

**Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP Project on
“Global Coral Reef Partnership: Towards an Ecosystem
Approach to Coral Reef Management - PIMS ID 01820”
(2015-2019)**



**Evaluation Office of the
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(Global Coral Reef Partnership: Towards an Ecosystem Approach to Coral Reef Management)

(PIMS ID 01820)

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BRIEF CONSULTANT BIOGRAPHY

Anissa Lawrence brings over 25 years of extensive experience in undertaking international desktop studies, reviews and in biodiversity conservation policy development and strategy, particularly for the Coral Triangle and Pacific region. She has a good understanding of and experience in coastal ecosystems and marine protected species programs globally, understands the management and institutional issues involved and is familiar with many SE Asian and Pacific governments, regional institutions and international organisations. She has a strong history of effective project management and experience with international funding and project proposal development and capacity assessments. She has led and worked in a number of multi-disciplinary international teams and is a strong project manager with a proven track record in stakeholder consultation. She has a good working knowledge of the process of developing and implementing internationally funded regional and global projects in a developing country context, having successfully prepared project proposals and undertaken a number of evaluations, capacity assessments and strategic planning projects across the Asia Pacific region. She has strong skills in synthesizing scientific information for plain writing and undertaking stakeholder engagement, working at all levels from Minister to community.

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ABOUT THE EVALUATION

Joint Evaluation: No

Report Language(s): English

Evaluation Type: Terminal Project Evaluations

Brief Description: This report is a terminal evaluation of a UNEP project implemented between 2015 and 2019. The project's overall development goal was *"Countries are able to use the ecosystem approach to sustain ecosystem services from coral reefs, with the assistance of UNEP* through specific actions mostly at the regional and global levels and a number of pilot studies within 5 countries (Kenya, New Caledonia, Seychelles, Malaysia and Mesoamerica). The evaluation sought to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The evaluation has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned with UNEP.

Key words: coral reefs, partnership, ICRI, International Coral Reef Initiative, Regional Seas, ecosystem based management, coral reef resilience, climate change, Green Fins, Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network, Global Coral Reef Partnership, small grants programme.

Primary data collection period: October – December 2020

Field mission dates: None due to COVID 19 travel restrictions

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
GCRMN	Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network
ICRI	International Coral Reef Initiative
ROPME (Regional Seas)	Regional Organisation for the Protection of the Marine Environment
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UNEA	United Nations Environment Assembly
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNEP-WCMC	United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

Table 1. Project Identification Table

UNEP PIMS ID:	01820	SB-000965	
Implementing Partners	UNEP-WCMC, GRID-Arendal, PERSGA, ROPME, SACEP, SPREP, Reef World Foundation, Forest Trends, CORDIO, TNC, NCRI, USCRTF, USEPA, NOAA		
Relevant SDG(s) and indicator(s):	Sustainable Development Goal 14, Targets 14.2 and 14.5 14.2.1 Proportion of EEZ managed using ecosystem-based approaches 14.5.1 Coverage of protected areas in relation to marine areas		
Sub-programme:	Ecosystem Management	Expected Accomplishment(s):	EA(b)
UNEP approval date:	09/01/2015	Programme of Work Output(s):	3ai,ii,iii, 3bi, ii
Expected start date:	01/01/2015	Actual start date:	09/01/2015
Planned completion date:	31/12/2019	Actual operational completion date:	
Planned project budget at approval:	US\$ 3,036,000	Actual total expenditures reported as of [date]:	
Planned Environment Fund allocation:	US\$ 255,000	Actual Environment Fund expenditures reported as of [date]:	
Planned Extra-Budgetary Financing:	US\$ 2,700,000	Secured Extra-Budgetary Financing:	US\$ 3,004,865
		Actual Extra-Budgetary Financing expenditures reported as of 31/12/2019:	US\$ 2,845,225
First disbursement:		Planned date of financial closure:	
No. of formal project revisions:	1	Date of last approved project revision:	26/09/2018
No. of Steering Committee meetings:	3	Date of last Steering Committee meeting:	Last: Dec 2018 Next:
Mid-term Review (planned date):		Mid-term Review (actual date):	Apr 2017
Terminal Evaluation (planned date):	January 2020	Terminal Evaluation (actual date):	February 2021
Coverage - Countries:	Tier 1: Barbados, Maldives, Mozambique, Palau, Seychelles, and Viet Nam Tier 2: Cap Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe,	Coverage - Regions:	Global - Asia Pacific, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, West Asia

	Belize, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Indonesia, Philippines, Myanmar, Madagascar, Tanzania, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Sri Lanka, Fiji, Samoa		
Dates of previous project phases:		Status of future project phases:	Phase 2 - Sustainable Management of Marine and Coastal Ecosystem Services commenced

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report presents the results of the terminal evaluation of the multi-donor funded project, *Global Coral Reef Partnership: Towards an Ecosystem Approach to Coral Reef Management (GCRP) (UNEP PIMS ID 01820)* executed by the Ecosystem Management Division, Coral Reef Unit of UNEP, and implemented through the Global Partnership for Coral Reefs, consisting of UNEP, the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans, the International Coral Reef Initiative and UNEP collaborating centres such as the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre. The Terminal Evaluation was undertaken to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency), and determine the degree of achievement and/or likelihood of outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the Project, including their sustainability. The terminal evaluation took place between October 2020 to March 2021.
2. The Terminal Evaluation used a mix of desk reviews of project documents and other relevant literature and studies and in-depth interviews (by Zoom, and by email) with UNEP, and key individuals involved in the design, implementation and management of the Project, as well as selected partner representatives and other international stakeholders who have participated in the Project. The Evaluation Consultant did not visit participating countries to hold interviews with key Partners due to Covid19 travel restrictions.

Summary of key evaluation findings

3. The overall goal of this Project was to *“develop and test methods, tools and policy frameworks for ecosystem-based management of coral reefs and facilitate their regional and national adoption through provision of technical and policy support, implementation of demonstration projects and capacity development.”* As shown in Table 7, the overall rating for the Project is Satisfactory.
4. This Project influenced policy and decision-making for coral reef management at global, regional and to a lesser extent national scale. This Project helped to develop tools to further understanding of the impacts of climate change on coral reefs, how to measure the status and trends of coral reef ecosystems, and how to use these data to manage for resilience of coral reefs in a changing world. The Project created opportunity to help build a strong global network, particularly through the International Coral Reef Initiative and engage and work with similar organisations. The Regional Seas Programmes, with their unique mandate for the protection of the coastal and marine environment, were an important Partner for the Project to collaborate with member states to implement the tools and approaches for ecosystem-based management of coral reefs in the face of climate change. While the ability of each Regional Sea to engage in the Project varied, their input was highly valued.
5. The Project greatly contributed to strengthening the implementation of the ecosystem approach in coral reef management at global, regional and going forward through follow on work at national scales. The value of the Project was seen through a) the development of a wide set of tools and information sources that support the implementation of best practices for ecosystem-based management of coral reefs,

- b) an improved understanding of the current status of coral reefs at national, regional and global scales, with ecosystem-based management recommendations, c) support for implementation of ecosystem-based management approaches and capacity-building in-country in key coral reef nations, d) the development of sustainable financing mechanisms for the implementation of ecosystem-based management in coral reef areas, notably through the Global Fund for Coral Reefs, and e) strengthening of international multi-lateral environmental frameworks specifically for coral reef issues.
6. Institutional/capacity strengths and weaknesses of the Global Coral Reef Partnership in delivering on the project objectives, and for future UNEP coral reef activities have been discussed throughout the report and are reflected in the recommendations.
 7. There is evidence that the socio-economic tools developed as part of the Project, were successfully taken up by various stakeholders. The establishment of the Global Coral Reef Fund is testament to the value of the Project in providing the underlying technical input via socio economic tools produced, to develop the business case for its acceptance. Going forward this should see increased strengthening of ecosystem based approaches implemented on the ground by countries. There was no resistance to the Project identified.
 8. The 2017 UN Oceans Conference and the 2018 International Year of the Reef events raised awareness of project objectives but as the Global Coral Reef Partnership was not branded the focus was on promoting outputs and outcomes. During the 2017 UN Oceans Conference, many of the project outputs and achievements were presented at a high level, for example a high level VIP lunch on coral reefs was organised with support from the Project. Collaboration with Indonesia through the UN Oceans Conference also helped them in agreeing to become an International Coral Reef Initiative Secretariat co-chair. The Project helped to catalyse the designation of International Year of the Reef in 2018 through its collaboration and support of the International Coral Reef Initiative.
 9. There was good consideration to gender dimensions throughout the Project where it was relevant, through consideration in team structures of partners, when training and capacity building was undertaken, and through deliberate steps taken to understand socio economic factors within communities to help drive change for the small grants programmes and in Project reporting at all levels.
 10. The Project has “put coral reefs on the map” and provided a clear mandate to show that coral reefs are an important area of work for the United Nations and UNEP going forward. The Project has influenced and strengthened international discussions and raised the focus on coral reefs directly as a result of the work undertaken across all Outputs of the Project. The Project made exceptional progress with respect to the outputs and outcomes achieved, exceeding expectations in a number of cases. Key strengths of the Project have been seen through the outcomes achieved, including:
 - the establishment of the first UN multi-partner trust fund dedicated to Sustainable Development Goal 14, and the first one for coral reefs, the Global Fund for Coral Reefs, a blended finance instrument to mobilise action and resources (both public and private) to protect and restore coral reef ecosystems;

- the expansion and scaling of the UNEP Green Fins initiative;
 - revitalising and strengthening the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network, established by the International Coral Reef Initiative and tasked with reporting on the condition of the world's coral reefs; and
 - strengthening of the International Coral Reef Initiative and the ability of Regional Seas participants to lead or participate in various ad-hoc committees, initiatives, and resolutions, which has also strengthened coral reef networks for practitioners. The Project offered the opportunity to engage and work with similar organisations; and through its collaborations and tools and materials developed, the passing of two resolutions specifically on coral reefs by the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA): Resolution 2/12 at the 2nd UNEA in 2016 and follow-on Resolution 4/13 at the 4th UNEA-4 in 2019, both on "Sustainable Management of Coral Reefs". The submission and acceptance of the UNEA resolutions can be attributed in part to the support of the project to Member States and to the International Coral Reef Initiative. Both resolutions now provide a strong mandate for UNEP to support coral reef countries on coral reef science, management and policy.
11. Project outcomes are likely to be sustainable, given the ongoing financial support from several donor countries to UNEP to build on the outcomes from this and other projects to assist in scaling and replication, working through Regional Seas; the continued collaboration with the International Coral Reef Initiative; the establishment of the Global Fund for Coral Reefs; and the international mandate provided via a number of instruments. There is strong commitment and ownership to drive things forward within International Coral Reef Initiative member countries, and UNEP is already seeing requests for support from some of these. Furthermore, the Convention on Biological Diversity post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework will most likely include targets and recommendations for coral reefs that will help see the focus extend beyond 2030. The capacity of Regional Seas will be a limiting factor that UNEP is well aware of and is looking to address, having engaged them early in the development of the new 316.1 project to ensure capacity issues can be managed or capacity enhanced.
12. The biggest weaknesses related to the short timeframes for delivery of some projects brought about mostly by internal delays with UNEP project and financial management systems and that some partners were not aware of what was going on with respect of the partnership given the deliberate decision not to brand the project. Of key concern was the overloading of the Project Coordinator who had two fulltime jobs during most of the project, impacting on efficiencies and the lack of dedicated financial support from a Financial Management Officer of UNEP.
13. The key recommendations arising from the Terminal Evaluation are summarised as follows:
- Ensure a clear mandate for the Project and regularly communicate this to Partners so they can understand what it is seeking to achieve, how they can engage, how UNEP can engage with them, and Partners are clear under which framework they are operating. This helps Partners to understand where they fit in and why activities are being undertaken and helps avoid duplication of effort. Showing Partners where the Global Coral Reef partnership fits in and how it works with other collaborations,

organisations, projects and mechanisms will also assist Partners in understanding the value of the Global Coral Reef Partnership and why they should invest in it.

- A project of this scope and complexity (including geographic scope, number of Partners and legal instruments for implementation, intended outcome, as well as relationships with and dependence on other global and regional entities with their own membership, governance mechanisms and challenges) should have a dedicated Project Coordinator and would benefit from additional support for project management and administration tasks. UNEP should not be having staff undertake two jobs at once as not only does it impact on project performance, but also the mental health and wellbeing of the employee.
- For all large projects with multiple donors there should be a dedicated finance officer from commencement to project conclusion to ensure sound financial management and avoid inefficiencies in financial reporting and financial closure. Given the lack of financial information available for the Project and the delays experienced with the financial closure, it is recommended that the Project be audited.
- For all UNEP projects, the UNEP Gender Unit should establish indicators for measuring gender outcomes for achieving conservation goals with respect to women empowerment and youth engagement and capacity building that can provide a template for all UNEP GEF funded projects. Without clear and appropriate outcome-level indicators, reporting of gender inclusion can often be piecemeal – i.e. number of women involved without measuring if there was a conservation-related outcome from their engagement.

14. The key lessons learned arising from the Terminal Evaluation are as follows:

- Any work in relation to coral reefs must be undertaken within a climate lens and consider resilience-based management in that context.
- There is no clear definition of what Ecosystem Based Management, and an ecosystems approach entails. You cannot do ecosystem-based management of one ecosystem as it needs to be set within a coastal mosaic and within societal processes.
- It is important to understand how best to engage with different partners, each with their different contexts. Working through the international Coral Reef Initiative was a great strength and brings credibility and allows more effective engagement. Global and regional meetings build bridges. Reinforcing the importance of having partnerships and networks and sharing information stops duplication of effort and builds on work already done. Supporting capacity building and sharing of experiences allows for on-ground successes to be replicated in other countries so they can gain access to expertise.
- Apply a participatory approach - Engaging people from the beginning and through a whole process will give greater chance of success for take up of results and ensure commitment and accountability to it.

I. INTRODUCTION

15. The Global Coral Reef Partnership (GCRP) Project (the Project) is being led by the Ecosystem Management Division, Coral Reef Unit of United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) and was implemented through the Global Partnership for Coral Reefs, consisting of UNEP, the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans, the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) and UNEP collaborating centres such as the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC). UNEP provided the secretariat of the partnership. Other partners included GRID-Arendal, Regional Organization for the Conservation of the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden (PERSGA), Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME) South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP), South Pacific Regional Environmental Programme (SPREP), Reef World Foundation, Forest Trends, Coral Reef Degradation in the Indian Ocean (CORDIO), The Nature Conservancy, National Coral Reef Institute (NCRI), US Coral Reef Task Force (USCRTF), US Environment Protection Agency (USEPA), US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The Project operated at the global and regional level (Africa, Asia Pacific, Europe, Latin America and Caribbean, West Asia), with a small number of demonstration projects at the local level. Beneficiary countries were Malaysia, Kenya, Seychelles, Tanzania, Belize, Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, New Caledonia (France), Egypt, Dominican Republic, Japan, Antigua and Barbuda, Sri Lanka and Singapore. The Project received Project Review Committee approval on 24 November 2014 (although the Project Review Committee document was not signed) and the project document was signed 9 January 2015. The total secured budget was US\$3,004,865. The Project was proposed as a 4 year project that commenced in January 2015. It was extended by 24 months until December 2019 through a Project Revision document approved in 2018. A midterm review was conducted in April 2017. The Project has now been superseded by a new project, Project 316.1 on the "Sustainable Management of Marine and Coastal Ecosystem Services". The GCRP Project contributed to the following:

Subprogramme	<i>Ecosystem Management Healthy and Productive Ecosystems</i>
PoW Expected Accomplishment (s)	<i>EA (b): Use of the ecosystem approach in countries to sustain ecosystem services from coastal and marine systems is increased</i>
PoW Outputs	<i>1. Methodologies, tools and global and regional policy frameworks that apply the ecosystem approach to sustain coastal and marine ecosystem services and productivity in particular food provisioning are developed and tested.</i>
Link to relevant SDG target(s) and SDG indicator(s)	SDG 14

16. This Terminal Evaluation (TE) for GCRP Project was carried out in accordance with the provisions of the UNEP's Evaluation Policy and the UNEP Programme Manual. The TE sought to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness,

and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the Project, including their sustainability. The evaluation had two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote operational improvement, learning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP and its Partners. The evaluation identified lessons of operational relevance for future project formulation and implementation, especially given a second phase of the Project is now underway. Due to COVID19 travel restrictions, no site inspections were undertaken. The intended audience for this report is UNEP, donors, and its implementation partners.

II. EVALUATION METHODS

17. The TE was conducted by an Independent Evaluator with expertise in natural resource/marine and coastal ecosystem conservation, community engagement, policy and institutional analysis, and project management and M&E (including UN and GEF project experience), under the overall responsibility and management of the Evaluation Office of UNEP (in Nairobi).

18. In addition to the Evaluation Criteria set out in the TORs, the evaluation sought to address the following strategic questions:

- To what extent did the scientific and other knowledge products prepared through this Project influence policy and decision-making for coral reef management at global, regional and national scales?
- To what extent did this Project contribute to strengthening the implementation of the ecosystem approach in coral reef management at global, regional and national scales?
- What were the institutional/capacity strengths and weaknesses of the Global Coral Reef Partnership in delivering on the project objectives, and for future UNEP coral reef activities?
- To what extent were the socio-economic tools developed as part of the Project, successfully taken up by various stakeholders? What resistance, if any, was the project met with?
- One of the recommendations from the Mid-Term Reviews was that the extension of the Project would benefit from the awareness raised through the UN Ocean Conference (2017) and the International Year of the Reef (2018). To what extent did these events have on raising awareness on the Project's objective and/or, to what extent did the project raise awareness at these events to meet the Project's objective?

19. A Reconstructed Theory of Change (TOC) for the Project developed by the independent evaluator underpinned the TE. The TOC was based on the results framework, intervention logic and risk analysis in the ProDoc, as well as from discussions with UNEP Project Coordinators, and the UNEP Evaluation Manager. The ToC was assessed for consistency and a clear conceptual understanding of the Project impact pathways to guide the TE. The reconstructed ToC is presented in Figure 2.

20. The TE was based on a combination of a desk review and analysis of available project and context-related documentation and interviews with the UNEP Project Coordinators and some project implementation partners, including pilot demonstration projects. Due to COVID19, no field inspections or face to face meetings were held. All discussions were via Zoom or via email.

21. Gender and human rights were evaluated with guidance provided from the UNEP policies. Throughout this evaluation process, and in the compilation of the Terminal Evaluation Report, efforts have been made to represent the views of both mainstream and more marginalised groups, noting the limitations with respect to

field visits. Data were collected with respect to ethics and human rights issues through the in-depth Zoom interviews conducted. All information gathered was after prior informed consent from people, all discussions remained anonymous, and all information was collected according to the UNEG Code of Conduct and Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation’.

22. In-depth interviews using standard questions (via zoom or by email) were undertaken with a representative selection of key stakeholders identified for the Project, including UNEP staff involved in the implementation and management of the Project, as well as some implementation Project Partner representatives who participated in the Project. A total of 14 interviews were held for the terminal evaluation, involving 17 stakeholder representatives. Data and information collected underwent qualitative analysis with verification of findings through triangulation. The combination of sources also helped to reduce information gaps. See Annex 2 for details on the documents reviewed and stakeholders interviewed as a part of the Evaluation Program.
23. In accordance with the UNEP evaluation guidelines, standard evaluation criteria were used to assess the Project. All evaluation criteria were rated on a six-point scale as follows: Highly Satisfactory (HS); Satisfactory (S); Moderately Satisfactory (MS); Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU); Unsatisfactory (U) Highly Unsatisfactory (HS). Sustainability and likelihood of impact were rated from Highly Likely (HL) down to Highly Unlikely (HU). The 'Nature of External Context' criterion is rated from Highly Unfavourable (HU) to Highly Favourable (HF). The evaluation criteria were:
 - (1) Strategic Relevance;
 - (2) Quality of Project Design;
 - (3) Nature of External Context;
 - (4) Effectiveness, which comprises an assessment of the availability of outputs, achievement of project outcomes and the likelihood of impact;
 - (5) Financial Management, which addresses *adherence* to UNEP’s financial policies and procedures, *completeness* of financial information and *communication* between financial and project management staff;
 - (6) Efficiency;
 - (7) Monitoring and Reporting;
 - (8) Sustainability, with a focus on socio-political, financial and institutional sustainability; and
 - (9) Factors affecting performance - including preparation and readiness, quality of project management and supervision, stakeholder participation and cooperation, responsiveness to human rights and gender equity, environmental and social safeguards, country ownership and driven-ness and communication and public awareness.

24. Several limitations and risks apply to the TE:

- Due to COVID19 travel restrictions, all interviews were held online via Zoom with Project Partners. This meant that no interviews were conducted with community beneficiaries involved in the demonstration pilot projects in selected countries and reliance was placed on project reporting and interviews conducted with Project Coordinators.
- Given the limitations in budget and the significant number of Partners in this Project, Zoom interviews were not undertaken with every Partner. All Partners were, however, provided with interview questions and given the option of a Zoom interview or to provide written responses. Only a small number of Partners responded, following several attempts with a number indicating they were not aware of the Project (refer Annex 2 for list of respondents).

III. THE PROJECT

A. Context

25. Coral Reefs are critical, not just for the 25% of all marine species but for the human population. They provide a range of regulating, provisioning, cultural and supporting services, sustaining coastal people and business sectors around the world. About half a billion people depend on coral reefs for food, coastal protection, building materials and income, with 275 million directly dependent on them for livelihoods and sustenance. Coral reefs globally, however, are showing decline due to many threats from human induced factors. These ecosystems act as an indicator of ocean health, a flagship system for understanding how ecosystem and societal processes interact, and in developing measures that reduce direct threats, secure ecosystem service provision for dependent communities and sectors, and promote adaptation to climate change and ocean acidification. As such coral reefs offer both a critical distress signal and an opportunity to learn how to effectively tackle today's ecosystem management challenges. Ecosystem-based management that addresses multiple threats in an integrated manner can ensure continued provision of coral reef ecosystem services.
26. In the decision on oceans adopted at the first Universal Session of the UNEP Governing Council in 2013, Member States requested the Executive Director of UNEP to coordinate work as contained in the Global Strategic Directions for the Regional Seas 2013-2016. Under these strategic directions the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans (RSCAP) and UNEP will, inter alia, *"1. Endeavor to effectively apply an ecosystem approach in the management of the marine and coastal environment...; and 6. Strengthen collaboration... partnerships and coordinated regional implementation of relevant MEAs, global and regional initiatives, such as...ICRI, including through collaborating on a coral reef partnership"*.
27. In 2013 a 'continuing call to action and framework for action' was adopted by members of ICRI (UNEP is a founding member), which inter alia called for management of coral reefs using an ecosystem approach and technical collaboration and information sharing on all aspects of sustainable management of coral reefs and related ecosystems, including through RSCAP. Through consultation with RSCAP during 2013 and a Coral Reef Partnership Workshop organised during GLOC-2 in October 2013, challenges and needs common to most reef regions were identified. The GCRP Project was designed to focus on addressing the challenges and needs identified, and implementation arrangements were developed in response.
28. The GCRP Project sought to support countries on international commitments related to coral reefs¹, by reducing and managing the impacts of stresses faced by coral reefs and the broader tropical coastal ecosystem in which they occur, through an ecosystem approach encompassing enhanced access to and use of environmental data, and collaboration across public and private sectors. It did this

¹ For example, Aichi Biodiversity Target 10 - "the multiple anthropogenic pressures on coral reefs, and other vulnerable ecosystems impacted by climate change or ocean acidification are minimized, so as to maintain their integrity and functioning"

through developing and testing methods, tools and policy frameworks for ecosystem-based management of coral reefs and facilitating their regional and national adoption through provision of technical and policy support, implementation of demonstration projects and capacity development. The Project intended to provide a mechanism for enhancing implementation of global policy frameworks relevant to coral reefs, including the ICRI Continuing Call to Action and Framework for Action, through UNEP's Regional Seas Programme and a framework for mobilising UNEP, tropical Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans, UNEP-WCMC, GRID-Arendal, other organisations and private sector entities in coral reef partnership activities. The Project intended to strengthen management of coral reef resources and enable a select number of target countries to make concrete and measurable progress towards achieving Aichi Target 10.

B. Results Framework

29. The Project Outcome is specified as:

"Countries are able to use the ecosystem approach to sustain ecosystem services from coral reefs, with the assistance of UNEP."

30. The Project Document described the following aims:

- at the global level, [to] develop methods, tools and policy frameworks, where possible building on existing efforts, and support exchange of best practice and lessons learned between regions;
- at the regional level, [to] facilitate adoption of methods, tools and policy frameworks by Regional Seas intergovernmental mechanisms through provision of policy guidance and other forms of support and adapting methods, tools and policy frameworks to regional context where required;
- at the national level, [to] demonstrate use of methods and tools and implementation of policy frameworks through pilot activities implemented with partners.

31. The Project's overall objective is stated in the Project Document as to *"develop and test methods, tools and policy frameworks for ecosystem-based management of coral reefs and facilitate their regional and national adoption through provision of technical and policy support, implementation of demonstration projects and capacity development"*.

32. To deliver against this overall objective and aims, the Project had four outputs:

- Output A) Indicators, methods, planning tools and strategic frameworks for management of coral reefs that builds resilience in the face of climate change and includes gender perspectives developed and tested through pilot interventions.
- Output B) Tools for policy-focused coral reef ecosystem service valuation, economic instruments for coral reef management and sectoral codes of practice that include gender perspectives developed and tested through pilot interventions.
- Output C) Knowledge for ecosystem-based coral reef planning and management, including development and pilot testing of coral reef status and outlook reporting and indicators for tracking progress towards targets, and related training.
- Output D) Institutional mechanisms for policy uptake and outreach, including

partnership operations, communications and support to ICRI and GCRMN.

33. All the project components and outcomes are closely linked to ensure that systems are developed and implemented to contribute to the wider goal of *"Countries are able to use the ecosystem approach to sustain ecosystem services from coral reefs with the assistance of UNEP"*.
34. The Project went through one revision relating to an extension of the time to complete by 24 months as a result of additional funding being secured and to allow a natural transition into a new program of work as UNEP moved to a new Medium-Term Strategy. The overall Outputs and Outcomes did not change, however several activities under each output were added in. These have been factored into the reconstructed TOC (refer Section 5).

