implementation of certain aspects of the project, such as development of the National Strategy & Action Plan and policy instruments, contribution to data collection and approaches, and involvement in capacity building activities.

Ministry of Agriculture will be a key partner in activities relating to supporting short food supply chains and reducing plastics in the agricultural sector and will be an important partner in connecting with local growers and growing communities or organisations.

A working group may be established to represent the needs of the Food and Beverage (F&B) sector as well as the Tourism sector, which are related but with separate scales and needs (e.g. F&B suppliers and vendors compared to hotels & restaurants, etc.). This would include private sector representatives as well as relevant government agencies such as Cook Islands Tourism Corporation (CIT) and Chamber of Commerce (CoC), amongst others as relevant.

Additional partners will include individual businesses, NGOs, communities and community groups, including the outer islands, involved in various project activities, some of which have been included in PPG phase consultations, and others who will be identified during project implementation.

Project coordination with other projects and initiatives
The project will work closely with the Global Platform Project under the IP Plastics Program as well as IW:LEARN to participate in regional and global workshops to ensure that the results of this project are available to the wider IW community of projects. This Project is designed to be informed by ongoing global and regional processes. In the implementation stage, it will align its efforts with other international instruments and mechanisms that are related to addressing plastic pollution. Full details are provided in Appendix 5.

Will the GEF Agency play an execution role on this child project?

If so, please describe that role here and the justification.

N/A

Also, please add a short explanation to describe cooperation with ongoing initiatives and projects, including potential for co-location and/or sharing of expertise/staffing (max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

The project will work closely with the Global Platform Project under the IP Plastics Program as well as IW:LEARN to participate in regional and global workshops to ensure that the results of this project are available to the wider IW community of projects.

This Project is designed to be informed by ongoing global and regional processes. In the implementation stage, the project will align its efforts with other international instruments and mechanisms that are related to addressing plastic pollution. The project will particularly coordinate with the initiatives in Table 5.

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Table 5 - Relevant projects and Initiatives.

Region	Donor	National Agency involved	Projects/Initiatives	Coordination with the Child project
National & Pacific region	EU	ICI	PacWaste Plus Project (PWP+) The Pacific – European Union (EU) Waste Management Programme, PacWastePlus, is a 72-month programme funded by the EU and implemented by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) to sustainably and cost-effectively improve regional management of waste and pollution.	While PacWaste Plus focuses on improving the management of waste streams, including hazardous materials, the child project will focus on upstream measures within the food and beverage industry to reduce single-use plastics. This upstream intervention will help reduce the amount of plastic entering the waste stream, complementing PacWaste Plus' broader waste management efforts. The child project will also draw on the technical expertise and lessons learned from PacWaste Plus, ensuring a coordinated approach to support the Cook Islands' transition toward more sustainable waste practices overall.
Pacific region	The Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation (APCO) is a not-for-profit organisation leading the development of a circular economy for packaging in Australia.		The Australian, New Zealand and Pacific Islands Plastics Pact (ANZPAC) is a collaborative solution that brings together key players behind a shared vision of a circular economy for plastic, in which it never becomes waste or pollution. Covering Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands, ANZPAC is the first Plastics Pact in the Oceania region and the second regional Plastics Pact to become part of	Although the National Environment Service (NES) does not yet have a direct working relationship with ANZPAC, the child project will align with ANZPAC's regional goals to create a circular economy for plastics. By reducing upstream plastic consumption within the Cook Islands' food and beverage sector, the child project will contribute to ANZPAC's objective of eliminating plastic waste and pollution. The child project will use ANZPAC's publicly available

Region	Donor	National Agency involved	Projects/Initiatives	Coordination with the Child project
			the Ellen MacArthur Foundation's global Plastics Pact network. With over 100 Member organisations working together from across all three geographies and covering the entire plastics value chain, ANZPAC and its Members are committed to achieving four ambitious and concrete Regional Plastics Targets by 2025.	guidelines and regional targets to inform its local interventions, helping ensure that the Cook Islands proactively contributes to regional efforts toward a circular plastic economy, particularly by addressing the consumption of single-use plastics.
National & Pacific region	GEF	NES	GEF ISLANDS Project The GEF ISLANDS Projects support Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to safely and sustainably manage hazardous chemicals and waste. Island nations depend on imported commodities including phones, vehicles, computers and other household products. The countries often lack the infrastructure to recycle or dispose of these products safely. ISLANDS is focused on reducing the amount of toxic chemicals entering SIDS and on the safe and sustainable management of the hazardous waste that accumulates when these products reach the end of life.	The child project will coordinate with the GEF ISLANDS Project, which focuses on reducing hazardous chemicals and waste in Small Island Developing States (SIDS). While the GEF ISLANDS Project mainly addresses waste from end-of-life products, the child project will complement these efforts by focusing on upstream interventions to reduce plastic consumption in the food and beverage sector. The child project will build on GEF ISLANDS' best practices for waste minimization and sustainability, particularly in the context of reducing plastic pollution before it enters the waste stream, ensuring that interventions in the food and beverage sector are both effective and aligned with best practices and thereby supporting both local and regional efforts to reduce environmental impacts.
National & Pacific region	Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) through the Australian Aid Program	NES	Pacific Ocean Litter Project (POLP) The Australian-funded Pacific Ocean Litter Project was borne from the Australian Government's desire to assist SPREP and Pacific Island countries (PICs) with the implementation of agreed actions under the Marine Litter Action Plan, and forms part of broader Australian Government support for sustainable oceans in the Pacific. The project initially addressed key marine litter threats and proposed actions identified through the Marine Litter Action Plan under the original four-year, AUD 8 million funding commitment by the Australian Government. In July 2019 Australia expanded this commitment to support a six-year, AUD 16 million project investment. Given the enthusiasm with which PICs have embraced this issue, the Australian Government's funding commitment under POLP represents a timely investment for the provision of much needed technical support, capacity building assistance and resources to implement plastic reduction measures.	The child project will align with the Pacific Ocean Litter Project (POLP) by focusing on upstream measures to reduce plastic consumption within the Cook Islands' food and beverage industry. While POLP has a broader regional focus on marine litter, the child project will contribute by addressing plastic waste at its source, helping reduce the flow of single-use plastics into the waste stream. By drawing on POLP's existing tools, capacity-building resources, and stakeholder networks, the child project can implement tailored solutions without duplicating POLP's broader marine-focused efforts. This collaboration will strengthen the overall approach to plastic reduction in the Cook Islands, ensuring the food and beverage industry shifts towards more sustainable practices, while complementing POLP's broader regional efforts to mitigate marine litter. The child project will also benefit from POLP's expertise in stakeholder engagement, waste management systems, and public awareness, allowing for a holistic and efficient strategy to reduce plastic pollution upstream.
Pacific Region		NES	Plastic Pollution Treaty (in progress)	The child project will align with the ongoing discussions at the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) regarding the Plastic Pollution Treaty, which aims to develop a legally binding

Region	Donor	National Agency involved	Projects/Initiatives	Coordination with the Child project
				global agreement to tackle plastic pollution across its entire lifecycle. While the treaty's final text is still under negotiation, the child project will contribute to the broader global efforts by focusing on upstream interventions to reduce plastic consumption in the Cook Islands. This approach directly supports the treaty's objectives of reducing plastic pollution at its source, particularly in the area of single-use plastics. The child project's work will complement the treaty's goals by implementing practical, localized solutions that align with global best practices for plastic reduction and waste management. By focusing on upstream measures, the child project will help demonstrate the effectiveness of early-stage interventions in preventing plastic waste, contributing to the treaty's overarching aim of reducing plastic pollution and improving circularity in the global plastic economy.
Pacific Region		ICI & NES	Pacific Regional Waste and Pollution Management Strategy 2016-2025 (Cleaner Pacific 2025) & Clean Pacific Roundtables	The child project will align with the Cleaner Pacific 2025 (CP2025) Management Strategy, which aims to reduce pollution across the Pacific through sustainable waste management and pollution control initiatives. While CP2025 provides a regional framework for improving waste management, the child project will focus on upstream plastic reduction efforts in the Cook Islands. This targeted intervention will directly contribute to the strategy's overarching goals of reducing marine litter and promoting sustainable practices, particularly by reducing single-use plastics at the point of consumption. By aligning with CP2025, the child project will help ensure that its upstream efforts are consistent with regional commitments to cleaner, less polluted Pacific environments, while also leveraging CP2025's guidelines and best practices to implement effective, locally relevant solutions. The child project will leverage the Clean Pacific Roundtables as a platform for sharing knowledge, building partnerships, and supporting the broader regional dialogue on waste management and pollution reduction. While the Roundtables focus on providing a forum for stakeholders across the Pacific to exchange ideas and align strategies, the child project will bring specific expertise on reducing plastic consumption in the Cook Islands' food and beverage industry. This localized focus will complement broader discussions at the Roundtables, contributing practical solutions and data that can inform regional efforts. The child project will also benefit from the collaborative nature of the Roundtables, using this space to strengthen partnerships, gather support from regional stakeholders, and align its efforts with regional priorities for reducing plastic pollution and improving waste management practices.

