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TERMINAL EVALUATION

Final Report

UNDP-Supported GEF-Financed Project *Strengthening the Implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit Sharing in the Cook Islands*

GEF Project ID: 5613

UNDP/GEF ID: 5317

Award ID: 00079046

Project ID: 00089162

Evaluation Period: July-September 2019

Date of Evaluation Report: 5 September 2019

Country and Region: The Cook Islands, Asia and the Pacific

GEF Operational Program: Biodiversity

Executing Partner: National Environment Services

GEF Agency: UNDP

Independent Evaluator: Dr. Amal Aldababseh

adababseh@estidama-jo.com

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1. Executive Summary

1.1 Project Summary Table

Project Title: Strengthening the Implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit Sharing in the Cook Islands.		
GEF Project ID:	5613	
UNDP Project ID (PIMS #):	5317	
ATLAS Business Unit, Award & Project ID:	WSM10, Award ID: 00079046, Project ID: 00089162.	
Country(ies):	The Cook Islands	
Region:	Asia and the Pacific	
Focal Area:	Biodiversity	
GEF Focal Area Strategic Objective:	BD -2	
Trust Fund (GEF)	GEF/NPIF	
Executing Entity/ Implementing Partner	The Cook Islands National Environment Service	
Implementing Entity/Responsible Parties	CIMTECH, Matheson Enterprises	
Project Financing	at CEO endorsement (US\$)	at TE August 2019 (US\$)
[1] GEF financing:	930,137	737,091
[2] UNDP contribution (in-kind):	50,000	50,000
[3] Government and other partners (in-kind)	870,000	188,250
[4] Private Sector and other partners (in-kind)	629,000	1,286,113
[5] Total co-financing [2+3+4]:	1,499,000	1,524,363
PROJECT TOTAL COST [1+5]	2,429,137	2,261,454
Project Document Signature Date	6 July 2015	
Closing date	Proposed 30 April 2018	Actual 5 October 2019

1.2 Project Description

The UNDP Project “Strengthening the Implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit Sharing in the Cook Islands” follows the national implementation modality.

The Project *aims* to:

“have a derivative of this genetic resource be commercialized and benefit the Cook Islands, local communities and contribute to the implementation of customary biodiversity and sustainable use practices, known as ra’ui.”¹

The *objective* of the project is to:

“develop and implement a national Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) framework, build national capacities and support an ABS Agreement based on Traditional Knowledge and Public-Private Partnership”.²

¹ Project Document, Subsection 2.4: Project Objective, Outcomes, and Outputs/activities.

² Project Document, Section 1. Situation Analysis. Page 7.

To achieve the project’s goal and objective, the project includes three components named as outcomes and eleven outputs. The project’s outcomes focus on the institutional and regulatory framework on ABS, capacity building, and biodiscovery and benefit-sharing. Specifically, the project’s outcomes as listed in the project document:

- 1) Strengthened National Regulatory and Institutional Framework on ABS,
- 2) Capacity Building and Awareness Raising for the Implementation of the National ABS Framework, and
- 3) Bio-discovery and Benefit-sharing based on the Traditional Knowledge on Bone and Cartilage Regeneration.

This project was designed to address the importance of biodiversity conservation and fulfilling the objectives of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD) through its facilitation of the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol. Furthermore, as a cross-cutting issue, it was designed to support the conservation of globally significant biodiversity and sustainable use of the components of globally significant biodiversity in the Cook Islands – CIs (a small island nation).

The project was designed to provide the government and local communities with key benefits in relation to biodiversity conservation and sharing of benefits. In order to safeguard the CIs’ diverse genetic resources, the potential of genetic resources must generate tangible local and national economic benefits, thus the project was designed to provide benefits *“in the form of business, employment and capacity building opportunities, through the discovery of new medicines, thereby providing a rationale for the preservation of the biological resources that contain those genetic materials. This will present a paradigm shift to one in which the Cook Islands’ biodiversity-rich nation is fully and equitably involved in this prospectively lucrative research process with the primary goal of promoting people-centric conservation and sustainable use.”*³

The Project is a direct response to the Nagoya Protocol⁴. The main objective of the Protocol is *“the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources, thereby contributing to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.”* The project was designed to take advantage of the potential utilization of the *Hibiscus tiliaceus* and compositions comprising the same, for the promotion of bone and cartilage repair by inducing new bone formation and new cartilage growth. The project was supposed to continue the development of the use of these and other genetic resources found in the Cook Islands for a line of skincare products. Both the bone regeneration drug and the skincare products represent a biochemical analysis of a traditional knowledge-based remedy for bone fractures, which has been widely held in the Cook Islands according to traditional healers.

1.3 Evaluation Rating Table

The key questions for this evaluation concerned relevance, the achievement of outputs, effectiveness, sustainability, and replicability, and factors affecting project performance. The overall rating for this project based on the evaluation findings is ***Moderately Unsatisfactory***.

The project reports indicated that the deliverable related to strengthening national regulatory and institutional framework for ABS reached less than 40% achievement; the capacity building and awareness-raising for the implementation of the national ABS framework achieved around 75%, and the project reported the bio-discovery and benefit-sharing based on the traditional knowledge on bone and cartilage regeneration 95% achieved. Based on the review and assessment and taking into consideration the complex nature of the Project, the overall rating on the achievement of results is ***Moderately Satisfactory***.

The detailed Project’s rating is provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Rating Project Performance⁵

³ Project Inception Report. Subsection 1.2 Importance of the CKI ABS Project. Page 9.