C. Stakeholders

35. The Project was implemented through a global partnership between UNEP, RSCAP, UNEP WCMC, GRID-Arendal, governments and government agencies, initiatives such as ICRI, academic and research institutions and private sector partners who all played leading roles as change agents within their respective areas of expertise, whether it be in the development of specific decision support tools and reports to drive action or through the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network which was reinvigorated through the Project. With multiple country partners and a strong focus on building awareness, capacity and technical expertise, understanding the needs, strengths and potential roles of all potential stakeholders was fundamental to the effective project implementation. Through the Regional Seas, existing relationships and partnerships provided a solid basis from which to identify who should be involved and in what role. Extensive consultation occurred during the design with RSCAP, ICRI and other partners to address specific needs in developing and implementing ecosystem-based management in coral reef areas. Country selection was undertaken on that basis with Regional Seas and technical partners that had a good understanding of the capacity and situation within countries.
36. For a global project of this kind across reef regions the main focus was on the development and adoption of tools and approaches and demonstration of their application, so the Project was not aiming for broadscale impact on the ground. Gender issues were incorporated into various aspects of project activities, for example through the Green Fins activities on sustainable tourism that had specific targets on gender balance in training of Green Fins certifiers and via the ICRI/UNEP Small Grants Programme, supported by the Governments of France and Monaco, which included a blue carbon project in Kenya that specifically incorporated gender issues as a large component of that project worked with women. As a large part of the Project focus was on global and regional science-policy processes including the development of reports and tools for the sustainable management of coral reefs, all project activities and interventions were deemed not to contravene the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

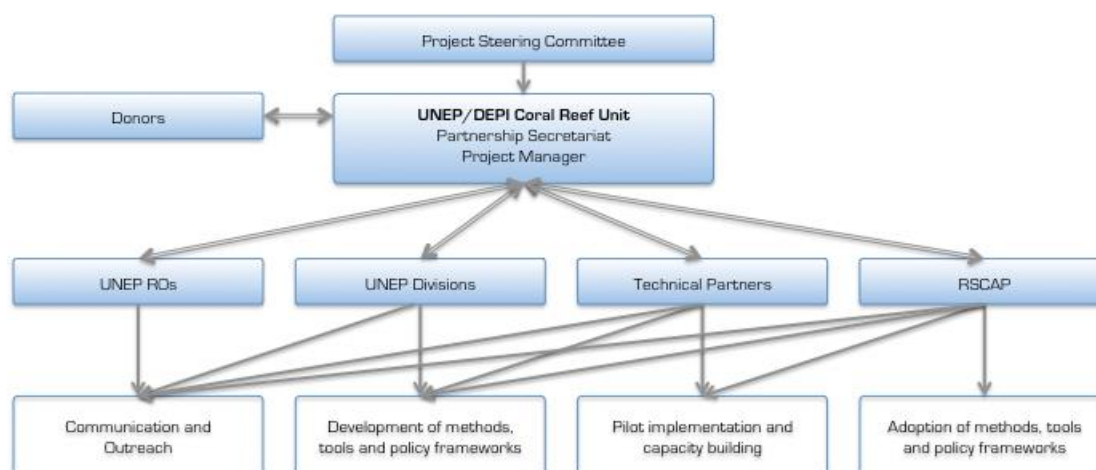
D. Project implementation structure and partners

37. The Project was implemented through the Global Partnership for Coral Reefs, consisting of UNEP, the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans, the

International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) and UNEP collaborating centres such as the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre. UNEP provides the secretariat of the partnership. The Project was administered and coordinated by the UNEP Coral Reef Unit in the Ecosystems Division. UNEP Regional Offices, UNEP Divisions, technical partners and Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans were then responsible for delivering on communication and outreach, development of methods, tools and policy frameworks, pilot implementation and capacity-building, and adoption of methods, tools and policy frameworks. Both the Project and the Partnership worked closely with ICRI to deliver on international coral reef priorities, and the relationship was formally acknowledged during the 28th ICRI General Meeting in Belize in 2013. The diagram below illustrates the project management arrangements

38. Figure 1 provides an overview of the implementation structure for the GCRP project:

Figure 1 Implementation structure for the GCRP Project (Source: Pg 27, Project Document)



E. Changes in design during implementation

39. The Project was extended by 24 months until December 2019 through a Project Revision document approved in 2018. The revision added additional activities to the Project and reflected additional funding secured for the Project from the US Department of State, France, Monaco, Sweden and Norway in 2018. The revision and extension also addressed a number of comments from the Mid Term Review relating to further structuring and harmonising coral reef monitoring globally, strengthening awareness-raising and outreach, and further developing the Global Coral Reef Partnership mechanism. A number of activities, along with unspent budgets have continued on beyond the life of the Project and these have been incorporated into a new “umbrella” project for UNEP’s marine and coastal activities including the Regional Seas Programmes, which was approved in 2018 and will run until December 2022: Project 316.1 on the “Sustainable Management of Marine and Coastal Ecosystem Services”.

40. Changes in UNEP administrative processes and the introduction of UMOJA, a new business process management software caused the Project to experience delays in implementation of several project activities. The introduction and transition to the

new online platform led to severe delays in funding disbursement and allotments across UNEP, including within this Project. This proved challenging to a number of Partners, particularly small NGOs like Reef World who had to take out a loan to cover the shortfall. UMOJA is currently working more efficiently, and the Project also increased its capacity on financial processes by hiring a finance officer dedicated to these tasks, although this occurred following completion of the Project.

F. Project Financing

41. The Project was approved in 2015 with a total planned budget of US\$3,036,000 as per the ProDoc. As at 31 December 2019 it was reported as \$2,909,199.8. The discrepancy in the budgets is due to unspent balance at the end of the coral reef project. The balance was transferred to Project 316.1 where coral reef activities continue.
42. As of December 2019, the Project spent 99.81% (US\$2,903,788) of the budget, as well as USD 3,449,649 co-financing received in kind from government project partners. Final expenditure by Component is not easily available as reporting is under UMOJA, the UNEP reporting system, which does not require reporting by Component. Table 2 provides a summary of the cumulative expenditure for the Project as of the end of December 2019, as reported to UMOJA, against the approved budget, resulting in an underspend of US\$5,411. Variances are explained in Section 6.5 Financial Management.

Table 2 Final Expenditure for the GCRP Project as at 31 December 2019.

Cummulative audited Project Expenditure as at 31st Dec 2019			
UNEP Budget Line		UNEP Approved Budget	Final Expenditure as at 31st Dec 2019
78101010	<i>Staff costs</i>	\$ 459,479.92	\$ 430,845.09
78102010	<i>Travel</i>	\$ 429,415.49	\$ 489,940.93
78103010	<i>Contractual services</i>	\$ 44,026.82	\$ 14,978.97
78104010	<i>Commodity</i>	\$ -	\$ -
78105010	<i>Operating costs</i>	\$ 135,115.66	\$ 132,946.87
78106010	<i>Vehicle & Furniture</i>	\$ 1,194.00	\$ 1,194.00
	<i>Transfer/IP Grant</i>	\$ 1,490,293.94	\$ 1,489,662.09
	<i>Grants Out</i>	\$ 18,519.00	\$ 16,755.00
	<i>Evaluation</i>	\$ 23,000.00	\$ 23,000.00
	<i>PSC</i>	\$ 308,154.97	\$ 304,465.92
99	Grand Total	\$ 2,909,199.80	\$ 2,903,788.87

43. Table 3 provides a summary of planned and actual sources of co-financing.

Table 3 Planned and actual co-financing as of December 2019

<u>Summary of Project Co-financing</u>				
Source of Co-financing	Confirmed		Materialised	
	Cash USD	In-Kind USD	Cash USD	In-Kind USD
NGO	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Governments	\$ -	\$ 3,462,280.00	\$ -	\$ 3,449,649.43
IGO	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Universities	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Private Sector	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total				
	Total Co-financing confirmed	\$ 3,462,280.00	Total Co-financing Materialised at Dec 2019	\$ 3,449,649.43

IV. THEORY OF CHANGE AT EVALUATION

44. A Theory of Change (ToC) was reconstructed during the Inception phase of the evaluation from the well-developed logframe, objective tree, problem tree and risk analysis in the ProDoc. This provided information on anticipated outputs and outcomes and causal links as well as assumptions which guided the project design rationale. The intervention logic and the causal links from activities to outputs presented in the ProDoc and results framework were examined during the TE, and appropriately reflected in the reconstructed ToC presented at evaluation. The ToC was assessed for consistency and a clear conceptual understanding of the Project impact pathways to guide the TE. The reconstructed ToC at Evaluation is presented in Figure 2.
45. The key assumption underlying the entire project was that through the development, adaptation and testing of tools and approaches and the demonstration and facilitation of their adoption, a contribution would be made to reef health, i.e. the Project would create a strong foundation for the implementation of ecosystem based management of coral reefs through strengthened capacity, tools and approaches in the participating countries beyond the life of the Project.
46. Several factors (assumptions and risks) are identified in the ProDoc's Logical framework (page 31) at the objective/ intermediate state and outcome levels. Where the Project or UNEP has an ability to influence these factors, these were classified as "drivers" in the reconstructed ToC. While all assumptions and drivers provided are valid and relevant, there are several assumptions and drivers that were not identified in the logframe - these have been included in the reconstructed ToC. Risks have been reformulated as assumptions (factors the project or UNEP has no control over).
47. While the ProDoc did not identify Project Components under which each Output would be delivered, these have been reconstructed for the purposes of the evaluation. Refer Table 4 for a summary of the project's results hierarchy.

Table 4 Project Results Hierarchy Summary.

Formulation in original project document(s)	Formulation for Reconstructed ToC at Evaluation Inception (RTOC)	Justification for Reformulation
LONG TERM IMPACT		Impacts are long-lasting results arising, directly or indirectly from a project. Impacts are intended and positive changes and must relate to UNEP's mandate.
Not Defined	Improved reef health Reduced reef loss Secure ecosystem service provision	The three are inter-related and form a looping mechanism to improved reef management in the long term.
INTERMEDIATE STATES		Intermediate states are changes (i.e. changes at the outcome level) beyond the life of the project
Not defined	Intermediate State 1: Countries more broadly use the ecosystem approach to sustain ecosystem services from coral reefs. Intermediate State 2: Regional networking via Regional Seas improves for coral reef assessment and reporting at the national and regional levels	The project statement is quite ambitious and hence has been captured as an Intermediate State, in line with UNEP's results definition and OECD DAC guidelines on TOC formulation
PROJECT OUTCOME(S)		Project Outcome(s) are those outcomes that are intended to be achieved by the end of project timeframe/funding envelope.
Countries are able to use the ecosystem approach to sustain ecosystem services from coral reefs, with the assistance of UNEP	Strengthened management of coral reef resources enable a select number of target countries to make concrete and measurable progress towards achieving Aichi Target 10.	The project outcome is ambitious and in line with TOC norms, OECD DAC guidelines and UNEP Results Definition document, this is more appropriately an Intermediate state
DIRECT OUTCOMES		A direct outcome is an outcome that is intended to be achieved from the uptake of outputs and occurring prior to the achievement of Project Outcome(s).
Not defined	DO-1. Strategic planning undertaken for specific priority threats that erode reef resilience and service provision is at regional level DO-2 Demonstration implementation illustrates	As per UNEP's results definition document, these are more appropriate. Strategic planning done by the project team with partners (ie outside the project team, eg

Formulation in original project document(s)	Formulation for Reconstructed ToC at Evaluation Inception (RTOC)	Justification for Reformulation
	efficacy of project outputs builds local capacity and supports national level adoption DO 3 - Adoption of tools through Regional Seas and outreach on demonstration projects catalyses uptake among countries DO 4 - Countries endorse use of ecosystem approach to sustain ecosystem services from coral reefs.	Ministries, Private Sector, etc) so it should be at outcome level Demonstration/Pilot projects should be at output level. Building Capacity and Adoption of Project Outputs = change in behaviour and hence labelled outcomes.
	DO 5 - development of appropriate regulatory frameworks at national or local levels; and DO 6 - Tourism businesses adopt best practices for coral reefs, including in relation to gender mainstreaming, drawing on guidance and tools.	
	DO 7 - Use of indicators and methods through national demonstration projects and capacity building associated with pilot projects and regional training events for decision makers, managers support broader uptake. DO 8 - Enhanced use of monitoring data in national policy and management planning DO 9 - Regional targets and actions are mapped in relation to globally agreed commitments on coral reefs	
OUTPUTS		An output is the availability (for intended beneficiaries/users) of new products and services and/or gains in knowledge, abilities and awareness of individuals or within institutions. For example, access by the intended user to a report; new knowledge held by a workshop participant at the end of a training event; heightened awareness of a

Formulation in original project document(s)	Formulation for Reconstructed ToC at Evaluation Inception (RTOC)	Justification for Reformulation
		serious risk among targeted decision-makers. (Outputs are viewed from the perspective of the intended beneficiary or user of the output rather than the provider).
A) Indicators, methods, planning tools and strategic frameworks for management of coral reefs that builds resilience in the face of climate change and includes gender perspectives developed and tested through pilot interventions.	A.1 Robust and cost-effective approaches are developed and available to target users for coral reef planning and management. A.2 Global synthesis on coral reef status and outlook as well as gap analysis is completed	The outputs as framed in the project document read as activities or a set of activities. They have been reconstructed to fit the description of outputs as per the UNEP Results' Definition document.
B) Tools for policy-focused coral reef ecosystem service valuation, economic instruments for coral reef management and sectoral codes of practice that include gender perspectives developed and tested through pilot interventions.	B.1 Coral reef ecosystem service assessment and valuation are developed, tested and strengthened and available to target users to provide opportunities to underpin and improve both private and public decision-making related to reef planning and management B.2 Financing gaps for sustainable reef management identified, feasibility for use of economic instruments assessed, and tools introduced at a demonstration level to further develop approaches for using economic instruments to support reef management and provide practical examples of replication B.3 Green Fins strengthened to become a certification mechanism for scuba diving and snorkelling centres.	Financing gaps for sustainable reef management identified. Feasibility for use of economic instruments assessed; and Tools to develop approaches for using economic instruments introduced "at a demonstration level" Successful demonstration and/or pilot projects are deemed outputs in line with UNEP's Results Definition document. If replication took place/plans for replication were endorsed by countries, then it should be re-labelled as an outcome
C) Knowledge for ecosystem-based coral reef planning and management, including	C.1 Regional level data is compiled and available to target users for preparation of comprehensive regional	

Formulation in original project document(s)	Formulation for Reconstructed ToC at Evaluation Inception (RTOC)	Justification for Reformulation
development and pilot testing of coral reef status and outlook reporting and indicators for tracking progress towards targets, and related training.	GCRMN coral reef status reports, management performance reporting and ecological and socio-economic monitoring reporting	
D) Institutional mechanisms for policy uptake and outreach, including partnership operations, communication, and support to ICRI and GCRMN.	D.1 Provision of institutional and administrative support for partnership operations, particularly ICRI, and greater collaboration, communication and information sharing between partners is achieved. D.2 Approaches and results are communicated, more broadly through Regional Seas and drawn upon and facilitate exchange of relevant work conducted. D.3 Promoting access to GCRMN findings and data through UNEP Live.	

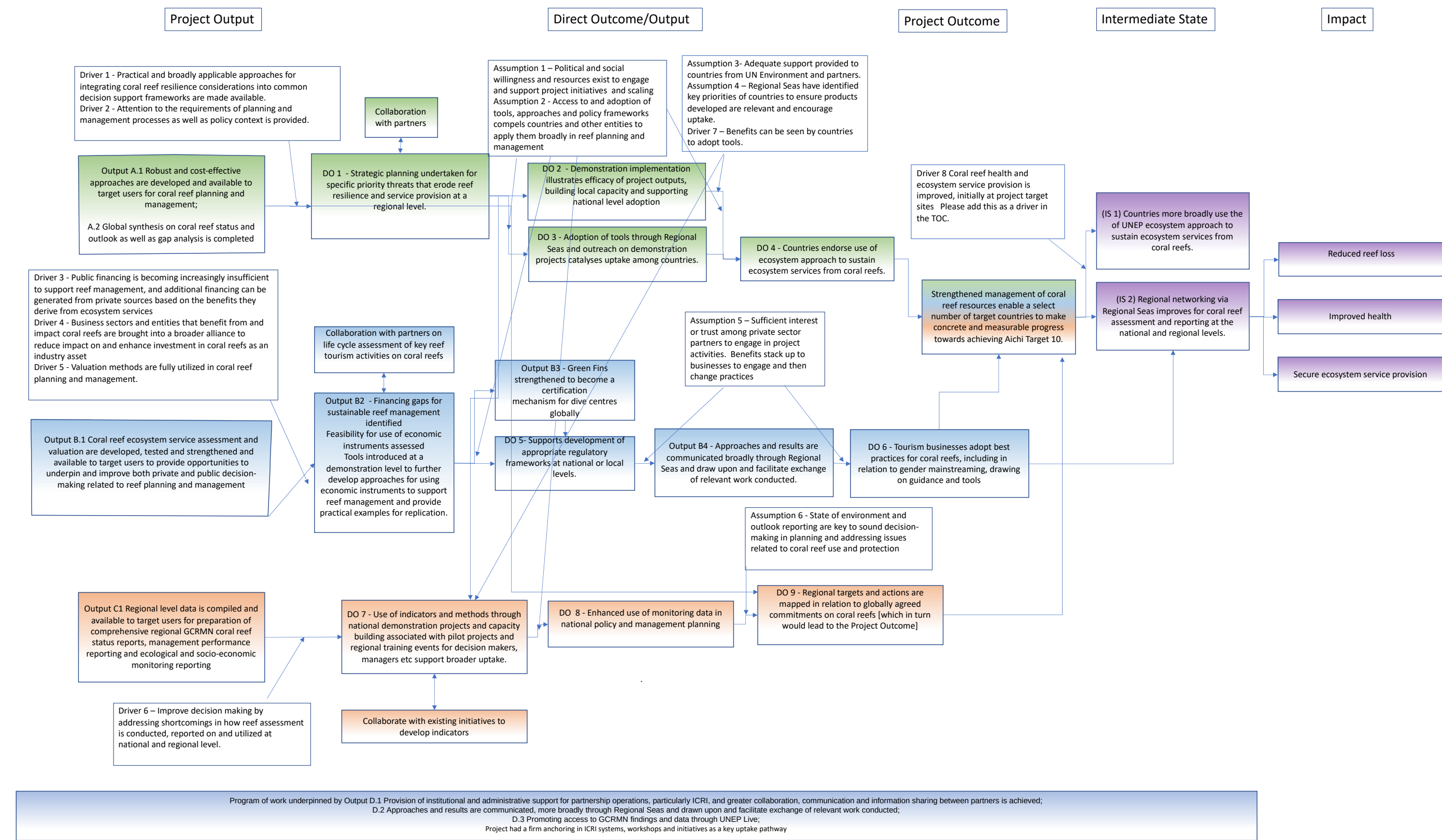
Outputs to Direct Outcomes

48. The Outputs outlined in the ProDoc are logical and coherent for a project aiming to develop, adapt and test tools and approaches and then demonstrate and facilitate their adoption to enhance ecosystem based management of coral reefs. All 4 Project Outputs proposed are considered necessary and are expected to lead to tangible direct outcomes for each. The Project is responding to needs common to all reef regions by working towards delivering on the Project Outputs.
49. For each Output sought, Direct Outcomes are needed and play an important role in delivering the impacts desired. Reaching these Direct Outcomes, however are based on significant drivers and assumptions, as identified in the logframe, objective tree and risk assessment of the ProDoc. They are discussed below.
50. To achieve the impacts anticipated, there are a number of significant assumptions that fall outside the remit of the Project, namely that there is political will and support (resources and stakeholder acceptance) to adopt an ecosystem based approach to coral reef conservation and management in coral reef countries beyond those involved in the Project and ongoing resources will be available to extend management tools, approaches and support post the Project. These are significant challenges for the Project and should be a part of the Project's exit strategy. The Project will have to provide a strong case to all countries and for there to be strong political will to adopt the outputs and lessons learned from this Project. Other

factors (drivers) required for success, within the control of the Project will include ensuring practical and broadly applicable approaches for integrating coral reef resilience considerations into common decision support frameworks are made available to ensure expansion from the demonstration pilot projects to global adoption as well as additional funding being found. Through ICRI this may be possible. This is underpinned however by an assumption that there is strong support from all stakeholders for adopting an ecosystem based approach to address key threats to coral reefs across all regions.

51. Component A is focused on robust and cost-effective approaches being developed for coral reef planning and management that enhance prospects for recovery from damage and adaptation to climate stress, and that can be applied in a variety of geographic and institutional settings. It also focuses on undertaking a global synthesis on coral reef status and outlook as well as gap analysis. The activities under this component are straightforward, however to achieve the direct outcome (DO 1), reliance is dependent on having practical and broadly applicable approaches for integrating coral reef resilience considerations into common decision support frameworks available to countries. It also requires a focus on the requirements of planning and management processes as well as the policy context as a part of tool development to make it relevant for each country. The linkages between these drivers are fundamental for the testing of indicators and methods, through a nested approach of regional and national level demonstration initiatives, integrated with existing processes and ecosystem-based decision support frameworks, to enable the countries to take more effective national (DO 2) and regional action (DO 3) which will then allow through promotion of the outcomes through Regional Seas and ICRI, countries adopt and endorse improved approaches (DO 3), and sustain the Project Outcome.
52. Component B focuses on coral reef ecosystem service assessment and valuation being developed, tested and strengthened to provide opportunities to underpin and improve both private and public decision-making related to reef planning and management. To that end, for achieving the outcome anticipated, it will be fundamental for there to be sufficient interest or trust among private sector partners to engage in project activities (Output B1). Working with Partners, financing gaps for sustainable reef management will need to be identified, feasibility for use of economic instruments assessed, and tools introduced at a demonstration level to further develop approaches for using economic instruments to support reef management and provide practical examples for replication to the tourism sector (Output B2). Success is based on using Green Fins as the key tool to engage the marine tourism industry (diving and snorkelling businesses) through strengthening it to become a certification mechanism for participating businesses that adopt a code of conduct (Output B3), and to support development of appropriate regulatory frameworks at national or local levels (DO 5). Delivering the direct outcome will depend on how effectively approaches and results are communicated broadly through Regional Seas (Output B4) and whether other marine tourism businesses adopt best practices for coral reefs, including in relation to gender mainstreaming, drawing on guidance and tools (DO 6). This will be dependent on whether benefits stack up for these marine tourism businesses to engage and then change practices.

Figure 2 Reconstructed Theory of Change



53. Component C focuses on regional level data compilation for preparation of comprehensive regional GCRMN coral reef status reports, management performance reporting and ecological and socio-economic monitoring reporting (Output C1). This is underpinned by a need for improved decision making by addressing shortcomings in how reef assessment is conducted, reported on and utilized at national and regional levels. Achieving the desired impact will require working with Partners to use indicators and methods developed through national demonstration projects and capacity building associated with demonstration pilot projects and regional training events for decision makers, managers to encourage broad uptake (DO 7). It is expected that this will lead to enhanced use of monitoring data in national policy and management planning (DO 8). Regional networking via Regional Seas should also then improve for sharing of information relating to coral reef assessment and reporting at the national and regional levels (DO 8). Through these direct outcomes, reliable tracking of progress towards global and regional targets relevant to coral reefs should be enabled to provide mapping regional targets and actions in relation to globally agreed commitments on coral reefs ((DO 9) and undertaken jointly with project 321.1). Again, it is assumed for all these Intermediate States that political and social willingness and resources will exist to engage and support project initiatives, and that access to and adoption of tools, approaches and policy frameworks compels countries and other entities to apply them broadly in reef planning and management and follow through with reporting.
54. Component D, focused on providing institutional and administrative support for partnership operations, particularly ICRI, and ensuring greater collaboration, communication and information sharing between partners underpins all other Outcomes (Outputs D1,D2,D3). The Project will need a firm anchoring in ICRI systems, workshops and initiatives as a key uptake pathway to ensure findings and outputs are shared broadly across coral reef countries (who are members of ICRI). ICRI is partnership of governments and non government organisations, so when governments make decision and adopt resolutions through ICRI, it provides an important soft mechanism to encourage commitment.

Direct Outcomes to Project Outcome and Intermediate State to impact

55. To achieve the impact desired for the Project, i.e. the project objective target countries are able to use the ecosystem approach to sustain ecosystem services from coral reefs, with the assistance of UNEP., leading to the overall impact of "Improved reef management outcomes: reduced reef loss, improved health and secure ecosystem service provision", there are a number of direct outcomes/ intermediate states that will need to be in place before achieving these impacts via each Output. Most importantly, given the Project only involves six tier 1 countries and 16 tier 2 countries it is unlikely to achieve such an objective unless there are two consolidated intermediate states for there to be uptake and replication of the approach in other locations and by other countries across regions. To that end, intermediate states (IS 1 and IS 2) relevant to all Outputs (which in effect could/should be an objective of the Project) have been added in the reconstructed TOC.

56. The Project Outcome, relevant across all Outcome areas is that selected countries are able to make considerable progress towards meeting Aichi 10 targets if the two Intermediate States across all Outcome areas are achieved. Again, being able to move from these intermediate states to the impacts desired are dependent on: having strong political will; the project partners being effective at encouraging mechanisms to be established to ensure ongoing resources are available to maintain tools and approaches and implement regional and national strategic plans; and other countries also adopting the lessons learned, tools and outcomes achieved.
57. It is also important to note the dependencies between Outputs A and C and their outputs/direct outcomes. The enhancement of existing tools and the results and learnings from the demonstration pilot projects and related activities should in effect lead to not only strengthened and adoption of national policy frameworks and development and implementation of ecosystem based approaches (DO 3 and 4), but also improved mapping to understand how globally countries collectively are tracking towards global and regional targets (DO 9).
58. To move to the ultimate impact for the project will take considerable time – something that is not represented well in the reconstructed TOC and from discussions with the Project Coordinators was not intended within the project timeframe. It will also require strong political will and support (resources and stakeholder acceptance) to address threats to coral reefs across all coral reef countries and from that, ongoing resources being made available to maintain regional and national tools, implement activities and continue regional and global coordination post the Project. Reliance will be place on UNEP, Regional Seas and ICRI to coordinate these aspects. To the extent possible through the Project, it will be important that the Project ensures the outputs of the demonstration pilot projects and other components are shared between the participating countries and disseminated to all coral reef countries via ICRI and Regional Seas to ensure expansion to a regional/global approach and work towards meeting globally agreed commitments.

V. EVALUATION FINDINGS

59. This section provides factual evidence relevant to the questions raised in the evaluation Terms of Reference, as well as analysis and interpretation of this evidence. Ratings are provided after the assessment of each evaluation criterion and summarised in Table 7 of Section 7 Conclusions.

A. Strategic Relevance

Alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy⁷ (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities

60. The Project was designed to support the decision on oceans adopted at the first Universal Session of the UNEP Governing Council in 2013, where Member States requested the Executive Director of UNEP to coordinate work as contained in the Global Strategic Directions for the Regional Seas 2013-2016. The urgency of addressing the crisis facing coral reefs is reflected in the ICRI Call to Action and Framework for Action, Aichi Biodiversity Target 10, and 'The Future We Want' paragraph 176. In 2012, UNEP and the Regional Seas committed to collaboration on addressing the downward trajectory of the world's coral reefs through a partnership approach (Regional Seas Strategic Directions 2013-16, Strategic Direction 6). A workshop at the Second Global Conference on Land-Ocean Connections (GLOC-2) in 2013 provided guidance on partnership purpose, objectives and priority activities as well as its operational basis.
61. The Project contributed to the delivery of a number of strategic focus areas in the UNEP Medium-term Strategy (MTS) 2014–2017, particularly Ecosystem Management (EA1, EA2 and EA3) and Environmental Governance (EA2 and EA3) through: its focus on strengthening the science-policy interface at the international, regional and national levels via engagement with ICRI and Regional Seas; and from the development and use of innovative tools and approaches; and the sharing of knowledge, data and techniques for their management.
62. The Project contributed to the delivery of the UNEP Programme of Work (2015 - 2019), primarily under Subprogramme 3 Healthy and Productive Ecosystems, specifically Expected Accomplishment (b) Use of the ecosystem approach in countries to sustain ecosystem services from coastal and marine systems is increased. The Project contributed to this goal through producing tools for ecosystem-based management of coral reefs and by implementing them in countries through demonstration projects.
63. The Project was instrumental in the delivery of UNEA Resolutions 2/12 and 4/13 on the Sustainable Management of Coral Reefs. UNEP coordinated a meeting on implementation of UNEA Resolution 2/12 in Manado in June 2016, which led to specific implementation action on paragraphs 3 (capacity-building on ecosystem-based management in partner countries), 4 (promotion of sustainable marine tourism through Green Fins), 6 (support to coral reef marine protected areas, for example in Malaysia), 8 (public outreach campaigns on the importance of coral reef through social media, and contributions to the Global Environment Outlook), 9 (development of tools for managers to mitigate the impacts of climate change on coral reefs through ecosystem-based and resilience-based management), 10 (development and publication of an analysis of global and regional policy instruments and governance mechanisms related to the protection

and sustainable management of coral reefs), and 11 (support to the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network). UNEA Resolution 4/13 followed 2/12, and the Project specifically addressed requests in paragraphs 2 (development of best practices on coral restoration), 3 (further review of the global coral reef policy analysis requested in 2/12), 4 (support to the development of a global report on the status of coral reefs with the GCRMN), 5 (support to the GCRMN in communicating the status and trends of coral reefs globally), and 6 (raising awareness of the importance of coral reefs through social media campaigns).

