Management Response: Implementation Plan for Evaluation Recommendations

General Information

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Implementation Plan

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1	The recommendation responds to the opportunity presented by the recognition by CBD parties and by UNEA of the role of regional seas programme in implementing the KM-GBF provides a firm framework for closer collaboration.	Continue to strengthen collaboration between the MFWB and Regional Seas Branch towards adoption and implementation of an ecosystem approach at regional and national level	Critical	Project	MFWB & RSB	Ongoing. The management response should include a structured approach for actions during 2025	Accepted		1. Joint planning between RSB and MFB on joint delivery of 30x30 Ocean Roadmap on Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), connecting Kumming Montral Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) and framework of the Specially Protected Areas and Biodiversity Protocols of the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans (Regional Seas) (≥1 joint 30x30 roadmap, evidence would include a workplan and meeting notes, including participation from MFB and

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									Regional Seas). 2. Joint planning, project development and fundraising between RSB and MFB in expanding regional networks of MPAs, including promoting a global technical meeting/workshop of Regional MPAs. (≥1 joint workplan; Evidence would include a workplan and meeting notes). 3. Supporting the Regional Seas in providing training and facilitating the exchange of best practices among representatives and experts from Member States on ecosystem-based management (EbM) tools, including OECMs. (≥2 regional training and/or knowledge sharing; ≥50 officials trained; Evidence would include an agenda, attendance list, training report, and/or knowledge-sharing materials); Joint RSB-MFB capacity building on 30x30 utilising UNEP tools (like MPAth) in regional/national training, pilot interventions. 4. Joint RSB-FMB planning and delivery of capacity building, policy support and demonstration projects on Sustainable Blue Economy Transition applying UNEP tools/training resources 5. Revitalisation and strengthening of Regional Seas Indicators, through the inclusion of KM-GBF indicators, as appropriate. (≥1 Updated indicator set; ≥1 workshop; Evidence would include an Updated Indicator

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									Set, agenda, attendance list, and workshop report).
2	To ensure the sustainability and scaling of benefits generated through collaboration with partners in a challenging funding environment where support through UNEP may no longer be guaranteed.	Undertake a review of formal and informal MCEU partnerships with a view to i) protecting the legacy of earlier or ongoing investments in partner- led activities and ii) developing an exit strategy with consideration of financial sustainability where it is no longer possible to guarantee support.	Important	Project	MCEU under oversight of MFWB	End of 2025	Accepted		SIDS Restoration Flagship UNEP's SIDS Restoration Flagship's Component 3 has been adapted, with partner UN-DESA, where, as a result of the SIDS Flagship's sustainable blue economy (SBE) Component and nested within a National Theory of Change, each island will be supported in the creation of up to 10 donor-ready proposals and investment pipelines, based on the best-practice and island-led innovation demonstrated in SIDS, and embedded in the SBE transition. Similarly, the work plan of the SIDS Flagship in Saint Lucia was designed to build on and deepen the impact of the GEF-South East Coast Restoration Project, ensuring sustainability, continuity, and a deeper impact through the UN Decade. Global Funds for Coral Reefs (GFCR) The Global Fund for Coral Reefs (GFCR) has a robust sustainability strategy for its reef-positive solutions and activities, which involves implementing solutions through financially viable private sector partners and developing and implementing sustainable financing mechanisms. Solutions are planned to be financially self-sustaining even when funding for UN partners may be uncertain. Sustainable financing mechanisms being implemented by the GFCR to support coral reef conservation include Marine Protected Area user fees,

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									mooring buoy fees, and blue carbon credits. Private sector companies engaged in reducing stressors on coral reefs include those in waste management, ecotourism, and aquaculture sectors. Furthermore, a new financing facility for ocean conservation, the One Ocean Finance Facility, is currently being developed with the support of the GFCR as a sustainability plan to continue and scale GFCR activities and partnerships. Gender-responsive Blue Economy in Kenya (UNEP-Canada) UNEP, FAO, UN Women, and UNIDO, in collaboration with UNRC-Kenya, have launched a 3-year UN Joint Programme in Kenya to support a gender-responsive blue economy, aligning with the UNSDCF 2023-2027. UNEP will provide technical support on nature-based solutions and gender-responsive sustainable blue economy transition planning, including. SBE Rapid Readiness Assessment in 2 counties (Kwale, Lamu), support county-level implementation of Kenya's new Blue Economy Strategy through integrated land-sea planning, enable local blue livelihood opportunities (eco-tourism), budgeting and investment planning, and support county-to-county learning through the Council of Governors. UNEP will also partner with Natural State under the Canadian-Kenyan blue economy program. Sustainable Ocean Plans / High-Level Ocean Panel UNEP has partnered with World Resources Institute