⁴ The Nagoya Protocol on ABS was adopted on 29 October 2010 in Nagoya, Japan and entered into force on 12 October 2014, 90 days after the deposit of the fiftieth instrument of ratification

⁵ The rating for the main evaluation criteria is narratively highlighted in the report; other rating is not. Rating explanations: HS- Highly Satisfactory; S- Satisfactory; MS- Moderately Satisfactory; MU – Moderately Unsatisfactory;

	Criteria	Rating
Monitoring and Evaluation		
	The overall quality of M&E	S
	M&E design at project startup	S
	M&E Plan Implementation	S
IA & EA Execution		
	The overall quality of Implementation / Execution	S
	Implementing Agency Execution	S
	Executing Agency Execution	MS
Outcomes		
	Overall Quality of Project Outcomes	MS
	Relevance: relevant (R) or not relevant (NR)	R
	Effectiveness	MUS
	Efficiency	MS
Sustainability: Likely (L); Moderately Likely (ML); Moderately Unlikely (MU); Unlikely (U).		
	The overall likelihood of risks to sustainability	ML
	Financial resources	ML
	Socio-economic	ML
	Institutional framework and governance	ML
	Environmental	ML
Impact: Significant (S), Minimal (M), Negligible (N)		
	Environmental Status Improvement	M
	Environmental Stress Reduction	M
	Progress towards stress/status change	2
	Overall Project Results	MUS

1.4 Summary of Conclusions, Recommendations, and Lessons learned

Summary of Conclusions

The project was least successful in strengthening national regulatory and instructional framework on ABS (the first outcome). Community consultations were organized in all islands to discuss the draft National ABS Policy. The policy was translated to the Maori language as well. The policy was ready to go through for national endorsement via the National Biodiversity Steering Committee, National Sustainable Development Committee, Cabinet in February 2019, however, the project was put on hold with the loss of the project coordinator. The project team got to know that ABS legislation should be developed after developing a policy. This has delayed the development of the needed regulatory framework. Furthermore, as of June 2018, the National Environment Service is in the process of developing a National Environment Policy leading up to a complete revision of the National Environment Act. The NES is planning on merging the ABS Policy with the overarching Environment Policy in order to have an integrated Policy and future legislation. Although NES considers this forms a part of the Exit Strategy for the project, with the development of the ABS legislation, national consultations, and then ratification of the Nagoya Protocol being integrated into the work of NES beyond Oct 2019. The TE consultant does not see it like that.

One of the significant challenges the project faced was due to deficiencies in the project management arrangement at the design stage, which was not – unfortunately- addressed during the project inception phase or during implementation. These deficiencies were most apparent with respect to the structure of the project management. Knowing the ABS is a new topic to many countries and the technical capacity to manage such a project might need support, the project document should have proposed a project technical advisor to provide

U – Unsatisfactory; HU – Highly Unsatisfactory; UA – Unable to Assess; N/A – Not Applicable Sustainability ratings: L – Likely; ML – Moderately Likely; MU – Moderately Unlikely; U – Unlikely. Impact ratings: Significant (S); Minimal (M); Negligible (N).

support to the project team at least on a quarterly basis. The absence of administrative and financial support put additional burden on the project coordinator as the later had to deal with all issues pertaining to the project, these include technical, financial, and administrative. Furthermore, the UNDP/GEF project management requires intensive M&E activities including quarterly and annual reporting. Special training should have been offered to the PC to help in complying with these requirements. The NES also has its own internal procedures; hence, the project coordinator needed to learn and adapt to master the NES procedures, UNDP/GEF project management procedures and to follow up on all technical, financial and administrative aspect of the project. The project document proposed that a Project manager (PM), government official, appointed to support the PC. It was noticed that most of the PM duties were moved to the PC during the inception phase. This has complicated the already complex project set-up.

The Cook Islands has its own procedures of advancing work at the project level. For example, to develop an ABS legislation, a national ABS policy is required, and nation-wide community consultations should be organized, and comments should be integrated prior to submitting the ABS policy to the Cabinet for approval. This was not envisaged in the project document, not accounted for and hence has contributed significant delays in outcome 1 implementation. Pursuing Cabinet approval required a great deal of effort on the part of NES that has caused a great delay in preparing the intended ABS submission for the Cabinet.

Individuals with practical, hands-on experience with implementing this project learned significant lessons about how to coordinate and manage a project that addresses a new and complex suite of issues, with relatively limited funds, short implementation period, and limited technical and operational support, and presumably will be able to apply them in the future.

The key questions for this evaluation concerned relevance, the achievement of outputs, effectiveness, sustainability, and replicability, and factors affecting project performance. The overall rating for this project based on the evaluation findings is **Moderately Unsatisfactory**.

The project reports indicated that the deliverable related to strengthening national regulatory and institutional framework for ABS reached less than 40% achievement; the capacity building and awareness-raising for the implementation of the national ABS framework achieved around 75%, and the project reported the bio-discovery and benefit-sharing based on the traditional knowledge on bone and cartilage regeneration 95% achieved. Based on the review and assessment and taking into consideration the complex nature of the Project, the overall rating on the achievement of results is **Moderately Satisfactory**.

Although the Project is very much acknowledged by the GoCIs, and very relevant to UNDP and the Government’s national plans, without a confirmed financial commitment and institutional arrangement to follow up on the project’s activities, prospects for sustainability are ambiguous, and overall sustainability is considered **moderately likely**.

Recommendations

The TE consultant would like to make the following recommendation to ensure that a clear set of actions to follow up or reinforce the initial benefits of the Project are identified:

This ABS project needs an exit strategy to avoid leaving the ABS partners (Koutu Nui, CIMTEH and NES) in limbo, the UNDP MCO and UNDP GEF RTA to look at the possibility of extending the project for another 5-6 months and help the NES in reallocating the remaining budget to ensure enable the ABS partners finalizing the project’s activities. Subject to the approval for a project extension at no cost, the following activities are recommended to be implemented during the extension period:

1. Re-hire the PC - using a different contractual modality - to follow up on the pending activities as the PC has already gained the needed knowledge on NES internal procedure, UNDP/GEF M&E procedures, and know the whole project.
2. Re-hire the two national consultants for policy and legislation development to finalize the work on the two documents as per the original contracts.

The consultants, under NES and UNDP supervision, should do the following:

3. National Consultants to consult with key national and local CKI stakeholders and refined the final draft ABS Policy;
4. National Consultants to finalize the Policy submission package and submit to the Cabinet;
5. National Consultants to draft the legislative measure based on the final draft ABS Policy;
6. Consultants to consult with the key stakeholders on the draft legislative measure with key national and local CKI stakeholders;
7. NES to finalize the draft legislative measure and submit to Cabinet;
8. NES to provide effective and timely technical and administrative support to the consultant’s requirements; and
9. NES with the support of the national consultant to finalize NES guidelines on ABS as aligned to National Policy on ABS, draft CKI ABS policy, and draft legislative measure;

Recommendation 1: NES to develop a project terminal report that includes the project exit strategy to ensure the Project’s results sustainability (UNDP/ NES).