The rating for Alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS) and Programme of Work (POW) is Highly Satisfactory.

Alignment to Donor/Partner Strategic Priorities

64. The leveraged funding obtained by Project Partners as a result of the GCRP project, as well as ongoing for support post the project completion provides strong evidence for the alignment of the Project with donor priorities. Refer Section 5.6 and Table 5.

The rating for Alignment to Donor/Partner Strategic Priorities is Highly Satisfactory.

Relevance to global, regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities

65. The Global Coral Reef Partnership that implemented this Project was created in a response to the Global Strategic Directions for the Regional Seas 2013 – 2016 as well as the UNEP Governing Council Resolutions 19/15, 20/21 and 21/5. Both called for support to countries to deliver internationally agreed coral reef commitments through ecosystem-based management of coral reefs.

66. The Project was relevant to targets related to coral reefs in individual Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans, for example the Cartagena Convention (e.g. the Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife Protocol, relevant to ecosystem-based management of coral reefs) and the workplan of COBSEA among others.

67. The Project worked closely with ICRI to implement the ICRI Action Plan, with focus on a) promoting effective and adaptable solution to improve protection of coral reefs (for example through building capacity for innovative funding with the Global Fund for Coral Reefs, supporting ecosystem-based management of coral reefs and tools for managing coral reef resilience, and developing best practices for coral restoration), and b) understanding the trends of coral reefs (for example through support to the GCRMN process).

68. The Project was relevant to several national priorities related to ecosystem-based management of coral reefs. Examples include the national coral reef action strategy for the United States of America which references “coordination with UNEP Global Program of Action and Regional Seas Programs to reduce soil erosion and agrochemical runoff, prevent industrial and municipal pollution, and reduce urban solid waste and wastewater”, and national plans for coral reefs in Japan, Egypt, Dominican Republic, Antigua and Barbuda, and the Philippines that include reference to Green Fins.

69. The Project is highly relevant to and delivering against Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for

sustainable development, and specifically Target 14.2 By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration, to achieve healthy and productive oceans, through promoting ecosystem-based management of coral reefs with a focus on resilience to climate change.

70. The Project has clearly demonstrated its relevance towards delivery of Aichi Biodiversity Target 10 - multiple anthropogenic pressures on coral reefs, and other vulnerable ecosystems impacted by climate change or ocean acidification are minimized, so as to maintain their integrity and functioning, through its activities on promoting ecosystem-based management of coral reefs and tools for managing resilience to climate change. Through the Project, UNEP has been providing input on coral reefs into the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. UNEP worked with the ICRI ad hoc committee to develop recommendations on coral reefs to the CBD post-2020 process. The recommendations were submitted in 2020 and will be considered for adoption at the 15th CBD Conference of Parties in 2021 in China.

The rating for Relevance to regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities is Highly Satisfactory.

Complementarity with existing interventions/Coherence

71. The Project was complementary to the ongoing GEF/UNEP Standardising Methodologies for Carbon Accounting and Ecosystem Services Valuation of Blue Forests (the Blue Forest Project) (GEF Project ID 4452) by supporting through the small grants programme, an onground demonstration project “Managing mangroves for climate change regulations and other ecosystem services in Kenya”, which built on previous work under the Blue Forest Project to implement, amongst other activities, the Vanga Blue Forest (VBF) – a carbon offset facility involving the mangroves in Vanga which is operated and owned by the community through a 13-member committee and a project coordinator. At least 40% of the members are women; which is in line with gender rule of the Kenya’s Constitution (2010).
72. There were a variety of examples where there was evidence of the Project building on, and making use of pre-existing partnerships, arrangements, data sources and synergies, such as the reinvigoration and strengthening of the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network, building its capacity to produce global and regional reports again on the status of coral reefs, and the expansion of the Green Fins program to engage with more dive companies and government tourism agencies in six new countries to make a total of 13 countries (over 500 dive centres around the world) using the Green Fins code of conduct.

The rating for Complementarity with Existing Interventions is Highly Satisfactory.

The overall rating for Strategic Relevance is Highly Satisfactory.

B. Quality of Project Design

73. A detailed assessment of the Project design undertaken during the Inception phase of the TE is provided in the Inception Report. Strengths and weaknesses are summarised below.

Strengths

- The Project was very relevant and addressed the decision on oceans adopted at the first Universal Session of the UNEP Governing Council in 2013, where Member States requested the Executive Director of UNEP to coordinate work as contained in the Global Strategic Directions for the Regional Seas 2013-2016. In 2012, UNEP and the Regional Seas committed to collaboration on addressing the downward trajectory of the world's coral reefs through a partnership approach (Regional Seas Strategic Directions 2013-16, Strategic Direction 6).
- The Project provided a good blend of having Regional Seas input speaking on behalf of countries and the capability of technical partners to help shape activities. The Project was built on and addressed the needs and priorities of the participating countries, via Regional Seas which provided inputs derived through consultations, primarily at the Coral Reef Partnership Workshop at GLOC-2.
- Good stakeholder involvement in the design led to strong partnership building through the process and allowed potential for sustainability to be factored in.
- There was close involvement and engagement of ICRI members in the Project which assisted in addressing priority needs through promoting relevant tools and capacity building. The design process was consistently calibrated with ICRI and endorsed by the ICRI General meeting and all findings shared with ICRI members.
- The Project was designed as an initiative to leverage existing approaches and processes without trying to rebrand or duplicate them. The design explicitly sought to address short comings with the predecessor to ICRI, ICRM and did this well in the consultation and development process.
- The Project had a very focused set of partners and supporting processes to assist countries.
- The Project was very relevant for addressing key threats to coral reefs and risks to dependent communities through applying an ecosystems based approach, building capacity and knowledge to those with responsibility to manage and protect at all levels. To that end, the Project had undertaken a comprehensive analysis of the problem and context to frame its development and focus.
- The Project recognised that the threats to coral reefs are shared problems globally that bring many challenges. The regional approach, through its inclusion of long term international and regional partners and the utilisation of permanent structures and frameworks, provided good opportunities to strengthen capacity and cooperation between countries and identify and share technical expertise and improve coordination mechanisms and partner networks and linkages to other environmental initiatives.

Weaknesses

- The ProDoc did not include a Theory of Change to help understand how the project components were linked and the output and outcomes would lead to the achievement of results, especially project impacts over the longer term. This could have been used to further develop the monitoring plan.
- The Project could have been more focused, i.e, doing fewer activities but undertaking them in more depth.
- While coral reefs are vulnerable ecosystems and need attention, the focus of the Project was perhaps too narrow and could have linked to other related processes such as blue economy, mangroves and seagrass and MPAs etc. Connecting it to other strands of work within UNEP may have strengthened it into the future.

The overall rating for Project Design is Satisfactory.

C. Nature of the External Context

74. Overall, the context and challenges as outlined in the ProDoc during its design remained the same throughout the Project implementation. The risks relating to coral reefs are similar across all countries that have them, driven by anthropogenic threats (overfishing, coastal development, pollution etc) brought about as a result of differing values of stakeholders, poverty in some cases, and conflicting national priorities as well as climate change impacts.
75. Given the Project had a global and regional focus there were no external features that impacted on the Project's performance, including within demonstration pilot projects funded through the small grants programme.

The overall rating for Nature of External Context is Highly Favourable.

D. Effectiveness

Availability of outputs

76. The Project made exceptional progress with respect to the outputs achieved, exceeding expectations in a number of cases, with all activities and small grants projects fully completed. For all outputs, end of project targets were all met or exceeded. The biggest challenges related to the short timeframes for delivery of some projects brought about mostly by internal delays with UNEP project and financial management systems.

Output A1 -A2

77. There were 2 end of project targets for Component A that were both exceeded, and this was confirmed during consultations. Through the Project a large suite of methods and tools that support the management of coral reef resilience against climate change were developed by selected scientists and global experts. They were developed being considerate of the differences in policy context between countries, with an intention to make them relevant for all countries regardless of size or situation. These tools produced consisted of a number of published technical and guidance documents to support coral reef managers in decision making to improve ecosystem-based

management interventions (target 4, actual 10) such as “A guide to assessing coral reef resilience for decision support”²; “Coral bleaching futures”³; “Wastewater pollution on coral reefs”⁴; and “Plastics and shallow water coral reefs”⁵. These tools and guidance materials were made available to ICRI members and more broadly through Regional Seas. During the consultation, those interviewed indicated that they were aware that many tools had been developed, however were unsure how widely they were being used internally within their countries.

78. The production of the Global Synthesis on coral reef status was a significant piece of work produced by the revitalising and strengthening of the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN) (refer Component C). The last global report was produced by the GCRMN in 2008, but since then activities had reduced due to lack of funds. The Project supported the GCRMN closely in developing a global report on the status of coral reefs, to update the last one in 2008 and based on the largest data set on coral reefs ever assembled through organising and funding regional and global data workshops, for example in the ROPME Sea Area. The report will be finalised in 2021, and all GCRMN related activities by UNEP will be carried on into Project 316.1.
79. Through the Project, three regional reports⁶ on the status of coral reefs were also developed and published. The Project hired experts to write the reports following several regional scientific workshops supported by the Project. The reports identify trends and current status of coral reefs in the regions, providing information and recommendations that are critical for stakeholders in the region to improve the management of coral reefs. Regional reports for the Eastern Tropical Pacific and the East Asian Seas are also currently in development and expected for 2021. It is unclear how much these regional reports are being utilised by countries within each region at this stage as COVID caused delays to follow-on workshops that would have focused on take up.
80. Through the ICRI, with support from the Governments of France and Monaco, the tools developed were extended and utilised at coral reef sites through a Small Grants Programme. The Small Grants programme consisted of a number of demonstration pilot projects centred around 5 countries (Kenya, Malaysia, Mesoamerica, New Caledonia and Seychelles) (target 3 actual 11) that sought to implement a variety of ecosystem-based management and adaptation tools. Recipients included Government Agencies and Non-Governmental Organisations. As an example, in Malaysia, the Project supported the development of a Marine Spatial Plan for the Tun Mustapha Marine Park (TMP). UNEP supported two NGOs to provide technical assistance to the Malaysian government to use UNEP guidance on using resilience data and downscaled climate projection data for decision support to marine spatial planning. This example led to the development of a Marine Spatial Plan that seeks to strengthen resilience of TMP coral reefs to climate change. The model for marine spatial planning used will continue to be promoted to encourage replication and upscaling in the follow-on Project 316.1 on the sustainable

² Refer <https://www.unep.org/resources/report/guide-assessing-coral-reef-resilience-decision-support>

³ Refer <https://www.unenvironment.org/resources/report/coral-bleaching-futures>

⁴ Refer <https://www.unep.org/resources/report/wastewater-pollution-coral-reefs-science-policy-brief-managing-wastewater-support>

⁵ Refer <https://www.unep.org/resources/report/plastics-and-shallow-water-coral-reefs-synthesis-science-policy-makers>

⁶ Refer for the Western Indian Ocean (<https://gcrmn.net/resource/status-coral-reef-western-indian-ocean-2017/>), the Caribbean (<https://gcrmn.net/resource/status-trends-caribbean-coral-reefs-1970-2012/>) and Pacific regions (<https://gcrmn.net/resource/status-trends-coral-reefs-pacific-2018/>)

management of marine and coastal ecosystem services. In all instances for small grants, project results were shared or training conducted from the tools produced for broader coral reef stakeholders to encourage adoption and use of these tools, by seeing the demonstration of results.

81. Gender perspectives were considered in the development of demonstration pilot projects to ensure engagement of minority and disadvantaged groups. For example, in Kenya, the project focused on development of a carbon offset facility run by the community, of which 40% were women. The approach has now been promoted to mangrove practitioners in the region, with results having led to the development of guidelines on ecological mangrove restoration in western Indian ocean region.

Output B1 -B4

82. There were 4 end of project targets for Component B that were all either met or exceeded, including one related to gender and this was confirmed during consultations. Of most significance under this Component was the establishment of the first UN multi-partner trust fund dedicated to SDG 14, and the first one for coral reefs, the Global Fund for Coral Reefs⁷, a blended finance instrument to mobilise action and resources (both public and private) to protect and restore coral reef ecosystems. The Fund provides grant funding and private capital to support sustainable interventions to save coral reefs and the communities that rely on them, working directly with stakeholders who have a direct impact on but also benefit from coral reef ecosystems such as fishing communities, tourism businesses or local management authorities among others. Coordinated by the UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund, UNEP sits on the Executive Board along with UNDP, UNCDF, the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation, the Paul G Allen Foundation and donor governments. The Project provided technical assistance via technical workshops in 2018 that brought conservation finance experts together to design the Fund. The Project also provided the evidence base via two key reports published by UNEP in 2018 that were critical in making the business case for a Global Fund for Coral Reefs: “The Coral Reef Economy”⁸ and the “Analysis of international funding for the sustainable management of coral reefs and associated coastal ecosystems”⁹. These reports also showed that protection of coral reefs is greatly under-funded and additional financing could be generated from private sources based on the benefits they derive from ecosystem services. It is understood that the 2017 “Bleaching Futures”¹⁰ report using downscaled climate projections to predict bleaching vulnerability will be used to advise site selection for Fund investments. Activities related to capitalising and implementing the Fund will be continued in Project 316.1.
83. The Project greatly supported the expansion of the UNEP Green Fins initiative¹¹ through activities to engage with more dive and snorkelling companies and government tourism agencies in six new countries. There are now thirteen countries using the Green Fins code of conduct, covering over 500 dive centres around the world. Introducing the Green

⁷ Refer <https://globalfundcoralreefs.org/>

⁸ Refer <https://www.unep.org/resources/report/coral-reef-economy>

⁹ Refer <https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/28372>

¹⁰ Refer <https://www.unep.org/resources/report/coral-bleaching-futures>

¹¹ Refer <https://greenfins.net/>. Green Fins is coordinated by Reef World and focuses on protecting and conserving coral reefs by establishing and implementing environmentally friendly guidelines to promote a sustainable SCUBA diving and snorkeling tourism industry.

Fins code of conduct results in measurable reductions of impacts on coral reefs by the tourism industry, and more sustainable practices that benefit both the industry and the environment. Green Fins activities have been carried over to Project 316.1. Green Fins had specific targets for gender ratios of stakeholders engaging in its programme, whether through employment or consultations and training and these were monitored and met.

Output C1

84. The Project met or exceeded the three end of project targets under Component C and this was confirmed during consultations. Of most significance under this Component, was the revitalising and strengthening the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN), established by ICRI and tasked with reporting on the condition of the world's coral reefs which was delivered as Output A2. The Project was instrumental in reinvigorating the GCRMN and building its capacity to produce global and regional reports again on the status of coral reefs. A major accomplishment was the development and adoption of a new Implementation and Governance Plan¹² for the GCRMN, (adopted during the 33rd General Meeting of ICRI, December 2018 in Monaco), that was based on extensive consultations with ICRI and GCRMN members in 2018 supported by UNEP and recommendations from a GCRMN meeting held in Townsville, Australia, in May 2017. The Plan provides new operational practices for the GCRMN and includes strengthening the role and importance of the regions in coordinating and organising the aggregation and reporting of data, outlining procedures for ensuring data quality in the provision of key indicators from varied but comparable methods. It also outlines the governance arrangements of the GCRMN through a Steering Committee consisting of members of ICRI, UNEP, and chaired by a host institution (The first host institution is the Australian Institute of Marine Science).

Output D 1-D3

85. The Project met or exceeded the three end of project targets under Component D and this was confirmed during consultations. Of note, the Project supported various outreach events for the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans at their annual meetings and used these to discuss key topics or issues such as for example, the GRCMN. Through the Project, UNEP was able to play a critical role in ICRI General Meetings, supporting travel to the meetings from Regional Seas participants, particularly from developing countries and leading or participating in various ad-hoc committees, initiatives, and resolutions. This included side events on coral reefs at the 12th and 14th CBD Conference of Parties in Korea in 2014 and in Egypt in 2018 respectively. It also included a consultation meeting with Member States and other relevant Partners on implementation of UNEA-2/12 Resolution on the sustainable management of coral reefs in Manado, Indonesia in 2016.
86. The Project supported the following ICRI General Meetings - GM-30 in Thailand (2015), GM-31 in France (2016), GM-32 in Kenya (2017), GM-33 in Monaco (2018) and GM-34 in Australia (2019). As part of this collaboration, UNEP participated in and provided technical support to various ad-hoc committees, including the committees on economic valuation of coral reef ecosystems, reef restoration, resilience-based management and the post-2020 coral reef target. This support from the Project has led to various ICRI

¹² Refer https://www.gcrmn.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/GCRMN_IGP.pdf

decisions and actions on the GCRMN and has led to key themes such as resilience-based management being firmly represented in the ICRI Secretariat action plans. Partnership meetings were held annually and held back to back with ICRI general meetings, with the Project Steering Committee also meeting at that time. The Steering Committees consisted of UNEP representatives, donor countries as well as other key Partners such as UNEP-WCMC, GRID - Arendal, WRI, Regional Seas representatives, ICRI and Reef World. The Steering Committee provided oversight and input into the development to the GCRP Project annual workplan, progress, communications, MTR recommendations, project challenges and strategic opportunities to strengthen the Partnership and forward planning beyond the Project for the new UNEP Project 361.1. The Steering Committee met three times over the life of the Project.

87. Through UNEP's collaboration with ICRI, the various tools and products produced by the Project have been more widely disseminated and promoted, resulting in wider uptake, although it was difficult to confirm to what extent in the consultations for this evaluation. The ad-hoc committees were also critical in advancing various technical and policy outputs to support multi-lateral environmental processes, such as the ad-hoc committee on the post-2020 coral reef target established in 2018 follows the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework development process, contributes on matters relating to the critical status of coral reefs and how these can be sufficiently addressed within the post-2020 framework, including the recommendation of a coral reef related target by ICRI members (including UNEP). An ICRI submission has been made based on the work of this committee. The recommendations will be considered at the CBD Conference of Parties in 2021.
88. It was noted by a small subset of those consulted that there was a shortfall in inter-partner communication between meetings which hampered relationship development and meant that Partners were not aware of what was going on with respect of the GCRP given the deliberate decision not to brand the Project and rather brand outputs as UNEP and or ICRI etc. It was however noted that this is a difficult challenge for any project, particularly one with such a short lifespan and limited face-to-face steering committee meetings. However, the Partnership Project was seen to offer the opportunity to engage and work with similar organisations and interviewees provided multiple examples of circumstances in which the relationships were fostered, both between and beyond members.
89. It was noted in the second Project Steering Committee that, to have greater impact, communication on the work of the Partnership needed to leverage the communication activities of individual Partners more. It was also noted that the Partnership needed a more structure approach to disseminating knowledge, experiences and tools. A communications strategy was not developed for the GCRP Project and those consulted indicated that there was not a great deal of reporting in the public domain around successes. From discussions with the Project Coordinators, the ICRI networks were used as a substitute to disseminate the work extensively and the Project also fed into the UNEP Live and World Environment Situation platforms.
90. A specific project portal was not developed, however all the publications are available in the UNEP publications repository and via the ICRI website <https://www.icriforum.org/>, although these are not easy to find unless you know what you are searching for. UNEP coral reefs work is now located on dedicated webpages <https://www.unep.org/explore->

topics/oceans-seas/what-we-do/protecting-coral-reefs. While information and all outputs are available online it is somewhat scattered and needs better aggregation and preferably a central portal for accessing it.

91. All those consulted indicated that the deliberate decision to not have branding for the Partnership made it difficult to recognise what the Partnership was delivering beyond each Partners' own projects. Many were unclear of its breath and depth and what other activities had been undertaken and what the results were. This would indicate that while project deliverables were promoted through ICRI meetings to its members and communication was made to Partners, that Partners were not aware, or had forgotten.
92. As noted previously, exceeding expectation, the Project through its collaborations and tools and materials developed was a key player in the passing of two resolutions specifically on coral reefs by the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA): Resolution 2/12 at the 2nd UNEA in 2016 and follow-on Resolution 4/13 at the 4th UNEA-4 in 2019, both on "Sustainable Management of Coral Reefs". The submission and acceptance of the UNEA resolutions can be attributed in part to the support of the project to Member States and to ICRI. Both resolutions now provide a strong mandate for UNEP to support ICRI and Member States on coral reef science, management and policy. An example of international policy support provided by the Project as a result of the UNEA Resolutions was the development of an Analysis of Policies related to the Protection of Coral Reefs¹³ mandated by Operational Paragraph 10 of UNEA Resolution 2/12. The analysis focuses on the strengths and weaknesses of over 230 international instruments to address the drivers of coral reef degradation, including the governance mechanisms they created, and provides possible options to the international community for addressing the identified policy gaps. These recommendations were submitted to the 5th UNEA in 2021 for further review and consideration. All these activities related to international policy supported have been carried over to Project 316.1.

The rating for Availability of Outputs is Satisfactory.

Achievement of Project Outcomes

93. The Project sought to achieve a number of outcomes under each Component that worked towards meeting its overall objective and engender change and impact. Consequently, the evaluation of the GCRP Project's effectiveness is based on the extent to which the Project's direct outcomes, as defined by the reconstructed ToC developed for the Project, were achieved.
94. The GCRP has provided strong links between science, guidelines and tools and their application on ground to inspire and replicate and then has been able, through their strong engagement with ICRI and Regional Seas members to take these results and achieve two UN resolutions on coral reefs. The Project has "put coral reefs on the map" and provided a clear mandate to show that coral reefs are an important area of work for the UN and UNEP going forward. The GCRP has influenced and strengthened international discussions and raised the focus on coral reefs directly as a result of the work undertaken across all Components of the Project.

¹³ Refer <https://www.unep.org/resources/report/analysis-policies-related-protection-coral-reefs>

95. This Project has helped to develop tools to further our understanding of the impacts of climate change on coral reefs, how to measure the status and trends of coral reef ecosystems, and how to use these data to manage for resilience of coral reefs in a changing world. The Project was seen by all consulted to offer the opportunity to help build a strong global network, particularly through ICRI and engage and work with similar organisations. Interviewees provided multiple examples of circumstances in which the relationships were fostered, both between and beyond members. The Regional Seas Programmes, with their unique mandate for the protection of the coastal and marine environment, were an important Partner for the Project to collaborate with Member States to implement the tools and approaches for ecosystem-based management of coral reefs in the face of climate change. While the ability of each Regional Sea to engage in the Project varied, their input was highly valued.
96. Through the four inter-related and synergistic components of the Project, each of these direct outcomes have been achieved to varying degrees and ecosystem-based management of coral reefs has been advanced globally, regionally and nationally.
97. The Midterm Review (MTR) for the Project highlighted a number of areas for improvement or amendment. In response, management responses, while not documented, were discussed at Steering Committee meetings and reflected in the variation for the Project where activities were modified or added with the additional budget made available by donors.

Direct Outcomes 1 - 4

98. Under Component A, 4 direct outcomes were identified in the reconstructed TOC:
- DO 1 - Strategic planning undertaken for specific priority threats that erode reef resilience and service provision at a regional level.
 - DO 2 - Demonstration implementation illustrates efficacy of project outputs, building local capacity and supporting national level adoption
 - DO 3 - Adoption of tools through Regional Seas and outreach on demonstration projects catalyses uptake among countries
 - DO 4 - Countries endorse use of ecosystem approach to sustain ecosystem services from coral reefs.
99. Direct outcomes 1 - 4 developed planning tools and strategic frameworks for ecosystem-based management of corals to build their resilience in the face of climate change. The focus was on key threats and issues impacting on coral reefs. Through these activities under Component A, coral reef managers have been provided useful tools and examples to strengthen decision making, particularly in relation to resilience against climate change. The Project generated knowledge that did not exist previously to help strengthen the capacity of coral reef managers. For example, as noted in Section 6.4.1.1, useful guidance documents were produced that have global application regardless of context and geographic situation, including *"A guide to assessing coral reef resilience for decision support"*¹⁴ ; *"Coral bleaching futures"*¹⁵. Collectively, these two tools provide coral reef managers with an improved

¹⁴ Refer <https://www.unep.org/resources/report/guide-assessing-coral-reef-resilience-decision-support>

¹⁵ Refer <https://www.unenvironment.org/resources/report/coral-bleaching-futures>

understanding of the potential impacts of climate change on their coral reefs as well as tools for managing for resilience to climate change. Of most importance, the tools provided guidance for managers to determine which actions to implement and where to target those actions to maximise returns on investment under climate change. It is understood that the tools were tested in a number of locations, including by the US Government in Hawaii and by non-governmental organisations in Malaysia (under the small grants programme) to inform marine spatial planning and the development of climate-resilient marine park management plans for coral reefs. In Malaysia, by applying the tools, relative climate winners and losers were identified by assessing spatial variation in climate vulnerability, through combining state-of-art information on both major components of climate vulnerability: exposure and resilience. Their climate model projections of future coral bleaching stress were then combined with knowledge of spatial variation in stress related to human activities to prioritise areas for conservation based on likely returns-on-investment – ‘management gain’. These spatial data layers are being integrated into planning processes in the focus areas to revise draft zoning plans that did not account for climate vulnerability.

100. To what extent coral reef health and ecosystem service provision was improved, initially at Project target sites for the small grants programme is unclear as the projects undertaken were mostly around planning, mapping or establishing management frameworks. It will take some time for the results to be seen on the ground.
101. The results of the small grants programme were shared with ICRI and Regional Seas members to provide useful demonstration of the tools and guidance materials developed. The sharing of the tools and various trainings conducted to ICRI members and Regional Seas means that the majority of coral reef managers globally have access to these resources and through the networks created within ICRI are able to share experiences and seek information or guidance from other ICRI members’ experiences with the tools. It is unclear to what extent however that the tools have been applied by ICRI or Regional Seas members either at a local or national level. Certainly, there is evidence that tools are being downloaded as the journal article on downscaled projections for climate modelling on future coral reef bleaching has had a high rate of citation and altimetric score from downloads as reported by the Project Coordinator. The Project Coordinator indicated however it would have been beneficial for stronger tailoring of project activities to the needs of different Regional Seas, given each region is at a different stage, with capacity limitations and as a result, were not always able to engage as would have been liked. It is proposed under future activities to work with specific Regional Seas Programmes, for example COBSEA, to implement the tools with member states and in regional planning processes.
102. Regardless of the level of uptake of tools, there is clear mandate of the level of support for an ecosystem based approach by Members States through the passing of two resolutions specifically on coral reefs by the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA): Resolution 2/12 at the 2nd UNEA in 2016 and follow-on Resolution 4/13 at the 4th UNEA-4 in 2019, both on “Sustainable Management of Coral Reefs”. The submission and acceptance of the UNEA resolutions can be attributed in part to the support of the Project to Member States and to ICRI. Both resolutions now provide a strong mandate for UNEP to support ICRI and Member States on coral reef science, management and policy.