Region	Donor	National Agency involved	Projects/Initiatives	Coordination with the Child project
Pacific Region		ICI & NES	Pacific Marine Litter Action Plan 2018-2025 (MLAP) This Action Plan sets out the policy context and key actions to minimize marine litter across the Pacific Island Countries and Territories. The scope of the Action Plan is intentionally focused on the Pacific Island Countries and Territories. It does not include mechanisms to drive change beyond the region's capacity. The transboundary nature of marine litter brings to the fore that "waste is everyone's problem and everyone's responsibility'.	The child project will align with the Pacific Marine Litter Action Plan (MLAP) by focusing on upstream plastic reduction within the Cook Islands' food and beverage industry, which directly supports MLAP's regional goal of reducing plastic waste. The child project will help fulfill specific MLAP action items related to reducing single-use plastics, while complementing regional waste management strategies by targeting the root causes of plastic pollution. Although it operates at a smaller scale, the child project's focus on upstream intervention will contribute to the MLAP's broader objectives of improving waste management and public awareness across the Pacific.

The project will also make use of the regional and global networks (e.g. the IP circular solutions for plastics, EAS Regional Node of the GPML, COBSEA, ASEAN, and PEMSEA) to access best available knowledge and technology for CE solutions (e.g. effective regulatory measures, viable CE businesses, financing instruments) and to share relevant best CE practices and solutions and coordinate action. The project will document and share best CE practices and lessons learned through the regional and global networks (e.g. SUP-alternatives, reuse and refill, and other CE solutions) and lessons learned for replication and scaling up.

Table On Core Indicators

Core Indicators

Indicate expected results in each relevant indicator using methodologies indicated in the GEF-8 Results Measurement Framework Guidelines. There is no need to complete this table for climate adaptation projects financed solely through LDCF and SCCF.

Indicator 2 Marine protected areas created or under improved management

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
30913600	30913600	0	0

Indicator 2.1 Marine Protected Areas Newly created

Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
0	0	0	0

Name of the Protected Area	WDPA ID	IUCN Category	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 2.2 Marine Protected Areas Under improved management effectiveness

Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
30913600	30913600	0	0

Name of the Protected Area	WDPA ID	IUCN Category	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)	METT score (Baseline at CEO Endorsement)	METT score (Achieved at MTR)	METT score (Achieved at TE)
Marae Moana			30,913,600.00	30,913,600.00					

Indicator 4 Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectares; excluding protected areas)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
24000	24000	0	0

Indicator 4.1 Area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity (hectares, qualitative assessment, non-certified)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
24,000.00	24,000.00		

Indicator 4.2 Area of landscapes under third-party certification incorporating biodiversity considerations

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Type/Name of Third Party Certification

Indicator 4.3 Area of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 4.4 Area of High Conservation Value or other forest loss avoided

Disaggregation Type	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 4.5 Terrestrial OECMs supported

Name of the OECMs	WDPA-ID	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)

Documents (Document(s) that justifies the HCVF)

Title

Indicator 6 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)

Expected metric tons of CO_2e (direct)	726	234	0	0
Expected metric tons of CO_2e (indirect)	0	0	0	0

Indicator 6.1 Carbon Sequestered or Emissions Avoided in the AFOLU (Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use) sector

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)
Expected metric tons of CO_2e (direct)				
Expected metric tons of CO_2e (indirect)				
Anticipated start year of accounting				
Duration of accounting				

Indicator 6.2 Emissions Avoided Outside AFOLU (Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use) Sector

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)
Expected metric tons of CO_2e (direct)	726	234		
Expected metric tons of CO_2e (indirect)				
Anticipated start year of accounting	2024	2025		
Duration of accounting	10	10		

Indicator 6.3 Energy Saved (Use this sub-indicator in addition to the sub-indicator 6.2 if applicable)

Total Target Benefit	Energy (MJ) (At PIF)	Energy (MJ) (At CEO Endorsement)	Energy (MJ) (Achieved at MTR)	Energy (MJ) (Achieved at TE)
Target Energy Saved (MJ)				

Indicator 6.4 Increase in Installed Renewable Energy Capacity per Technology (Use this sub-indicator in addition to the sub-indicator 6.2 if applicable)

Technology	Capacity (MW) (Expected at PIF)	Capacity (MW) (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Capacity (MW) (Achieved at MTR)	Capacity (MW) (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 7 Shared water ecosystems under new or improved cooperative management

	Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
Shared water Ecosystem		Western Pacific Warm Pool (WPWP)		
Count	0	1	0	0

Indicator 7.1 Level of Transboundary Diagonostic Analysis and Strategic Action Program (TDA/SAP) formulation and implementation (scale of 1 to 4; see Guidance)

Shared Water Ecosystem	Rating (Expected at PIF)	Rating (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Rating (Achieved at MTR)	Rating (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 7.2 Level of Regional Legal Agreements and Regional management institution(s) (RMI) to support its implementation (scale of 1 to 4; see Guidance)

Shared Water Ecosystem	Rating (Expected at PIF)	Rating (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Rating (Achieved at MTR)	Rating (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 7.3 Level of National/Local reforms and active participation of Inter-Ministeral Committees (IMC; scale 1 to 4; See Guidance)

Shared Water Ecosystem	Rating (Expected at PIF)	Rating (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Rating (Achieved at MTR)	Rating (Achieved at TE)
Western Pacific Warm Pool (WPWP)		2		

Indicator 7.4 Level of engagement in IWLEARN throgh participation and delivery of key products(scale 1 to 4; see Guidance)

Shared Water Ecosystem	Rating (Expected at PIF)	Rating (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Rating (Achieved at MTR)	Rating (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 9 Chemicals of global concern and their waste reduced

Metric Tons (Expected at PIF)	Metric Tons (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Metric Tons (Achieved at MTR)	Metric Tons (Achieved at TE)
0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Indicator 9.1 Solid and liquid Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) removed or disposed (POPs type)

POPs type	Metric Tons (Expected at PIF)	Metric Tons (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Metric Tons (Achieved at MTR)	Metric Tons (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 9.2 Quantity of mercury reduced (metric tons)

Metric Tons (Expected at PIF)	Metric Tons (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Metric Tons (Achieved at MTR)	Metric Tons (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 9.3 Hydrochloroflurocarbons (HCFC) Reduced/Phased out (metric tons)

Metric Tons (Expected at PIF)	Metric Tons (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Metric Tons (Achieved at MTR)	Metric Tons (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 9.4 Number of countries with legislation and policy implemented to control chemicals and waste (Use this sub-indicator in addition to one of the sub-indicators 9.1, 9.2 and 9.3 if applicable)

Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 9.5 Number of low-chemical/non-chemical systems implemented, particularly in food production, manufacturing and cities (Use this sub-indicator in addition to one of the sub-indicators 9.1, 9.2 and 9.3 if applicable)

Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 9.6 POPs/Mercury containing materials and products directly avoided

Metric Tons (Expected at PIF)	Metric Tons (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Metric Tons (Achieved at MTR)	Metric Tons (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 9.7 Highly Hazardous Pesticides eliminated