Recommendation 2: NES to follow up vigorously on the remaining project’s activities and transfer the needed funds to CIMTECH to ensure that component 3 of the project finalized its work before project closure (UNDP, NES, CIMTECH/Matheson Enterprises).

Recommendation 3: NES to institutionalize linkages with other ongoing activities and initiatives to ensure the delivery of the remaining results like Ridge-to-Reef and the National Environmental Policy and Act review initiative (NES).

Recommendation 4: NES to develop a dissemination plan, through its media and education team, for the project “public awareness and outreach tools” to ensure future initiatives would build on the Project activities and results and will incorporate the project’s products in its work. (NES).

Recommendation 5: The work on ABS has just begun through this Project. The GoCIs should develop clear mechanisms concerning the follow up on CIMTECH activities pertaining to the project’s activities (NES, UNDP).

Recommendation 6: As other countries are working on and/or planning to work on ABS. NES and UNDP to capture lessons learned from this Project and share at the national/ regional/ and global level. The successful involvement of the private sector and the expected benefits the local healers through the Koutu Nui receive, should be documented and shared (NES, UNDP, and CIMTECH).

There is still the potential to achieve more, but it will require investing in a continuation phase of the Project. Thus, Project’s stakeholders should develop and endorse a clear work-plan to ensure the achievement of the remaining deliverables with the support of the stakeholders.

Lessons Learned

- ABS future projects should not only focus on making the linkages between ABS, biodiversity conservation and sustainable livelihoods but also on integrating that into the project’s objectives, components, activities and major deliverables. This ABS project while focused on ABS and Nagoya protocol, it also integrated sustainable livelihood and biodiversity conservation into its design mainly through component number 3.
- The involvement of the private sector in component 3: research and development, processing of the plant bark to get the extract, testing it and converting it to the final products need a dedicated research institute partnering with a company or a company with a strong R&D. This project proves that a local company with the interest, vision, and needed support can achieve the work that might need many people to do.

- The small project management team might be very efficient in terms of project financing; however, it had its bad consequences on project implementation and performance. UNDP GEF projects asked not to invest a lot in project management, but that does not mean that you ask one person to implement the whole project.

2. Acronyms and abbreviations

ABS	Access and Benefit-Sharing
APR	Annual Progress Report
AWP	Annual Work Plan
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CDRs	Combined Delivery Reports
CPAP	Country Programme Action Plan
DCD	Development Coordination Division
EA	Executing Agency
IR	Inception Report
IW	Inception Workshop
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEF CEO	Global Environment Facility Chief Executive Officer
GoCIs	The government of the Cook Islands
LF	Logical Framework
LFA	Logical Framework Analysis
NES	National Environmental Services
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MCO	Multi-Country Office
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
ME	Matheson Enterprise
MFCM	Ministry of Finance and Economic Management
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTR	Mid-term Review
NIM	National Implementation Modality
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NPD	National Project Director
OPM	Office of Prime Minister
PAC	Project Appraisal Committee
PIC	Prior Informed Consent
PC	Project Coordinator
PB	Project Board
PIR	Project Implementation Report
PMU	Project Management Unit
POPP	Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures
RTA	Regional Technical Advisor

SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound
TE	Terminal Evaluation
TKP	Traditional knowledge and practices
ToC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNCBD	United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity
UNCCD	United Nations Convention on Combating Desertification
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistant Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDP MCO	United Nations Development Programme- Multi-Country Office
UNDP-GEF	United Nations Development Programme- Global Environment Facility

1. Introduction

This Terminal Evaluation (TE) is an integral component of the UNDP-supported GEF-funded project cycle management. This report for the TE of the UNDP/GEF Project “Strengthening the Implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit Sharing in the Cook Islands” (hereafter called “Project”) summarizes the main findings of the TE in accordance with the UNDP/GEF terminal evaluation guide⁶. The TE was carried out during the last six months of the Project implementation.

1.1 Purpose of the Evaluation

All UNDP/GEF full and medium-size projects are required to undergo a terminal evaluation upon completion of implementation, as per the UNDP/GEF evaluation policies and procedures. The purpose of the evaluation is to use the criteria of *relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact*, to assess the project’s status in achieving its intended results and impacts and the achievements of project overall Objective. The TE is also intended to provide evidence-based credible, useful, and reliable information as it produces a set of recommendations and lessons to help guide future design and implementation of UNDP/GEF Projects. It also contributes to the overall assessment of results in achieving GEF strategic objectives aimed at global environmental benefits.

According to “Project-Level Evaluation. Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects”⁷ terminal evaluation has the following corresponding purposes to

- (i) *promote accountability and transparency, and to assess and disclose the extent of project accomplishments;*
- (ii) *synthesize lessons that can help to improve the selection, design, and implementation of future GEF financed UNDP activities;*
- (iii) *provide feedback on issues that are recurrent across the UNDP portfolio and need attention, and on improvements regarding previously identified issues;*
- (iv) *contribute to the overall assessment of results in achieving GEF strategic objectives aimed at global environmental benefit; and*
- (v) *gauge the extent of project convergence with other UN and UNDP priorities, including harmonization with other UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and UNDP Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) outcomes and outputs.*

1.2 Scope and Methodology

Scope: terminal evaluation is a planned monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activity of this Project of the Cook Islands in according with the UNDP/GEF TE guide. The UNDP Multi-County Office (MCO) initiated the terminal evaluation during the last six months of the project completion. The TE followed a participatory and consultative approach and focused on ensuring close and continuous engagement with key government counterparts, UNDP MCO, project team, the UNDP GEF team, and key project beneficiaries and stakeholders. The TE was carried out in accordance with the evaluation Terms of Reference received (**TOR, Annex 1**).

The TE considered analyzing four major components; project implementation, log-frame matrix (LF) and strategy, adaptive management framework, and project performance. In line with the UNDP/GEF terminal evaluation guidelines, the evaluation included analyzing and understanding project preparation and implementation, starting from the project’s development (PIF formulation) to the present, attention was placed upon the project’s Log-frame analysis (LFA) to examine the rationale behind the project’s design and consider how that contributed to achieving the objective and overall GEF goal. The project’s strategy was also examined, and the project’s main components/outcomes, outputs, indicators, and targets. The

⁶ <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/guidance/GEF/UNDP-GEF-TE-Guide.pdf>

⁷ <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/guidance/GEF/UNDP-GEF-TE-Guide.pdf>

project’s adaptive management framework was also examined, that is, how the project responded to new information, changes in variables, etc. This included analyzing and understanding the project’s risks and assumptions that the project had based its strategy upon and assess their validity and the way in which the project, has responded and managed these risks. The TE focused also on evaluating the project’s performance and its impacts over the project lifetime. Finally, the TE assessed the effectiveness of the various activities in achieving the Project’s outcomes, and thus the effectiveness of the Project’s outcomes on achieving the Project’s objective.