Direct Outcomes 5 - 6

103. Under Component B, 2 direct outcomes were identified in the reconstructed TOC:

- DO 5- Supports development of appropriate regulatory frameworks at national or local levels.
- DO 6 - Tourism businesses adopt best practices for coral reefs, including in relation to gender mainstreaming, drawing on guidance and tools

104. Outputs in Component B focused on addressing the challenge of a lack of understanding of the importance of coral reef ecosystem services and integrating this understanding in economic or public policy decision-making. Again, through these outputs, the Project was able to provide new knowledge and connect it to management and decision making through linking to ICRI and Regional Seas.

105. As outlined in Section 6.4.1.2, the greatest outcome and legacy for the Project was the establishment of the Global Fund for Coral Reefs¹⁶, a blended finance instrument to mobilise action and resources (both public and private) to protect and restore coral reef ecosystems. The fund aims to run for 10 years and raise US\$500 million in blended finance through a coalition between UN agencies, financial institutions, and private philanthropy sources. It will support business models that can sustainably finance key conservation and development goals for coral reefs. The fund thus provides the opportunity for sustainability of many of the Project's achievements, whilst also building on the reports and analyses produced by the Project. The Project provided technical assistance to design the fund as well as a strong evidence base via two key reports published by UNEP in 2018 that were critical in making the business case for investing in and return on investment of coral reef conservation. The Project highlighted through the work done under Output B that investing in shifting the trajectory of coral reef health from one of continuing decline towards a healthy state could unlock tens of billions of dollars in additional value. The findings showed that this shift can be largely achieved through strategic investments using available tools and methods for ecosystem-based management, indicating that the goal of closing the gap between the forecast benefits of a healthy reef and the current trend towards coral reef degradation is possible and makes economic sense. A number of those consulted indicated that through UNEPs involvement and partly as result of their strong leadership, the Fund concept was developed and validated and is now attracting partners.

106. Through the Project, a quantitative model of selected interactions between live coral cover and the economic returns generated by three sectors that benefit directly from coral reefs – tourism, coastal development and commercial fisheries – was applied to two case study regions: the Coral Triangle in South East Asia and the Mesoamerican Reef in the Caribbean. This analysis showed how value created by coral reefs can be used to support decision-making in environmental management, public as well as private financing, and business sector planning. The misalignment of funding with policy ambitions related to coral reefs was highlighted, along with implications for future investment in the conservation of these ecosystems. The Project also supported blue finance and attempts at generating sustainable private financing of

¹⁶ Refer <https://globalfundcoralreefs.org/>

coral reef management focusing on marine protected areas based on revenue streams generated by coral reefs.

107. The reports underpinning these findings were shared and discussed with ICRI members and through Regional Seas to member countries. It is unclear to what extent however the outputs under Component B have led to appropriate regulatory frameworks at regional and national levels. A Review¹⁷ of the implementation of the resolution 2/12 showed that in 2018 there were 232 international policy instruments directly or indirectly supporting the conservation and sustainable management of coral reef ecosystems and/or addressing anthropogenic drivers of change in these ecosystems. They include 150 global instruments, 29 of which are binding, and 82 regional instruments (including 32 regional seas instruments), 44 of which are binding. The body of international reef-related policy includes at least 591 discrete commitments to address the wide range of anthropogenic drivers of change in coral reef ecosystems. More than 85 per cent of coral-reef-related policy commitments are planning- and process-oriented, with States having the primary responsibility for 75 per cent of the commitments. While it is difficult to understand how many of these are as a direct response from the outputs of the Project, it is likely that the project heavily influenced the progress made.
108. While the breadth of international coral-reef-related policy was vast, the TE noted that the depth is less so: policy commitments are quite general and largely voluntary. Many are focused on “marine and coastal ecosystems” or on the human activities that may drive changes in coral reef ecosystems, rather than on the coral reef ecosystem itself. The efficiency of the international policy instruments depends in part on the mechanisms through which they function, including mechanisms for coordination, enforcement and financing. Few mechanisms have been established or designated by the instruments to explicitly promote coordination. Most policy instruments are not linked to financial mechanisms to help fund the associated costs, which presents a challenge for the many low-income States with responsibility for delivering reef-related commitments. The Global Fund should assist in helping countries move forward to implement the agreements and policy commitments they have made.
109. As outlined in Section 6.4.2.1, Component B was also critical for expanding and enhancing the Green Fins initiative for sustainable tourism. From ongoing technical and financial support that UNEP have given to Reef-World in support of the expansion and scaling of Green Fins over some 20 years, including through the Project there are now thirteen countries using the Green Fins code of conduct, covering over 500 dive and snorkel centres around the world. The work undertaken with Green Fins provides a good example of a real partnership - technical organisation - The Reef-World Foundation, working with UNEP and regional partners allowed for a higher level of professionalism/standard which gave opportunity for it to connect into Regional Seas activities and to work with countries to meet obligations from international agreements.
110. Green Fins have an audit process for ensuring businesses adopting the Code of Conduct are complying with it, as a way to measure change to reduce impacts from local threats from the marine tourism industry. It is clear from the high levels of

¹⁷ Refer to https://papersmart.unon.org/resolution/uploads/l14_sustainable_coral_reefs_management_1.pdf

compliance and the capacity building through the programme that more sustainable practices that benefit both the industry and the environment are now in place within these businesses.

Direct Outcomes 7 - 9

111. Under Component C, 3 direct outcomes were identified in the reconstructed TOC:

- DO 7 - Use of indicators and methods through national demonstration projects and capacity building associated with pilot projects and regional training events for decision makers, managers etc support broader uptake
- DO 8 - Enhanced use of monitoring data in national policy and management planning.
- DO 9 - Regional targets and actions are mapped in relation to globally agreed commitments on coral reefs [which in turn would lead to the Project Outcome]

112. Component C was fundamental for addressing ongoing challenges with coral reef data (inconsistent, incomplete, not consolidated), and for providing the data, knowledge and evidence base for the approaches developed in Components A and B. Strengthening and reinvigorating the GCRMN allowed for global, regional and national coral reef data to be standardised and aggregated to produce a number of reports to provide decision makers with reliable information on the status of coral reefs which could inform decision-making and management interventions. Through the Project, the GCRMN's capacity was enhanced for it to become the global ocean observation system on the status of coral reefs. Through the support of this Project, GCRMN is recognised as the most important and reliable global network for reporting on the status of coral reefs, supporting both the evidence base for this project's activities but also producing critical reports and analyses that inform decision-making and management of coral reefs globally, as well as becoming a useful tool for countries reporting against international commitments (for example to the CBD or the SDGs).

113. For the GCRMN to be policy and management relevant at all scales, it was important for the Project to strengthen regional GCRMN coordination mechanisms and institutions. The new approach was trialed in the GCRMN-Caribbean subregion whereby Guidelines for biophysical monitoring of coral reefs¹⁸ were developed to revitalise and strengthen coral reef monitoring, to ensure the collection of useful and accessible data that could effectively reveal the status and trends of the coral reefs in the region. Regional training was then conducted to build skills. This approach was then replicated and adapted in the Western Indian Ocean and the Pacific, with now ongoing processes in the Eastern Tropical Pacific and the East Asian Seas.

114. While there remains additional work for the GCRMN to continue to harmonise data the Project has demonstrated a strong mandate for the value the GCRMN provides. It is unclear to what extent the GCRMN has impacted on national policies but it has helped to strengthen the network and connect people. At the regional and global scales, the GCRMN is now working through ICRI, with UNEP on the post 2020 target for CBD - to ensure a target for coral reefs is tied into the GCRMN for consistency and most importantly, so that there will not be any additional onus placed on countries for more

¹⁸ Refer <https://www.icriforum.org/documents/gcrmn-caribbean-guidelines-for-coral-reef-biophysical-monitoring/>

data. It is important to note that the UNEA 4/13 Resolution specifically calls on “Member States and other entities to engage in the International Coral Reef Initiative Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network, including through participation in regional networks and the application of indicators and best practice identified through the Network, in order to produce a global report on the status of coral reefs in 2020”;....and “to continue to develop and strengthen the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network, including through integrated monitoring and new technologies, in line with the implementation and governance plan of the Network, to understand and communicate the status and trends of coral reefs globally”.

Component D Outcomes

115. No specific direct outcomes were identified in the reconstructed TOC for Component D, as it was seen as an overarching mechanism for the Project to have a firm anchoring in ICRI systems, workshops and initiatives as a key uptake pathway.

Project Outcome: Strengthened management of coral reef resources enable a select number of target countries to make concrete and measurable progress towards achieving Aichi Target 10.

116. Component D provided the institutional mechanisms for policy uptake, outreach and replication for many of the products, tools and approaches developed in Components A, B, and C, thus multiplying the impact of the Project. The Project led to the development of tools and approaches that had wide policy uptake, globally, regionally and nationally, although to what extent varied and is not clear. What is clear however, is that the Project played an important role in promoting ecosystem-based management and resilience to climate change approaches within the ICRI policy frameworks and networks, as well as supporting the GCRMN to become an increasingly relevant tool for policymakers and managers. The Project was able to unlock resources and draw from the resources through ICRI to ensure the activities of the Project were valuable and needed and had visibility, building on what existed previously to enhance, strengthen and implement.
117. As noted by the Project Coordinator, side events and inputs at the CBD, the UNEA and Regional Seas meetings allowed the leveraging of the mandates of existing structures to promote these approaches for coral reefs in environmental policy settings. The close collaboration and iterative processes between ICRI and UNEA led to the adoption of two UNEA resolutions on sustainable management of coral reefs (2/12 and 4/13), proposed to the assembly ICRI chairs. The UNEA framework was important in bringing project tools, approaches and achievements to the highest levels of international environmental decision-making. The adoptions of policies and resolutions was based on a solid foundation of high-quality science, technical analyses and needs-driven work on priority issues and with well-respected technical partners.

The rating for Achievement of Outcomes is Satisfactory.

Likelihood of Impact

118. Referring to the Reconstructed Theory of Change outlined in Figure 2, the Project has three interrelated impacts: *to achieve reduced coral reef loss, improved reef health and*

secured ecosystem system service provision for coral reefs. The Project has two intermediate states:

- Intermediate State 1: Countries more broadly use the ecosystem approach to sustain ecosystem services from coral reefs.
- Intermediate State 2: Regional networking via Regional Seas improves for coral reef assessment and reporting at the national and regional levels

119. The following assumptions across Components A - C need to hold in order for the intermediate state and the impact to be achieved:

- 1) Political and social willingness and resources exist to engage and support project initiatives and scaling.
- 2) Access to and adoption of tools, approaches and policy frameworks compels countries and other entities to apply them broadly in reef planning and management.
- 3) Adequate support provided to countries from UNEP and partners.
- 4) Regional Seas have identified key priorities of countries to ensure products developed are relevant and encourage uptake.
- 5) Sufficient interest or trust among private sector partners to engage in project activities. Benefits stack up to businesses to engage and then change practices.
- 6) State of environment and outlook reporting are key to sound decision-making in planning and addressing issues related to coral reef use and protection.

120. The following drivers need to be in place:

- 1) Practical and broadly applicable approaches for integrating coral reef resilience considerations into common decision support frameworks are made available.
- 2) Attention to the requirements of planning and management processes as well as policy context is provided.
- 3) Public financing is becoming increasingly insufficient to support reef management, and additional financing can be generated from private sources based on the benefits they derive from ecosystem services.
- 4) Business sectors and entities that benefit from and impact coral reefs are brought into a broader alliance to reduce impact on and enhance investment in coral reefs as an industry asset.
- 5) Valuation methods are fully utilised in coral reef planning and management.
- 6) Benefits can be seen by countries to adopt tools.
- 7) Improve decision making by addressing shortcomings in how reef assessment is conducted, reported on and utilised at national and regional level.

121. It would appear from a review of the Components from the Project and as confirmed during consultations that all assumptions are holding to varying degrees. Certainly, there has been strong political support and willingness to engage in the Project and provide resources as seen through the level of donors to the Project, including additional funding received from multiple donors (France, Sweden, Norway, USA, Monaco) to allow for a new project to build on the outcomes from this one. The support by ICRI members and Regional Seas for the UNEA resolutions is a clear example of the

level of political support at a global level. It is clear however that how this translates to national level action is dependent on funding support, particularly for developing and SIDS countries. The analysis of the implementation of Resolution 2/12 highlighted in Section 6.4.2.2 shows that assumption 2 holds to a degree, but not everywhere.

122. All those consulted indicated that UNEP and its partners provided strong support and technical expertise, however it is noted that the Project Coordinator in Section 6.4.2.1, suggested the need for stronger tailoring of the Project activities to the needs of different Regional Seas, given each region is at a different stage, with capacity limitations and because of that were not always able to engage as would have been liked. The Project did not achieve real triple bottom line investment to the extent sought. For example, while the Project conceptualised and demonstrated well, governance shortcomings meant it did not leverage parts of the Partnership well enough, (particularly Regional Seas) and misalignment of activities and limitations in capacity of different Partners meant replicating and scaling did not happen to the extent sought. There was however, certainly good engagement of some Regional Seas at the planning and design stage to ensure the Project aligned with priorities raised and ongoing engagement of them throughout the Project with good opportunities for sharing and expansion of various tools, such as the GCRMN regional assessments as well as regional training and capacity building. There was strong evidence provided in Components A and B of private sector interest and engagement as described previously which would indicate assumption 5 holds to some extent, however it is unclear to what extent businesses beyond the tourism sector have changed practices as a result of the Project. There was very little private sector engagement directly in the Project. It is unlikely that this will be able to be measured given the broad reach of the tools and guidelines etc provided. Assumption 6 holds as can best be seen through the strong support at all levels for the GCRMN and the reports being produced to inform decision makers and the recognition of the importance of the GCRMN through Resolution 4/13.
123. At this stage all drivers remain relevant. The variety of tools and approaches developed, enhanced and trialed and extended to ICRI and Regional Seas members demonstrates that driver 1 is remains relevant. As noted above that perhaps the Project could have been stronger in tailoring work to needs of different Regional Seas to address capacity limitations. It is proposed under future activities to work with specific Regional Seas Programmes, for example COBSEA, to implement the tools with Member States and in regional planning processes so it expected that this work will assist in strengthening driver 2. Certainly, with the Global Coral Reef Fund and the increasing interest from the private sector as well as the uptake of Green Fins within the tourism sector, and interest being expressed by other industries such as insurance (through a small grant project in the Caribbean), drivers 3 and 4 remain relevant and continuing to strengthen. It is unclear to what extent driver 5 remains an important factor at a national level, however the work undertaken in Component B provided the evidence base for the support received to establish the Global Coral Reef Fund. The level of support received towards the outputs produced from the Project during consultations, along with the support by ICRI and Regional Seas members for the proposed target on coral reefs for the post 2020 CBD indicates that driver 6 also remains relevant. The outputs produced from Components A and C, in particular relating to various impact assessment guidelines and tools, the GCRMN and reports to help understand threats and the related training

and capacity building that has followed support driver 7, however it is unclear to what extent national level take up has occurred.

124. The Project was rated Likely in terms of the likelihood of impact because there is a widespread sense of country driven-ness and ownership through the partnerships with ICRI and Regional Seas, the two Resolutions have provided a mandate to continue work on coral reefs, a global coral reef fund has been established with a mandate to assist countries to implement actions on the ground and there is now a new umbrella project within UNEP that will continue and build on the work done under the GCRP project, all positively influencing the likelihood of impact. However, the fact that the intermediate state has not been fully achieved yet has a negative effect on the rating. For intermediate states and impact, given their medium and long-term nature, it is harder to assess whether, and to what extent, assumptions hold, but it has been partially achieved, even with the Project existing for only a few years. Overall, despite some uncertainty associated mostly about how and when the intermediate state will be achieved fully, there is a reasonable expectation that some impact will be achieved, due both to national, regional and international circumstances.

The rating for Achievement of Likelihood of Impact is Likely.

The overall rating for Effectiveness is Satisfactory

E. Financial management

125. The Project was approved in 2013 with a total planned budget of US\$3.246 million. This included US\$1.305 million from secured from donors, US\$1.395 million that was to be mobilised during the project and an inkind cash contribution from UNEP of US\$336 thousand. In addition, an inkind non cash contribution of US\$210 thousand was estimated, although there is no documentation provided as to what this related to. In 2018 the Project was revised with a new budget due to additional funding mobilised by donors as shown in Table 5, noting it shows no inkind contributions previously secured, even though US\$210 thousand were identified in the ProDoc.

Table 5 Revised project budget approved in 2018.

Overall Budget	Amount
A: Previously approved planned budget (from the last revision)	USD 3,246,000
B: Previously secured budget (from IMIS)	USD 1,384,931
C: Total change of secured budget	USD 2,077,349
i) Source of newly Secured budget – France	USD 523,013 (including PSC 13 %)
ii) Source of newly Secured budget – France	USD 17,700 (including PSC 13%)
iii) Source of newly secured budget – Sweden	USD 248,386 (including PSC 8 %)
iv) Source of newly Secured budget – Norway	USD 100,000(including PSC 8 %)
v) Source of newly Secured budget – USA	USD 1,070,250 (including PSC 13 %)
vi) Source of newly Secured budget – Monaco	USD 118,000 (including PSC 13 %)
D: Total revised secured budget (B+C)	USD
E: Unsecured budget (F-D)	USD 0
F: New total for proposed planned budget	USD 3,462,280
G: In Kind contributions- Previously Secured	
H: Revised total in kind secured contributions	
I: Total revised planned budget: Planned + In Kind (F+H)	USD 3,462,280

126. As of March 2021, the final financial expenditure report for the Project was not available. From discussions with the Finance Officer, it is only possible to see the breakdown of expenditure by donor to the Project. Financial reporting by component and/or line item for the entire Project is not available. From a report provided by the Financial Officer for the Project split by donor spending it appears the Project had spent US\$2.904million of the revised budget, with the remainder of unspent funds transferred to the new project 361.1. It is unclear how much had been received as in-kind support (non cash) for the GCRP Project. Documentation in relation to the transfer to the new umbrella project was not easily available given it occurred over 2 years - 2019 and 2020, however from a review of one example of correspondence provided between the US Permanent Representative in Kenya in 2015 and UNEP, it appears that there were no restrictions on how the funds provided by them were to be spent other than they were for the Coral Reef Unit's work.
127. The Project's Financial Management is rated as Moderately Satisfactory according to the UNEP Evaluation Office Criterion Ratings Matrix. The Project's financial management is rated based on the combination of ratings for completeness of financial information and communication between the Project Coordination Team and financial management officials. A breakdown of ratings for these aspects is provided in the Table 6. Both Adherence to UNEP's Policies and Procedures and Completeness of Financial Information were rated moderately unsatisfactory and Quality of Project Communication was rated satisfactory. It is important to note however that the Evaluator did not (nor was expected to) undertake a full financial audit of the Project, including a review of internal controls UNEP and Project Partners.

Table 6 Financial Management Table

Financial management components:		Rating	Evidence/ Comments
1. Adherence to UNEP's policies and procedures:		MU	
Any evidence that indicates shortcomings in the project's adherence to UNEP or donor policies, procedures or rules		Yes	Process to finalise project finances has been over 12 months and still yet to be finished. Significant delays between approval and disbursement of cash advances to partners. There were a number of PIMS reports missing.
2. Completeness of project financial information:		MU	
Provision of key documents to the evaluator (based on the responses to A-H below)			
A.	Co-financing and Project Cost's tables at design (by budget lines)	Yes	Included within the Prodoc and then subsequent revision document.
B.	Revisions to the budget	Yes	Revised budget provided as a part of the only revision to the project.
C.	All relevant project legal agreements (e.g. SSFA, PCA, ICA)	Yes	Relevant documents sighted.

Financial management components:		Rating	Evidence/ Comments
D.	Proof of fund transfers	Yes	Evidence provided showing funds transfers within the system and tracked in monitoring spreadsheets used by the project coordinator.
E.	Proof of co-financing (cash and in-kind)	No	Several examples of letters from donors have been sighted for cash contributions. No documentation has been provided showing proof of inkind contributions. The level of inkind contributions was not available at the time of the evaluation.
F.	A summary report on the project's expenditures during the life of the project (by budget lines, project components and/or annual level)	Yes	Very high level summary report on the projects expenditure by donor grant provided. Progress reports were provided to donors. Nothing else is available as project is still being finalised and closed.
G.	Copies of any completed audits and management responses (where applicable)	N/A	No audits were conducted for the project
H.	Any other financial information that was required for this project (list):	N/A	
3. Communication between finance and project management staff		S	
Project Manager level of awareness of the project's financial status.		S	There is a good level of awareness however reliance is on the Financial Officer to complete the closure to provide end of project financials. It is unclear why the project has taken so long to close however from discussions with the Finance Officer it is the result of internal delays within UNEP between departments and waiting on supporting documentation.
Fund Management Officer's knowledge of project progress/status when disbursements are done.		S	The Financial Officer was employed around a year ago to assist with closure of the project. There was good level of awareness of project status and issues requiring resolving (eg waiting on supporting documentation relating for travel). It appears prior to that there was no dedicated person however there was knowledge of the project within the FMO.
Level of addressing and resolving financial management issues among Fund Management Officer and Project Manager/Task Manager.		S	Any financial management issues that arose during the project, such as delays in payments or unused fund reallocations were resolved however not always in a timely fashion over the life of the Project, as confirmed from the consultation. UMOJA, the new project and financial management system was introduced during the project. There were a number of delays in paying partners as a result teething problems and staff learning the new system. These issues have generally been rectified based on consultation however there remain ongoing systems challenges where internal

Financial management components:	Rating	Evidence/ Comments
		systems with the UN do not talk to each other, eg UNOPS and UMOJA.
Contact/communication between by Fund Management Officer, Project Manager/Task Manager during the preparation of financial and progress reports.	S	There was good communication and regular contact between all positions over the life of the Project relating to Progress and financial reporting.
Project Manager, Task Manager and Fund Management Officer responsiveness to financial requests during the evaluation process	S	All parties were very responsive to financial information requests, responding in a timely manner and answering questions.
Overall rating	MS	

Adherence to UNEP's Financial Policies and Procedures

128. Based on a review of documents provided and from discussions with the Financial Officer, the Project has followed UNEP policies and procedures, including with respect to implementation Partners. While it has been over 14 months since the Project finished financial closure to the Project is still underway. The Financial Officer indicated that procedures are also being following in terms of closure, however this could not be verified.
129. Despite the concurring positive views about communication over financial matters, concerns regarding the timeliness of financial processes were raised. Significant challenges were experienced with the time delays incurred for funds to be transferred to Project Partners. This was primarily the result of the transfer to a new system within UNEP as well as the result of not having dedicated resources within the FMO at the time to support the Project. In some cases, delays of up to a year were experienced. There was much pressure on the Project Coordinator to rectify the issues and extensive and regular engagement with the FMO was undertaken to attempt to do that. In one case, Reef World, the NGO who runs Green Fins needed to take out a loan to continue to operate and then only had three months to deliver the project activities that had been outlined as 12 months of work, with Project funds being received 8 months after contracts were signed. A key quote during the consultation was that "UNEP relies on small partners to put hands in pockets and that is not fair". Without Partners accommodating these delays, it is questionable whether the outcomes achieved for the Project would have been as effective and the Project Partners would not have been able to deliver within the timeframes agreed. Even still there were delays by Partners as a result of delays in funding being received. Delays to fieldwork in particular through the small grants programme can cause significant problems, particularly when working with communities. It does not seem to be the case here that these delays impacted on community work where it was occurring though.
130. From a review of PIMS reports, there were 3 reporting periods that were not completed. It appears that reports were not submitted for the 6 monthly periods of Jan - June 2018, July - Dec 2017, and Jan - June 2017. From discussion with the Project Coordinator, these periods coincided with PIMS experiencing technical glitches in one of the

reporting periods, and the Project Coordinator during that time was managing COBSEA as well as the coral reef project and was overwhelmed given they were undertaking two full time jobs.

131. Regular analysis of actual expenditure against the budget and workplan was undertaken by the Project Coordinator by way of an excel spreadsheet. From a review of examples provided, the monitoring of actual expenditure undertaken was well structured and clear.
132. Progress and final reporting were provided to donors, with a number of examples sighted.

The rating for Adherence to UNEP policies and procedures is Moderately Unsatisfactory.

Completeness of Financial Information

133. All information required for the TE by the Evaluator was not available, however it appears from reviewing the information that was available that high level budgets, funds transfers etc existed, for example as reference numbers were provided on the excel spreadsheets used for financial management by the Project Coordinator. Note the Evaluator did not undertake a financial audit of the Project and no audits have been undertaken by external auditors so, while it appears that financial information is complete, this cannot be assured. Annex 2 provides a summary of key documents referred to for the TE.
134. During consultations, the Finance Officer indicated that the financial closure has been a slow process due to internal processes within UNEP to reconcile accounts for example, as a result of waiting on supporting documentation relating to travel. Unspent funds have been rolled over to the new umbrella project which appears to be in line with donor wishes from a review of documentation provided. It appears prior to a dedicated Finance Officer being appointed for the Project in 2020 to assist with the closure, there was no dedicated person, and this contributed to the delays in being able to reconcile the Project, as supporting documentation does not appear to have been collected at the time the Project was running and the inability of systems within UNEP to talk to each other has compounded the complexity.
135. Detailed project budgeting by output was not undertaken due to limitations with the UMOJA system, however it was undertaken by UNEP line item by donor via the excel spreadsheet used by the Project Coordinator. There was no information available in relation to the delivery of in-kind contributions however, both in terms of the equivalent costed amount and what was provided.

The rating for Completeness of Financial Information is Moderately Unsatisfactory

Communication between Financial and Project Management staff

136. There was evidence that the Project Coordinator and FMO had strong awareness of the Project's financial status, regular contact, evidence of discussions to resolve financial

issues and the fact that narrative and financial reports were reviewed, as confirmed during consultations and from a review of correspondence provided. For example, with the significant delays in providing funding to Partners to undertake Project work, there is documentation of regular correspondence and actions between the Project Coordinator and the FMO with respect to addressing funding delays for Partners. While it took some time for these delays to be resolved it did occur.

The rating for Communication between Financial and Project Management Staff is Satisfactory.

137. In summary, Project financial management is rated as Moderately Satisfactory because with respect to Adherence to UNEP policies and procedures there were significant delays experienced between the time of contract approval and disbursement to Project Partners - up to 12 months and a number of progress reports were missing, for the completeness of financial information the necessary financial items required in the UNEP Criteria Ratings Matrix were inadequate. In the area of communication between FMO and Project Coordinator, the Project was deemed satisfactory because of the evidence that the Project Coordinator and FMO had strong awareness of the Project's financial status, regular contact, evidence of proactive strategies to resolve financial issues and the fact that narrative and financial reports were reviewed. The financial management challenges they faced were due to organisational process issues beyond the Project staff's control. These challenges provide evidence of issues that deserve the attention of UNEP and its staff working on such projects. It also points to the need for a dedicated Project Coordinator and Finance Officer for all projects of this size within UNEP.