Metric Tons (Expected at PIF)	Metric Tons (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Metric Tons (Achieved at MTR)	Metric Tons (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 9.8 Avoided residual plastic waste

Metric Tons (Expected at PIF)	Metric Tons (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Metric Tons (Achieved at MTR)	Metric Tons (Achieved at TE)
217.00	57.00		

Indicator 10 Persistent organic pollutants to air reduced

Grams of toxic equivalent gTEQ (Expected at PIF)	Grams of toxic equivalent gTEQ (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Grams of toxic equivalent gTEQ (Achieved at MTR)	Grams of toxic equivalent gTEQ (Achieved at TE)
	0.01		

Indicator 10.1 Number of countries with legislation and policy implemented to control emissions of POPs to air (Use this sub-indicator in addition to Core Indicator 10 if applicable)

Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 10.2 Number of emission control technologies/practices implemented (Use this sub-indicator in addition to Core Indicator 10 if applicable)

Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 11 People benefiting from GEF-financed investments

	Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
Female	7,670	6,538		
Male	7,370	6,263		
Total	**15,040**	**12,801**	0	**0**

Explain the methodological approach and underlying logic to justify target levels for Core and Sub-Indicators (max. 250 words, approximately 1/2 page)

The methodological approach and underlying logic to justify target levels for Core and Sub-Indicators across the project lifetime:

- Core indicator 6 was estimated based on sub indicator 6.7 “Emissions avoided outside AFOLU sector (direct)”. The calculation uses the estimated avoided residual plastic waste (core sub indicator 9.8) and the emission factors for the plastic waste eliminated and the avoided open burning of a percentage of that waste to calculate the GHG emissions, then multiplied by 10 years, to reflect the duration of the global project (~8 years) and an additional two years’ projected impact due to the continued impact of interventions past the end of the project lifetime. These calculations were embedded in the UNEP/WWF Calculator for Key Core Indicators for GEF Circular Solutions to Plastic Pollution IP provided during the PPG phase.

- While Core indicator 7 captures the commitment of Cook Islands to cooperatively manage the Pacific Ocean (subregion 62) together with the other 22 island nations or territories of the tropical Pacific Ocean that embrace the cultural areas of Melanesia, Polynesia and Micronesia, this project will specifically help improve the ecosystem health of the Western Pacific Warm Pool LME. The expected target for core sub indicator 7.3 “Level of National/Local reforms and active participation of Inter-Ministerial Committees” is 2, because it is expected that an Inter-Ministerial Committee dealing with plastic pollution and ensuring multi-stakeholder coordination will be operating during the first year of the project, but national reforms will only be at the preparation stage by the end of the project (Component 1).

- As no reliable, consistent and robust national data on F&B SUPs production, import, consumption and disposal exist in the Cook Islands, the target for Core Sub indicator 9.8 Avoided Residual Plastic Waste was estimated using the latest estimates of the total amount of plastic waste generated in 2019, reduced by the percent of that plastic that is from the Food and Beverage sector that the project will eliminate over its lifetime. The annual weight of that plastic that is estimated to be recycled is removed (to get the avoided residual plastic waste per year). This annual avoided residual plastic waste for each country is totalled and then multiplied by an estimated 5 years, to reflect the duration of the Child project. This total avoided residual plastic waste across the Child Projects is then used to estimate the associated GHG emissions reductions for Core Sub Indicator 6.2 (using the emissions factors for the plastic waste eliminated, and the avoided open burning of a percentage of that waste), and to estimate the persistent organic pollutants to air reduced for CI 10 (based on the estimated avoided open burning of plastic waste). In the Inception phase of the project, these estimates will be refined, and the durations used to estimate the project impact will be project specific.

- Core indicator 10 is estimated upon the estimated avoided residual plastic waste (core sub indicator 9.8) using conversion factors of the avoided open burning of a percentage of that waste.

- Core Indicator 11: Cook Islands census dated 2021 shows the total Cook Islands population = 15,040 with 51% female and 49% male. The entire population is expected to directly benefit from the projects activities including national policy strengthening (C1), sustainable CBMs implementation (C2 and C3) and extensive behaviour and social change interventions (C4 and C5).

Key Risks

	Rating	Explanation of risk and mitigation measures
CONTEXT		
Climate	Low	The Cook Islands is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The interventions from the project will indirectly address the climate issue by reducing unnecessary consumption of single use plastics (SUPs) from imports.
Environmental and Social	Moderate	The project will have substantial environmental benefits in the area of waste. However, increasing private sector buy in will need to be encouraged to improve the chances of success. If the Cook Islands were to experience another pandemic, or major national disaster, e.g. cyclone, it is most likely the use of SUPs would substantially increase, rather than decrease. In order to ensure no impact from pilots, appropriate safeguards assessment and development of safeguards management plans will be developed at Inception Phase to mitigate E&S risks (in line with the SRIF)
Political and Governance	Moderate	There is a moderate risk that Government will stall any legislative changes that will reduce SUPs entering the country to keep some of their more influential constituents happy. This can be mitigated by withholding donor funds until the required legislation is passed. Implementing agencies will need to apply pressure to Government to follow through on commitments and discourage political interference.
INNOVATION		
Institutional and Policy	Low	The National Environment Service as the implementing agency is committed to the success of this project, so will do their utmost to ensure it succeeds
Technological	Moderate	Lessons learned and best practices from SIDS and other countries with comparable geographical, environmental, socio-economic context will be used to mitigate the possible technological risks associated to the identification of sustainable and cost-effective alternative solutions to F&B-related SUPs.
Financial and Business Model	Moderate	he extra cost of some of the alternatives to SUPs may not be acceptable to the private sector. This can be mitigated through a public awareness campaign encouraging consumers to support businesses that do take on more environmentally friendly packaging, by selecting cost-effective alternatives during the project implementation, and by validating the cost-benefits of the pilots.
EXECUTION		
Capacity	Moderate	As a small country, there is a limited pool of human resources. If suitable staff cannot be recruited in country, positions will be made available to Cook Islanders living offshore, and failing that, to other nationalities.

Fiduciary	Low	The Ministry of Finance that has strict financial management procedures will be closely overseeing spending on the project. The usual Government procurement policies will be applied.
Stakeholder	Low	Consultations have indicated that the majority of private sector will support the project. However, some stakeholders may be reluctant to fully come on board if their labor requirements are increased and if their profitability is compromised by the project. Feasibility studies will be conducted to ensure only the most viable alternative solutions are promoted, while the economic validation of the pilots and the demonstration of applicable business models will further support the engagement of the private sector.
Other		
Overall Risk Rating	Moderate	Rating is moderate due to Environment and Social risks. Also, regarding stakeholders, the project is dependent on the commitment of partners and especially private sector to implement and ensure sustainability of project results. Appropriate safeguards assessment and development of safeguards management plans will be developed at Inception Phase to mitigate E&S risks. Cook Islands is extremely vulnerable to climate change and therefore project activities will require climate vulnerability assessment and climate-proofing. Development of an Indigenous People Plan will guide the engagement process with this stakeholder group. Appropriate E&S mitigation measures will be needed once the exact interventions and their sites are clearly defined, the implementation of the "Plastic Smart" program and the "Short Food Supply Chains" programs. Attention to be paid to community safety, and poor working conditions.

C. ALIGNMENT WITH GEF-8 PROGRAMMING STRATEGIES AND COUNTRY/REGIONAL PRIORITIES

Explain how the proposed interventions are aligned with GEF- 8 programming strategies, including the specific integrated program priorities, and country and regional priorities, Describe how these country strategies and plans relate to the multilateral environmental agreements, such as through NDCs, NBSAPs, etc.

For projects aiming to generate biodiversity benefits (regardless of what the source of the resources is - i.e., BD, CC or LD), please identify which of the 23 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework the project contributes to and explain how.

