

# RESCCUE

## RESCCUE's SUPPORT

### TO INTEGRATED COASTAL MANAGEMENT

#### *HIGHLIGHTS*

- ✓ Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) was at the heart of RESCCUE's implementation strategy. This has resulted (i) at the regional level, in the production of documents and the exchange of experiences to guide field activities, and (ii) on pilot sites, in the development and implementation of ICM plans as well as diversified activities in planning, management of sectoral interventions and strengthening of governance.
- ✓ In practice, the necessary adaptation to local contexts and needs has meant that ICM plans were not developed systematically. When they were, they took a variety of forms.
- ✓ RESCCUE partners have refrained from taking the “ICM plan” tool for an objective in itself. They have navigated, overall successfully, between expectations of process quality and the imperative of operational efficiency.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

The overall goal of RESCCUE was to contribute to increasing the resilience of Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) in the context of global changes. To this end RESCCUE aimed at supporting adaptation to climate change through integrated coastal management (ICM), resorting especially to economic analysis and economic and financial mechanisms.

Alongside this overall objective at the regional level, RESCCUE had specific objectives at pilot sites:

- Develop integrated coastal management planning and pilot implementation;
- Strengthen the use of economic analysis for integrated coastal management;
- Ensure economic and financial sustainability of integrated coastal management;
- Facilitate learning, dissemination and replication of experiences gained from pilot sites.

ICM was therefore central to RESCCUE and it is worth looking back at what the project achieved.

## 2. THE RESCCUE APPROACH TO ICM – A REMINDER

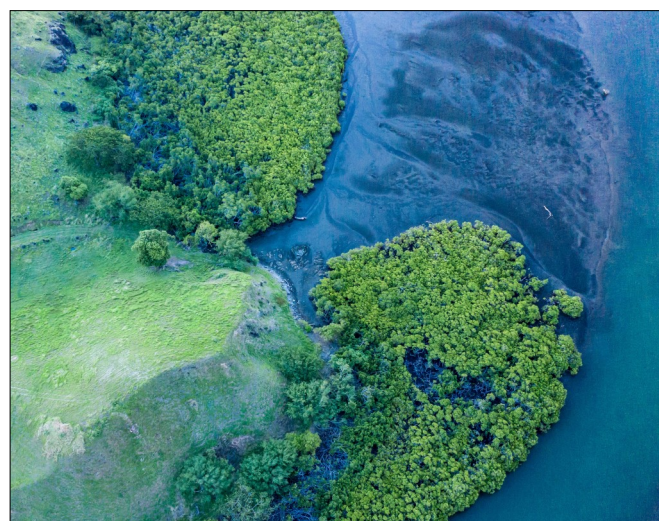
Early in the project implementation, a brief document entitled [The RESCCUE approach](#) outlined among other what was understood by “ICM” within RESCCUE. It built especially on two reports previously produced under RESCCUE: “[The pilot sites approach to ICM, its pitfalls and how to avoid them](#)”, and “[ICM in the Pacific and participation in decision-making](#)”. Three key points are reminded here.



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### 2.1 ICM is a mean and an end, not a procedure

ICM is both the way by which RESCCUE intended to contribute to increasing Pacific societies' and ecosystems' resilience to climate change, and the objective – that management be integrated. Under RESCCUE ICM was never understood as a pre-conceived procedure or protocol to follow, but an objective (or a utopian horizon given that management will never be fully integrated) and a context-dependent management framework that aims to address integration issues (between land and sea, sectors, levels of governance, science and management...). In other words under RESCCUE ICM was oriented towards solving – or managing – problems and conflicts.