Methodology: The evaluation methodology was based on a participatory approach, which included three main elements:

- (i) initiating the TE work by conducting a comprehensive desk review of project’s documentation;
- (ii) conducting a mission to the Cook Islands to interview key project’s stakeholders, collect project’s documentation, and cross-checking the TE findings, and
- (iii) drafting and finalizing the terminal evaluation report.

In details, the TE included:

The *initiation/inception stage* of the TE involved desk reviews of Project-related documents (PIF, UNDP/GEF Project Document, GEF Request for CEO Approval, Project’s technical deliverables, Project Inception Report, Project’s Board meetings/Steering Committee Meetings, Minutes of Meetings, list of participants, Project’s public awareness activities and media campaign) that the evaluator considered useful for an evidence-based evaluation assessment (list of documents reviewed, (**Annex 2**)).

After reviewing Project’s related documents, an inception report (IR) was prepared and submitted to UNDP for approval on 20 July 2019; it included:

- a preliminary proposed agenda for the mission to the Cook Islands (**Annex 3**),
- a list of people to interview during the mission. This list was prepared based on the Project Document and the list of Project’s stakeholders and beneficiaries (**Annex 4**), and
- an evaluation matrix which was used during the mission to the Cook Islands to guide the interviews with the project’s stakeholders (**Annex 5**).

Evaluation Mission to the Cook Islands (26 August – 2 September 2019) stage: An evaluation mission in the Cook Islands took place. The mission had three major activities:

- interviewing key project stakeholders and beneficiaries to brief interviewees on the purpose and methodology of the TE, and to get updates on the project’s activities. Findings were crosschecked during different interviews and with available evidence (Project documentation). A pre-prepared set of questions was used to facilitate the discussion with the stakeholders and ensure that all aspects of the TE are covered (**Annex 6**);
- visiting CIMTECH laboratory as the lead agency for implementing component 3, meeting with the responsible team and get an insight about the full processing procedures, and
- gathering project’s data, documents, and technical deliverables and cross-checking findings.

Drafting and finalizing the Terminal Evaluation Report stage: following the field mission to the Cook Islands, data and documents collected were examined, analyzed and discussed with concerned project’s team. Related information and stakeholders’ opinions with associated sources and assumptions given, were used to draft the TE report that was submitted to UNDP for review and feedback. It is UNDP Multi-Country Office (MCO) responsibility - according to the UNDP/GEF Evaluation guide - to circulate the report to key project’s partners for review and comments. UNDP MCO compiles all comments on the TE draft report and shares with the TE consultant. The response to these comments, whether they were addressed or not is

provided in the “**audit trail**” document (annexed to the TE final report) which is an integral part of the TE final report submission.

1.3 Structure of the Evaluation Report

The TE report followed the structure presented in the TE TOR, which is structured based on the “Project-Level Evaluation, Guidance for conducting Terminal Evaluation of UNDP-Supported and GEF-Financed Project.”

The TE report consists of four main parts in addition to several annexes, as follows:

- **Chapter 1:** includes a project introduction, the project’s objectives and goals, evaluation scope, and methodology.
- **Chapter 2:** provides more details about the project, the problems sought to address, the Project objective and development context, the baseline indicators, expected results and project’s stakeholders.
- **Chapter 3:** describes in detail the main finding of the TE in relation to Project design, Project implementation, results, and sustainability following the UNDP/GEF TE guidelines.
- **Chapter 4:** provides the TE conclusions, recommendations and lessons to be learned.

According to the TE evaluation guide, the maximum total number of the TE report pages is 40 excluding the annexes. Annexes include TE’s ToR, mission to the Cook Islands itinerary, list of persons interviewed, list of documents reviewed, evaluation question matrix, the questionnaire used and summary of results, and evaluation consultant agreement form.

2. Project Description and Development Context

2.1 Project start and duration

The table below contains the Project’s main milestone dates. The development period from the PIF approval (23 December 2013) to GEF MSP approval (25 February 2015) was 14 months. However, another 13 months required⁸ (the Project Inception Report, February 2017) to officially launch the Project in a national Inception Workshop (IW). The Project’s IW took place in Rarotonga on 11th and 12th May 2016. Yet, the GoCIs and UNDP MCO team worked together to initiate the project’s activities (mainly components number 2 and 3) prior to organizing the project IW.

Milestone	Dates (Project document)	Actual
PIF submitted to the GEF	6 December 2013	
PIF approved by the GEF	23 December 2013	
Request for CEO Endorsement submitted to GEFSec	11 December 2014	
MSP Document Approved	25 February 2015	
Executing Agency	NES	NES
Appraisal Committee meeting (PAC)	April 2015	21 April 2015
UNDP Sign ProDoc		1 May 2015
Government Sign ProDoc		6 July 2015
Implementation Start	1 May 2015	6 July 2015
Inception Workshop		11-12 May 2016
Inception Report		February 2017
Project Closure	30 April 2018	5 October 2019
Project TE		July-Sept. 2019

The Project was designed to follow a National Implementation Modality (NIM). During the PIF and PPG stages, the NES was designated as the executing partner and the CIMTECH was selected as the main partner to implement component number 3.

The UNDP Multi-Country Office Samoa (UNDP MCO) along with National Environment Service (NES) and CIMTECH/Matheson Enterprises initiated a series of national consultation in October 2015, and were able to reach a Memorandum of Understanding between NES/the Project and Matheson Enterprise (ME) as the local company tasked with the implementation of component 3. This MOU was approved and signed on the 23rd of December 2015, around 7 months prior to appointing the PC.

Due to this delay in recruiting the PC, an official extension was discussed in the Project Steering Committee meeting on 26th October 2018, and a request to extend the project was submitted to UNDP GEF on the 5th of June 2018. A no-cost, till October 2019, was granted on 6th September 2018 to allow the completion of the remaining project’s activities.