(max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

The project is aligned with the GEF 8 Chemicals and Waste Strategy to prevent pollution and transition to a zero-waste economy. The project is also in line with the objectives of the GEF-8 Circular Solutions to Plastic Pollution Integrated Program which intends to catalyze circular economy approaches to reduce plastic production, consumption, and waste. This will be achieved by investing in national and local government initiatives that will help create enabling policy environments, as well as through private sector and engagement of multiple stakeholders in the food and beverage and tourism sector.

The project is fully aligned with the approach of the GEF-8 Integrated Program which takes a circular economy approach through interventions to tackle plastic pollution. The project is also in line with the ongoing Intergovernmental Negotiating

Committee process to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment. This project presents an opportunity to align with and leverage the outcome of the negotiation to address plastic pollution.

The project contributes principally to International Waters and two STAR focal areas (biodiversity and climate change mitigation) and deliver co-benefits as follows:

- Chemicals and Waste - Chemicals and additives in plastic products pose health and environmental hazards when products become waste and they are improperly disposed of, or enter the recycling loop. The program will explore alternative solutions to the plastic packaging in common usage with an aim of reducing toxins and chemicals entering the waste stream

- International Waters –plastic waste has significant impacts on marine and freshwater ecosystems and ecosystem services. It is a transboundary issue, as plastics that start on land end up in our streams and oceans. There is also a significant amount of SUP waste ending up in our ocean and littering our beaches generated by the industrial fishing fleets in our Cook Islands waters and from the high seas. The program will support goals under the IW focal area by reducing the amount of plastic pollution entering transboundary marine and freshwater ecosystems.

- Biodiversity - marine, freshwater, and terrestrial biodiversity are all threatened by plastic pollution. In the ocean, more than 2,000 species are impacted, with negative effects such as entanglement, ingestion, smothering, and chemical pollution. Birds and terrestrial species face similar threats. By reducing the imports of SUPs the program aims to protect and preserve the habitats and ecosystems that support biodiversity.

- Climate Change Mitigation – plastic waste incineration releases significant amounts of greenhouse gas emissions, which this project aims to address through upstream and interventions.

There is a strong link between the project and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. While it helps address several targets indirectly, it directly addresses target 7, reducing pollution to levels that are not harmful to biodiversity, and Target 16, enable sustainable consumption choices to reduce waste and overconsumption.

The project contributes to the Cook Islands 100-year development plan 2021-2121 by working towards the protection of the pristine environment by reducing pressure on the natural environment. It contributes to the 2nd of the 15 pledges related to *To Tatou Ao Ora Natura – Our ocean and environment*.[1]1

Within that longer term plan, there is also a medium term 25-year plan that this project supports by working towards Zero waste. This includes a set of principles focused on waste prevention that encourages the redesign of resource life cycles so that all products are reused. The goal is for no solid waste to be sent to landfills, incinerators or enter the ocean.[2]2

In addition, the project aligns with the following initiatives:

Cook Islands Tourism Development Policy and Framework Goals. The project is inherently designed to target key consumers of harmful single use plastics items, including the Cook Islands tourism sector, operators and hoteliers. As such, it will contribute directly to the 2017 STDPF goals, particularly Goal 1 and 4, which respectively reflect integrated management and governance, and ensuring the protection of the pristine environment through sustainable practices. Progress achieved under this project will be reported and contribute to tracking progress towards such goals.

Cook Islands State of the Environment Report. The SOE Report launched in 2020 has provided much of the baseline environmental data and information that has informed the development of this project, particularly with respect to identifying the main pressures that are significantly threatening the Cook Islands environment. Given the SOE is updated every five years, the next two can bear testimony to the emerging achievements (or otherwise) of the projects interventions and indicate where continued efforts should be replaced.

Cook Islands National Sustainable Development Agenda 2020+ and UN Sustainable Development Goals. As stated elsewhere in this document, the project is well aligned with relevant NSDA 2020+ goals, notably solid and hazardous waste (goal 4), agriculture (goal 10) and environment (goal 11). Consequently, the project will contribute significantly towards these NSDA goals, which feed directly into the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Thus, the project is also well aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals 2, 12, 14, 15, while also introducing 5 through the mainstreaming of gender equality and social inclusion across its interventions.

- Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture;
- Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls;
- Goal 12: More sustainable consumption and production;
- Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development;
- Goal 15: protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification and halt and reverse land degradation and biodiversity loss.

National Infrastructure Investment Plan (2021). The NIIP 2021 outlines the Cook Islands' priorities and plans for major infrastructure over the next 10 years.

[1] https://www.pmoffice.gov.ck/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Turanga-Meitaki-100-mataiti-Digital.pdf

[2] https://www.pmoffice.gov.ck/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Te-Kaveinga-Iti-5-Mataiti-Digital.pdf

D. POLICY REQUIREMENTS

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment:

We confirm that gender dimensions relevant to the project have been addressed during Project Preparation as per GEF Policy and are clearly articulated in the child Project Description (Section B).

Yes

1) Does the project expect to include any gender-responsive-measures to address gender gaps or promote gender equality and women's empowerment?

Yes

If the child project expects to include any gender-responsive measures to address gender gaps or promote gender equality and women empowerment, please indicate in which results area(s) the project is expected to contribute to gender equality:

Closing gender gaps in access to and control over natural resources;

Yes

Improving women's participation and decision-making; and/or

Yes

Generating socio-economic benefits or services for women.

Yes

2) Does the child project's results framework or logical framework include gender-sensitive indicators?

Yes

Stakeholder Engagement

We confirm that key stakeholders were consulted during Project Preparation as required per GEF policy, their relevant roles to project outcomes has been clearly articulated in the Child Project Description (Section B) and that a Stakeholder Engagement Plan has been developed before CEO endorsement**.**

Yes

Select what role civil society will play in the Project:

Consulted only;

Member of Advisory Body; Contractor; Yes

Co-financier; Yes

Member of project steering committee or equivalent decision-making body ; Yes

Executor or co-executor; Yes

Other (Please explain)

Private Sector

Will there be private sector engagement in the Child project?

Yes

And if so, has its role been described and justified in section B "Child project description"?

Yes

Environmental and Social Safeguards

We confirm that we have provided information regarding Environmental and Social risks associated with the proposed child project or program, including risk screenings/ assessments and, if applicable, management plans or other measures to address identified risks and impacts (this information should be presented in Annex E).

Yes

Please provide overall Project/Program Risk Classification

Overall Project/Program Risk Classification

PIF	CEO Endorsement/Approval	MTR	TE
	Medium/Moderate		

E. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Knowledge management

We confirm that an approach to Knowledge Management and Learning has been clearly described during Project Preparation in the Project Description and that these activities have been budgeted and an anticipated timeline for delivery of relevant outputs has been provided. This includes budget for linking with and participation in knowledge exchange activities organized through the coordination platform.

Yes

Socio-economic Benefits

We confirm that the child project design has considered socio-economic benefits to be delivered by the project and these have been clearly described in the Project Description and will be monitored and reported on during project implementation (at MTR and TER).

Yes

There are several and remarkable socio-economic benefits related to the fight against plastic pollution, as well as promoting packaging circularity in the food and beverage sector. Among others, the project will contribute to:

- Cost savings: Governments spend significant resources on waste management, cleaning up plastic pollution and dealing with its consequences, such as damage to infrastructure and biodiversity. By preventing pollution at its source, these costs can be minimized, allowing funds to be allocated elsewhere.
- Job creation: Initiatives aimed at reducing plastic pollution, such as reuse systems and the development of alternative materials, create employment opportunities in various sectors, including waste management, research and development, and manufacturing. The project intends to work with local businesses and growers in support to the identification, co-design and pilot-testing of local solutions to plastic pollution. These solutions, such as reuse/refill systems and Short Food Supply Chains, tend to create orders of magnitude more jobs than disposal-based systems that primarily burn or bury waste. Zero waste measures can be considered as an opportune social infrastructure in which investments can strengthen local economic resilience. Multiple studies of zero waste systems cite higher wages and better working conditions than in comparable fields, and opportunities to develop and use varied skills, from equipment repair to public outreach.[1][3]
- Innovation and entrepreneurship: Addressing plastic pollution fosters innovation in sustainable materials, food & beverage processing and distribution, and waste management technologies. This stimulates

economic growth by creating new markets for responsible products and services. This is the case when promoting reuse, and particularly enhancing the informal practices.