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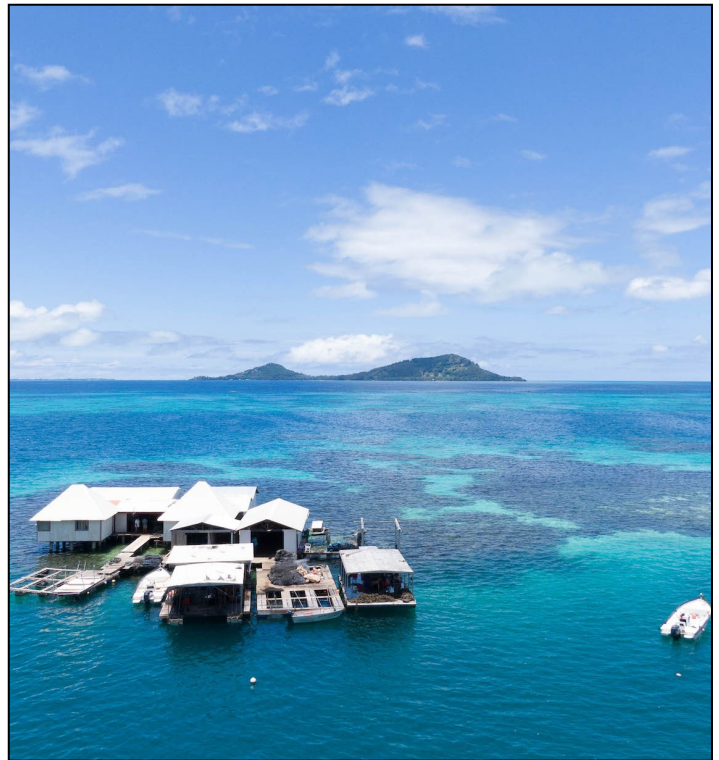


## 2.2 ICM, sectors and governance

Two other needed clarifications concerned the links between ICM and sectoral policies, and between ICM and governance.

ICM does not replace sectoral policies: it does not delegitimize nor make them obsolete. Sectoral socio-economic activities (such as fisheries, mining, tourism, protected areas...) and regulations (including Environmental Impacts Assessments or licensing procedures) are the key drivers of change in coastal areas. Strong sectoral policies and their effective regulation are crucial and offer considerable leeway for more integrated management. On the “theoretical side” of ICM, the systemic approach at the origin of the integration concept is essential to understand articulations, synergies, side effects etc. On the “action side” of ICM, a more integrated coastal management stems first and foremost – and maybe ironically – from strategic interventions on sectors and sectoral policies regulating them. The need for more integration should not remove the focus from the main threats to the coastal zone – usually the lack of appropriate implementation of sectoral policies. The RESCCUE approach proposed the following motto: “Think integrated, act strategic – and often sectoral<sup>1</sup>”.

Resorting to public participation to open decision-making processes is an essential dimension of ICM and was a fundamental principle of RESCCUE. Nevertheless, the legitimacy of public policies, and of the administrations that promote and implement them, was fully recognized. ICM provided a framework where top-down and bottom-up approaches hybridized.



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<sup>1</sup> Billé R., Rochette J. 2015. The Mediterranean ICZM Protocol: Paper treaty or wind of change? *Ocean and Coastal Management* 105: 84-91.

## 2.3 ICM and climate change

Within RESCCUE ICM was the favored approach to promote resilience to climate change. The logical chain was that more integrated coastal management means a better-protected environment, hence healthier ecosystems that are more resilient to climate change. In turn, this means people who depend on ecosystem services for their livelihoods – i.e. most people in RESCCUE's pilot sites – are also more resilient to climate change. A separate note provides insights on the links between ICM, adaptation to climate change and resilience.



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## 3. ICM ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT UNDER RESCCUE

### 3.1 Regional activities

Although RESCCUE was supposed to provide support for setting up ICM plans at pilot sites, there were no document or existing regional guidelines to help operators and stakeholders do so. Since [INTEGRE](#) was facing the same situation, the two projects joint forces to fill that gap, with the objective that ICM plans be developed and implemented rationally and consistently on RESCCUE and INTEGRE sites, while adapted to local circumstances.

The two projects therefore initially produced:

- A [Critical review and recommendations for PICTs](#), drawing from international experience;
- [Draft guidelines on how to develop ICM Plans in PICTs](#).

The [guidelines where then updated and upgraded in a new document](#) towards the end of the projects to draw lessons from implementation at INTEGRE and RESCCUE pilot sites.



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In addition, given that participatory approaches have been at the core of both INTEGRÉ and RESCCUE’s support to ICM, from identifying the issues and needs to developing and implementing the resulting ICM plans, the two projects co-organized a regional workshop on public participation in environmental management and decision-making. The main objectives were to get feedback about the two projects implementation and identify best practices as well as Pacific specificities in terms of both opportunities and challenges. These can be found in the [workshop outcomes report](#).