The overall rating for Financial Management is Moderately Satisfactory

F. Efficiency

138. The Project was implemented in cost-effective way under the effective project coordination and management by UNEP; however, a number of factors made this challenging. The Project Coordinator was also coordinating COBSEA at the time of managing the GCRP project which proved very challenging with the workload. The design of the Project therefore was not sufficiently anchored in the realities of organisation (in hindsight). In some instances, there were too many things to do across a broad field. In particular, the time required to chase contract approvals (took up to 8 months from approval to contracting) and outstanding funds transfers (payments took up to a year) due to very slow internal financial and contracting processes within UNEP took up much time and slowed down engagement of Project Partners with UNEP. Unfortunately, the good will of Partners and the success and impact of the Project was impacted because of the bureaucracy and inefficiencies. Some Partners reported challenges to get feedback on time so deadlines slipped because there were periods where communication was delayed. Working across so many time zones also proved challenging. During consultations all interviewed noted however, how well the Project Coordinator operated to cover such a heavy workload and that he had performed very well, given the circumstances. This overloading of capacity was rectified towards the end of the Project with a new Project Coordinator coming on board to take over the

Project after following a hiatus as the existing Project Coordinator took on a new role. The new Project Coordinator however was also delivering a number of roles at UNEP so it became shared project coordination for a period. The handover was detailed and smooth and all consulted indicated that the new Project Coordinator had also done a very good job at driving the Project forward. This allowed for some sharing of project management responsibilities for a period. All consulted indicated that both Project Coordinators provided strong thought leadership, scientific knowledge and robustness, good strategic thinking and project management to drive the Project forward.

139. All consulted indicated that a strength of the Project was the light touch with respect to administration. Many indicated there is a tendency in UNEP to overly complicate things at times however the Project Coordinators kept it light to get on and do the work needed while staying connected to Partners. This was a smart strategy to enable quick delivery, given the constraints the Project was under as noted above. During the consultation, some Partners noted that while the flexible and informal style to the Project, was appreciated to encourage interaction between Partners, the informality generated some uncertainty and ambiguity for some Partners regarding composition and roles and what the Partnership was delivering to give clarity to the Project. Where possible time saving measures were also introduced, such as simple small grants applications and reporting processes for all Partners to reduce workloads on all parties. During the consultations, many indicated that this was much appreciated and provided for a more streamlined approach.
140. There were challenges with some Project Partners in terms of their capacity to deliver which meant that this stretched the Project Coordinator's capacity even further as there was a need to dedicate more time to those Partners needing more input and capacity building. To rectify this, changing of lead partners for specific activities occurred where it was necessary.
141. ICRI also provided very strong administrative support via their general meetings (supported by the Project) to extend GCRP outputs and related information out to members to encourage take up of key aspects by members.
142. The no cost extension in 2018, approved to allow for the additional funding support provided by donors, and subsequent revision and expansion of some activities, allowed for the Project to continue for another 2 years and for Project activities that were delayed to be completed, but also additional activities to be undertaken in direct response to implementing Resolution 4/12.
143. The MTR had provided a number of recommendations geared towards improving the efficiency and cost effectiveness of the Project. The MTR was important in shaping the Project Document revision of 2018. Recommendations were discussed at the second Steering Committee, however were not formally tracked or reported on in half-year reports. The MTR coincided with the change in amount of effort that the first Project Coordinator were able to dedicate to the Partnership so the MTR followup could have been stronger and more structured.
144. The Project made good use of/built on pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other initiatives, programmes and projects. This was a key strength of the Project, to ensure it provided opportunity to enhance, build capacity and strengthen existing or flailing networks (eg

ICRI, GCRMN etc) and support the strengthening, expansion or progression of various tools, and programs (eg Green Fins) by allowing testing, scaling etc. Partnering with ICRI and Regional Seas streamlined the engagement process and allowed for more effective interaction with coral reef countries and input and sharing of new tools, resources, information. It also allowed for an effective means to build support and agreement towards global policy action such as the 2 UNEA Resolutions passed on coral reefs as discussed previously. The level of political support in UNEP, allowed the project to increase the profile of coral reefs within UNEP. Coral reefs are now seen as a flagship system and those in the Coral Reef Unit are seeking to leverage many parts of UNEP to drive issues, such as the economics. The work of the Partnership also enabled provision of input to a variety of international processes including participation in the Advisory Panel IPWG on climate change and ocean acidification for the UN Our Oceans Our World Conference on SDG 14 in 2017, the 2018 Year of the Reef and for the CBD post 2020 targets.

145. From discussions with the Project Coordinator, all the standard UNEP policies and requirements for carbon offsetting travel were followed. UNEP invests in carbon offsetting projects to offset travel emissions¹⁹.
146. The efficiency of the Project is rated Satisfactory. Delays in implementation had a negative impact on the rating, while adaptive management, time saving measures and use of existing institutions, agreements, partnerships and data sources had a positive impact. It meets the UNEP Evaluation Office Satisfactory rating as the Project had a 2 year extension with justified amendments to the formally approved results framework and, evidence suggests that the application of cost-effective approaches strongly supported the achievement of Project targets and it operated within existing roles, mechanisms or institutions or expanded them in a generally efficient and effective manner.

The overall rating for Efficiency is Satisfactory.

G. Monitoring and Reporting

Monitoring design and budgeting

147. The Project followed the UNEP standard monitoring, reporting and evaluation processes and procedures. The Project logframe developed at the design and annual workplans provide the primary framework against which progress was monitored and included some SMART indicators for each expected outcome focused on outputs, as well as end-of-project targets, and milestone outputs. These indicators and targets along with the key milestone deliverables were the main tools for assessing Project implementation progress and whether Project results (outputs) were being achieved. The ProDoc clearly designated roles and responsibilities for monitoring, evaluation and reporting from the outset of the Project. There was clear reference to incorporation of gender and marginalised groups in the monitoring strategy in relation to actions involving workshops and training or Green Fins, and each Project Partner was asked to monitor and provide disaggregated gender data in their Final Reports. No targets

¹⁹ For example see this story here: <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/press-release/unep-joins-un-carbon-offsetting-programme-second-year-running>

however were set in relation to gender balance or the conservation outcomes achieved from having a gender balance.

148. The budget allocated for monitoring and evaluation was quite low at US\$40k, however COVID travel restrictions at least for the terminal evaluation have meant that a travel budget was not required. It is unclear however what actual costs are against monitoring and evaluation at the time of writing the terminal evaluation as no financial reporting by line item was available. There was no specific budget for ongoing monitoring activities undertaken by the Project Coordinator.

The rating for Monitoring Design and Budgeting is Satisfactory.

Monitoring of Project Implementation

149. Monitoring of Project progress during implementation was adequate as most indicators were at the output level and easily tracked. Monitoring of performance (in terms of achievement of Project outcomes and Project objective) was more challenging, as indicators did not measure outcomes. This included in relation to gender balance and marginalised groups that were reported on in relation to relevant projects.
150. The monitoring system used for the Project was tailored for the Project and adapted as required to suit the needs of Project Partners. At the inception stage, all Project Partners for the small grants programme were required to provide Project Proposals, using a simple, standard template. These proposals required key information such as targets and milestones but did not show how they fed into the results framework for the Project, nor specify any gender requirements to be factored into the design. Other activities were via terms of reference development and either through a tender process where partners submitted proposals or via direct appointment depending on the size of the project.
151. All Project partners undertaking contracted activities or delivering small grants provided progress reporting, using standard templates developed and provided the required supporting information in accordance with requests by the Project Coordinator. Subcontracts with Partners were required to report against Project outcomes, outputs and milestones but this could be made more explicit. Half yearly reporting was perhaps too long a timeframe to allow for timely responses to any issues and challenges from the Project Coordinator relating to Project Partners and for appropriate action to be discussed and taken by each party, also given that the Project Coordinator was undertaking two jobs as noted previously.
152. Monitoring of participation and representation in Project activities of vulnerable and marginalised groups such as women and youth were undertaken by each Project Partner, where relevant to record gender balance, or in the case of Green Fins to show participation of males to females. The results were analysed and discussed, with examples provided in the Project's Final Report. As a large part of the Project focus was on global and regional science-policy processes including the development of reports and tools for the sustainable management of coral reefs, all project activities and interventions were deemed not to contravene the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The rating for Monitoring of Project Implementation is Satisfactory.

Project Reporting

153. Reporting requirements were fulfilled throughout the Project, in line with the UNEP requirements, and with progress and final reports provided to each donor as well as 6-monthly progress and final reports into PIMS submitted largely as planned and in line with the Project scope. From a review of the final PIMS report for the Project (Dec 2019) however, it appears that reports were not submitted for the 6 monthly periods of Jan - June 2018, July - Dec 2017, and Jan - June 2017 as discussed in Section 6.5.1.
154. The information provided by Project Partners was used by the Project Coordinator to improve Project delivery and to adapt to changing needs. The quality of reporting was good and gender neutral in its style. Consolidating reporting from Project Partners into half yearly PIMS reporting took some time and from discussions with the Project Coordinators, could have been better designed to make things more streamlined and reduce reporting burdens, by having potentially fewer but clearer indicators/milestones.
155. There were many bodies of work under the GCRP that relied on other work from other areas, so it was hard to measure progress - to separate out what GCRP did/contributed to.
156. The Final Report for the Project, along with the final PIMS report and a sample of donor reports were made available to the Evaluator. All appeared comprehensive, detailed and well presented. There were dedicated sections in the final reports on gender dimensions.

The rating for Project Reporting is Satisfactory.

The overall rating for Monitoring and Reporting is Satisfactory.

H. Sustainability

157. There are a number of factors that will ensure the long-term sustainability of this Project, in terms of financial, socio-political and institutional sustainability.

Financial sustainability

158. A key outcome from the project has been the establishment of the Global Fund for Coral Reefs. This Fund is aiming to finance on ground implementation activities at the national level through providing blended finance and innovative public-private partnerships, to catalyse a sustainable financial ecosystem for conservation and restoration of coral reefs. The plan is for the fund to be a 10-year, US\$500 million blended finance vehicle established through a coalition between UN agencies, financial institutions, and private philanthropy sources. The financial sustainability of the Project activities as well as the scaling up of many of them may be achieved now through this fund. The fund will have a grant mechanism and investment window. The grant mechanism will support technical assistance, capacity development, monitoring,

and evaluation. The investment window generates de-risked investment capital to maximise the impact of projects incubated by the grant window. UNEP is a member of the Fund's Executive Board. Even where future funding may be secured through this Fund the question will still remain as to whether the national project outcomes will be financially sustainable in the medium to long term, given the reliance on ongoing donor and NGO support to continue some government functions in many developing and small island developing countries.

159. The additional funding support from donors has also added to the sustainability of the Project, building on activities and efforts to assist in scaling and replication working through Regional Seas, but incorporating the linkages between all coastal ecosystems - not just coral reefs, and focusing on national actions, through the establishment of a new US\$8.3m four year project 316.1 Sustainable Management of Marine and Coastal Ecosystem Services. A number of activities from the GCRP project will continue on under this new umbrella project including those related to the GCRMN, the partnership with the Regional Seas, work on understanding the impacts of climate change on coral reefs and coral bleaching futures, the Global Fund for Coral Reefs, the development and implementation of tools for ecosystem-based management of coral reefs, Green Fins and the partnership with ICRI. This new umbrella project seeks to incorporate the values of marine and coastal ecosystem services in the development and implementation of coastal and marine policies and decision-making, building on the work of the GCRP. It is funded exclusively through donors, including the USA, Sweden, Italy, Norway and the European Commission and Germany(unsecured), taking unspent funds from the GCRP Project as well as additional support provided by these countries. This new umbrella project focuses on 1. Partnerships established and policy relevant scientific knowledge, data and analysis produced and disseminated on globally critical marine ecosystems, 2. Customised tools and approaches for ecosystem-based management and sustainable blue economy are developed, and tested and made available to support sustainable management of ecosystem services in marine and coastal environments, 3. Communication made available on the value of ecosystem services, supported by operational knowledge platform and outreach, 4. Guidance disseminated and technical support provided for the development of innovative financing projects, and 5. Services and guidance made available to strengthen Regional Ocean Governance
160. At the time of writing the terminal evaluation, the full amounts of funds rolled over from the GCRP Project to the new 316.1 project was unclear.

The rating for Financial Sustainability is Likely

Socio-political Sustainability

161. Many of the tools and approaches developed by the Project have been taken up by Member States and partners and are now critical elements of their long-term policies for the sustainable ecosystem-based management of coral reefs in the face of climate change. Clear examples include Green Fins, the GCRMN and the use of UNEP guidance for assessing coral reef resilience for decision support or for using downscaled climate projections for bleaching events. NOAA is now hosting the climate data produced by the Project to predict bleaching events on its website, which is now widely used by

coral reef practitioners in developing management strategies, following the model initially developed by this Project. Green Fins has been embedded in national coral reef strategies as outlined earlier, and the GCRMN now has a strong host institution and a clear plan for future governance and implementation.

162. The partnership between UNEP and ICRI provides good opportunities for scaling up and replication of Project tools and approaches through the ICRI networks. ICRI members have access to learnings from the Project, and the annual General Meetings continue to provide an opportunity to share the approaches and products developed, even beyond the life of the Project.

The rating for Socio-Political Sustainability is Likely.

Institutional Sustainability

163. Under UNEA Resolution 2/10, UNEP is requested to establish a new Marine and Coastal Strategy which covers the period until 2030 and this document serves as a principle guiding document for the new Project 316.1. UNEA Resolution 4/13 requested national action on coral reef ecosystems, as well as Regional Seas based action on this ecosystem. Following on, UNEP has received requests for support for a number of Regional Seas and as well as countries for national action. Within the resolutions of the regional seas conference of the parties and intergovernmental meetings, UNEP is also called upon to address the requests from the Member States of these Regional Seas intergovernmental mechanisms.
164. The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration provides the framework for continued investment and emphasis on coral reef protection and restoration, and the UN Decade on Ocean Science for Sustainable Development provides the framework for continued investment and action on the GCRMN for the next decade. Furthermore, the CBD post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework will most likely include targets and recommendations for coral reefs that have been supported by the activities of this Project.
165. On that basis, through the new umbrella project 316.1 as well as ongoing partnerships at the international level between UNEP and ICRI and at the regional level with Regional Seas, efforts will be sustained at least until 2030 to continue promotion of the outcomes from the Project and share lessons learned to encourage adoption and incorporation of Project outputs into national decision making. The capacity of Regional Seas will be a limiting factor that UNEP is well aware of and is looking to address, having engaged them early in the development of the new umbrella project 316.1 to ensure capacity issues can be managed or capacity enhanced.
166. The institutional frameworks (policy, legal and capacity) are not yet in place in all coral reef countries, although there are many that are far progressed. How far it progresses by governments will be driven by the level of political will and support as well as champions both within and external to government to drive processes forward to implementation. While capacity has been built within many coral reef countries within governments, research institutions and NGOs through ICRI with from technical and funding support from UNEP via the Project, the sustainability of that capacity will be driven by whether staff engaged in the Project remain in key positions or move on.

The rating for Sustainability of the Institutional Framework is Moderately Likely.

The overall rating for Sustainability is Likely.

I. Factors Affecting Performance

167. The guidelines for undertaking a TE do not require this section to be completed as factors are discussed throughout the main findings of the report. To assist in helping understand the factors a short summary is provided of the key points.

Preparation and readiness

168. Effective Inception stage of the project. Appropriate measures were taken to either address weaknesses in the project design and respond to changes that took place between project approval, the securing of funds and project mobilisation. Good engagement with stakeholder groups by the project team, however some challenges with some project partner capacity. Delays in project financing.

Quality of project management and supervision

169. Effective project management performance given the project coordinator was undertaking two jobs at the time. Strong technical backstopping and supervision provided by UNEP.

Stakeholder participation and co-operation

170. Good quality and effective communication and consultation with stakeholders throughout the project life. Strong support given to maximise collaboration and coherence between various stakeholders. Gender groups considered.

Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity

171. Gender reflected in the context, implementation, logframe and the budget. Project adheres to UNEP Policy and Strategy for Gender Equality and the Environment.

Environmental and social safeguards

172. Low risk for negative unintended environmental, social and economic effects. Mostly working at the science-policy interface at global and regional scales. All applications of the tools via interventions in-country were through reputable non-governmental organizations or environmental government agencies, and did not involve any negative environmental, social or economic consequences. All interventions conformed to UNEP's safeguards and impacts were monitored through regular reporting by partners on the ground.

Country ownership and driven-ness

173. Level of ownership generated by the project over outputs and outcomes is strong within ICRI members and will need to hold for long term impact to be realised across coral reef countries.

Communication and public awareness

174. While many communication products were developed and communicated through UNEP and ICRI, many Partners not aware of what the depth and breath of the Partnership was, how they fitted into the bigger picture of what it was seeking to achieve and what the Partnership was achieving. The lack of branding, while a conscious decision, meant that there was no recognition with respect to Partnership outputs and achievements. In some cases, some Partners (Regional Seas) did not even know they were a part of the Partnership project.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusions

175. The Global Coral Reef Partnership Project has proved invaluable in raising the profile of coral reefs and the need for action to build climate resilience, providing the information, tools and frameworks in which to undertake the work necessary. The Project has provided strong links between science, guidelines and tools and their application on ground to inspire and replicate and then has been able, through their strong engagement with ICRI and Regional Seas members to take these results and achieve two UN resolutions on coral reefs. The Project has “put coral reefs on the map” and provided a clear mandate to show that coral reefs are an important area of work for the UN and UNEP going forward. The GCRP has influenced and strengthened international discussions and raised the focus on coral reefs directly as a result of the work undertaken across all Outputs of the Project.
176. This Project has helped to develop tools to further understanding of the impacts of climate change on coral reefs, how to measure the status and trends of coral reef ecosystems, and how to use these data to manage for resilience of coral reefs in a changing world. The Project was seen by all consulted to offer the opportunity to help build a strong global network, particularly through ICRI and engage and work with similar organisations. Interviewees provided multiple examples of circumstances in which the relationships were fostered, both between and beyond members. The Regional Seas Programmes, with their unique mandate for the protection of the coastal and marine environment, were an important Partner for the Project to collaborate with Member States to implement the tools and approaches for ecosystem-based management of coral reefs in the face of climate change. While the ability of each Regional Sea to engage in the project varied, their input was highly valued.
177. The widespread sense of country driven-ness and ownership through the partnerships with ICRI and Regional Seas, and the two Resolutions have provided a mandate to continue work on coral reefs. A Global Fund for Coral Reefs has been established with a mandate to assist countries to implement actions on the ground and there is now a new umbrella project within UNEP that will continue and build on the work done under the GCRP Project, all positively influencing the likelihood of impact.
178. The biggest weaknesses related to the short timeframes for delivery of some projects brought about mostly by internal delays with UNEP project and financial management systems and that some Partners were not aware of what was going on with respect of the Partnership given the deliberate decision not to brand the Project and rather brand outputs as UNEP and or the international Coral Reef Initiative. Of key concern was the overloading of the Project Coordinator who had two fulltime jobs during the majority of the project, impacting on efficiencies.
179. Project outcomes are likely to be sustainable, given the ongoing financial support from a number of countries to UNEP to build on the outcomes from this and other projects to assist in scaling and replication working through Regional Seas, the continued collaboration with ICRI, the establishment of the Global Fund for Coral Reefs and the international mandate provided via a number of instruments. There is strong commitment and ownership to drive things forward within ICRI member countries, and

UNEP is already seeing requests for support from some of these. Furthermore, the CBD post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework will most likely include targets and recommendations for coral reefs that will help see the focus extend beyond 2030. The capacity of Regional Seas will be a limiting factor that UNEP is well aware of and is looking to address, having engaged them early in the development of the new umbrella project 316.1 to ensure capacity issues can be managed or capacity enhanced.

180. The five questions posed for the evaluation have all been addressed by the Project to varying degrees as discussed below.
181. There was clear evidence provided to show that the scientific and other knowledge products prepared through this Project influenced policy and decision-making for coral reef management at global, regional and to a lesser extent national scales. There are many examples, but this was particularly the case with respect to methods and tools that support the management of coral reef resilience in the face of climate change such as the guide to assessing coral reef resilience for decision support and the coral bleaching futures work. These tools are now being applied by a number of countries. Clear examples were also seen through the revitalisation and strengthening of the GCRMN, and the expansion and scaling of the Green Fins initiative.
182. The Project greatly contributed to strengthening the implementation of the ecosystem approach in coral reef management at global, regional and going forward through follow on work at national scales. The value of the Project was seen through a) the development of a wide set of tools and information sources that support the implementation of best practices for ecosystem-based management of coral reefs, b) an improved understanding of the current status of coral reefs at national, regional and global scales, with ecosystem-based management recommendations, c) support for implementation of ecosystem-based management approaches and capacity-building in-country in key coral reef nations, d) the development of sustainable financing mechanisms for the implementation of ecosystem-based management in coral reef areas, notably through the Global Fund for Coral Reefs, and e) strengthening of international multi-lateral environmental frameworks specifically for coral reef issues.
183. Institutional/capacity strengths and weaknesses of the Global Coral Reef Partnership in delivering on the Project objectives, and for future UNEP coral reef activities have been discussed throughout the report and are reflected in the recommendations.
184. There is evidence that the socio-economic tools developed as part of the Project, were successfully taken up by various stakeholders. The establishment of the Global Coral Reef Fund is testament to the value of the Project in providing the underlying technical input via socio economic tools produced, to develop the business case for its acceptance. Going forward this should see increased strengthening of ecosystem based approaches implemented on the ground by countries. There was no resistance to the Project identified.
185. There is strong evidence to support that the 2017 UN Oceans Conference and the 2018 International Year of the Reef events raised awareness of Project objectives but as the Partnership was not branded the focus was on promoting outputs and outcomes. During the 2017 UN Oceans Conference, many of the Project outputs and achievements were presented at a high level and a high level VIP lunch on coral reefs was organised with support from the Project. Collaboration with Indonesia through the

UN Oceans Conference also helped them in agreeing to become an ICRI Secretariat co-chair. The Project helped to catalyse the designation of International Year of the Reef in 2018 through its collaboration and support of ICRI.

186. There was good consideration to gender dimensions throughout the Project where it was relevant through consideration in team structures of Partners, when training and capacity building was undertaken, through deliberate steps taken to understand socio economic factors within communities to help drive change for the small grants programmes and in Project reporting at all levels.
187. The overall rating for the Project is Satisfactory with likelihood of impact, Likely. A summary of the evaluation criteria, assessment and ratings is provided in Table 7.

Table 7 Project ratings for each criterion

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Rating
Strategic relevance		Highly Satisfactory
1. Alignment to MTS and POW	Strong alignment with MTS and POW.	Highly Satisfactory
2. Alignment to Donor strategic priorities	Strong alignment with strategic priorities.	Highly Satisfactory
3. Relevance to regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities	Highly relevant to regional, sub regional and national priorities across the Pacific and Indian Oceans.	Highly Satisfactory
4. Complementarity with existing interventions	The project demonstrated strong complementarity with many important interventions.	Highly Satisfactory
Quality of Project Design	Strong project design but aspects of design structure and emphasis remained challenging throughout the life of the project.	Satisfactory
Nature of the external context	Project moved forward successfully, with no interruptions experienced as a result of external influences.	Highly favourable
Effectiveness	Satisfactory	
1. Availability of outputs	Project Partners delivered high quality outputs.	Satisfactory
2. Achievement of direct outcomes	Strong evidence that there has been good achievement of outcomes.	Satisfactory
3. Likelihood of impact	The achieved direct outcomes include the most important to attain the intermediate state; assumptions for the change to intermediate states hold; drivers to support transition to intermediate states are in place. Intermediate state partially achieved, but well on way to being achieved through follow on activities.	Likely
Financial Management		Moderately Satisfactory
1. Adherence to UNEP's policies and procedures	Good adherence to UNEP policies and procedures, however significant delays in funds disbursement and a number of progress reports were not done.	Moderately Unsatisfactory

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Rating
2.Completeness of project financial information	Some financial management information made available and appear complete, however gaps with respect to final expenditure and inkind contributions.	Moderately Unsatisfactory
3.Communication between finance and project management staff	Good and effective communication between finance and project management staff.	Satisfactory
Efficiency	Project was delivered efficiently and cost effectively but had one no-cost extension for two years as a result of delays in some activities, but also additional funding support received from donors that allowed for additional activities to take place.	Satisfactory
Monitoring and Reporting		Satisfactory
1. Monitoring design and budgeting	Many aspects of monitoring design and budgeting are good with SMART indicators, project targets and baseline identified. MTR and TE were adequately funded as a result of COVID restrictions meaning savings on travel costs. underfunded.	Satisfactory
2. Monitoring of project implementation	Approved process for change in mid-term review, generally good evidence of detailed monitoring of project implementation and sharing, extensive data shared with evaluators; also disaggregated data by gender conducted.	Satisfactory
3.Project reporting	Substantial documentation of project progress and good communication.	Satisfactory
Sustainability		Moderately Likely
1. Socio-political sustainability	Strong interest and commitment and some level of ownership from international, regional levels and some national and governments to take project achievements forward. Strong ownership and commitment from ICRI members and NGO Project Partners.	Likely
2. Financial sustainability	Ongoing donor support for the next 8 years, establishment of the Global Coral Reef Fund to investment in onground implementation at national levels, ICRI member countries have displayed political will and some evidence already of countries seeking assistance for the implementation of activities and regulatory mechanisms required on ground.	Likely
3. Institutional sustainability	At an international and regional level efforts will be sustained. Institutional frameworks (policy, legal and capacity) are now in place or progressing at the	Moderately Likely

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Rating
	international and regional levels. The global fund will help to provide an exit strategy down the track for UNEP. Within some countries however there remains strong dependence on NGOs to continue to provide support, technical input and financial backing.	
Factors Affecting Performance		Satisfactory
1. Preparation and readiness	Effective Inception stage of the project. Appropriate measures were taken to either address weaknesses in the project design and respond to changes that took place between project approval, the securing of funds and project mobilisation. Good engagement with stakeholder groups by the project team, however some challenges with some project partner capacity. Delays in project financing.	Moderately Satisfactory
2. Quality of project management and supervision	Effective project management performance given the project coordinator was undertaking 2 jobs at the time. Strong technical backstopping and supervision provided by UNEP.	Satisfactory
3. Stakeholders participation and cooperation	Good quality and effective communication and consultation with stakeholders throughout the project life. Strong support given to maximise collaboration and coherence between various stakeholders. Gender groups considered.	Satisfactory
4. Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity	Gender reflected in the context, implementation, logframe and the budget. Project adheres to UNEP Policy and Strategy for Gender Equality and the Environment.	Satisfactory
5. Environmental, social and economic safeguards	Low risk for negative unintended environmental, social and economic effects. Mostly working at the science-policy interface at global and regional scales. All applications of the tools via interventions in-country were through reputable non-governmental organizations or environmental government agencies, and did not involve any negative environmental, social or economic consequences. All interventions conformed to UNEP's safeguards and impacts were monitored through regular reporting by partners on the ground.	Satisfactory
6. Country ownership and	Level of ownership generated by the project over outputs and outcomes is	Satisfactory

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Rating
driven-ness	strong within ICRI members and will need to hold for long term impact to be realised across coral reef countries.	
7. Communication and public awareness	While many communication products were developed and communicated through UNEP and ICRI, many Partners were not aware of what the depth and breath of the Partnership was, how they fitted into the bigger picture of what it was seeking to achieve and what the Partnership was achieving. The lack of branding, while a conscious decision, meant that there was no recognition with respect to Partnership outputs and achievements. In some cases, some Partners (Regional Seas) did not even know they were a part of the Partnership project.	Moderately Satisfactory
Overall project rating		Satisfactory

B. Lessons Learned

188. The lessons learned have been generated from the evaluation findings and are summarised in Table 8.

Table 8 Lessons learned

Section 6.4.1 Availability of Outputs	
Lesson 1:	Any work in relation to coral reefs must be undertaken within a climate lens and consider resilience-based management in that context.
Context from which lesson is derived	With the increasing threats facing coral reefs, it is climate change that will have the most significant impacts over the long term without action. Undertaking Ecosystem Based Management therefore needs to factor in the impacts of climate change from increasing sea temperatures, increasing ocean acidity and actions need to be framed around building resilience, not just against local threats, but also these global threats. The Project showed clearly that resilience management against climate change is one of the top, if not the top priority for coral reef managers.
Contexts in which lesson may be useful	Development and implementation of tools and frameworks for coral reef management, particularly in relation to onground activities within countries.
Lesson 2:	There is no clear definition of what EBM and an ecosystems approach entails. You cannot do ecosystem-based management of one ecosystem as it needs to be set within a coastal mosaic and within societal processes.