- Enhanced reputation: Businesses and regions that actively combat plastic pollution often enjoy improved reputations, attracting environmentally conscious consumers and investors. This can lead to increased market share, higher revenues, and greater investment inflows.
- Tourism promotion: Cleaner environments resulting from reduced plastic pollution can attract more tourists, boosting local economies reliant on tourism. Beaches, parks, and natural attractions are more appealing when free from litter and plastic debris.
- Public health improvement: Decreased plastic pollution means less plastic waste in waterways and food chains, reducing the risk of ingestion by humans and animals. This helps mitigate health issues associated with plastic contamination, such as endocrine disruption and chemical toxicity. In addition, promoting local, fresh food and beverage production and consumption has positive effects on health in comparison to processed foods.
- Cultural heritage: In addition to health benefits, promoting local produce is a great way to protect cultural heritage.
- Community empowerment: Engaging communities, in plastic pollution reduction initiatives promotes a sense of ownership and responsibility for the environment. In addition, the project gender strategy will ensure gender mainstreaming and specific activities in the project, such as training and business support.
- Resource conservation: Minimizing plastic usage encourages the efficient use of resources, including fossil fuels used in plastic production. This supports sustainability efforts and reduces reliance on finite resources, contributing to long-term economic stability.

[1] For more information: https://www.no-burn.org/zerowastejobs/

ANNEX A: FINANCING TABLES

GEF Financing Table

Trust Fund Resources Requested by Agency(ies), Country(ies), Focal Area and the Programming of Funds

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Grant / Non-Grant	GEF Project Grant($)	Agency Fee($)	Total GEF Financing ($)
UNEP	GET	Cook Islands	International Waters	International Waters: IW IP Contributions	Grant	2,688,292.00	241,948.00	2,930,240.00
UNEP	GET	Cook Islands	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation: IPs	Grant	1,325,147.00	119,263.00	1,444,410.00
UNEP	GET	Cook Islands	Biodiversity	BD IP Matching Incentives	Grant	441,716.00	39,754.00	481,470.00
UNEP	GET	Cook Islands	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation: IPs	Grant	1,325,147.00	119,263.00	1,444,410.00

UNEP	GET	Cook Islands	Climate Change	CC IP Matching Incentives	Grant	441,716.00	39,754.00	481,470.00
Total GEF Resources ($)						**6,222,018.00**	**559,982.00**	**6,782,000.00**

Project Preparation Grant (PPG)

Was a Project Preparation Grant requested? true

PPG Amount ($) 200000

PPG Agency Fee ($) 18000

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	PPG($)	Agency Fee($)	Total PPG Funding($)
UNEP	GET	Cook Islands	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation: IPs	51,000.00	4,590.00	55,590.00
UNEP	GET	Cook Islands	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation: IPs	51,000.00	4,590.00	55,590.00
UNEP	GET	Cook Islands	Biodiversity	BD IP Matching Incentives	17,000.00	1,530.00	18,530.00
UNEP	GET	Cook Islands	Climate Change	CC IP Matching Incentives	17,000.00	1,530.00	18,530.00
UNEP	GET	Cook Islands	International Waters	International Waters: IW IP Contributions	64,000.00	5,760.00	69,760.00
Total PPG Amount ($)					**200,000.00**	**18,000.00**	**218,000.00**

Please provide Justification

Sources of Funds for Country Star Allocation

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Sources of Funds	Total($)
UNEP	GET	Cook Islands	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation	1,500,000.00
UNEP	GET	Cook Islands	Climate Change	CC STAR Allocation	1,500,000.00
Total GEF Resources					**3,000,000.00**

Focal Area Elements

Programming Directions	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing($)	Co-financing($)
Plastics IP	GET	6,222,018.00	35074779
Total Project Cost		**6,222,018.00**	**35,074,779.00**

Confirmed Co-financing for the project, by name and type

Please include evidence for each co-financing source for this project in the tab of the portal

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount($)
Recipient Country Government	National Environment Service (NES)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	28719669
Recipient Country Government	National Environment Service (NES)	Public Investment	Investment mobilized	5918425
Recipient Country Government	National Environment Service (NES)	Grant	Investment mobilized	436685
Total Co-financing				**35,074,779.00**

Please describe the investment mobilized portion of the co-financing

The Cook Islands submits herewith, a single letter of co-finance which demonstrates that the entire co-finance amount of US$ 35,074,779 is directed through NES as the executing agency to the RESPONSE project. The consolidation of the entire co-finance amount through NES will result in efficient management and allocation of resources. This approach not only simplifies the administrative process but also reinforces accountability and transparency in the utilisation of the allocated funds. This central model of co-finance gives NES the ability to report and monitor effectively throughout the tenure of the RESPONSE project. NES endeavours to consult further with the private sector during project execution to garner their further support in future engagements.

ANNEX B: ENDORSEMENT

GEF Agency(ies) Certification

GEF Agency Coordinator	Date	Project Contact Person	Telephone	Email
GEF Agency Coordinator	6/28/2024	Victoria Luque	25427624544	victoria.luque@un.org
Project Coordinator	6/28/2024	Isabelle VANDERBECK	12027254201	isabelle.vanderbeck@un.org

Record of Endorsement of GEF Operational Focal Point (s) on Behalf of the Government(s):

Please attach the Operational Focal Point endorsement letter(s) with this template.

Name of GEF OFP	Position	Ministry	Date (MM/DD/YYYY)
Halatoa Fua	Director, National Environment Service	National Environment Service	4/4/2023

ANNEX C: PROJECT RESULTS FRAMEWORK

Please indicate the page number in the Project Document where the project results and M&E frameworks can be found. Please also paste below the Project Results Framework from the Agency document. For the Integrated Programs' global/regional coordination child project, please include the program-wide results framework, inclusive of results specific to the coordination child project. For any country child project, please ensure that relevant program level indicators are included.

Project Objective	Objective level Indicators	Targets and Monitoring Milestones
To reduce the amount of plastics entering the Cook Islands via the F&B and tourism sectors and to support enabling environments for circular solutions, with the intention of reducing the burden on the Cook Islands waste management system, as well as reducing pollution and harmful impacts of plastic.	CI 6: Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated CI 6.8: Greenhouse Gas Emissions Avoided Outside AFOLU sector (indirect) (metric ton of CO2e avoided) CI 9: Chemicals of global concern and their waste reduced - CI 9.8: Avoided Residual Plastic Waste (metric ton) CI 10: Persistent organic pollutants to air reduced (g TEQ) CI 11: People benefiting from GEF-financed investments disaggregated by sex (count)	CI 6.7: 234 Metric Tonnes of CO2eq avoided CI 9.8: 57 metric tons CI10: 0.0068 g TEQ CI 11: 12,800 (6,263 men and 6,538 women)