### 3.2 Development of ICM Plans at RESCCUE pilot sites

Out of seven RESCCUE pilot sites, there was expressed initial interest for ICM plans in six – the only exception being in the North East Coastal Area of the Northern Province, New Caledonia. All ICM plans were developed with the concern to match local needs and demands – although sometimes diverging.

#### *Ra and Kadavu Provinces, Fiji*

In Fiji, the development of Provincial ICM plans falls under the national ICM framework, which relies on a participatory approach with a national ICM committee – a technical advisory committee to the National Environment Council – and provincial ICM committees which comprise individuals from provincial administrations, government, private sector and communities. Based on a template for provincial-level ICM plans, provided by the national committee, each coastal province in Fiji is expected to develop a plan relying on the provincial committee.

When RESCCUE started, Ra was the first province in Fiji that had produced a draft of an ICM plan, alongside the establishment of the Ra Provincial ICM committee. RESCCUE supported the completion of the existing draft, until the [Ra ICM plan](#) (2015-2020) was endorsed by the Ra Provincial Council in September 2016, and subsequently by the National ICM sub-committee of the National Environment Council. It was officially launched by the Prime Minister in August 2018, as the first Provincial ICM Plan in Fiji.

Building on the Ra experience, RESCCUE supported the development of the [Kadavu ICM plan](#) (2017-2022), which was endorsed by the Kadavu Provincial Council in September 2018. The plan is currently awaiting approval by the National ICM sub-committee.

Activities undertaken by RESCCUE in both Provinces where all framed under these ICM Plans.



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### *Southern Province, New Caledonia*

The Southern Province requested that a Great South Spatial Prioritization and Development Plan be developed under RESCCUE. As at RESCCUE's start, there was no planning tool at an intermediate scale between municipalities (Urban Development Plans) and the whole territory (New Caledonia 2025). The Province was therefore keen to trial the feasibility and added value of a regional planning document which, although with no legal status, would provide multi-use spatial planning and strategic directions for the Great South, where environment and development stakes are high.



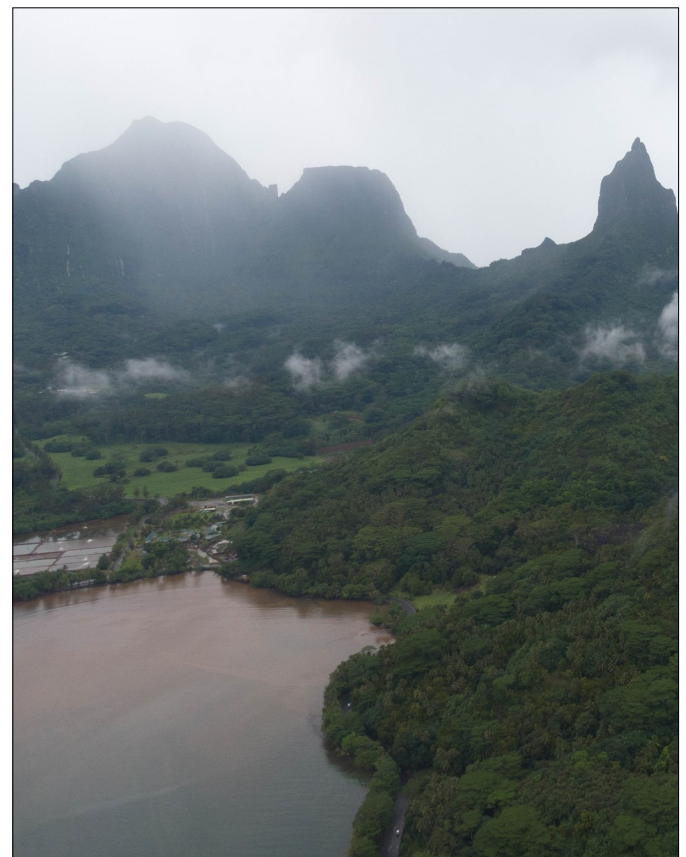
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This plan builds on, and brings coherence among, other planning document developed for the Great South under RESCCUE: the 2025 Protected Area Strategy, the Ramsar area integrated management plan, the Strategy for degraded sites ecological restoration, and the [Forest Fire Management Plan](#).