2.2 Problems that the project sought to address

The Cook Islands is a signatory to the Convention on Biological Diversity, signed in 1992, ratified in 1993 and entered into force in the same year. The Convention on Biological Diversity is a legal instrument used in the Cook Islands to guide the development of strategies that balance the appetite for economic development and the protection of its ecological biodiversity.

The Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization (ABS) to the Convention on Biological Diversity is a supplementary agreement to the Convention on Biological Diversity. The Nagoya Protocol on

⁸ The project launching got delayed for 13 months by the recruitment process for the project coordinator which began in July 2015 and concluded by the appointment of the project coordinator in April 2016.

ABS was adopted on 29 October 2010 in Nagoya, Japan and entered into force on 12 October 2014. Its objective is the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources, thereby contributing to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

According to the Project document and the project identification form, the Cook Islands’ biodiversity has been considered globally important. The WWF has listed the forests of the Cook Islands (particularly on Rarotonga) as one of its key Global 2000 Ecoregions and considers them to be in a critical/ endangered state. The Islands also fall under Conservation International’s Polynesia-Micronesia hotspot. Birdlife International has listed at least 11 endemic birds on the Islands and recognizes 2 endemic bird areas. Other notable marine ecosystems include seamounts, seabed, and the open ocean water columns. The marine ecosystems are home to several globally endangered species such as the Giant Wrasse and the Green Turtle.

Biodiversity is threatened in the Cook Islands because many ecosystems are not considered economically important by local communities and development sectors, and economic actions that degrade or cause a loss of biodiversity are more profitable in the short term. Overharvesting of wild resources is a serious concern, of coastal and marine species that are important to the food security of local communities living on the Cook Islands.

There are also some concerns that some international fishing vessels may also be breaching their contract with the Government and harvesting products that they are not permitted to and/or fishing in areas that are prohibited under their license conditions, despite having monitors onboard the ships. Further, there has been a progressive conversion of lowland forests (especially on Rarotonga) to agriculture, plantations, infrastructure, and settlements. Consequently, little native vegetation remains in the more accessible lowland zones. The conversion of coastal areas for tourism-related infrastructure also means that only remnants of the natural coastal forests and salt marshes remain. Consequently, the availability of habitats of the Beach Morning Glory (*Ipomoea pes-caprae*) and Portia Tree (*Thespesia populnea*) has significantly declined. In some instances, tourism infrastructure may also impact the nesting sites of sea turtles. There is some on-going conversion of natural habitats in Rarotonga for house construction, as people move inland and up the hills that house globally significant cloud forest ecosystems.

The spread of alien invasive species is another key threat. The main root causes include disproportionate distribution of income, uneven employment opportunities across islands and amongst males and females, as well as a high employment rate⁹. Another key threat is related to increasing affluence and modernizing lifestyle of the Cook Islanders which has led to increasing consumption patterns and use of natural resources.

In 2012, the Prime Minister of the Cook Islands announced the establishment of the Cook Islands Marine Park encompassing approximately 1.1 million square kilometers of the country’s southern Exclusive Economic Zone. This commitment, including the financial aspects of such a commitment, underlies the need to gauge the increasing pressures on the environment vis-à-vis the goal to conserve the biodiversity for perpetuity and identify critical measures that need to be put in place to enable a win-win situation. In this regards, the Cook Islands sees great potential in sustainably utilizing its vast wealth of genetic resources through a farsighted vision which enables the fair and equitable sharing of benefits through access to genetic resources, part of which in turn is plowed back into its conservation to sustain conservation initiatives in the country.

It was hoped that with civic and community engagement in implementing the Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) regime, there will be a paradigm shift from state-centric conservation to people-centric conservation thereby enabling the future of conservation in the Cook Islands as

⁹ 13% of the total labor force versus an average of 9.2% globally (2012 statistics)

well as empowering local communities and livelihoods. Furthermore, the underlying problem related to the ABS is that the potential benefit which developing countries such as the Cook Islands can receive from the exploration and exploitation of their genetic resources for drugs and agrochemicals is not fully explored. This results in undervaluing the genetic resources the country harbors and their overexploitation, which in turn threatens the genetic resources. At the same time, spending worldwide on drug discovery research (amount to tens of billions of dollars per year) is virtually all conducted in developed countries rather than the host countries where the biodiversity occurs naturally. As a result, the benefits that host countries receive from the exploration and exploitation of their genetic resources are limited, both in terms of financial income and trickle-down benefits such as training and employment: this, in turn, limits their motivation and abilities to invest in the conservation of biodiversity.

In order to safeguard the Cook Islands’ diverse genetic resources, the potential of genetic resources must generate tangible local and national economic benefits. The benefits of developing this project were expected to be in the form of business, employment and capacity building opportunities, through the discovery of new medicines, thereby providing a rationale for the preservation of the biological resources that contain the genetic material.

The project presented a paradigm shift from the situation described above, to one in which biodiversity-rich nations such as the Cook Islands are fully and equitably involved in this lucrative research process with the primary goal of promoting people-centric conservation and sustainable use.

This project is consistent with the following objectives of the NPIF¹⁰:

- Support Parties in reviewing their own capacities and needs on ABS with a focus on the provisions of existing national policies, laws, and regulations and to strengthen the enabling environment at national level through the development of appropriate policy and institutional measures to promote the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources, including by appropriate access to genetic resources;
- Support Parties to implement national and regional projects to promote technology transfer on mutually agreed terms, private sector engagement, and projects targeting investments in the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources in-situ to accelerate the ratification and implementation of the Protocol;
- Support Parties to undertake activities to increase public awareness regarding the implications of the Nagoya Protocol; and
- Support Parties to further the knowledge and scientific base for the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol.

The project is consistent with the programmatic objectives of the GEF Biodiversity thematic focal area. Furthermore, this project is consistent with other GEF-funded activities such as the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for the Pacific Sub-region for 2008-2012 (UNDAF) and the Millennium Development Goals and Sustainable Development Goals (MDGs/SDGs).