Project Outcome	Indicators	Means of Verification (MoV)	Baseline	Target		Assumptions / Risks	Contribution to the Plastic IP Components and GEB Core Indicators
				Mid-term	Final		
Component 1: Enabling a Regulatory and Policy Environment							IP Component 1 Enabling regulatory and policy environment
Outcome 1.1 Upstream policy instruments to limit plastic pollution in the Cook Islands are updated, strengthened	1. Number of policy instruments updated, strengthened or developed, adopted and ready for implementation (disaggregate	Project reports, progress reports, PIRs, midterm evaluation report, terminal evaluation report. Annual Stakeholders' Activity reports.	1. Baseline value: 0 Existing regulatory and policy framework mostly focus on waste management, and existing policy	- (Y1 Q3) 1 IWG established to oversee Comp 1 activities - At least 2 IWG meetings per year - (Y1 Q4) 1 Policy Gap	1. At least 2 policy instruments (disaggregated by type: bans, taxes, incentives, etc.) updated, strengthened or developed, adopted and	Assumptions: The Solid & Hazardous Waste Bill will be passed and there is full political support for the updating or development of policy instruments.	**CI 9.8 – Avoided Residual Plastic Waste:** Over the project lifetime, the annual

or developed, adopted and ready for implementation by Y5.	d by type: bans, taxes, incentives, fiscal policies, etc.). 2. Number of National Strategic Action Plans (SAP) on Plastics developed 3. Percentage of women actively participating to the consultation activities. 4. Amount of residual plastic waste avoided (metric tons) as a result of the effective implementation of policies and regulations over the project lifetime.		instruments are either outdated, ineffective or remain in draft awaiting formal endorsement and passing into legislation. 2. Baseline value: 0 No National Strategic Action Plan exist. 3. Baseline value: 0 Women participation to the policy decision-making process is still low, with only 25% female representation in National Parliament (UN Women, 2023). 4. Baseline value: NA No viable and robust data on plastics used in the F&B and tourism sectors exist in Cambodia.	Analysis conducted - (Y1 Q4) 1 Policy Brief, including recommendations, produced - At least 2 consultation meetings with government partners and relevant stakeholders organised per year - (Y1 Q4) 1 SAP consultation plan developed - At least 10 consultation meetings by Y4 - (Y3 Q2) 1 validation workshop organised to present the draft SAP on Plastics - At least 10 representatives of key stakeholder groups actively engaged in consultation meetings per year, of which at least 40% are women (total 50 people, of which 30 are women)	ready for implementation by Y5 2. 1 National Strategic Action Plan on Plastics (SAP) developed and endorsed by Y4, with at least 1 chapter of the SAP includes gender specific actions, measures, recommendations 3. At least 40% of participants involved in the project's consultation activities are women 4. Approximately 5.70 metric tons of residual plastic waste avoided (metric tons) as a result of the effective implementation of policies and regulations over the project lifetime.	Risks: Government capacity limitations regarding legislative drafting, reviews, implementation & enforcement. Elections or turnover of ministry directors delays timely government approvals of policy instruments. Lack of appetite in post-covid recovery for any fiscal mechanisms.	plastic waste generated by the F&B and tourism sectors is expected to be reduced of about 5.70 metric tons due to the laws and regulations developed, updated, approved and implemented with the support of the project. **CI 11 - People benefiting from GEF-financed investments disaggregated by sex:** About 100 representatives of key stakeholder groups, of which 50 men and 50 women.
Component 2: Support in identifying suitable alternative products							**IP Component 2: Mobilizing finance** **IP Component 3: Engaging with Food and Beverage Private sector**
Outcome 2.1 Sustainable and viable alternative solutions to reduce & replace harmful, avoidable or unnecessary F&B packaging	1. Number of sustainable and viable alternative solutions to priority SUPs identified and ready for pilot-testing, 2. Number of programs designed and	Project reports, progress reports, PIRs, midterm evaluation report, terminal evaluation report. Annual Stakeholders' Activity reports.	1. Baseline value: 0 No viable sustainable alternative solutions to SUPs in the F&B and tourism sectors available in the Cook	- (Y2 Q4) 1 feasibility study report completed. - (Y2 Q4) At least 1 roundtable discussion organised. - At least 1 representative of each of the	1. (Y2 Q4) At least 10 alternative solutions validated as economically and socially viable and adopted for further business development	Assumptions: - Stakeholder engagement allowing for rigorous product identification - There is sufficient technical expertise regionally with understanding of Pacific/SIDS contexts to undertake the feasibility studies.	**CI 11 - People benefiting from GEF-financed investments disaggregated by sex:**

and packaged goods commonly imported into the Cook Islands identified and ready for pilot-testing.	ready for implementation to pilot test the identified alternative solutions. 3. Number of women-led initiatives (or initiatives that employs a majority of women) identified as viable alternative solutions to priority categories of products and sub- sectors for intervention.		Islands at scale. 2. Baseline value: 0 No program to pilot test alternative solutions to plastics exist. 3. Baseline value: 0 Both men and women with a tertiary level of education had a labour force participation rate of 80% in 2019. However, only women with a lower level of education were less likely to be in the labour force than their male counterparts (UN Women, 2023).	key stakeholder groups (government, traditional leader, private sector, NGO, other) represented in the roundtable discussions. - At least 40% of participants actively participating to the roundtable are women.	2. (Y3 Q1) A "Plastic Smart" and a "Short Food Supply Chain" program designed and ready for implementation. 3. At least 50% of the initiatives identified as viable alternative solutions to priority categories of products and sub- sectors for intervention are women-led (or employing a majority of women).	- Cross agency government capacity for the drafting of policies and legislation. Risks: - Public and private sector appetite for feasible alternatives identified is lacking. - Complexity of F&B sector making it difficult to clearly identify intervention points. Capacity restraints within Customs limiting data availability for timely and accurate analysis.	About 100 representatives of key stakeholder groups, of which 50 men and 50 women.
Component 3: Engaging with F&B private sector							**IP Component 2: Mobilizing finance** **IP Component 3: Engaging with Food and Beverage Private sector**
Outcome 3.1 Local private sector (including domestic agriculture sector and MSMEs), NGOs and communities are engaged and supported to pilot and scale up innovative solutions.	1. Number of alternative solutions, including short food supply chain initiatives, to reduce & replace harmful F&B packaging and packaged goods commonly imported into the Cook Islands that have proved to be legally, technically, socially, economically viable and gender responsive. 2. Number of women-led initiatives (or initiatives that	Platform/dialogue/event invitations and agendas, Project reports, progress reports, PIRs, midterm evaluation report, terminal evaluation report. Pilot testing monitoring reports.	1. Baseline value: 0 No viable sustainable alternative solutions to SUPs in the F&B and tourism sectors available exists in the Cook Islands at scale. 2. Baseline value: 0 Both men and women with a tertiary level of education had a labour force participation rate of 80% in 2019. However, only women with a lower level of	- (Y5 Q2) At least 20 organisations (hotels, restaurants, cafes/bars, etc.) are enrolled in the "Plastic Smart" program and have reduced their consumption of SUPs (MT of plastic waste avoided). - (Y5 Q2) At least 3 local producers/farmers are enrolled in the "Short Food Supply Chains" program. - At least 2 initiatives pilot-tested are women-led (or employs a	1. At least 10 alternative solutions, including at least 2 short food supply chain initiatives, to reduce & replace harmful F&B packaging and packaged goods commonly imported into the Cook Islands are legally, technically, socially, economically viable and gender responsive by Y5. 2. At least 2 initiatives that have proved to be legally,	Assumptions: Private sector willing and able to engage Assumption: Stakeholder engagement in the roll out of a pilot, feasible alternatives to plastics are identified Risks: Business resistance, consumer scepticism, market competition	**CI 9.8 – Avoided Residual Plastic Waste**: Over the project lifetime, the annual plastic waste generated by the F&B and tourism sectors is expected to be reduced of 8% (equal to about 45.56 metric tons) due to the pilot-testing of at least 10 alternative solutions to F&B SUPs through the Plastic smart and SFSCs programs.