As it has been delivered only at the very end of the project, it is too early to take stock of the Great South Spatial Prioritization and Development Plan utilization and added value.

### *Gambier and 'Opunohu, French Polynesia*

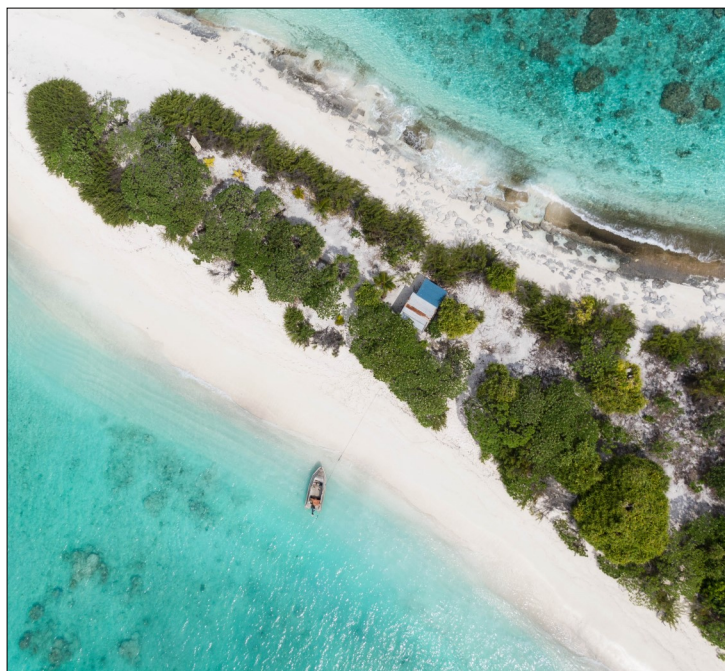
At the 'Opunohu pilot site on Moorea, in collaboration with [INTEGRE](#), RESCCUE first carried out an [in-depth assessment](#) with residents in order to understand and give due weight to the site's historical, social and cultural background. Using a participatory approach, the project helped [identify actions and propose a new governance method for sustainable local development](#) of the site. A number of priority activities were also [carried out](#) and then evaluated. Together the diagnosis, proposed priority actions and governance framework may or may not be considered as an ICM plan with no legal status, depending on criteria considered. It seems however that the word "plan" was poorly accepted so that the document is designated as a "process". Some ambiguity hence remains that would be worth clarifying: while ICM usually refers to the whole process, an ICM plan is a planning tool that can be utilized in support to that process.



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In the Gambier Islands, the work carried out with all the stakeholders *via* a participatory approach made it possible to jointly develop a document entitled [Nukutaireva](#) (“Land, Sea, Sky” in Mangarevian). Seven sustainable development goals, 26 objectives and 32 actions for the area over the next 20 years were identified –15 of which were carried out during the project. Several governance arrangements were discussed with the various stakeholders involved and municipal authorities are now considering the establishment of a management committee. While Nukutaireva’s subtitle is “An ICM plan for the Gambier archipelago”, which translates a real local appetite for the ICM plan tool, there is no consensus here either as to key criteria that may or may not justify to call this document an ICM plan.



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#### *North Efate, Vanuatu*

RESCCUE supported the participatory development of an [ICM plan for North Efate \(2017-2022\)](#), in line with the [National Integrated Coastal Management Framework and Implementation Strategy for Vanuatu](#). The activities undertaken in RESCCUE are all components of the ICM Plan. They were led primarily by the community-based Tasi Vanua and Nguna Pele environmental networks, in partnership with Government Departments and the Shefa Province.

Although the plan provides a vision and a framework for current and future sustainable development and climate change adaptation initiatives in North Efate (e.g. the North Efate Conservation Fund), Vanuatu Government has not formally endorsed it and there is no formal ICM committee in North Efate to monitor its implementation. This could be explained by both the rather experimental nature of this ICM plan (a first in Vanuatu) and an uneven local and national appetite for it.