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									(WRI), IOC/UNESCO and Ocean Action 2030 Coalition to lead a new UN Ocean Decade Programme on Sustainable Ocean Planning and developed the guide 'Sustainable Ocean Planning Handbook: A Practitioners Guide', which will support countries develop sustainable ocean plans for 100% management of their marine area. Future resource-mobilisation opportunities are envisioned for national SOP capacity building and global knowledge-sharing/learning.
3	The need to i) consolidate UNEP's approach to SBE and ii) to identify appropriate entry points to influence SBE development at national and regional level, complementing the UNEP FI approach	Liaise with relevant parties in UNEP to establish an advisory body to guide further development of the organisation wide work on SBE and ensure effective dovetailing of efforts across the organisation and with external actors	Critical	UNEP-wide	MFWB	Mid 2025	Accepted		UNEPs Sustainable Blue Economy Initiative (championed by MFB in consultation across UNEP Divisions/Regional Offices through a UNEP-wide SBE coordination group) has championed the development a practical policy-coherence framework to guide national Sustainable Blue Economy transition planning and implementation. This includes a novel SBE Transition Framework and Rapid Readiness Assessment (RRA) tool to assess blue economy opportunities, delivery strategies, enabling actions, finance, and capacity building. This SBE guidance package has been/are being piloted tested in 6 countries and currently positioned to support future national/regional blue economy transition processes, technical assistance, demonstration and upscaling of UNEP's SBE transition approach in close collaboration with Regional Seas Programmes. The SBE

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									Transition Framework was designed in close coordination with UNEP FI, including development of several joint UNEP & UNEP FI guidance tools and resource on SBE finance (https://www.unepfi.org/blue-finance/). Future public-private resource mobilisation is envisioned between UNEP (FMB-RSB), UNEP FI, GFCR, OOFF and regional/global development corporations. Another key theme of SBE TF's approach is enabling equity and benefit-sharing, representing an emerging strategic focus of UNEP' ocean, coastal and freshwater work. UNEP's SBE TF approach has informed influenced several global/regional/national processes, incl ASEAN Blue Economy Framework; G20 High-level Principles on Sustainable Blue Economy; Indonesia's Blue Economy Roadmap; UNFCCC Ocean-Climate Dialogue; the Ocean Panel and new guide 'Sustainable Ocean Planning Handbook: A Practitioners Guide'. An independent evaluation of World Bank's blue economy investments (Making Waves, 2024) highlights UNEP's SBE TF holistic approach as important strategic guidance for future country investments. SBE-TF pilot testing, demonstration and learning includes: a) RRAs for Antigua & Barbuda and Trinidad & Tobago; b) EU GoBlue programme, Kenya, piloting SBE-RRA approach across

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									coastal counties for coastal resilience and blue economy strategy implementation; c) UNEP's SIDS Restoration Flagship is actively implementing the SBE RRA approach in it's 3 target countries (Vanuatu, Saint Lucia and Comoros), with Comoros in the final stages of a fully revised National Sustainable Blue Economy Policy. As a result of a joint stakeholder engagement workshop in Saint Lucia with the GEF-BGI project, the SIDS Flagship's modality has encouraged a joint technical advisory committee in Saint Lucia to ensure synergy, complementarity and alignments of efforts off the back of Saint Lucia's SBE Rapid Readiness Assessment process. Follow-up action: Re-establish UNEP-wide task team/advisory group to connect SBE-related work, technical innovation, policy guidance, capacity building, knowledge sharing, identifying entry-points for regional/national engagements, project/program development and resource mobilisation. The group could be co-led by MFB & RSB (enabling RSP engagement) with representation from across Ecosystems Div, Economy Div (incl UNEP FI), Climate Div, Law Div, Science Office, Regional Offices, collaborating centres (GRID-A, WCMC, UNEP-DHI). To meet quarterly, communicate online.

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4	The need to provide a stable hosting arrangement for the platform and ensure its continued development to remain relevant. This includes exploring options for integration with UNEP Digital Transformation hub using MPAth as a model for targeted knowledge-dissimination and practical lessons-sharing from marine management. Key future thematic focus areas inlcudes: a) policy coherence to support achievement of GBF 30x30 and b) BBNJ Treaty.	Develop an options paper related to consolidation and future development of MPAth including consideration for each option of funding and hosting implications	Important	Project	MFWB	Mid 2025	Accepted		The options paper will include exploring options for integration with the UNEP Digital Transformation Hub, using MPAth as a model for targeted knowledge dissemination and practical lessons-sharing from marine management. Key future thematic focus areas include: a) Policy coherence to support achievement of GBF 30x30, and b) Implementation of the BBNJ Treaty. The challenges will be addressed by: a) Securing a sustainable hosting arrangement by aligning MPAth with UNEP's Digital Transformation Hub. b) Establish a governance framework for continuous content updates and ensure relevance to emerging marine policy priorities by investing in a dedicated communications specialist. This role will curate content, translate technical outputs into accessible formats, and drive strategic outreach to key stakeholders. Success will be indicated by: a) Integration of MPAth into UNEP Digital Hub. b) Knowledge-sharing (e.g. Published case studies, thematic briefs on GBF 30X30 and BBNJ Treaty)
5	The recommendation addresses an opportunity rather than a specific challenge to valorise the project (and wider partners' experience) to support scaling up and replication of successful community based blue carbon projects and build	Collaborate with relevant partners including KMFRI and ENU to develop an authoritative guide or set of practice notes on community based blue carbon projects	Important	Project	MFWB	End of 2025	Accepted		Enhancing blue carbon market integrity and equity: UNEP and GRID-Arendal are developing a Blue Carbon Rapid Response Assessment Report (RRA): "Pathways to High-Integrity Coastal Climate Finance - Unlocking blue carbon as a financial mechanism for high integrity conservation, community, and

