

Lessons from Evaluating GEF Programs in Pacific SIDS

Anna Viggh

Senior Evaluator at the GEF IEO

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Pacific SIDS Face Threats and Challenges

Environmental and physical

- Climate change, natural disasters, sea level rise
- Biodiversity loss, waste management

Economic and Structural

- Geographic isolation, high costs
- Institutional capacity



Programs Assessed

Three GEF programs | 14 Pacific SIDS | \$528M across 140 projects (1991–2023)

CPDP

Climate Proofing
Development in the Pacific

ADB | LDCF | GEF-5

Climate Change Adaptation
& Infrastructure Resilience

R2R

Ridge-to-Reef National
Priorities Program

UNDP | GEF/LDCF | GEF-5

Ridge-to-Reef & Watershed
Management

ISLANDS

Sustainable Low &
Non-Chemical Development

UNEP | GEF | GEF-7

Chemicals & Waste
Management

Lessons from Evaluating Programs in Pacific SIDS

What we had to rethink to evaluate Pacific SIDS...

1

Theory of change was a precondition for evaluability

2

M&E systems tracked outputs, not institutional change

3

Portfolio-level analysis was essential

4

Country visits were critical to validate desk findings

What Worked?

Integration, inclusion, protected areas ...

Ridge-to-Reef Integration

- ▶ Linked upland land use to coastal ecosystem health
- ▶ Enabled countries to tackle multiple challenges through a single GEF allocation.

Women as Active Agents

- ▶ Seed nurseries run by women in Fiji communities
- ▶ Women led waste management in Tonga

Traditional Knowledge

- ▶ Taro water farming + scientific models
- ▶ Farmer Field Schools alongside indigenous practices

Multi-Channel Platforms

- ▶ TV/radio + village visits + Facebook page
- ▶ Youth awards program for environmental action

What Did Not Work?

Design-Capacity gaps & M&E failures...

Capacity Underestimated

12

*Months on average
for staff
recruitment*

- ▶ Early delays cascaded through the project cycle
- ▶ Budgets and manuals unfinished at project approval

M&E

36%

*Of projects lack
accurate baselines*

- ▶ Corrective action
- ▶ Child project indicators not linked to program-level assessment



Root Causes of Implementation Challenges

The “why behind the why”...

Structural



Design



Coordination



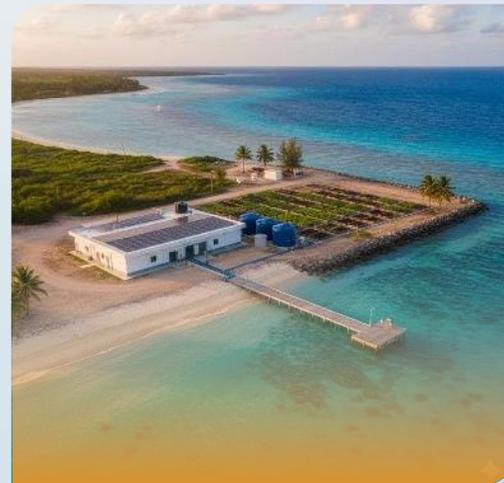
These root causes persisted across GEF-5 and GEF-7 programs, despite lessons from previous SIDS evaluations -> indicating the need for structural solutions, not project-by-project fixes.

Takeaways for Future Programming in Pacific SIDS

1. Enhance Coordination & Collaboration

2. Strengthen Program Effectiveness & M&E

3. Prioritize Institutional Capacity Development





Evaluation of GEF Programs in Pacific Small Island Developing States



<https://www.gefio.org/en/types/evaluations/pacific-sids>

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 Website: www.gefio.org

 LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/gefio](https://www.linkedin.com/in/gefio)

 X (Twitter): [@GEF_IEO](https://twitter.com/GEF_IEO) ([x.com/gef_ieo](https://twitter.com/GEF_IEO))

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