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### 3.3 Implementation of field activities in terms of planning, management of sectoral activities and governance

With ICM being the general project approach to building resilience, all RESCCUE field activities implemented on the seven pilot sites and under every project component were about ICM implementation. They can be clustered under three broad categories:

- Planning: besides ICM planning per se (see 3.2), several planning activities were carried out at pilot sites such as PGEM revision in Moorea, Waste Management Plan in the Gambier, Ramsar area integrated management plan in the Southern Province of New Caledonia, Tasi Vanua Environmental Network business plan in Vanuatu.
- Sectoral activities: for example support to MPAs or waste management in Fiji, invasive alien species management in the Northern Province of New Caledonia, reef fisheries management in North Efate, Vanuatu, change of agricultural practices in ‘Opunohu (Moorea) and of pearl farming practices in the Gambier.
- Governance: under RESCCUE a strong focus was placed not only on activities, but also on the “how” things were done, i.e. governance arrangements. This encompasses among other, procedures and tools to place partner countries and territories in the pilot seat while allowing a close partnership with local and provincial authorities, public participation processes to design and implement activities in a way that meets local needs and specificities, special attention to the role of customary authorities where applicable, establishment of local management committees where appropriate and synergy with existing committees where more appropriate.



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## 4. CONCLUSION

There are many lessons learnt and conclusions to draw from RESCCUE's experience with ICM, and the comprehensive, multistakeholder lessons-learning process carried out at the end of the project is best suited to formalize them. Here we just offer some subjective comments on key points of interest emerging from the above.

### 4.1 Tools *vs.* objectives and the requirement to deliver tangible outcomes

RESCCUE faced the risk to take tools for objectives, with the project (actually or being perceived as) “selling” a combination of ICM plans and committees as a one-size-fits-all response to all contexts of intervention. The above shows that based on extensive consultations with partner governments, administrations and local stakeholders, the ICM plan component of RESCCUE demonstrated flexibility both in the nature and in the governance of such plans, ranging from an “ideal” (i.e. perfectly matching the project's theory) combination of ICM plans and committees in Fiji to no work nor discussion of an ICM plan in the Northern Province of New Caledonia.

An even greater risk was that ICM plans (or related, locally-adjusted plans) be developed but end up on bookshelves with no tangible implementation. This was avoided by systematically starting implementation activities before the plans were actually finalized or endorsed. This obviously requires careful design to avoid illegitimate actions, but it does contribute to building momentum for the plan under development.



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## 4.2 Public participation and legal status of ICM plans

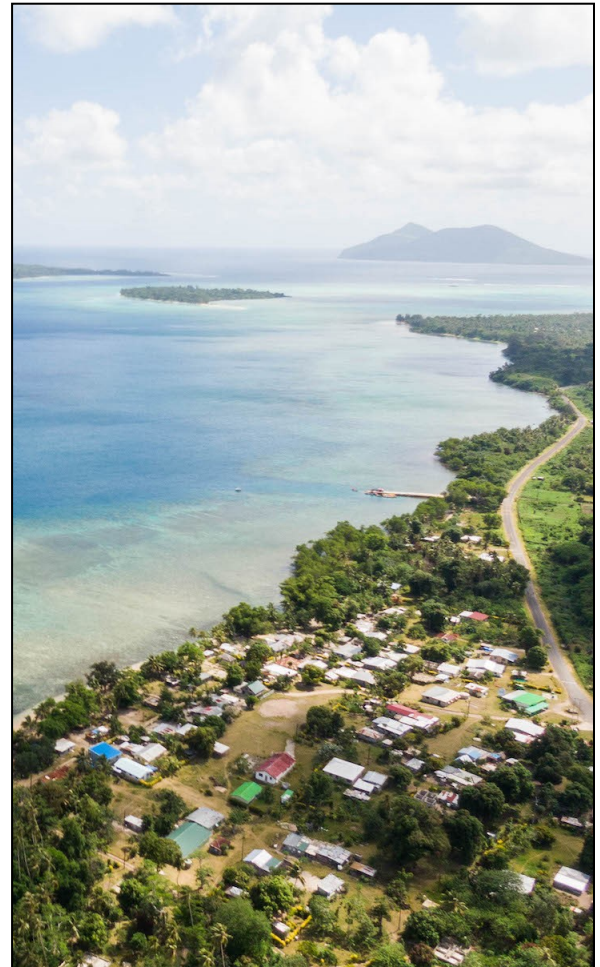
Public participation processes sometimes face the risk to get stuck. In such cases there may be a temptation to go too fast to deliver, which generates blockages and wastes of time later. Identifying legitimate representatives of various groups of stakeholders sometimes turned out to be a real challenge and the issue of representation could induce highly complex participatory processes such as in ‘Opunohu or Kadavu. Striking a balance was never easy, it took a lot of energy and many different strategies, was the subject of sometimes difficult negotiations between governments, operators, SPC and local stakeholders, but there is no one pilot site where either the participatory process lasted forever while nothing happened, or hasty action was taken but process was bypassed.