The project identified and elaborated on a set of barriers that hinder achieving the potential of the Cook Islands’ diverse genetic resources to generate tangible local and national economic benefits through the establishment of ABS agreements, thereby safeguarding these resources, these barriers include: (i) weak national and institutional framework on ABS, (ii) limited national technical capacities and awareness to maximize benefits from the nation’s genetic resources, and (iii) limited in-country scientific research capacity and experience with the negotiation and implementation of ABS agreements.

¹⁰ Cited from the Project PIF. Section B.2. page 22.

The project rationale focused on addressing these barriers and building on available opportunities against each barrier, particularly:

- ***Weak national and institutional framework on ABS:*** there were opportunities to use this specific CIMTECH ABS agreement to develop the national ABS system of the Cook Islands. The agreement highlighted specific gaps in the permit system and the need to design a specific prior informed consent (PIC) process consistent with the Nagoya Protocol that clarifies who has ‘established rights’ over genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge and involves TK-holders in establishing Mutually Agreed Terms (MAT).
- ***Limited national technical capacities and awareness to maximize benefits from the nation’s genetic resources.*** Previously poor management of traditional knowledge and practices (TKP) related to the customary use of biological resources in the Cook Islands is a major gap. Understanding of TKP in the Cook Islands is usually limited to local practitioners such as ta’unga (traditional healers), many of whom are reluctant to share their knowledge of BD species used in traditional medicine for fear of misuse and abuse by others. Oral history and records have been traditionally relied on to preserve knowledge however this can lead to loss of valuable information if this knowledge is not passed on. Programs or attempts to record traditional knowledge have been inconsistent and ad hoc, leading to a major need to document traditional knowledge as well as on-going bio-prospecting research.
- ***Limited in-country scientific research capacity and experience with the negotiation and implementation of ABS agreements:*** at the time of the project design and development, there was only one bio-prospecting activity on-going and the company (CIMTECH) has entered a formal agreement in accessing the traditional knowledge with the Te Koutu Nui. However, in order to maximize the national benefits from ABS agreements, extraction facilities would be placed in-country. There was a need for the extracted chemicals that are exported to have standard documentation detailing the chemical nature of the products. The inability to provide such documentation places severe limits on the acceptability of extracted material in the international market. The alternative is to export raw plant material, and the associated risk of nutrient loss, and the loss of the major value-added component of the supply chain. The refined product must also have safety and toxicology data to inform the safe handling and transport of material. At that time, the Cook Islands does not have the expertise or capacity to perform these tests.
- ***Supply chain:*** there were opportunities to further establish the supply chain of *Terminalia catappa*, *Vigna marina*, and *Cocos nucifera*, for use in cosmetics, as well as *Hibiscus tiliaceus* for use in the R&D and subsequent potential commercial pharmaceutical for bone healing.
- ***Technology transfer:*** there were potential benefits in terms of training, technology transfer and expansion of the facility and laboratory at CIMTECH in the Cook Islands. This should include laboratory QA/QC, materials processing, fractionation, and other processes.
- ***Commercial opportunities:*** the project was designed to contribute to the commercial development of biotechnology from the sustainable use of biodiversity through a public-private partnership that has the goal of creating the financial, technical, institutional and legal conditions to attract public and private resources for the development of companies and commercial products based on the sustainable use of biodiversity, specifically biological and genetic resources and their derivatives.

- **Conservation and sustainable use of globally significant biodiversity:** the project was expected to provide global environmental benefits through its contribution towards conservation and sustainable management of the Cook Islands’ genetic and biological diversity that has evolved due to its remoteness, as well as promote and lead to the conservation of the traditional knowledge of the uses of these resources.

The concept of ABS was new to the Cook Islands; however, it is an issue of some importance given the close and traditional dependence of the Cook Islands people on local biological resources. Further, progress has been somewhat slow since the enactment of *the Biological Research and Benefits Bill*¹¹ due to the suboptimal institutional framework for implementation, and an absence of clear rules and regulations for the implementation of the Bill, such as a system of prior informed consent. There was also a need to review the Bill in line with Nagoya Protocol.

The Cook Islands also has a National Research Policy clearly outlining the National Research Committee’s responsibility in research approval and outlining the research permit process. The national administrative processes for issuing ABS licenses, negotiating and enforcing agreements have not been fully clarified and key stakeholders remain unaware of their roles in promoting ABS. Little is known – at the time of project development - about research activities that access biological resources after they have received their research approval and there is limited capacity to monitor these activities in-country. There was no means of enforcement of the requirements of the approved permit, especially once the researchers have left the country.

The Project highlighted all barriers to achieving progress in global environmental objectives in the biodiversity thematic area. The improved institutional and technical capacities, and the development of needed regulatory and institutional frameworks would help the Cook Islands in meeting and sustaining the objectives of the Nagoya Protocol.

2.3 Immediate and development objectives of the project

The Project Document lists the Project’s aim to “*have a derivative of this genetic resource be commercialized and benefit the Cook Islands, local communities and contribute to the implementation of customary biodiversity and sustainable use practices, known as ra’ui*”.

The project document outlined the main objective of the project as: “*to develop and implement a national Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) framework, build national capacities and support an ABS Agreement based on Traditional Knowledge and Public-Private Partnership. This will be accomplished through achievement of the following outcomes.*”

The achievement of the goal and objective were organized around three components/outcomes and eleven outputs. The proposed Project’s components/outcomes are:

- Component 1: Strengthened National Regulatory and Institutional Framework on ABS.
- Component 2: Capacity building and awareness-raising for the implementation of the National ABS Framework.
- Component 3: Bio-discovery and benefit-sharing based on Traditional Knowledge on Bone and Cartilage Regeneration.