	employs a majority of women) that have proved to be legally, technically, socially, economically viable and gender responsive. 3. Total amount of residual plastic waste avoided (metric tons) as a result of the implementation of the alternative solutions to plastics over the project lifetime.		education were less likely to be in the labour force than their male counterparts (UN Women, 2023). 3. Baseline value: NA No viable and robust data on plastics used in the F&B and tourism sectors exist in Cambodia.	majority of women).	technically, socially, economically viable and gender responsive are women-led (or employs a majority of women). 3. Approximately 45.56 metric tons of residual plastic waste avoided as a result of the implementation of the alternative solutions to plastics over the project lifetime.		**CI 11 - People benefiting from GEF-financed investments disaggregated by sex:** About 12,000 people, of which 5,868 men and 6,132 women.
Component 4: Improving national data and capacities							IP Component 4: Activating Behaviour and social change to support Program strategy
Outcome 4.1 National data and capacities on plastics is enhanced to inform and improve decision making by Y5.	1. Number of National Plastics Audits designed and conducted. 2. Number of National Source Inventory (NSI) produced. 3. Number of National Plastics Monitoring system established and operative. 4. Number of stakeholders trained (disaggregated by gender (as self-assessed), occupation, etc. and by type of training, topic, etc.). 5. Number of stakeholders attending the knowledge	Project reports, progress reports, PIRs, midterm evaluation report, terminal evaluation report	1. Baseline value: 0 No plastic audits have been conducted so far. 2. Baseline value: 0 No NSI exists in the Cook Islands today. 3. Baseline value: 0 No National Plastics Monitoring system established so far. 4. Baseline value: 0 No Child Project's training implemented. 5. Baseline value: 0 No Child Project's knowledge exchange activity implemented.	- (Y1 Q4) 1 stakeholder analysis and mapping conducted. - (Y1 Q4) 1 capacity building needs assessment targeting key stakeholders conducted. - (Y3 Q2) At least 5 training modules addressing the top priority capacity building needs of targeted stakeholders developed. - (Y4 Q4) At least 5 training workshops on priority areas of intervention organised and delivered. - At least 40% of trainers are women. - (Y4 Q4) At least 70% completion rate of training courses.	1. (Y2 Q4) At least 1 National Plastics Audit designed and conducted. 2. (Y3 Q4) A NSI - following the UNEP NSI Approach - produced, including the findings of the National Plastics Audit, established. 3. (Y3 Q4) A National Plastics Monitoring system established and operative. 4. (Y4 Q4) At least 10 stakeholders trained (disaggregated by occupation, etc. and by type of training, topic, etc.), of which at least 40% are women. 5. At least 20 stakeholders	Assumptions: An effective knowledge management system is in place and fully coordinated with the Global Project Knowledge Management and Communication	**CI 11 - People benefiting from GEF-financed investments disaggregated by sex:** About 100, of which 50 men and 50 women.

	exchange activities or events (either abroad or hosted, disaggregated by gender (as self-assessed), occupation, etc.).			- (Y4 Q4) 1 Evaluation survey designed for each training workshop. - (Y4 Q4) At least 70% of respondents (disaggregated by gender [as self-assessed], occupation, etc. and by type of training, topic, etc.) complete the evaluation survey per training/course. - At least 40% of evaluation survey respondents are women. - At least 1 post-attendance report with learnings and recommendations following each knowledge exchange activity or event.	attending the knowledge exchange activities or events (either abroad or hosted, disaggregated by occupation, etc.) of which at least 40% are women.		
Component 5: Knowledge management, Communications (including National and Program-level Coordination)							**IP Component 4: Activating Behaviour and social change to support Program strategy**
Outcome 5.1 Best practices, innovative solutions and lessons learned are documented and exchanged through Knowledge Management and knowledge transfer.	1. Number of gender-responsive KM and Communications Strategies developed and implemented. 2. Number of gender responsive knowledge and information products on processes, best practices, innovations, lessons learned, and project findings developed and	Knowledge Management and Communications Strategy, Project reports, progress reports, PIRs, midterm evaluation report, terminal evaluation report.	1. Baseline value: 0 2. Baseline value: 0 3. Baseline value: 0 4. Baseline value: 0 The Child project's KM and Communications Strategies will be finalised during Inception Phase. 5. Baseline value: NA No viable and robust data on plastics used in the F&B and	- At least 1 chapter of the Gender-responsive Knowledge Management and Communications Strategy includes gender specific actions, measures, recommendations. - At least 2 gender-responsive KAP surveys completed by (1) Y2 as a baseline and (2) repeated by Y4. - Repeated KAP survey results demonstrate	1. (Y2 Q2) 1 gender-responsive KM and Communications Strategy developed (building on Appendix 10 - draft Comm and KM strategy) and implemented. 2. (Y4 Q4) At least 20 knowledge and information products on best practices, innovations, lessons learned and project findings (e.g. case studies, factsheets, videos,	Assumptions: - An effective knowledge management system is in place and fully coordinated with the Global Project KM and Communication. Risks: - Ineffective knowledge communication and dissemination.	**CI 9.8 – Avoided Residual Plastic Waste:** Over the project lifetime, the annual plastic waste generated by the F&B and tourism sectors is expected to be reduced of 1% (equal to about 5.70 metric tons) due to changes in social and cultural behaviours. **CI 11 - People**

	disseminated to stakeholders. 3. Number of gender-responsive Knowledge, Aptitudes & Practices (KAP) surveys throughout the project demonstrate quantifiable changes in public understanding & consumer behaviour. 4. Number of gender-responsive knowledge & information products developed & disseminated to stakeholders 5. Total amount of residual plastic waste avoided (metric tons) as a result of behaviour and social change activities over the project lifetime.		tourism sectors exist in Cambodia.	positive changes in at least 25% of questions. - At least 40% of the KAP survey respondents are women. - At least 20 participatory monitoring and evaluation activities conducted & documented. - At least 5 lessons learned documented. - At least 5 contributions to the Global Project KM and Communication strategy and workplan by Y4. - Participate in at least 75% of relevant annual conferences, knowledge sharing sessions, webinars, capacity development activities offered. - At least 5 best practices and success stories prepared in English and uploaded on GP platform. - At least 1 best practices and success stories that highlights women-led activities. - PMU operational by Y1 Q1. At least 1 of the project team is a woman. - An Inception workshop is organised & held by Y1 Q2. - At least 10 stakeholders participate in Inception workshop (disaggregated by key	guidelines, newsletters, social media posts, etc.) developed and disseminated to stakeholders. 3. At least 2 gender-responsive KAP surveys throughout the project demonstrate quantifiable changes in public understanding & consumer behaviour. 4. At least 1 gender-responsive knowledge & information products developed & disseminated to stakeholders. 5. Approximately 5.70 metric tons of residual plastic waste avoided as a result of behaviour and social change activities over the project lifetime.		**benefiting from GEF-financed investments disaggregated by sex**: About 500 people, of which 254 men, and 256 women.

				stakeholder group [government, traditional leader, private sector, NGO, other], of which at least 40% are women. - An Inception report with detailed workplan, budget and institutional arrangements is produced by Y1 Q3. - At least 2 actively engaged PSC meetings held per year. At least 30% of PSC members are women. - Key project staff participate in at least 4 IP Annual Conferences and key events, of which at least 40% are women. - PMU participate in at least 75% of relevant virtual events and working groups - PMU and national experts provide contributions to at least 75% of relevant Global Project reports.			

Outcomes/Outputs	Indicators	Baseline	Final Target	Means of Verification (MoV)	Assumptions/Risks
Component 6 Monitoring and Evaluation					
M&E Outcome 6.1 Efficient and timely project execution, monitoring and evaluation processes carried out, and corresponding improvement of project execution as appropriate.	- Project Implementation Review (PIR) to UNEP and GEF rating - Recommendations of the MTR reflected in revised results framework, workplan and budget Gender-specific indicator: - Percentage of female representatives participate in the meetings.	No monitoring or evaluation until the project starts.	- Yearly PIR achieves rating of MS or above - 100% of recommendations from MTR addressed and reflected in revised results framework, workplan and budget Gender-specific target: - At least 30% of representatives engaged in project meetings are women.	PIR Reports Evaluation reports PSC Reports	EA and PMU have capacity, experience and training on UNEP projects and reporting EA & PSC committed to support the project
M&E Output 6.1.1 Documented monitoring and reporting process throughout the entire	- Inception Report with M&E activities, roles and responsibilities and templates agreed	No monitoring reports or meetings have been organized	- Inception Report with M&E activities, roles and responsibilities and templates agreed by Y1 Q3	Inception Report Quarterly progress reports	EA and PMU have capacity, experience and training on UNEP