Context from which lesson is derived	The Partnership was meant to acknowledge this - how climate, local stressors and society interact and how to deal with that for reefs. While the Partnership conceptualised it well, a common understanding of what EBM truly entails when at the practical implementation level did not exist. EBM requires an integrated approach, and to do this well requires the approach to cross ecosystems - ie focus on all coastal ecosystems and their interconnectedness. This Project focused only on coral reefs, and yet there are clear linkages between mangroves, coral reefs and seagrass for example and therefore a need to acknowledge climate, local stressors and society impacts and dependencies and how activities undertaken on one ecosystem can impact on another.
Contexts in which lesson may be useful	Development and implementation of tools and frameworks for coral reef management, particularly in relation to onground activities within countries.
Lesson 3:	It is important to understand how best to engage with different partners, each with their different contexts. Working through ICRI was a great strength and brings credibility and allows more effective engagement. Global and regional meetings build bridges. Reinforcing the importance of having partnerships and networks and sharing information stops duplication of effort and builds on work already done. Supporting capacity building and sharing of experiences allows for onground successes to be replicated in other countries so they can gain access to expertise.
Context from which lesson is derived	Not all Partners in the Project were at the same level of knowledge and capacity, particularly in relation to Regional Seas. ICRI provided opportunity to obtain greater understanding of the needs of partners and where gaps were needing to be addressed. Global and regional meetings provide opportunity for knowledge sharing and learning, strengthening of capacity as well as reducing the risk of duplicating effort and building on work already undertaken. The Project was able to support capacity building of ICRI members.
Contexts in which lesson may be useful	Development and implementation of tools and frameworks for coral reef management at all levels. Undertaking of onground projects where lessons learned can be applied.
Lesson 4:	Apply a participatory approach - Engaging people from the beginning and through a whole process will give greater chance of success for take up of results and ensure commitment and accountability to it.
Context from which lesson is derived	The majority of partners to the GCRP project were involved from inception and design and implementation. This meant there was strong commitment and engagement, particularly in relation members of ICRI. While the Project did not deliver across the board onground implementation of the tools and frameworks developed, it has provided a basis from which to build which is now being delivered through follow-on projects and the Global Fund for Coral Reefs.

Contexts in which lesson may be useful	Development and implementation of tools and frameworks for coral reef management, particularly in relation to onground activities within countries.
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C. Recommendations

189. The majority of recommendations are directed at UNEP at an institutional level. Compliance with the recommendations will, therefore, be set on the basis of which person or office is assigned the role sharing and/or discussing the recommendation with appropriate staff in the responsible agency. This evaluation will continue to be a source of detailed information on the recommendation. Recommendations are provided in Table 9.

Table 9. Summary of key recommendations

Recommendation #1: (Refer Section 6.6 Efficiency)	In relation to nurturing partner relationships under followup projects to keep the Partnership strong and effective, the UN Coral Reef Unit needs to: • Ensure a clear mandate and regularly communicate this to partners so they can understand what it is seeking to achieve, how they can engage and how UNEP can engage with them; • Given the conscious decision to not brand the Partnership, ensure partners are clear under which framework they are operating, for example knowing if their project is a part of this GCRP. This helps partners to understand where they fit in and why activities are being undertaken and helps avoid duplication of effort; and • Undertake a mapping exercise to show to partners where the partnership fits in and how it works with other collaborations, organisations, projects and mechanisms so as to assist partners in understanding the value of the Partnership and why they should invest in it.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	A number of Partners during the consultations indicated that they were not aware of what the depth and breath of the Partnership was, how they fitted into the bigger picture of what it was seeking to achieve and what the Partnership was achieving. All indicated that the lack of branding, while a conscious decision, meant that there was no recognition with respect to Partnership outputs and achievements. In some cases, some Partners (Regional Seas) did not even know they were a part of the Partnership project.
Priority Level:	Opportunity for improvement
Type of Recommendation	Project
Responsibility:	Coral Reef Unit

Proposed implementation time-frame:	Immediately and then ongoing for follow on projects
Recommendation #2: (Refer Section 6.6 Efficiency)	A project of this scope and complexity (including geographic scope, number of partners and legal instruments for implementation, intended outcome, as well as relationships with and dependence on other global and regional entities with their own membership, governance mechanisms and challenges) should have a dedicated Project Coordinator and would benefit from additional support for project management and administration tasks. UNEP should not be having staff undertake two jobs at once as not only does it impact on project performance, but also the mental health and wellbeing of the employee.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The Project Coordinator for the GCRP project was undertaking two fulltime jobs for UNEP for the majority of time across the life of the Project. This impacted on all aspects of the Project, but particularly the efficiency and monitoring and reporting where progress reports were missed, financial closure has been delayed and communication with Partners between ICRI meetings, limited. Those consulted indicated that while the Project Coordinator has done an excellent job under the circumstances, it meant the Project did not reach its full potential, particularly in relation to engagement of Regional Seas and building of their capacity to address needs.
Priority Level:	Important recommendation
Type of Recommendation	Project and UNEP wide
Responsibility:	Coral Reef Unit
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Immediately and then ongoing
Recommendation #3: (Refer Section 6.5 Financial Management)	For all large projects with multiple donors there should be a dedicated finance officer from commencement to project conclusion to ensure sound financial management and avoid inefficiencies in financial reporting and financial closure. Given the lack of financial information available for the Project and the delays experienced with the financial closure, it is recommended that the Project be audited.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The Project had a significant number of donors which meant monitoring of the actual to budget allocation of project funds across Project activities required sound financial management and monitoring. Significant delays were experienced with closure of financial reporting and basic information in relation to budget to actual expenditure by UNEP line item was not available at the time of the evaluation, even though the evaluation was extended to allow time for this information to be forthcoming. Inefficient internal processes across UN system, particularly where systems do not talk to each other means that reconciliations of project spending is a very labour and time intensive process. Financial closure has been ongoing for over 14

	months since the project finished. It is acknowledged that a Finance Officer was put in place around 12 months ago to assist in financial closure. This should have happened much earlier.
Priority Level:	Important recommendation
Responsibility:	Coral Reef Unit
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Immediately and then ongoing
Type of Recommendation:	Project and UNEP wide
Recommendation #4: (Refer Section 6.4 Effectiveness)	For all UNEP projects, the UNEP Gender Unit should establish indicators for measuring gender outcomes for achieving conservation goals with respect to women empowerment and youth engagement and capacity building that can provide a template for all UNEP GEF funded projects. Without clear and appropriate outcome-level indicators, reporting of gender inclusion can often be piecemeal – i.e. number of women involved without measuring if there was a conservation-related outcome from their engagement.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	While this Project was focused on global and regional activities mostly, gender outcomes were still important. Gender was primarily measured in terms of the number of women attending events or training, and assumptions made that if they attend training their capacity increases. For a project where there is a strong focus on strengthening the capacity of coral reef managers and decision makers and improving the management of marine resources, women can be strong advocates and play important roles in improving management and decision making. Likewise, youth, as up and coming leaders can also play an important role.
Priority Level:	Important recommendation
Type of Recommendation:	Project and UNEP wide
Responsibility:	Coral Reef Unit
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Immediately and then ongoing

ANNEX I. PEOPLE CONSULTED DURING THE EVALUATION

Individuals Consulted

While attempts were made to consult with all stakeholders, only those below responded after several attempts.

Name	Institution
Chloe Harvey	Reef World
James Kairo	Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute
Francis Staub	International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI)
Kristian Teleki	World Resources Institute
Stephen Fletcher	Formerly UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre
Hazel Thornton	UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre
David Obura	Coastal Oceans Research and Development – Indian Ocean (CORDIO) East Africa
Sivaji Patra	South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP)
Amanda Brigdale	Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (formerly Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority)
Jen Koss	US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Chuck Cooper	Vulcan Inc
John Virdin	Duke University
Gabriel Grimsditch	Project Coordinator for UNEP
Jerker Tamalander	Former Project Coordinator for UNEP

ANNEX II. KEY DOCUMENTS CONSULTED
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- UNEP 321.2 *Global Coral Reef Partnership: towards an Ecosystem Approach to Coral Reef Management* Project Document and appendices
- PRC REPORT – QAS / OFO UNEP November 2014
- Project Revision 1 - approved 26/9/2018
- Mid-term Review– 31/5/2017
- Minutes of meetings, including from the Project Steering Committee
- PIMS Reports
- Project expenditure reports by donor and financial monitoring spreadsheets
- Progress reports and final reports for pilot projects and contracted work, including Final Reports as provided in the Project Dropbox
- Various progress and final reports to donors
- Various technical outputs (guidelines, toolkits, manuals, etc) from the Project
- Various communication and knowledge management outputs from the Project (regional and global)
- UN Resolutions UNEP/EA.2/Res.12 and UNEP/EA.4/Res.13 on Sustainable Coral Reefs Management and
- Terms of Reference: Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP project 321.2 Global Coral Reef Partnership: Towards an Ecosystem Approach to Coral Reef Management -PIMS ID 01820.

ANNEX III. SUMMARY OF PROJECT CO-FINANCING AND PROJECT EXPENDITURE

1) Summary of Project Co-financing

<u>Summary of Project Co-financing</u>				
Source of Co-financing	Confirmed		Materialised	
	Cash USD	In-Kind USD	Cash USD	In-Kind USD
NGO	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Governments	\$ -	\$ 3,462,280.00	\$ -	\$ 3,449,649.43
IGO	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Universities	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Private Sector	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total				
	Total Co-financing confirmed	\$ 3,462,280.00	Total Co-financing Materialised at Dec 2019	\$ 3,449,649.43

2) Cumulative unaudited Project Expenditure as at 31 December 2019

<u>Cumulative audited Project Expenditure as at 31st Dec 2019</u>			
UNEP Budget Line		UNEP Approved Budget	Final Expenditure as at 31st Dec 2019
78101010	Staff costs	\$ 459,479.92	\$ 430,845.09
78102010	Travel	\$ 429,415.49	\$ 489,940.93
78103010	Contractual services	\$ 44,026.82	\$ 14,978.97
78104010	Commodity	\$ -	\$ -
78105010	Operating costs	\$ 135,115.66	\$ 132,946.87
78106010	Vehicle & Furniture	\$ 1,194.00	\$ 1,194.00
	Transfer/IP Grant	\$ 1,490,293.94	\$ 1,489,662.09
	Grants Out	\$ 18,519.00	\$ 16,755.00
	Evaluation	\$ 23,000.00	\$ 23,000.00
	PSC	\$ 308,154.97	\$ 304,465.92
99	Grand Total	\$ 2,909,199.80	\$ 2,903,788.87

ANNEX IV. SHORT CV OF THE EVALUATOR

Anissa Lawrence brings extensive experience in undertaking international desktop studies, reviews and in biodiversity conservation policy development, particularly for the Coral Triangle and Pacific region. She has a good understanding of and experience in coastal ecosystems and marine protected species programs globally, understands the management and institutional issues involved and is familiar with many SE Asian and Pacific governments and regional institutions. She has a strong history of effective project management and experience with international funding and project proposal development and capacity assessments. She has led and worked in a number of multi disciplinary international teams and is a strong project manager with a proven track record in stakeholder consultation.

With a diverse background in environmental science, natural resource management (NRM) and conservation, environmental communication, business and risk management, Anissa has over 24 years experience in developing and communicating strategic solutions and managing people, projects and businesses towards sustainability, particularly with respect to biodiversity conservation and natural resource management issues. As the Managing Director of TierraMar, Anissa has worked to build the capacity of Natural Resource Management (NRM) and conservation program delivery agents to achieve better outcomes across Asia Pacific. This work has included strategic assistance to develop regional and national conservation frameworks, program development, implementation and assessment, monitoring and evaluation, and the review of on-the-ground conservation and NRM projects.

She has a good working knowledge of the process of developing and implementing internationally funded regional projects in a developing country context, having successfully prepared project proposals and undertaken a number of evaluations, capacity assessments and strategic planning projects across the Asia Pacific region. She has strong skills in synthesizing scientific information for plain writing and undertaking stakeholder engagement, working at all levels from Minister to community. She has been actively working in the marine conservation space for the past 16 years on and off, mostly with respect to conservation programs for coastal and wetland habitats and their species in Australia, the Coral Triangle and Pacific regions.

Anissa has previously held leadership positions in a number of Australian conservation NGOs where she focused on improving the sustainability of Australian fisheries and coastal and marine ecosystems. In these roles she provided effective policy and governance advice and delivered industry, government and community partnerships, as well effective large scale strategic education and capacity building, communication and on-the-ground coastal catchments and habitat and species conservation and rehabilitation programs.

She has held senior positions in a number of leading international consulting and professional services firms where she provided expertise in environmental, business,

operational and technological risk management, systems and process design and control, and strategic planning and management. Anissa has worked across nearly every industry sector and with all types of organisations from blue chip companies to government departments both nationally and internationally in this capacity. Anissa has a Bachelor of Business and a Masters in Environmental Science. She is also a former Australian Chartered Accountant and is a Certified Environmental Practitioner (CEnvP).

ANNEX V. EVALUATION TERMS OF REFERENCE

Evaluation Office of UNEP

Last revised: 30.06.2020

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP project

321.2 Global Coral Reef Partnership: Towards an Ecosystem Approach to Coral Reef Management -PIMS ID 01820

Section 1: PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

1. Project General Information

Table 1: Project Summary

UNEP PIMS ID:	01820	SB-000965	
Implementing Partners	UNEP-WCMC, GRID-Arendal, PERSGA, ROPME, SACEP, SPREP, IUCN, Reef World, CORDIO, TNC, USCRTF, USEPA, NOAA, CEP/SPAW-RAC, ISU, SymbioSeas, CDF		
Relevant SDG(s) and indicator(s):	Sustainable Development Goal 14, Targets 14.2 and 14.5 14.2.1 Proportion of EEZ managed using ecosystem-based approaches 14.5.1 Coverage of protected areas in relation to marine areas		
Sub-programme:	Ecosystem Management	Expected Accomplishment(s):	EA(b)
UNEP approval date:	09/01/2015	Programme of Work Output(s):	3ai,ii,iii, 3bi, ii
Expected start date:	01/01/2015	Actual start date:	09/01/2015
Planned completion date:	31/12/2019	Actual operational completion date:	31/12/2019
Planned project budget at approval:	US\$ 3,036,000	Actual total expenditures reported as of [date]:	
Planned Environment Fund allocation:	US\$ 255,000	Actual Environment Fund expenditures reported as of [date]:	
Planned Extra-Budgetary Financing ¹ :	US\$ 2,700,000	Secured Extra-Budgetary Financing:	US\$ 3,004,865
		Actual Extra-Budgetary Financing expenditures reported as of 31/12/2019:	US\$ 2,845,225
First disbursement:		Planned date of financial closure:	
No. of formal project revisions:	1	Date of last approved project revision:	26/09/2018
No. of Steering Committee meetings:	3	Date of last Steering Committee meeting:	Last: Dec 2018 Next:
Mid-term Review (planned date):		Mid-term Review (actual date):	Apr 2017
Terminal Evaluation (planned date):	January 2020	Terminal Evaluation (actual date):	
Coverage - Countries:	Tier 1: Barbados, Maldives,	Coverage - Regions:	Global - Asia Pacific, Africa, Latin America

¹ Blue = Information to be added at TOR stage if possible and, otherwise, within the Main Evaluation Report.

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	Mozambique, Palau, Seychelles, and Viet Nam Tier 2: Cap Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe, Belize, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Indonesia, Philippines, Myanmar, Madagascar, Tanzania, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Sri Lanka, Fiji, Samoa		and the Caribbean, West Asia
Dates of previous project phases:		Status of future project phases:	

2. Project Rationale

1. Coral Reefs occupy less than 0.1% of the ocean surface but provide a home for 25% of all marine species. Their ecosystem service value through a range of regulating, provisioning, cultural and supporting services is exceptionally high. Occurring in over 100 countries, including 80 developing countries, coral reefs sustain coastal people and business sectors around the world. About half a billion people depend on coral reefs for food, coastal protection, building materials and income, with 275 million directly dependent on them for livelihoods and sustenance. 30 million people living on atolls are totally dependent on coral reefs for the land they live on.
2. Coastal countries and human populations are frequently disproportionately dependent on coral reefs. The nutritional and food-security benefits of coral reefs through small-scale and artisanal fisheries are significant, providing the bulk of dietary proteins on many islands. Coral reefs are also a critical asset to the tourism industry. Tourism accounts for a third of the economic value of coral reefs worldwide. It drives considerable economic growth, with reef tourism of growing importance to many developing countries around the world. Income from reef and beach tourism in the Caribbean makes up two thirds of the region's GDP. The coral reef value chain also provides additional gains e.g. associated with the role of women in seafood processing and trade as well as in tourism sector jobs. However, while in most regions women make up a significant part of the fishing industry their participation is often not socially acknowledged, which is reflected in low participation in reef use planning and decision-making.
3. Despite their high value, a fifth of the world's coral reefs have been lost, and more than 50% are under immediate and direct threat from over harvesting, pollution arising from land-based activities including nutrients, sediments, and sewage, and physical alteration and destruction of habitat as a result of poorly managed coastal development. Invasive alien species constitute a further nefarious threat, as illustrated by the introduction of Indo-Pacific lionfish to the Caribbean. Repeated coral bleaching and been recorded in most regions since the mass mortality in 1998, and evidence is emerging of coral sensitivity to ocean acidification and its ecological and economic implications.
4. Strong coral reef recovery has been seen in some areas where direct stress is low, but recovery is stalled or weak where there are substantial human pressures. Recent analysis of data in the Caribbean shows that, while live coral cover overall has seen drastic decline in the past 40 years, there is enormous variability between locations. Coral abundance today is more strongly correlated with local management than with incidence of coral bleaching and disease. This provides further evidence that ecosystem management has a significant impact on condition of coral reefs also during climate change, and ecosystem-based management that addresses multiple threats in an integrated manner can ensure continued provision of coral reef ecosystem services.
5. Coral reefs are among the first marine ecosystems with a global distribution to show global decline. They constitute an indicator of ocean health as well as a flagship system for understanding how ecosystem and societal processes interact, and developing measures that reduce direct threats, secure ecosystem service provision for dependent communities and sectors, and promote adaptation to climate change and ocean acidification. As such coral reefs offer both a critical distress signal and an opportunity to learn how to effectively tackle today's ecosystem management challenges.

3. Project Objectives and Components

6. The project aimed to develop and test methods, tools and policy frameworks for ecosystem-based management of coral reefs and facilitate their regional and national adoption through provision of technical and policy support, implementation of demonstration projects and capacity development. The project intended to provide a mechanism for enhancing implementation of global policy frameworks relevant to coral reefs, including the ICRI Continuing Call to Action and Framework for Action, through UNEP's Regional Seas Programme. The project intended to strengthen management of coral reef resources and enable a select number of target countries to make concrete and measurable progress towards achieving Aichi Target 10.

7. The Project Outcome is specified as:

"Countries are able to use the ecosystem approach to sustain ecosystem services from coral reefs, with the assistance of UNEP."

8. The project document described the following aims:

- at the global level, [to] develop methods, tools and policy frameworks, where possible building on existing efforts, and support exchange of best practice and lessons learned between regions;
- at the regional level, [to] facilitate adoption of methods, tools and policy frameworks by Regional Seas Intergovernmental mechanisms through provision of policy guidance and other forms of support and adapting methods, tools and policy frameworks to regional context where required;
- at the national level, [to] demonstrate use of methods and tools and implementation of policy frameworks through pilot activities implemented with partners.

9. The project document presented the following 'objective tree':



Figure 1: Objective Tree from the Project Document

10. Project Outputs were specified as:

- Output A) Indicators, methods, planning tools and strategic frameworks for management of coral reefs that builds resilience in the face of climate change and includes gender perspectives developed and tested through pilot interventions.
- Output B) Tools for policy-focused coral reef ecosystem service valuation, economic instruments for coral reef management and sectoral codes of practice that include gender perspectives developed and tested through pilot interventions.

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- Output C) Knowledge for ecosystem-based coral reef planning and management, including development and pilot testing of coral reef status and outlook reporting and indicators for tracking progress towards targets, and related training.
- Output D) Institutional mechanisms for policy uptake and outreach, including partnership operations, communication, and support to ICRI and GCRMN.

4. Executing Arrangements

11. The project is implemented through the UNEP Coral Reef Unit as part of a global partnership between UNEP, RSCAP, UNEP-WCMC, GRID-Arendal, governments and government agencies, initiatives including ICRI, NGOs, academic and research institutions and private sector partners.

12. UNEP coordinated project implementation; lead execution on some technical activities, provided a secretariat for the partnership to administer funding for activities, subcontract delivery of Global Coral Reef Partnership specific activities, and track and report on progress to the global meeting of the Regional Seas, meetings of individual Regional Seas and ICRI, as well as to UNEA.

13. RSCAP, through their intergovernmental mechanisms as well as networks of institutions and individuals, provided the primary mechanisms for identifying regional and national needs, and for facilitating broad uptake of project outputs among countries. They also supported implementation of pilot interventions in collaboration with national partners. Where possible UNEP Regional Offices aimed to backstop RSCAP in these functions, and support policy outreach.

14. UNEP-WCMC and GRID-Arendal provided technical input on specific activities and lead implementation on project activities within their respective fields of competence. Where possible they provided co-financing for project activities through their ongoing and planned activities.

15. Government agencies or NGOs lead implementation of pilot projects at national or local level, and participated in regional and national capacity building activities. With support from Regional Seas and UNEP, they worked towards broader application of project outputs, including by integrating them into regular coral reef planning and management activities at the national or subnational level.

16. Technical organizations, academic institutions and NGOs, for example Reef World and SymbioSeas, provided technical input and quality control on development of indicators, approaches and tools, lead development of some outputs, and supported implementation of pilot projects through technical advice and other input. They also, provided in-kind support towards project implementation.

17. Private sector partners collaborated on development of codes of practice and other mechanisms for supporting improvements in environmental stewardship.



Figure 2: Project management structure as per the Project Document

5. Project Cost and Financing

18. The total estimated project cost at design was US\$ 3,036,00 of which US\$ 1,305,000 was to come from Extra-Budgetary Fund through secured donor funding; US\$ 255,000 from the Environment Fund, US\$ 81,000 from the Regular Budget.

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19. The total estimated project cost at design was US\$ 3,036,000 and as of 31 December 2019, US\$ 2,845,225 had been spent. The budget at design and the expenditure is summarized in the tables below.

Table 2: Budget at Design of the project (taken from the Project Document)

TYPE OF FUNDING	SOURCE OF FUNDING	2014-15 USD '000	2016-17 USD '000	Total USD '000
CASH BUDGET	Environment Fund activity budget	-	-	-
	Regular Budget activity budget	-	-	-
	Extrabudgetary Funding (post + non-post costs)	1,017,34	429	1,44034
	Donor funding secured ² (USOOS Salogear)	121	49	170
	Programme Support Costs	930	375	1,305
	Subtotal secured XB funding	0	1,395	1395
TOTAL PROJECT CASH BUDGET (=EF or RB activity budget + Secured and unsecured XB funding)		930	1,770	2,700
IN-KIND CONTRIBUTION	Environment Fund post costs (5%DI, 10%PS, 60%P4)	85	170	255
	Regular Budget post costs (3%DI, 3% of 8 PAs in ROs and other divisions incl. gender FP)	27	54	81
	TOTAL UNEP IN-KIND CONTRIBUTION	112	224	336
TOTAL UNEP MANAGED PROJECT BUDGET (=PROJECT CASH BUDGET + UNEP IN-KIND CONTRIBUTION)		1,042	1,994	3,036
COFINANCING CASH CONTRIBUTION ³ (estimate)				
COFINANCING BASED ON PARTNERS IN-KIND CONTRIBUTION (estimate)				
UNEP-WCMC (Indicators, data management)		20		20
GRID-Arendal (emerging issues, capacity building)		20		20
GIZ and Forest Trends (economic instruments)		70		70
NOAA and THC (resilience)		50		50
RSCAP (uptake and outreach)		50		50

Table 3: Project Budget and Expenditure

Grant Name	Sum of Consumable Budget - Combined	Sum of Expense - Combined	Sum of Available Budget
M1-32CPL-000323	363,662.55	298,668.57	64,991.69
M1-32CPL-000348	193,065.03	178,992.70	6,864.39
M1-32CPL-000350	240,605.54	217,707.79	8,173.55
M1-32CPL-000360	58,507.59	35,275.62	26.97

¹ For GEF Projects, all funding has to be committed and confirmed by co-financing letters from co-financiers at PRC stage and shall be divided between cash and in-kind contributions.

² i.e. funding still to be mobilized

³ Funding from a donor to a partner which is not received in UNEP accounts but is used by a UNEP partner or collaborating centre to deliver the results in a UNEP-approved project

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M1-32NFL-000088	55,000.00	48,365.38	5,304.55
M1-32SEL-000001	125,000.00	125,701.20	(701.20)
M1-32SEL-000042	48,386.00	47,633.61	752.39
P1-33CPL-000322	160,000.00	160,000.00	-
P1-33CPL-000383	156,431.84	156,431.84	-
P1-33CPL-000585	10,000.00	10,000.00	-
P1-33CPL-000645	40,511.00	40,511.00	-
P1-33CPL-000793	41,724.00	20,862.00	20,862.00
P1-33CPL-000808	100,000.00	100,000.00	-
P1-33CPL-000829	65,000.00	65,000.00	-
P1-33CPL-000909	60,000.00	59,972.27	-
P1-33CPL-000942	60,000.00	60,000.00	-
P1-33CPL-000965	60,000.00	60,000.00	-
P1-33CPL-000976	90,000.00	88,783.08	46.92
P1-33CPL-001015	100,000.00	100,000.00	-
P1-33CPL-001049	60,000.00	60,000.00	-
P1-33CPL-001186	126,225.00	126,224.00	1.00
P1-33NFL-000301	45,000.00	45,000.00	-
P1-33SEL-000038	75,000.00	75,000.00	-
REST_H	14,577.00	8,926.37	-
S1-32CPL-000004	656,169.51	656,169.51	(0.00)
Grand Total	3,004,865.06	2,845,224.94	106,322.26

6. Implementation Issues

20. A mid-term review was carried out for this project, and recommendations were made regarding:

- Further structuring and harmonization of coral reef reporting
- Strengthening awareness-raising and outreach
- Further developing and evolving the Global Coral Reef Partnership mechanism

21. A revision of the project was approved in 2018 in order to extend the project duration by 24 months, until December 2019, to add activities, and to reflect the secured funding raised for the project. The revision also addresses comments arising from Mid Term Review of the project outlined above.

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22. The extension of the project duration was needed in view of ongoing and some new project activities being carried out during 2018-2019, in alignment with legal agreements with partners. A new project document 316.1 "Sustainable Management of Marine and Coastal Ecosystem Services", which was approved on 28 August 2018 to start with an inception phase for the 2018 – 2021 Programme of Work delivery. Remaining funds and ongoing activities under Project 321.2 at the end of 2019 were eventually carried over to project 316.1.