2.4 Baseline Indicators Established

The project log-frame includes objective, outcomes, outputs, indicators, and target for each project components in order to measure progress and performance. Several indicators, baseline, and end of project targets were identified per the project component, and outcomes

¹¹ The Biological Research and Benefits Bill: Drafted in 2006 on ABS. it was based on implementing the CBD Boon Guidelines, prior to the adoption of the Nagoya Protocol in 2010. The Bill needed to be re-designed to incorporate Nagoya Protocol compliance elements and realigned to complement the Traditional Knowledge Act, 2013 that established a register of traditional knowledge administrated by the Ministry of Cultural Development.

but no targets and indicators were set for the Project’s outputs. The project log-frame has been discussed during the project Inception Workshop (IW), some weaknesses were figured out but were not fully discussed or modified during the IW. In the baseline scenario, there were the following indicators¹²:

- The number of ABS laws in compliance with the Nagoya Protocol.
- Level of institutional and personnel capacity for implementation of the national ABS framework measured by the UNDP/GEF ABS Capacity Development Score.
- Nagoya Protocol is ratified
- Operational national ABS institutional framework indicated by:
 - ABS National Focal Point is established
 - The national agency mandated to coordinate ABS activities
- An institutional framework, administrative systems, rules and procedures in place to facilitate the implementation of the national ABS framework
- Percentage of ABS agreements aligned to NP and ABS National Legislation requirements
- Cook Islands biodiversity database expanded with information regarding traditional uses of plants and other organisms (number of records)
- Improved facility and capacity for partners indicated by:
 - Number of Government staff with knowledge and facility to monitor bio-prospecting projects and documentation
 - Streamlined Government decision process to create IRCCs
- The number of research institutes and private sector people with knowledge of ABS and on responsibility, operation, and opportunities regarding ABS.
- No. of stakeholders reached by the ABS awareness campaign.
- Enhanced understanding of the ABS regime and the value of traditional knowledge associated with genetic and biological resources for improved policymaking and on-the-ground conservation, sustainable use and fair and equitable sharing of benefits.
- Strengthened ABS agreement between CIMTECH and Te Koutu Nui.
- Monetary and non-monetary benefits received by State and local communities from CIMTECH-Te Koutu Nui ABS Agreement.
- Safety protocols for Au extraction and standardization developed.
- Accreditation and extract certification achieved.
- The volume of Hibiscus tiliaceus harvested in a sustainable manner as indicated by a wild harvest management plan.

2.5 Main Stakeholders

The Project document involved a limited list of stakeholders to be involved however, the Inception Report (IR) indicated that the proposed stakeholders, 11 limits the project and hence recommended to include 23 stakeholders they were perceived as very important to ensure the successful implementation of the project. The original list of the proposed stakeholders to be involved in the project implementation included¹³:

- Office of the Prime Minister (OPM).
- Crown Law Office.
- Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MFEM).
- Ministry of Cultural Development (MoCD).
- Island Council.
- Te Koutu Nui.
- Te Ipukarea Society (TIS).
- House of Ariki.

¹² UNDP GEF Project Document. Annex 2: Logical Framework. Page 68.

¹³ UNDP Project Document, Table 5. Pages 42-43.

- Te Rito o te Vairaku Maori.
- Aronga Mana.
- CIMTECH and Partners.
- Ta’unga Vairakau,
- National Heritage Trust (NHT).

In addition to this list, the following should also be included:

- GEF operational focal point.
- Biodiversity Focal Point.
- Project Committee/project board.
- Project team
- UNDP Office and UNDP GEF Regional Technical Advisor.
- The Cook Islands National Environment Service (NES).

The Project included other stakeholders through its awareness campaign and across 10 islands utilizing its public meetings, brochures, handouts, and other related project documentation to reach out as many concerned stakeholders as possible. A full list of project stakeholders who were involved in the implementation with a description of key partnerships established is fully discussed under sections 3.2.3 and 3.3.2.

2.6 Expected Results

The following were the end of the project expected results:

- ABS Act approved by Parliament that incorporates traditional knowledge regulatory framework and is in line with NP.
- Improved institutional and personnel capacity indicated by an increase of at least 15% over the UNDP/GEF ABS Capacity Development Scorecard baseline score.
- Cook Island is a party to the Nagoya Protocol.
- Permanent ABS National Focal Point nominated to CBD
- National Environment Services mandated to coordinate ABS activities
- Formalized ABS rules and procedures in place.
- 100% ABS Agreements identified and aligned to NP and ABS National Legislation.
- Information on traditional uses of plants included in the database.
- At least 30 government staff have knowledge and capacity to monitor bio-prospecting projects and documentation
- IRCC created
- At least 5 people from research institutions and the private sector have participated in two workshops.
- 23 stakeholders reached by the ABS awareness campaign.
- Increased awareness of stakeholders.
- Revised agreement compliant with NP (e.g. including specifying monetary and non-monetary benefits).
- 25% of income (benefits received by State and local communities from CIMTECH- Te Koutu Nui ABS Agreement) to support ra’ui (biodiversity conservation and sustainable use) and increase in employment.
- Safety protocols created and introduced based on production safety, toxicological and efficacy component assurance studies.
- New quality standards meet Good Laboratory Practice and NP and Industry-compliance certification processes achieved.
- At least 50 Kg of *Hibiscus tiliaceus* plant materials harvested during the project period (target (maximum annual harvest) will be determined by the wild harvest management plan)

3. Findings

3.1 Project Design/ Formulation

The UNDP/GEF Terminal Evaluation Guide asks the TE consultant to assess and analyze whether:

- the Project objectives and comments were clear, well-written, practical and feasible within the proposed timeframe and with the allocated budget.
- the ability and capacities of the Project’s executing agency to implement the project’s components in line with the proposed design.
- What lessons learned from other relevant projects were incorporated into the project design.
- needed partnerships to implement the project were properly incorporated in the project design.
- financial resources (including the cash and in-kind co-financing) were adequate or not.
- The Project’s assumptions and risks identified during the project preparation with the proposed mitigation measures.
- the Project’s outcomes and the proposed indicators were **SMART**¹⁴

The project was considered highly relevant at the time of design and it remains very relevant to the GoCIs global environmental obligations not only in relation to the CBD convention but also Nagoya Protocol, and to UNDP Plans in the Cook Islands, and to the GEF global benefits and objectives. The Project Document included specific outcomes, outputs, activities, indicators, targets, work-plans and the allocated budget per output.

The Project addresses the importance of biodiversity conservation and fulfilling the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity through its facilitation of the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol. As a cross-cutting issue, it also supports the conservation of globally significant biodiversity and sustainable use of the components of globally significant biodiversity in small island nations.

The project was designed to provide environmental benefits through its contribution towards conservation and sustainable management of the Cook Islands’ genetic and biological diversity that has evolved due to its remoteness in the mid-Pacific Ocean, as well as promoting and leading to the conservation of the traditional knowledge of the uses of these resources. According to the Project document, “*the conservation of traditional knowledge and its promotion into modern medicinal practices will be directly linked to the conservation of its associated biological resources*”. The Cook Islands hoped to develop the national ABS legal framework and capacity and piloting Nagoya Protocol compliant ABS agreements through this project. The project was supposed to “*facilitate sustainable and most cost-effective use of biological resources and ensure that the derived benefits accrue to the nation and its people*”. Thus, the project intended result is to play a significant role in safeguarding the country’s biological resources and their genetic diversity.