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	confidence in related carbon credits.								climate action. The report offers a risk-focused assessment of blue carbon as a financial mechanism, examining the integrity and equity challenges faced by governments, communities, stakeholders, and projects, and outlines practical measures to address these challenges. UNEP is exploring various opportunities to replicate, upscale, and disseminate the lessons learned from the blue carbon projects in Kenya, specifically in Gazi, Vanga, and Lamu. UNEP is supporting a blue carbon project in the Mono Delta UNESCO Biosphere in Benin, utilising traditional conservation methods in conjunction with science-based restoration. It is planned to organise a capacity-building mission from Benin to Kenya for government officials and community leaders to ensure that best practices and lessons learned from the Kenyan blue carbon experience are applied in the Benin context.
6	The recommendation addresses a need to manage partners expectations and provide clarity over the extended publication and the status of unpublished reports.	Develop an information document for external partners that sets out UNEP's policy and practice related to reports and publications including information on the publication pipeline (steps and timelines), intellectual property, acknowledgements, use and citation of pre-publications or grey literature and conditions for	Opportunity for improvement	UNEP-wide	MFWB to raise the issue with Communications Division	End of 2025	Accepted		UNEP Communications Division provided guidance that Marine and Freshwater Branch to circulate existing Publications Policy and Logo Use policy to partners, highlighting four key points. 1. Copyright for publications remains with UNEP 2. Partner's must adhere to UNEP's logo use guidelines. 3. Joint citations are not permitted 4. No publications is exempted from UNEP's publication policy

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		release of materials as partners publications.							The success will be tracked through a. Email communication sent to all relevant partners, with policies attached or linked, and acknowledgment received from partners via email. b. Meeting notes or agenda showing the policies were discussed with partners c. Reference the Legal Agreements with the clauses that relate to Publications Policy and Logo Use Policy.
7	The recommendation reflects challenges that arose in management of complex multi-partner projects.	Initiative a dialogue with relevant parties in UNEP towards developing guidelines or a code of conduct on partnership management including supervision, conflict resolution and appropriate approaches for flexible engagement on emerging topics.	Opportunity for improvement	Project	MFWB	Mid 2025	Partially Accepted		Global Fund for Coral Reef The GFCR is a good example of a complex multi-partner project, being a UN Multi-Partner Trust fund and also a collaboration with a private equity partner. Recommendations from the GFCR for complex project management include 1) The need for a strong M&E accountability framework, with standardized indicators, definitions and standards across all partners, 2) The need for high transparency and collaboration in decision-making regarding activities and investments of the partnerships, 3) The need for a clear governance structure for the partnership, with clearly defined decision-making procedures and grievance mechanisms. Managing intellectual property in multi-partner consortia: Ensure clarity around Intellectual Property and editorial roles during project inception, when several partner institutions are brought together to deliver overall joint

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									knowledge outputs, acknowledging specific technical expertise and contributions by individual partners. Aspects related to IP rights and editorial roles caused some friction among external partners of MPAth when they were required to integrate individual sub-outputs into the overall online portal. This can be avoided with a clear IP framework in place from project inception. It is also important to define clear roles and responsibilities, along with a monitoring framework, and to put in place a strong coordination mechanism when multiple institutions or consultants deliver a complex output. Rigor's partnership selection: In-depth scrutiny of partners' technical capacity is essential in partnership selection, including assessing practical policy experience and actual availability of human resources needed for delivery of relevant, quality outcomes. In the case of the SBE work, some partners (i.e. collaborating centres) turned out struggling to deliver relevant outputs; having limited policy experience and human capacity to conceptualize practical SBE policy and planning tools; in turn leading to a weak, lengthy and costly development process with multiple draft iterations of the transition approach before reaching a robust final output. Eventually, UNEP was required to bring in additional external technical expertise to deliver the SBE transition

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									framework. The management action include: 1. UNEP's publication policy and the legal agreements, such as the MoU, SSFA, and PCA, which have clear guidelines, will be applied in the future project design and implementation. 2. UNEP will develop a clear institutional engagement framework at the project inception phase, where clear roles and responsibilities, along with a monitoring framework and coordination mechanisms, will be established when multiple institutions or consultants deliver a complex output. 3. UNEP partnership selection: In-depth scrutiny of partners' technical capacity, assessing practical policy experience, and actual availability of relevant human resources needed for delivery of quality outcomes will be ensured in all projects