23. The main challenges to implementation noted in PIMS include:

- a. Delays associated with introduction of Umoja management system, leading to significant delays in disbursement of funds and consultant recruitment;
- b. Some implementation partners deliver with significant delay and/or require a disproportionate amount of oversight;
- c. In 2017, the original project manager, Jerker Tamelander, was given an extra responsibility by being named COBSEA Coordinator a.i. as well as coral reef project manager, leading to higher workload;
- d. In 2019, the original project manager, Jerker Tamelander, was recruited for the position of COBSEA Coordinator full time, and the project manager position changed to staff member Gabriel Grimsditch.

Section 2. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

7. Objective of the Evaluation

24. In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy⁵ and the UNEP Programme Manual⁶, the Terminal Evaluation is undertaken at completion of the project to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The evaluation has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote operational improvement, learning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP and GRID Arendal, UNEP-WCMC and other project partners (PERSGA, ROPME, SACEP, SPREP, IUCN, Reef World, CORDIO, TNC, USCRTF, USEPA, NOAA, CEPISPAW-RAC, ISU, SymbioSeas, CDF). The evaluation will identify lessons of operational relevance for future project formulation and implementation, especially where a second phase of the project is being considered.

8. Key Evaluation Principles

25. Evaluation findings and judgements will be based on sound evidence and analysis, clearly documented in the evaluation report. Information will be triangulated (i.e. verified from different sources) as far as possible, and when verification is not possible, the single source will be mentioned (whilst anonymity is still protected). Analysis leading to evaluative judgements should always be clearly spelled out.

26. The "Why?" Question. As this is a terminal evaluation and a follow-up project is likely (or similar interventions are envisaged for the future), particular attention will be given to learning from the experience. Therefore, the "Why?" question should be at the front of the consultants' minds all through the evaluation exercise and is supported by the use of a theory of change approach. This means that the consultants need to go beyond the assessment of "what" the project performance was and make a serious effort to provide a deeper understanding of "why" the performance was as it was (i.e. what contributed to the achievement of the project's results). This should provide the basis for the lessons that can be drawn from the project.

27. Attribution, Contribution and Credible Association: In order to attribute any outcomes and impacts to a project intervention, one needs to consider the difference between what has happened with, and what would have happened without, the project (i.e. take account of changes over time and between contexts in order to isolate the effects of an intervention). This requires appropriate baseline data and the identification of a relevant counterfactual, both of which are frequently not available for evaluations. Establishing the contribution made by a project in a complex change process relies heavily on prior intentionality (e.g. approved project design documentation, logical framework) and the articulation of causality (e.g. narrative and/or illustration of the Theory of Change). Robust evidence that a project was delivered as designed and that the expected causal pathways developed supports claims of contribution and this is strengthened where an alternative theory of change can be excluded. A credible association between the implementation of a project and observed positive effects can be made where a strong causal narrative, although not explicitly articulated, can

⁵ <https://www.unepenvironment.org/about-un-environment/evaluation-office/policies-and-strategies>

⁶ <https://www.unepenvironment.org>

be inferred by the chronological sequence of events, active involvement of key actors and engagement in critical processes.

28. **Communicating evaluation results.** A key aim of the evaluation is to encourage reflection and learning by UNEP staff and key project stakeholders. The consultant should consider how reflection and learning can be promoted, both through the evaluation process and in the communication of evaluation findings and key lessons. Clear and concise writing is required on all evaluation deliverables. Draft and final versions of the main evaluation report will be shared with key stakeholders by the Evaluation Manager. There may, however, be several intended audiences, each with different interests and needs regarding the report. The consultant(s) will plan with the Evaluation Manager which audiences to target and the easiest and clearest way to communicate the key evaluation findings and lessons to them. This may include some, or all, of the following: a webinar, conference calls with relevant stakeholders, the preparation of an evaluation brief or interactive presentation.

9. Key Strategic Questions

29. In addition to the evaluation criteria outlined in Section 10 below, the evaluation will address the strategic questions listed below. These are questions of interest to UNEP and to which the project is believed to be able to make a substantive contribution:

- a. To what extent did the scientific and other knowledge products prepared through this project influence policy and decision-making for coral reef management at global, regional and national scales?
- b. To what extent did this project contribute to strengthening the implementation of the ecosystem approach in coral reef management at global, regional and national scales?
- c. What were the institutional/capacity strengths and weaknesses of the Global Coral Reef Partnership in delivering on the project objectives, and for future UNEP coral reef activities?
- d. To what extent were the socio-economic tools developed as part of the project, successfully taken up by various stakeholders? What resistance, if any, was the project met with?
- e. One of the recommendations from the Mid-Term Reviews was that the extension of the project would benefit from the awareness raised through the UN Ocean Conference (2017) and the International Year of the Reef (2018). To what extent did these events have on raising awareness on the project's objective and/or, to what extent did the project raise awareness at these events to meet the project objective?

10. Evaluation Criteria

30. All evaluation criteria will be rated on a six-point scale. Sections A-I below, outline the scope of the criteria and a link to a table for recording the ratings is provided in Annex 1. A weightings table will be provided in excel format (link provided in Annex 1) to support the determination of an overall project rating. The set of evaluation criteria are grouped in nine categories: (A) Strategic Relevance; (B) Quality of Project Design; (C) Nature of External Context; (D) Effectiveness, which comprises assessments of the provision of outputs, achievement of outcomes and likelihood of impact; (E) Financial Management; (F) Efficiency; (G) Monitoring and Reporting; (H) Sustainability; and (I) Factors Affecting Project Performance. The evaluation consultants can propose other evaluation criteria as deemed appropriate.

A. Strategic Relevance

31. The evaluation will assess the extent to which the activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient and donor¹. The evaluation will include an assessment of the project's relevance in relation to UNEP's mandate and its alignment with UNEP's policies and strategies at the time of project approval. Under strategic relevance an assessment of the complementarity of the project with other interventions addressing the needs of the same target groups will be made. This criterion comprises four elements:

- i. **Alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy² (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities**

32. The evaluation should assess the project's alignment with the MTS and POW under which the project was approved and include, in its narrative, reflections on the scale and scope of any contributions made to the

¹ UNEP's Medium Term Strategy (MTS) is a document that guides UNEP's programme planning over a four-year period. It identifies UNEP's thematic priorities, known as Sub-programmes (SP), and sets out the desired outcomes, known as Expected Accomplishments

planned results reflected in the relevant MTS and POW. UNEP strategic priorities include the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building⁸ (BSP) and South-South Cooperation (S-SC). The BSP relates to the capacity of governments to: comply with international agreements and obligations at the national level; promote, facilitate and finance environmentally sound technologies and to strengthen frameworks for developing coherent international environmental policies. S-SC is regarded as the exchange of resources, technology and knowledge between developing countries.

II. Alignment to Donor/Partner Strategic Priorities

33. Donor strategic priorities will vary across interventions. The Evaluation will assess the extent to which the project is suited to, or responding to, donor priorities. In some cases, alignment with donor priorities may be a fundamental part of project design and grant approval processes while in others, for example, instances of 'softly-earmarked' funding, such alignment may be more of an assumption that should be assessed.

III. Relevance to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities

34. The evaluation will assess the alignment of the project with global priorities such as the SDGs and Agenda 2030. The extent to which the intervention is suited, or responding to, the stated environmental concerns and needs of the countries, sub-regions or regions where it is being implemented will be considered. Examples may include: national or sub-national development plans, poverty reduction strategies or Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action (NAMA) plans or regional agreements etc. Within this section consideration will be given to whether the needs of all beneficiary groups are being met and reflects the current policy priority to leave no one behind.

IV. Complementarity with Existing Interventions/Coherence⁹

35. An assessment will be made of how well the project, either at design stage or during the project inception or mobilization¹⁰, took account of ongoing and planned initiatives (under the same sub-programme, other UNEP sub-programmes, or being implemented by other agencies within the same country, sector or institution) that address similar needs of the same target groups. The evaluation will consider if the project team, in collaboration with Regional Offices and Sub-Programme Coordinators, made efforts to ensure their own intervention was complementary to other interventions, optimized any synergies and avoided duplication of effort. Examples may include UN Development Assistance Frameworks or One UN programming. Linkages with other interventions should be described and instances where UNEP's comparative advantage has been particularly well applied should be highlighted.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Stakeholders' participation and cooperation
- Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity
- Country ownership and driven-ness

B. Quality of Project Design

36. The quality of project design is assessed using an agreed template during the evaluation inception phase, ratings are attributed to identified criteria and an overall Project Design Quality rating is established (www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/evaluation-office/our-evaluation-approach/templates-and-tools). This overall Project Design Quality rating is entered in the final evaluation ratings table as item B. In the Main Evaluation Report a summary of the project's strengths and weaknesses at design stage is included, while the complete Project Design Quality template is annexed in the Inception Report.

Factors affecting this criterion may include (at the design stage):

- Stakeholders participation and cooperation
- Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity

C. Nature of External Context

37. At evaluation inception stage a rating is established for the project's external operating context (considering the prevalence of conflict, natural disasters and political upheaval¹¹). This rating is entered in the final

(EAs), of the Sub-programmes. <https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/evaluation-office/our-evaluation-approach/un-environment-documents>

⁸ <http://www.unep.fr/connections/about/bap.htm>

⁹ This sub-category is consistent with the new criterion of 'Coherence' introduced by the OECD-DAC in 2019.

¹⁰ A project's inception or mobilization period is understood as the time between project approval and first disbursement.

Complementarity during project implementation is considered under Efficiency, see below.

¹¹ Note that 'political upheaval' does not include regular national election cycles, but unanticipated unrest or prolonged disruption. The potential delays or changes in political support that are often associated with the regular national election cycle should be part of the project's design and addressed through adaptive management by the project team.

evaluation ratings table as item C. Where a project has been rated as facing either an Unfavourable or Highly Unfavourable external operating context, and/or a negative external event has occurred during project implementation, the ratings for Effectiveness, Efficiency and/or Sustainability may be increased at the discretion of the Evaluation Consultant and Evaluation Manager together. A justification for such an increase must be given.

D. Effectiveness

i. Availability of Outputs¹²

38. The evaluation will assess the project's success in producing the programmed outputs and making them available to the intended beneficiaries as well as its success in achieving milestones as per the project design document (ProDoc). Any formal modifications/revisions made during project implementation will be considered part of the project design. Where the project outputs are inappropriately or inaccurately stated in the ProDoc, reformulations may be necessary in the reconstruction of the TOC. In such cases a table should be provided showing the original and the reformulation of the outputs for transparency. The availability of outputs will be assessed in terms of both quantity and quality, and the assessment will consider their ownership by, and usefulness to, intended beneficiaries and the timeliness of their provision. It is noted that emphasis is placed on the performance of those outputs that are most important to achieve outcomes. The evaluation will briefly explain the reasons behind the success or shortcomings of the project in delivering its programmed outputs and meeting expected quality standards.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Preparation and readiness
- Quality of project management and supervision¹³

ii. Achievement of Project Outcomes¹⁴

39. The achievement of project outcomes is assessed as performance against the project outcomes as defined in the reconstructed¹⁵ Theory of Change. These are outcomes that are intended to be achieved by the end of the project timeframe and within the project's resource envelope. Emphasis is placed on the achievement of project outcomes that are most important for attaining intermediate states. As with outputs, a table can be used where substantive amendments to the formulation of project outcomes is necessary. The evaluation should report evidence of attribution between UNEP's intervention and the project outcomes. In cases of normative work or where several actors are collaborating to achieve common outcomes, evidence of the nature and magnitude of UNEP's 'substantive contribution' should be included and/or 'credible association' established between project efforts and the project outcomes realised.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Quality of project management and supervision
- Stakeholders' participation and cooperation
- Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity
- Communication and public awareness

iii. Likelihood of Impact

40. Based on the articulation of long-lasting effects in the reconstructed TOC (i.e. from project outcomes, via intermediate states, to impact), the evaluation will assess the likelihood of the intended, positive impacts becoming a reality. Project objectives or goals should be incorporated in the TOC, possibly as intermediate states or long-term impacts. The Evaluation Office's approach to the use of TOC in project evaluations is outlined in a guidance note available on the Evaluation Office website, <https://www.unep.org/about-un-environment/evaluation>, and is supported by an excel-based flow chart, 'Likelihood of Impact Assessment Decision Tree'. Essentially the approach follows a 'likelihood tree' from project outcomes to impacts, taking

¹² Outputs are the availability (for intended beneficiaries/users) of new products and services and/or gains in knowledge, abilities and awareness of individuals or within institutions (UNEP, 2019).

¹³ Project management and supervision refers to the supervision and guidance provided by UNEP to implementing partners and national governments.

¹⁴ Outcomes are the use (i.e. uptake, adoption, application) of an output by intended beneficiaries, observed as changes in institutions or behavior, attitude or condition (UNEP, 2019).

¹⁵ All submitted UNEP project documents are required to present a Theory of Change. The level of 'reconstruction' needed during an evaluation will depend on the quality of this initial TOC, the time that has lapsed between project design and implementation (which may be related to securing and disbursing funds) and the level of any formal changes made to the project design.

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account of whether the assumptions and drivers identified in the reconstructed TOC held. Any unintended positive effects should also be identified and their causal linkages to the intended impact described.

41. The evaluation will also consider the likelihood that the intervention may lead, or contribute to, unintended negative effects (e.g. will vulnerable groups such as those living with disabilities and/or women and children, be disproportionately affected by the project?). Some of these potential negative effects may have been identified in the project design as risks or as part of the analysis of Environmental, Social and Economic Safeguards.¹⁶

42. The evaluation will consider the extent to which the project has played a catalytic role or has promoted scaling up and/or replication¹⁷ as part of its Theory of Change and as factors that are likely to contribute to longer term impact.

43. Ultimately UNEP and all its partners aim to bring about benefits to the environment and human well-being. Few projects are likely to have impact statements that reflect such long-term or broad-based changes. However, the evaluation will assess the likelihood of the project to make a substantive contribution to the long-lasting changes represented by the Sustainable Development Goals, and/or the intermediate-level results reflected in UNEP's Expected Accomplishments and the strategic priorities of funding partner(s).

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Quality of Project Management and Supervision (including adaptive management)
- Stakeholders participation and cooperation
- Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity
- Country ownership and driven-ness
- Communication and public awareness

E. Financial Management

44. Financial management will be assessed under three themes: adherence to UNEP's financial policies and procedures, completeness of financial information and communication between financial and project management staff. The evaluation will establish the actual spend across the life of the project of funds secured from all donors. This expenditure will be reported, where possible, at output/component level and will be compared with the approved budget. The evaluation will verify the application of proper financial management standards and adherence to UNEP's financial management policies. Any financial management issues that have affected the timely delivery of the project or the quality of its performance will be highlighted. The evaluation will record where standard financial documentation is missing, inaccurate, incomplete or unavailable in a timely manner. The evaluation will assess the level of communication between the Project Manager and the Fund Management Officer as it relates to the effective delivery of the planned project and the needs of a responsive, adaptive management approach.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Preparation and readiness
- Quality of project management and supervision

F. Efficiency

45. The evaluation will assess the extent to which the project delivered maximum results from the given resources. This will include an assessment of the cost-effectiveness and timeliness of project execution. Focussing on the translation of inputs into outputs, cost-effectiveness is the extent to which an intervention has achieved, or is expected to achieve, its results at the lowest possible cost. Timeliness refers to whether planned activities were delivered according to expected timeframes as well as whether events were sequenced efficiently. The evaluation will also assess to what extent any project extension could have been avoided through stronger project management and identify any negative impacts caused by project delays or extensions. The evaluation will describe any cost or time-saving measures put in place to maximise results within the secured budget and agreed project timeframe and consider whether the project was implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternative interventions or approaches.

46. The evaluation will give special attention to efforts made by the project teams during project implementation to make use of/build upon pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and

¹⁶ Further information on Environmental, Social and Economic Safeguards (ESES) can be found at <http://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/1718>

¹⁷ Scaling up refers to approaches being adopted on a much larger scale, but in a very similar context. Scaling up is often the longer term objective of pilot initiatives. Replication refers to approaches being repeated or lessons being explicitly applied in new/different contexts e.g. other geographic areas, different target group etc. Effective replication typically requires some form of revision or adaptation to the new context. It is possible to replicate at either the same or a different scale.

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complementarities¹⁸ with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. to increase project efficiency. The evaluation will also consider the extent to which the management of the project minimised UNEP's environmental footprint.

47. The factors underpinning the need for any project extensions will also be explored and discussed. As management or project support costs cannot be increased in cases of 'no cost extensions', such extensions represent an increase in unstated costs to implementing parties.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Preparation and readiness (e.g. timeliness)
- Quality of project management and supervision
- Stakeholders participation and cooperation

G. Monitoring and Reporting

48. The evaluation will assess monitoring and reporting across three sub-categories: monitoring design and budgeting, monitoring implementation and project reporting.

I. Monitoring Design and Budgeting

49. Each project should be supported by a sound monitoring plan that is designed to track progress against SMART¹⁹ results towards the provision of the project's outputs and achievement of project outcomes, including at a level disaggregated by gender, marginalisation or vulnerability, including those living with disabilities. In particular, the evaluation will assess the relevance and appropriateness of the project indicators as well as the methods used for tracking progress against them as part of conscious results-based management. The evaluation will assess the quality of the design of the monitoring plan as well as the funds allocated for its implementation. The adequacy of resources for mid-term and terminal evaluation/review should be discussed if applicable.

II. Monitoring of Project Implementation

50. The evaluation will assess whether the monitoring system was operational and facilitated the timely tracking of results and progress towards projects objectives throughout the project implementation period. This assessment will include consideration of whether the project gathered relevant and good quality baseline data that is accurately and appropriately documented. This should include monitoring the representation and participation of disaggregated groups, including gendered, marginalised or vulnerable groups, such as those living with disabilities, in project activities. It will also consider the quality of the information generated by the monitoring system during project implementation and how it was used to adapt and improve project execution, achievement of outcomes and ensure sustainability. The evaluation should confirm that funds allocated for monitoring were used to support this activity.

III. Project Reporting

51. UNEP has a centralised Project Information Management System (PIMS) in which project managers upload six-monthly progress reports against agreed project milestones. This information will be provided to the Evaluation Consultant(s) by the Evaluation Manager. Some projects have additional requirements to report regularly to funding partners, which will be supplied by the project team. The evaluation will assess the extent to which both UNEP and donor reporting commitments have been fulfilled. Consideration will be given as to whether reporting has been carried out with respect to the effects of the initiative on disaggregated groups.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Quality of project management and supervision
- Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity (e.g. disaggregated indicators and data)

H. Sustainability

52. Sustainability²⁰ is understood as the probability of project outcomes being maintained and developed after the close of the intervention. The evaluation will identify and assess the key conditions or factors that are likely to undermine or contribute to the endurance of achieved project outcomes (i.e. 'assumptions' and 'drivers'). Some factors of sustainability may be embedded in the project design and implementation approaches while

¹⁸ Complementarity with other interventions during project design, inception or mobilisation is considered under Strategic Relevance above.

¹⁹ SMART refers to results that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-oriented. Indicators help to make results measurable.

²⁰ As used here, 'sustainability' means the long-term maintenance of outcomes and consequent impacts, whether environmental or not. This is distinct from the concept of sustainability in the terms 'environmental sustainability' or 'sustainable development', which imply not living beyond our means' or 'not diminishing global environmental benefits' (GEF STAP Paper, 2019, Achieving More Enduring Outcomes from GEF Investment)

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others may be contextual circumstances or conditions that evolve over the life of the intervention. Where applicable an assessment of bio-physical factors that may affect the sustainability of project outcomes may also be included.

i. Socio-political Sustainability

53. The evaluation will assess the extent to which social or political factors support the continuation and further development of project outcomes. It will consider the level of ownership, interest and commitment among government and other stakeholders to take the project achievements forwards. In particular the evaluation will consider whether individual capacity development efforts are likely to be sustained.

ii. Financial Sustainability

54. Some project outcomes, once achieved, do not require further financial inputs, e.g. the adoption of a revised policy. However, in order to derive a benefit from this outcome further management action may still be needed e.g. to undertake actions to enforce the policy. Other project outcomes may be dependent on a continuous flow of action that needs to be resourced for them to be maintained, e.g. continuation of a new resource management approach. The evaluation will assess the extent to which project outcomes are dependent on future funding for the benefits they bring to be sustained. Secured future funding is only relevant to financial sustainability where a project's outcomes have been extended into a future project phase. Even where future funding has been secured, the question still remains as to whether the project outcomes are financially sustainable.

iii. Institutional Sustainability

55. The evaluation will assess the extent to which the sustainability of project outcomes (especially those relating to policies and laws) is dependent on issues relating to institutional frameworks and governance. It will consider whether institutional achievements such as governance structures and processes, policies, sub-regional agreements, legal and accountability frameworks etc. are robust enough to continue delivering the benefits associated with the project outcomes after project closure. In particular, the evaluation will consider whether institutional capacity development efforts are likely to be sustained.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Stakeholders participation and cooperation
- Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity (e.g. where interventions are not inclusive, their sustainability may be undermined)
- Communication and public awareness
- Country ownership and driven-ness

i. Factors Affecting Project Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

(These factors are rated in the ratings table but are discussed within the Main Evaluation Report as cross-cutting themes as appropriate under the other evaluation criteria, above. Where the issues have not been addressed under other evaluation criteria, the consultant(s) will provide summary sections under the following headings)

i. Preparation and Readiness

56. This criterion focuses on the inception or mobilisation stage of the project (i.e. the time between project approval and first disbursement). The evaluation will assess whether appropriate measures were taken to either address weaknesses in the project design or respond to changes that took place between project approval, the securing of funds and project mobilisation. In particular the evaluation will consider the nature and quality of engagement with stakeholder groups by the project team, the confirmation of partner capacity and development of partnership agreements as well as initial staffing and financing arrangements. (Project preparation is included in the template for the assessment of Project Design Quality).

ii. Quality of Project Management and Supervision

57. In some cases 'project management and supervision' will refer to the supervision and guidance provided by UNEP to implementing partners and national governments while in others, it will refer to the project management performance of the executing agency and the technical backstopping and supervision provided by UNEP.

58. The evaluation will assess the effectiveness of project management with regard to: providing leadership towards achieving the planned outcomes; managing team structures; maintaining productive partner relationships (including Steering Groups etc.); maintaining project relevance within changing external and strategic contexts; communication and collaboration with UNEP colleagues; risk management; use of

problem-solving; project adaptation and overall project execution. Evidence of adaptive management should be highlighted.

III. Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation

59. Here the term 'stakeholder' should be considered in a broad sense, encompassing all project partners, duty bearers with a role in delivering project outputs and target users of project outputs and any other collaborating agents external to UNEP and the implementing partner(s). The assessment will consider the quality and effectiveness of all forms of communication and consultation with stakeholders throughout the project life and the support given to maximise collaboration and coherence between various stakeholders, including sharing plans, pooling resources and exchanging learning and expertise. The inclusion and participation of all differentiated groups, including gender groups should be considered.

IV. Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equity

60. The evaluation will ascertain to what extent the project has applied the UN Common Understanding on the human rights-based approach (HRBA) and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. Within this human rights context the evaluation will assess to what extent the intervention adheres to UNEP's Policy and Strategy for Gender Equality and the Environment²⁹.

61. In particular the evaluation will consider to what extent project implementation and monitoring have taken into consideration: (i) possible inequalities (especially those related to gender) in access to, and the control over, natural resources; (ii) specific vulnerabilities of disadvantaged groups (especially women, youth and children and those living with disabilities) to environmental degradation or disasters; and (iii) the role of disadvantaged groups (especially those related to gender) in mitigating or adapting to environmental changes and engaging in environmental protection and rehabilitation.

V. Environmental and Social Safeguards

62. UNEP projects address environmental and social safeguards primarily through the process of environmental and social screening at the project approval stage, risk assessment and management (avoidance, minimization, mitigation or, in exceptional cases, offsetting) of potential environmental and social risks and impacts associated with project and programme activities. The evaluation will confirm whether UNEP requirements³⁰ were met to: review risk ratings on a regular basis; monitor project implementation for possible safeguard issues; respond (where relevant) to safeguard issues through risk avoidance, minimization, mitigation or offsetting and report on the implementation of safeguard management measures taken. UNEP requirements for proposed projects to be screened for any safeguarding issues; for sound environmental and social risk assessments to be conducted and initial risk ratings to be assigned are evaluated above under Quality of Project Design).

The evaluation will also consider the extent to which the management of the project minimised UNEP's environmental footprint.

VI. Country Ownership and Driven-ness

63. The evaluation will assess the quality and degree of engagement of government / public sector agencies in the project. While there is some overlap between Country Ownership and Institutional Sustainability, this criterion focuses primarily on the forward momentum of the intended projects results, i.e. either a) moving forwards from outputs to project outcomes or b) moving forward from project outcomes towards intermediate states. The evaluation will consider the engagement not only of those directly involved in project execution and those participating in technical or leadership groups, but also those official representatives whose cooperation is needed for change to be embedded in their respective institutions and offices (e.g. representatives from multiple sectors or relevant ministries beyond Ministry of Environment). This factor is concerned with the level of ownership generated by the project over outputs and outcomes and that is necessary for long term impact to be realised. Ownership should extend to all gender and marginalised groups.

VII. Communication and Public Awareness

64. The evaluation will assess the effectiveness of: a) communication of learning and experience sharing between project partners and interested groups arising from the project during its life and b) public awareness

²⁹ The Evaluation Office notes that Gender Equality was first introduced in the Project Review Committee Checklist in 2010 and, therefore, provides a criterion rating on gender for projects approved from 2010 onwards. Equally, it is noted that policy documents, operational guidelines and other capacity building efforts have only been developed since then and have evolved over time. https://docs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.506.11562/7655/Gender_equality_and_the_environment_Policy_and_strategy_2018Gender_equality_and_the_environment_policy_and_strategy.pdf;sequence=3&ad=us&open=true

³⁰ For the review of project concepts and proposals, the Safeguard Risk Identification Form (SRIF) was introduced in 2019 and replaced the Environmental, Social and Economic Review note (ESEN), which had been in place since 2016. In GEF projects safeguards have been considered in project design since 2011.

activities that were undertaken during the implementation of the project to influence attitudes or shape behaviour among wider communities and civil society at large. The evaluation should consider whether existing communication channels and networks were used effectively, including meeting the differentiated needs of gendered or marginalised groups, and whether any feedback channels were established. Where knowledge sharing platforms have been established under a project the evaluation will comment on the sustainability of the communication channel under either socio-political, institutional or financial sustainability, as appropriate.

Section 3. EVALUATION APPROACH, METHODS AND DELIVERABLES

65. The Terminal Evaluation will be an in-depth evaluation using a participatory approach whereby key stakeholders are kept informed and consulted throughout the evaluation process. Both quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods will be used as appropriate to determine project achievements against the expected outputs, outcomes and impacts. It is highly recommended that the consultant(s) maintains close communication with the project team and promotes information exchange throughout the evaluation implementation phase in order to increase their (and other stakeholder) ownership of the evaluation findings. Where applicable, the consultant(s) will provide a geo-referenced map that demarcates the area covered by the project and, where possible, provide geo-reference photographs of key intervention sites (e.g. sites of habitat rehabilitation and protection, pollution treatment infrastructure, etc.)

66. The findings of the evaluation will be based on the following:

(a) A desk review of:

- Relevant background documentation, inter alia UNEP policies, strategies, MTS, PoW;
- Project design documents (including minutes of the project design review meeting at approval); Annual Work Plans and Budgets or equivalent, revisions to the project (Project Document Supplement), the logical framework and its budget;
- Project reports such as six-monthly progress and financial reports, progress reports from collaborating partners, meeting minutes, relevant correspondence etc.;
- Project outputs, including but not limited to: scientific, technical and guidance documents and publications, financial instrument documentation, guidance documents for use of ecosystem service values, economic tools and sectoral codes of practice in reef management, regional coral reef status and outlook reports, policy advisory, communication strategy and outreach documents;
- Mid-Term Review or Mid-Term Evaluation of the project;
- Evaluations/reviews of similar projects.