Another thorny issue was whether ICM plans or their equivalents should be formally adopted (i.e. legally endorsed by a competent authority) or not. Project implementation progressively demonstrated – and confirmed international experience – that this question is not as important as the level of plan ownership by the people who are in a position to implement it. A plan can be formally endorsed and remain a paper-plan, or be purely informal but implemented thoroughly.

## 4.3 Role of local facilitators and volunteers

Some local conditions for success were initially underestimated and had to be addressed later with extra difficulties.

First, nothing would have been possible in terms of tangible ICM activities at the local level without local facilitators being dedicated to “making things happen”. Sometimes RESCCUE benefited from the synergy with INTEGRE (like in Moorea and the Southern Province of New Caledonia), sometimes more resources had to be found and put in local facilitation along the way (like in Vanuatu or the Gambier): solutions were found but better anticipation would have helped.



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Second, nothing would have been possible either without the involvement and dedication of volunteers – i.e. people giving their time and expertise freely to support project implementation. This is a tacit pattern of community-based management, but it raises questions as Pacific societies are changing fast and “free time” is becoming a scarcer resource for people increasingly involved in formal economic activities (like pearl farming in the Gambier, mining in New Caledonia or farm workers visas granted to North Efate people for the New Zealand picking season).

#### 4.4 Governance mechanisms

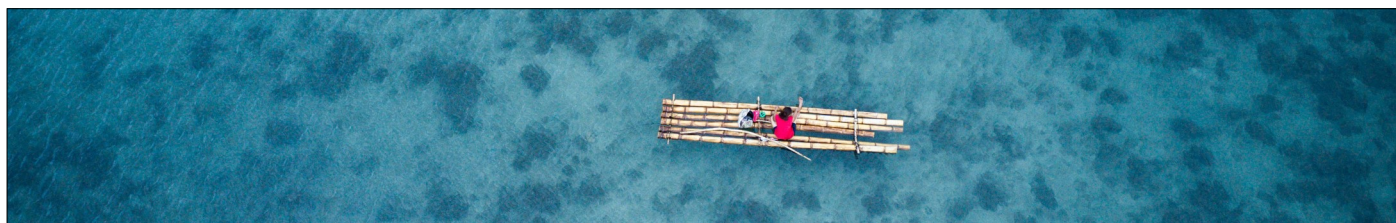
The usual challenge for sectoral administrations to work together more closely, especially at the land/sea interface, lies at the heart of the ICM rationale. RESCCUE, *via* the governance mechanisms established, contributed to more intense inter-sectoral collaboration at all its pilot sites. For instance national steering committees, when multi-sectoral enough, helped bring together organisations that did not necessarily meet very often otherwise.

Some actions undertaken by RESCCUE may seem quite obvious and probably could have been designed without going through a long and complex ICM process. However the governance arrangements under which such actions were taken strongly reinforced their legitimacy, their political support and social acceptability. Good governance processes legitimize actions, and conversely tangible activities reflect efficient governance processes, hence legitimizing them.

Last, governance arrangements used under RESCCUE allow key project outputs such as the various plans and strategies developed, to offer a concerted framework for action in the near future. They are key part of the project heritage.



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#### AUTHORS

Raphaël Billé and Jean-Baptiste Marre

#### EDITION

Mélanie Farman

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