Outcomes/Outputs	Indicators	Baseline	Final Target	Means of Verification (MoV)	Assumptions/Risks
project execution life cycle ensuring successful project delivery.	- Number of quarterly progress and financial reports submitted in a timely manner - Number of Project Implementation Review (PIR) to UNEP and GEF - Number of Co-financing Reports - Number of reports on GEF Core Indicators/GEBs and other core indicators Gender-specific indicator: - Number of progress reports include a gender section to review progress on gender-specific indicators and targets	before the project starts.	- 1 progress and financial reports submitted in a timely manner per quarter. - 1 Project Implementation Review (PIR) to UNEP and GEF per year. - 1 Co-financing Report per year. - 3 monitoring reports on GEF Core Indicators/GEBs and other core indicators at Baseline, mid-point and final end of project. Gender-specific target: - All progress reports include a gender section to review progress on gender-specific indicators and targets	Quarterly finance reports Yearly PIR and co-financing reports GEF Core Indicator reports	GEF monitoring and reporting requirements
M&E Output 6.1.2 Independent evaluations to assess the progress, success, and effectiveness of the project undertaken and recommendations reflected in project implementation.	- Number of evaluation reports - Number of stakeholders engaged in evaluation process - Recommendations of the MTR reflected in revised results framework, workplan and budget Gender-specific indicator: - Number of evaluations that include a gender section to review progress on gender-specific indicators and targets	No evaluation reports have been produced before the project starts.	- Mid-Term Review completed by YR2 Q4 - Terminal Evaluation completed by YR5 Q2 - 100% of key stakeholders and partners engage in evaluation process - 100% of recommendations from MTR addressed and reflected in revised results framework, workplan and budget Gender-specific target: - Midterm report and Terminal Evaluation include a gender section	Evaluation Reports PMU reports	Evaluation consultant recruited and delivers on time EA & PSC committed to support the project
M&E Output 6.1.3 Regular contribution to the Global Project M&E Reporting.	- Number of contributions to Integrated Program Annual Report, the Global Project's M&E kick-off meeting; Quarterly reports; Mid-term Evaluation and Terminal Evaluation Gender-specific indicator: - Number of contributions to the Global Project M&E Reporting that include gender-specific data and information regarding progress on gender-specific indicators and targets	No reports have been produced before the GP project starts.	- Min 4 Integrated Program Annual Reports include contributions from PMU - PMU participate in GP M&E kick-off meeting - PMU responds to all requests for contributions to contribute to mid-term and final evaluation and other reports as required Gender-specific target: All contributions to the Global Project M&E Reporting include gender-specific data and information regarding progress on gender-specific indicators and targets	GP Integrated Program Annual Reports GP meeting reports Correspondence/emails with GP	Requests received by GP with sufficient time to contribute

ANNEX D: STATUS OF UTILIZATION OF PROJECT PREPARATION GRANT (PPG)

Provide detailed funding amount of the PPG activities financing status in the table below:

Project Preparation Activities Implemented	GETF/LDCF/SCCF Amount ($)

	Budgeted Amount	Amount Spent To date	Amount Committed
PPG Design Experts	100,000.00	100,000.00	0.00
National Coordinator	60,000.00	60,000.00	0.00
Stakeholder Consultations	40,000.00	40,000.00	0.00
Total	**200,000.00**	**200,000.00**	**0.00**

ANNEX E: PROJECT MAP AND COORDINATES

Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Cook Islands	-21.236736	-159.777671	1,899,402

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Please provide any further geo-referenced information and map where project interventions are taking place as appropriate.

ANNEX F: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS DOCUMENTS INCLUDING RATING

Attach agency safeguard datasheet/assessment report(s), including ratings of risk types and overall project/program risk classification as well as any management plans or measures to address identified risks and impacts (as applicable).

Title
11185 Plastic IP Cook Islands Annex F - SRIF 2024-06-26

ANNEX G: BUDGET TABLE

Please upload the budget table here.

BUDGET ALLOCATION BY PROJECT COMPONENT, M&E and PMC	BUDGET BY YEAR	Responsible Entity

BUDGET LINE JUSTIFICATION	TOTAL	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	M&E	PMC	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5	TOTAL	Executing Entity receiving funds from the GEF Agency
		GEF (US$)	GEF (US$)	GEF (US$)	GEF (US$)	GEF (US$)	GEF (US$)	GEF (US$)	US$	US$	US$	US$	US$	US$	
PROJECT PERSONNEL COMPONENT															
Project Personnel														**239,960**	
Other staff	239,960	40,000	40,000	40,000	39,960	40,000	40,000		48,992	48,992	48,992	48,992	43,992	239,960	NES
Consultants w/m														**1,428,040**	
Policy and legislation experts	212,000	212,000							44,250	91,417	47,167	29,167		212,000	NES
Thematic plastic technical and scientific experts	240,000		210,000			30,000			30,000	210,000				240,000	NES
Gender and social expert(s)	70,000					70,000			14,000	14,000	14,000	14,000	14,000	70,000	NES
Pilot support expert(s)	280,000			280,000						70,000	140,000	70,000		280,000	NES
M&E specialist	200,040	33,320	33,340	33,340	33,360	33,340	33,340		42,229	42,229	42,229	36,676	36,676	200,040	NES
Other project consultants/experts	328,000				310,000	18,000			48,000	93,333	123,333	63,333		328,000	NES
Evaluator (Mid-term)(Terminal)	98,000						98,000				39,000		59,000	98,000	NES
Administrative Support														**120,000**	
Admin / Finance Support Staff	120,000							120,000	24,000	24,000	24,000	24,000	24,000	120,000	NES
Travel														**1,205,590**	
Travel of Staff on official business	213,040	74,300	13,680	15,540	100,400	9,120				126,780	23,730	60,250	2,280	213,040	NES
Travel for Global Project meetings	751,500				569,500	182,000			56,800	63,300	287,300	63,300	280,800	751,500	NES
Travel of Consultants	241,050	77,540	30,630	77,530	36,690	9,330	9,330		18,933	110,433	62,133	39,276	10,276	241,050	NES
SUB CONTRACT COMPONENT															
Transfers & Grants to														**2,103,928**	

Implementing Partners																
Sub-contract, NGO	2,103,928			2,103,928						427,232	1,217,232	427,232	32,232	2,103,928	NES
Contract Services														**798,250**	
Commercial Contract Company Services	737,950	149,500	56,500	227,000	156,000	130,000	4,500	14,450	48,686	282,343	187,359	124,283	95,279	737,950	NES
Commercial Contract Company Facilities	60,300	9,300	21,000	7,200	12,200	9,600	1,000		1,600	11,100	31,300	6,900	9,400	60,300	NES
TRAINING COMPONENT															
Training														**105,000**	
Training Personnel / Users	105,000				105,000					33,750	18,750	33,750	18,750	105,000	NES
SUPPLIES COMMODITIES AND MATERIALS															
Supplies, Commodities and Materials														**13,200**	
Office Supplies and consumables	7,200							7,200	1,440	1,440	1,440	1,440	1,440	7,200	NES
Materials	6,000							6,000	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200	6,000	NES
Equipment and Furniture														**119,250**	
Equipment	117,000				75,000	42,000			21,000	37,500	37,500	21,000		117,000	NES
Furniture	2,250							2,250	2,250					2,250	NES
Premises														**16,800**	
Office Premises	16,800							16,800	3,360	3,360	3,360	3,360	3,360	16,800	NES
MISCELLANEOUS COMPONENT															
Operating and Other Costs														**25,000**	
Equipment Rental and Maintenance	25,000					400		24,600	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	25,000	NES
Reporting costs (publications, maps, NL)														**25,000**	

Audits	25,000							25,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	25,000	NES
Sundry (communications, postages)														**22,000**	
Communications (tel, e-mail, etc..)	22,000				21,200	800			400	5,400	5,400	5,400	5,400	22,000	NES
TOTAL	**6,222,018**	**595,960**	**405,150**	**2,784,538**	**1,459,310**	**574,590**	**186,170**	**216,300**	**417,140**	**1,707,809**	**2,365,425**	**1,083,559**	**648,085**	**6,222,018**	

Please explain any aspects of the budget as needed here

N/A

ANNEX I: RESPONSES TO PROJECT REVIEWS

From GEF Secretariat and GEF Agencies, and Responses to Comments from Council at work program inclusion and the Convention Secretariat and STAP at PIF.

N/A