(b) Interviews (individual or in group) with:

- UNEP Project Manager (PM);
- Project management team;
- UNEP Fund Management Officer (FMO);
- Project partners, including and GRID Arendal, UNEP-WCMC and other project partners (PERSGA, ROPME, SACEP, SPREP, IUCN, Reef World, CORDIO, TNC, USCRTF, USEPA, NOAA, CEP/SPAW-RAC, ISU, SymbioSeas, CDF);
- Sub-Programme Coordinator for Healthy and Productive Ecosystems;
- Relevant resource persons;
- Representatives from civil society and specialist groups (such as women's, farmers and trade associations etc.).

(c) Surveys as deemed necessary and designed during the inception phase of the TE.

(d) Field visits in light of the current travel restrictions due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, the Terminal Evaluation, for the time being, will take place without field visits.

(e) Other data collection tools as deemed necessary and designed during the inception phase of the TE.

11. Evaluation Deliverables and Review Procedures

67. The evaluation team will prepare:

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68. **Inception Report:** (see Annex 1 for links to all templates, tables and guidance notes) containing an assessment of project design quality, a draft reconstructed Theory of Change of the project, project stakeholder analysis, evaluation framework and a tentative evaluation schedule.

69. **Preliminary Findings:** typically in the form of a powerpoint presentation, the sharing of preliminary findings is intended to support the participation of the project team, act as a means to ensure all information sources have been accessed and provide an opportunity to verify emerging findings. In the case of highly strategic project/portfolio evaluations or evaluations with an Evaluation Reference Group, the preliminary findings may be presented as a word document for review and comment.

70. **Draft and Final Evaluation Report:** (see links in Annex 1) containing an executive summary that can act as a stand-alone document; detailed analysis of the evaluation findings organised by evaluation criteria and supported with evidence; lessons learned and recommendations and an annotated ratings table.

71. **An Evaluation Brief** (a 2-page overview of the evaluand and evaluation findings) for wider dissemination through the UNEP website may be required. This will be discussed with the Evaluation Manager no later than during the finalization of the Inception Report.

72. **Review of the draft evaluation report.** The consultant(s) will submit a draft report to the Evaluation Manager and revise the draft in response to their comments and suggestions. Once a draft of adequate quality has been peer-reviewed and accepted, the Evaluation Manager will share the cleared draft report with the Project Manager/Implementing Partner, who will alert the Evaluation Manager in case the report contains any blatant factual errors. The Evaluation Manager will then forward the revised draft report (corrected by the evaluation consultant(s) where necessary) to other project stakeholders, for their review and comments. Stakeholders may provide feedback on any errors of fact and may highlight the significance of such errors in any conclusions as well as providing feedback on the proposed recommendations and lessons. Any comments or responses to draft reports will be sent to the Evaluation Manager for consolidation. The Evaluation Manager will provide all comments to the evaluation consultant(s) for consideration in preparing the final report, along with guidance on areas of contradiction or issues requiring an institutional response.

1. Based on a careful review of the evidence collated by the evaluation consultants and the internal consistency of the report, the Evaluation Manager will provide an assessment of the ratings in the final evaluation report. Where there are differences of opinion between the evaluator and the Evaluation Manager on project ratings, both viewpoints will be clearly presented in the final report. The Evaluation Office ratings will be considered the final ratings for the project.

2. The Evaluation Manager will prepare a quality assessment of the first draft of the main evaluation report, which acts as a tool for providing structured feedback to the evaluation consultants. The quality of the final report will be assessed and rated against the criteria specified in template listed in Annex 1 and this assessment will be appended to the Final Evaluation Report.

3. At the end of the evaluation process, the Evaluation Office will prepare a Recommendations Implementation Plan in the format of a table, to be completed and updated at regular intervals by the Project Manager. The Evaluation Office will track compliance against this plan on a six-monthly basis.

12. The Evaluation Consultant

4. For this evaluation, the Evaluation Consultant will work under the overall responsibility of the Evaluation Office represented by an Evaluation Manager, Neeral Shah, in consultation with the UNEP Project Manager, Gabriela Grimsditch, Fund Management Officer, Lydia Eibi-Kamoleh and the Sub-programme Coordinators of Healthy and Productive Ecosystems, Marieta Sakalian. The consultant will liaise with the Evaluation Manager on any procedural and methodological matters related to the evaluation, including travel. It is, however, each consultants' individual responsibility to arrange for their visas and immunizations as well as to plan meetings with stakeholders, organize online surveys, obtain documentary evidence and any other logistical matters related to the assignment. The UNEP Project Manager and project team will, where possible, provide logistical support (introductions, meetings etc.) allowing the consultants to conduct the evaluation as efficiently and independently as possible.

5. The Evaluation Consultant will be hired over a period of 4 months 4th September 2020 to 3rd February 2021 and should have the following: a university degree in environmental sciences, international development or other relevant political or social sciences area is required and an advanced degree in the same areas is desirable; a minimum of 10 years of technical / evaluation experience is required, preferably including evaluating large, regional or global programmes and using a Theory of Change approach; and a good/broad understanding of coral reef management or multilateral partnerships is desired. English and French are the working languages of the United Nations Secretariat. For this consultancy, fluency in oral and written English

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is a requirement. Working knowledge of the UN system and specifically the work of UNEP is an added advantage. The work will be home-based with possible field visits.

6. In close consultation with the Evaluation Manager, the Evaluation Consultant will be responsible for the overall management of the evaluation and timely provision of its outputs, data collection and analysis and report-writing. More specifically:

Inception phase of the evaluation, including:

- preliminary desk review and introductory interviews with project staff;
- draft the reconstructed Theory of Change of the project;
- prepare the evaluation framework;
- develop the desk review and interview protocols;
- draft the survey protocols (if relevant);
- develop and present criteria for country and/or site selection for the evaluation mission;
- plan the evaluation schedule;
- prepare the Inception Report, incorporating comments until approved by the Evaluation Manager

Data collection and analysis phase of the evaluation, including:

- conduct further desk review and in-depth interviews with project implementing and executing agencies, project partners and project stakeholders;
- (where appropriate and agreed) conduct an evaluation mission(s) to selected countries, visit the project locations, interview project partners and stakeholders, including a good representation of local communities. Ensure independence of the evaluation and confidentiality of evaluation interviews.
- regularly report back to the Evaluation Manager on progress and inform of any possible problems or issues encountered and;
- keep the Project Manager informed of the evaluation progress.

Reporting phase, including:

- draft the Main Evaluation Report, ensuring that the evaluation report is complete, coherent and consistent with the Evaluation Manager guidelines both in substance and style;
- liaise with the Evaluation Manager on comments received and finalize the Main Evaluation Report, ensuring that comments are taken into account until approved by the Evaluation Manager
- prepare a Response to Comments annex for the main report, listing those comments not accepted by the Evaluation Consultant and indicating the reason for the rejection; and
- (where agreed with the Evaluation Manager) prepare an Evaluation Brief (2-page summary of the evaluand and the key evaluation findings and lessons)

Managing relations, including:

- maintain a positive relationship with evaluation stakeholders, ensuring that the evaluation process is as participatory as possible but at the same time maintains its independence;
- communicate in a timely manner with the Evaluation Manager on any issues requiring its attention and intervention.

13. Schedule of the Evaluation

7. The table below presents the tentative schedule for the evaluation.

Table 3. Tentative schedule for the evaluation

Milestone	Tentative Dates
Evaluation Initiation Meeting	September 2020
Inception Report	October 2020
Evaluation Mission	For the time being there will be no travel until the COVID-19 subsides and travel restrictions are removed.
Telephone interviews, surveys etc.	October/November 2020
Powerpoint/presentation on preliminary findings and recommendations	November 2020

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Draft report to Evaluation Manager (and Peer Reviewer)	November 2020
Draft Report shared with UNEP Project Manager and team	December 2020
Draft Report shared with wider group of stakeholders	December 2020
Final Report	January 2020
Final Report shared with all respondents	February 2020

14. Contractual Arrangements

8. Evaluation consultants will be selected and recruited by the Evaluation Office of UNEP under an individual Special Service Agreement (SSA) on a "Fees only" basis (see below). By signing the service contract with UNEP/UNON, the consultant(s) certify that they have not been associated with the design and implementation of the project in any way which may jeopardize their independence and impartiality towards project achievements and project partner performance. In addition, they will not have any future interests (within six months after completion of the contract) with the project's executing or implementing units. All consultants are required to sign the Code of Conduct Agreement Form.

9. Fees will be paid on an instalment basis, paid on acceptance by the Evaluation Manager of expected key deliverables. The schedule of payment is as follows:

Schedule of Payment for the Evaluation Consultant:

Deliverable	Percentage Payment
Approved Inception Report (as per annex document 7)	30%
Approved Draft Main Evaluation Report (as per annex document 13)	30%
Approved Final Main Evaluation Report	40%

10. Fees only contracts: Air tickets will be purchased by UNEP and 75% of the Daily Subsistence Allowance for each authorised travel mission will be paid up front. Local in-country travel will only be reimbursed where agreed in advance with the Evaluation Manager and on the production of acceptable receipts. Terminal expenses and residual DSA entitlements (25%) will be paid after mission completion.

11. The consultant may be provided with access to UNEP's Programme Information Management System (PIMS) and if such access is granted, the consultants agree not to disclose information from that system to third parties beyond information required for, and included in, the evaluation report.

12. In case the consultant is not able to provide the deliverables in accordance with these guidelines, and in line with the expected quality standards by the UNEP Evaluation Office, payment may be withheld at the discretion of the Director of the Evaluation Office until the consultants have improved the deliverables to meet UNEP's quality standards.

13. If the consultant fails to submit a satisfactory final product to UNEP in a timely manner, i.e. before the end date of their contract, the Evaluation Office reserves the right to employ additional human resources to finalize the report, and to reduce the consultants' fees by an amount equal to the additional costs borne by the Evaluation Office to bring the report up to standard.

Annex 1: Tools, Templates and Guidance Notes for use in the Evaluation

The tools, templates and guidance notes listed in the table below, and available on the Evaluation Office website (<https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/evaluation/our-evaluation-approach>), are intended to help Evaluation Managers and Evaluation Consultants to produce evaluation products that are consistent with each other and which can be compiled into a biennial Evaluation Synthesis Report. The biennial summary is used to provide an overview of progress to UNEP and the UN Environmental Assembly.

This suite of documents is also intended to make the evaluation process as transparent as possible so that all those involved in the process can participate on an informed basis. It is recognised that the evaluation needs of projects and portfolio vary and adjustments may be necessary so that the purpose of the evaluation process (broadly, accountability and lesson learning), can be met. Such adjustments should be decided between the Evaluation Manager and the Evaluation Consultants in order to produce evaluation reports that are both useful to project implementers and that produce credible findings.

ADVICE TO CONSULTANTS: As our tools, templates and guidance notes are updated on a continuous basis, kindly download documents from this links during the Inception Phase and use those versions throughout the evaluation.

List of tools, templates and guidance notes available:

Document	Name
1	Evaluation Process Guidelines for Consultants
2	Evaluation Consultants Team Roles (Principal Evaluator and Evaluation Specialist)
3	List of documents required in the evaluation process
4	Evaluation Criteria (summary of descriptions, as in these terms of reference)
5	Evaluation Ratings Table (only)
6	Matrix Describing Ratings by Criteria
7	Weighting of Ratings (excel)
8	Project Identification Tables
9	Structure and Contents of the Inception Report
10a	Template for the Assessment of the Quality of Project Design (Word template)
10b	Template for the Assessment of the Quality of Project Design (Excel tool)
11	Guidance on Stakeholder Analysis
12	Gender Note for Evaluation Consultants
13	Use of Theory of Change in Project Evaluations
14	Assessment of the Likelihood of Impact Decision Tree (Excel)
15	Possible Evaluation Questions
16	Structure and Contents of the Main Evaluation Report
17	Cover Page, Prelims and Style Sheet for Main Evaluation Report
18	Financial Tables
19	Template for the Assessment of the Quality of the Evaluation Report

ANNEX VI. QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF THE EVALUATION REPORT

Quality Assessment of the Evaluation Report

Evaluand Title:

Global Coral Reef Partnership: Towards an Ecosystem Approach to Coral Reef Management (GCRP) (UNEP PIMS ID 01820)

All UNEP evaluations are subject to a quality assessment by the Evaluation Office. This is an assessment of the quality of the evaluation product (i.e. evaluation report) and is dependent on more than just the consultant's efforts and skills.

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
Substantive Report Quality Criteria		
Quality of the Executive Summary: The Summary should be able to stand alone as an accurate summary of the main evaluation product. It should include a concise overview of the evaluation object; clear summary of the evaluation objectives and scope; overall evaluation rating of the project and key features of performance (strengths and weaknesses) against exceptional criteria (plus reference to where the evaluation ratings table can be found within the report); summary of the main findings of the exercise, including a synthesis of main conclusions (which include a summary response to key strategic evaluation questions), lessons learned and recommendations.	Final report:	5
I. Introduction A brief introduction should be given identifying, where possible and relevant, the following: institutional context of the project (sub-programme, Division, regions/countries where implemented) and coverage of the evaluation; date of PRC approval and project document signature); results frameworks to which it contributes (e.g. Expected Accomplishment in POW); project duration and start/end dates; number of project phases (where appropriate); implementing partners; total secured budget and whether the project has been evaluated in the past (e.g. mid-term, part of a synthesis evaluation, evaluated by another agency etc.) Consider the extent to which the introduction includes a concise statement of the purpose of the evaluation and the key intended audience for the findings?	Final report:	5
II. Evaluation Methods A data collection section should include: a description of evaluation methods and information sources used, including the number and type of respondents; justification for methods used (e.g. qualitative/quantitative; electronic/face-to-face); any selection criteria used to identify respondents, case studies or sites/countries visited; strategies used to increase stakeholder engagement and consultation; details of how data were verified (e.g. triangulation, review by stakeholders etc.). Efforts to include the voices of different groups, e.g. vulnerable, gender, marginalised etc) should be described.	Final report:	5

Methods to ensure that potentially excluded groups (excluded by gender, vulnerability or marginalisation) are reached and their experiences captured effectively, should be made explicit in this section. The methods used to analyse data (e.g. scoring; coding; thematic analysis etc.) should be described. It should also address evaluation limitations such as: low or imbalanced response rates across different groups; gaps in documentation; extent to which findings can be either generalised to wider evaluation questions or constraints on aggregation/disaggregation; any potential or apparent biases; language barriers and ways they were overcome. Ethics and human rights issues should be highlighted including: how anonymity and confidentiality were protected, and strategies used to include the views of marginalised or potentially disadvantaged groups and/or divergent views. Is there an ethics statement? E.g. <i>‘Throughout the evaluation process and in the compilation of the Final Evaluation Report efforts have been made to represent the views of both mainstream and more marginalised groups. All efforts to provide respondents with anonymity have been made.</i>		
III. The Project This section should include: • <i>Context:</i> Overview of the main issue that the project is trying to address, its root causes and consequences on the environment and human well-being (i.e. synopsis of the problem and situational analyses). • <i>Results framework:</i> Summary of the project’s results hierarchy as stated in the ProDoc (or as officially revised) • <i>Stakeholders:</i> Description of groups of targeted stakeholders organised according to relevant common characteristics • <i>Project implementation structure and partners:</i> A description of the implementation structure with diagram and a list of key project partners • <i>Changes in design during implementation:</i> Any key events that affected the project’s scope or parameters should be described in brief in chronological order • <i>Project financing:</i> Completed tables of: (a) budget at design and expenditure by components (b) planned and actual sources of funding/co-financing	Final report:	5
IV. Theory of Change The <i>TOC at Evaluation</i> should be presented clearly in both diagrammatic and narrative forms. Clear articulation of each major causal pathway is expected, (starting from outputs to long term impact), including explanations of all drivers and assumptions as well as the expected roles of key actors. This section should include a description of how the <i>TOC at Evaluation</i>²⁰ was designed (who was involved etc.) and applied to the context of the project? Where the project results as stated in the project design documents (or formal revisions of the project design) are not an accurate reflection of the project’s intentions or do not	Final report:	5

²⁰ During the Inception Phase of the evaluation process a *TOC at Evaluation Inception* is created based on the information contained in the approved project documents (these may include either logical framework or a TOC or narrative descriptions), formal revisions and annual reports etc. During the evaluation process this TOC is revised based on changes made during project intervention and becomes the *TOC at Evaluation*.

follow UNEP's definitions of different results levels, project results may need to be re-phrased or reformulated. In such cases, a summary of the project's results hierarchy should be presented for: a) the results as stated in the approved/revised Prodoc logframe/TOC and b) as formulated in the <i>TOC at Evaluation</i> . The two results hierarchies should be presented as a two-column table to show clearly that, although wording and placement may have changed, the results 'goal posts' have not been 'moved'. This table may have initially been presented in the Inception Report and should appear somewhere in the Main Review report.		
V. Key Findings A. Strategic relevance: This section should include an assessment of the project's relevance in relation to UNEP's mandate and its alignment with UNEP's policies and strategies at the time of project approval. An assessment of the complementarity of the project at design (or during inception/mobilisation ²¹), with other interventions addressing the needs of the same target groups should be included. Consider the extent to which all four elements have been addressed: i. Alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities ii. Alignment to Donor/GEF/Partners Strategic Priorities iii. Relevance to Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities iv. Complementarity with Existing Interventions	Final report:	5
B. Quality of Project Design To what extent are the strength and weaknesses of the project design effectively <u>summarized</u> ?	Final report:	5
C. Nature of the External Context For projects where this is appropriate, key <u>external</u> features of the project's implementing context that limited the project's performance (e.g. conflict, natural disaster, political upheaval ²²), and how they affected performance, should be described.	Final report:	5
D. Effectiveness (i) Outputs and Project Outcomes: How well does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the a) availability of outputs, and b) achievement of project outcomes? How convincing is the discussion of attribution and contribution, as well as the constraints to attributing effects to the intervention? The effects of the intervention on differentiated groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation, should be discussed explicitly.	Final report:	6

²¹ A project's inception or mobilization period is understood as the time between project approval and first disbursement. Complementarity during project implementation is considered under Efficiency, see below.

²² Note that 'political upheaval' does not include regular national election cycles, but unanticipated unrest or prolonged disruption. The potential delays or changes in political support that are often associated with the regular national election cycle should be part of the project's design and addressed through adaptive management of the project team.

(ii) Likelihood of Impact: How well does the report present an integrated analysis, guided by the causal pathways represented by the TOC, of all evidence relating to likelihood of impact? How well are change processes explained and the roles of key actors, as well as drivers and assumptions, explicitly discussed? Any unintended negative effects of the project should be discussed under Effectiveness, especially negative effects on disadvantaged groups.	Final report:	6
E. Financial Management This section should contain an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under financial management and include a completed 'financial management' table. Consider how well the report addresses the following: • <i>Adherence</i> to UNEP's financial policies and procedures • <i>completeness</i> of financial information, including the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used • <i>communication</i> between financial and project management staff 190.	Final report:	5
F. Efficiency To what extent, and how well, does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of efficiency under the primary categories of cost-effectiveness and timeliness including: • Implications of delays and no cost extensions • Time-saving measures put in place to maximise results within the secured budget and agreed project timeframe • Discussion of making use during project implementation of/building on pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. • The extent to which the management of the project minimised UNEP's environmental footprint.	Final report:	5
G. Monitoring and Reporting How well does the report assess: • Monitoring design and budgeting (<i>including SMART results with measurable indicators, resources for MTE/R etc.</i>) • Monitoring of project implementation (<i>including use of monitoring data for adaptive management</i>) • Project reporting (e.g. <i>PIMS and donor reports</i>)	Final report:	5
H. Sustainability How well does the evaluation identify and assess the key conditions or factors that are likely to undermine or contribute to the persistence of achieved project outcomes including: • Socio-political Sustainability • Financial Sustainability • Institutional Sustainability	Final report:	5
I. Factors Affecting Performance These factors are <u>not</u> discussed in stand-alone sections but are integrated in criteria A-H as appropriate. Note that these are described in the Evaluation Criteria Ratings Matrix. To what extent, and how well, does the evaluation report cover the following cross-cutting themes: • Preparation and readiness	Final report:	5

• Quality of project management and supervision²³ • Stakeholder participation and co-operation • Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality • Environmental and social safeguards • Country ownership and driven-ness • Communication and public awareness		
VI. Conclusions and Recommendations i) Quality of the conclusions: The key strategic questions should be clearly and succinctly addressed within the conclusions section. This includes providing the answers to the questions on Core Indicator Targets, stakeholder engagement, gender responsiveness, safeguards and knowledge management, required for the GEF portal. It is expected that the conclusions will highlight the main strengths and weaknesses of the project and connect them in a compelling story line. Human rights and gender dimensions of the intervention (e.g. how these dimensions were considered, addressed or impacted on) should be discussed explicitly. Conclusions, as well as lessons and recommendations, should be consistent with the evidence presented in the main body of the report.	Final report:	5
ii) Quality and utility of the lessons: Both positive and negative lessons are expected and duplication with recommendations should be avoided. Based on explicit evaluation findings, lessons should be rooted in real project experiences or derived from problems encountered and mistakes made that should be avoided in the future. Lessons are intended to be adopted any time they are deemed to be relevant in the future and must have the potential for wider application (replication and generalization) and use and should briefly describe the context from which they are derived and those contexts in which they may be useful.	Final report:	5
iii) Quality and utility of the recommendations: To what extent are the recommendations proposals for specific action to be taken by identified people/position-holders to resolve concrete problems affecting the project or the sustainability of its results? They should be feasible to implement within the timeframe and resources available (including local capacities) and specific in terms of who would do what and when. At least one recommendation relating to strengthening the human rights and gender dimensions of UNEP interventions, should be given. Recommendations should represent a measurable performance target in order that the Evaluation Office can monitor and assess compliance with the recommendations.	Final report:	5

1. ²³ In some cases 'project management and supervision' will refer to the supervision and guidance provided by UNEP to implementing partners and national governments while in others, specifically for GEF funded projects, it will refer to the project management performance of the executing agency and the technical backstopping provided by UNEP. This includes providing the answers to the questions on Core Indicator Targets, stakeholder engagement, gender responsiveness, safeguards and knowledge management, required for the GEF portal.

In cases where the recommendation is addressed to a third party, compliance can only be monitored and assessed where a contractual/legal agreement remains in place. Without such an agreement, the recommendation should be formulated to say that UNEP project staff should pass on the recommendation to the relevant third party in an effective or substantive manner. The effective transmission by UNEP of the recommendation will then be monitored for compliance. Where a new project phase is already under discussion or in preparation with the same third party, a recommendation can be made to address the issue in the next phase.		
VII. Report Structure and Presentation Quality		
i) Structure and completeness of the report: To what extent does the report follow the Evaluation Office guidelines? Are all requested Annexes included and complete?	Final report:	6
ii) Quality of writing and formatting: Consider whether the report is well written (clear English language and grammar) with language that is adequate in quality and tone for an official document? Do visual aids, such as maps and graphs convey key information? Does the report follow Evaluation Office formatting guidelines?	Final report:	5
OVERALL REPORT QUALITY RATING		Satisfactory

A number rating 1-6 is used for each criterion: Highly Satisfactory = 6, Satisfactory = 5, Moderately Satisfactory = 4, Moderately Unsatisfactory = 3, Unsatisfactory = 2, Highly Unsatisfactory = 1. The overall quality of the evaluation report is calculated by taking the mean score of all rated quality criteria.

At the end of the evaluation, compliance of the evaluation process against the agreed standard procedures is assessed, based on the table below. *All questions with negative compliance must be explained further in the table below.*

Evaluation Process Quality Criteria	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Independence:		
1. Were the Terms of Reference drafted and finalised by the Evaluation Office?	Y	
2. Were possible conflicts of interest of proposed Evaluation Consultant(s) appraised and addressed in the final selection?	Y	
3. Was the final selection of the Evaluation Consultant(s) made by the Evaluation Office?	Y	
4. Was the evaluator contracted directly by the Evaluation Office?	Y	
5. Was the Evaluation Consultant given direct access to identified external stakeholders in order to adequately present and discuss the findings, as appropriate?	Y	
6. Did the Evaluation Consultant raise any concerns about being unable to work freely and without interference or undue pressure from project staff or the Evaluation Office?		N
7. If Yes to Q6: Were these concerns resolved to the mutual satisfaction of both the Evaluation Consultant and the Evaluation Manager?		
Financial Management:		
8. Was the evaluation budget approved at project design available for the evaluation?	Y	
9. Was the final evaluation budget agreed and approved by the Evaluation Office?	Y	
10. Were the agreed evaluation funds readily available to support the payment of the evaluation contract throughout the payment process?	Y	
Timeliness:		
11. If a Terminal Evaluation: Was the evaluation initiated within the period of six months before or after project operational completion? Or, if a Mid Term Evaluation: Was the evaluation initiated within a six-month period prior to the project's mid-point?		N
12. Were all deadlines set in the Terms of Reference respected, as far as unforeseen circumstances allowed?	Y	
13. Was the inception report delivered and reviewed/approved prior to commencing any travel?	Y	
Project's engagement and support:		
14. Did the project team, Sub-Programme Coordinator and identified project stakeholders provide comments on the evaluation Terms of Reference?	Y	
15. Did the project make available all required/requested documents?	Y	
16. Did the project make all financial information (and audit reports if applicable) available in a timely manner and to an acceptable level of completeness?	Y	
17. Was adequate support provided by the project to the evaluator(s) in planning and conducting evaluation missions?	Y	
18. Was close communication between the Evaluation Consultant, Evaluation Office and project team maintained throughout the evaluation?	Y	
19. Were evaluation findings, lessons and recommendations adequately discussed with the project team for ownership to be established?	Y	
20. Did the project team, Sub-Programme Coordinator and any identified project stakeholders provide comments on the draft evaluation report?	Y	
Quality assurance:		
21. Were the evaluation Terms of Reference, including the key evaluation questions, peer-reviewed?	Y	
22. Was the TOC in the inception report peer-reviewed?	Y	
23. Was the quality of the draft/cleared report checked by the Evaluation Manager?	Y	

and Peer Reviewer prior to dissemination to stakeholders for comments?		
24. Did the Evaluation Office complete an assessment of the quality of both the draft and final reports?	Y	
Transparency:		
25. Was the draft evaluation report sent directly by the Evaluation Consultant to the Evaluation Office?	Y	
26. Did the Evaluation Manager disseminate (or authorize dissemination) of the cleared draft report to the project team, Sub-Programme Coordinator and other key internal personnel (including the Reference Group where appropriate) to solicit formal comments?	Y	
27. Did the Evaluation Manager disseminate (or authorize dissemination) appropriate drafts of the report to identified external stakeholders, including key partners and funders, to solicit formal comments?	Y	
28. Were all stakeholder comments to the draft evaluation report sent directly to the Evaluation Office	Y	
29. Did the Evaluation Consultant(s) respond adequately to all factual corrections and comments?	Y	
30. Did the Evaluation Office share substantive comments and Evaluation Consultant responses with those who commented, as appropriate?	Y	

Provide comments / explanations / mitigating circumstances below for any non-compliant process issues.

<u>Process Criterion Number</u>	<u>Evaluation Office Comments</u>
<u>11</u>	Due to the COVID -19 pandemic there were delays to the start of the TE within the 6 month timeframe.