One of the critical aspects that were highlighted in the project formulation is the protection of the habitat of *Hibiscus tiliaceus* through traditional conservation and sustainable extraction practices. The design took into consideration the importance of enhancing awareness of the traditional conservation practice of ra’ui due to the monetary and non-monetary support from the implementation of the project to the Te Koutu Nui.

The Project was proposed to operate in a policy framework that includes, among others: United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) Action Plan and Cook Islands Country Matrix for 2013-2017.

¹⁴ **SMART: Specific:** Outcomes must use change language, describing a specific future condition; **Measurable:** Results, whether quantitative or qualitative, must have measurable indicators, making it possible to assess whether they were achieved or not; **Achievable:** Results must be within the capacity of the partners to achieve; **Relevant:** Results must make a contribution to selected priorities of the national development framework; **Time-bound:** Results are never open-ended and there should be an expected date of accomplishment

The Project design considered developing and implementing national access and benefit-sharing legal framework, build national capacities and support an ABS agreement based on traditional knowledge and a public-private partnership. A set of activities was planned under the three project’s components; 1) strengthened the national regulatory and institutional framework for ABS; 2) capacity building and awareness-raising for the implementation of the National ABS Framework; and 3) bio-discovery and benefit-sharing agreement based on Traditional Knowledge on Bone and Cartilage Regeneration. The project design was based on taking advantage of traditional medical knowledge to use a common Cook Islands biological resource (*Hibiscus tiliaceus*) to accelerate bone healing and cartilage repair. The project design also focused on commercializing its genetic properties and benefit the Cook Islands, local communities and contribute to the implementation of customary biodiversity and sustainable use practices, known as *ra’ui*.

3.2 Analysis of the LF/Results Framework (Project logic/ Strategy, Indicators)

The Project’s LF is a monitoring and evaluation tool used as a base for the planning of detailed activities defined during the project development phase. According to the Project’s inception workshop report, the LF has been reviewed, but no major changes were introduced. Furthermore, no theory of change was developed at the time of design nor during the inception workshop. Although it was not mandatory to include the ToC at the time of design, it would have been very beneficial to develop it during the project implementation mainly at the inception phase.

The LF followed the UNDP/GEF format and included the end of project targets at the outcome levels. No targets or indicators were identified at the output level. This made it complex for the project team to define the targets and indicators at the output and activity levels. This resulted in weaknesses in the LF mainly in relation to the evaluation of the timeliness of the project’s achievements. **Error! Reference source not found.** provides an overview of the TE assessment of the project’s indicators and how “SMART” the achievements are compared to the defined end-of-project targets.

Nevertheless, the Project Document established a balanced strategy to address challenges to ABS in the Cook Islands. The strategy, as a well-presented plan, mostly addressed the legal framework, the capacity barriers, risks and issues might hinder the project implementation and hence consistently set the basis for a plan of action. However, this plan was not well reflected in the log frame and was complex to achieve. As a result, the project team was not able to make good progress towards achieving the project’s Objective. The strategy survived through to the inception phase and effectively remain the strategy for the project, as there have been no revisions to the log-frame. The targets achievement by the end of the project as formulated during project development-are generally realistic with exception as presented in Table 2.

One of the project design shortages is that components 2 and 3 implementation depends on component 1. This makes it difficult for the project team to proceed well in the two components based on the delay encountered in implementing component 1. The implementation of the three components should be concurrent instead of successive.

Table 2 Overview of the Terminal Evaluation of the Project's Log-frame

Criteria	TE comments
Specific	Indicators are, with a few exceptions, specific and target oriented. The LF relates to the project components and outputs and defines corresponding indicators per component/outcome.
Measurable	All indicators are linked to measurable targets. However, the timeframe was set as the end of the project. No targets and indicators identified at the project implementation mid-point, or after the inception phases. This makes it difficult for the project team to measure progress per year.

Achievable	Most of the targets are achievable. Yet, some of the targets are beyond the capacity of the project and the team. For example, developing and endorsing a new ABS law in compliance with the Nagoya Protocol is beyond the project’s scope and capacity. This is a national issue and needs a long time to materialize.
Relevant	Indicators are relevant
Time-bound	All targets to be achieved by the end of the project. Although the source of information identified periodic progress report as one source of verification, yet, no targets were identified on a quarterly basis.

3.2.1 Assumptions and Risks

The Project’s LF and the project document included a set of risks and assumptions per outcome and output. The Project Document discussed some of them under the key Indicators, Assumption, and Risk Section.

Project’s Assumptions:

The review of the set of assumptions identified in the Project Document/ project log-frame table indicated that the project was built based on ten assumptions. However, some of the assumptions are not necessarily logic. Examples:

- Several assumptions were made regarding the development of a bio-discovery and benefit-sharing agreement based on the traditional knowledge of bone and cartilage regeneration. The agreement was supposed to be between CIMTECH and *Te Koutu Nui*. The assumptions included “*revised agreement and conditions can be reached between CIMTECH and Te Koutu Nui; commercial success of the venture; a business plan is implemented, and people comply with and respect the accreditation and standardization process in place.*”¹⁵ This assumption should be based on thorough analyses as they are not realistic to take place within 3 years taking into consideration that commercialize any venture would usually take years after testing and piloting. In addition to developing business plan and implementing it and asking people to comply with the standardization processes and accreditation are long processes that could not be achieved within a short period.
- It is assumed in the Project Document that “*external political circumstances do not prevent appointment*”¹⁶. This assumption is not clear as it is listed under outcome 1: strengthened national regulator and institutional framework for ABS. It is difficult to understand how this assumption is related to the outcome.

Project’s Risks

The Project identified **12 risks** during the formulation stage¹⁷, it included risks per each outcome. Five risks were rated as a medium level while the other seven were considered low-level risks. Risks were not classified in the project document; however, they can be related to operational, technical, environmental, economic, social, and financial. However, during the Project implementation, the TE consultant noticed that risks were not monitored as per the UNDP M&E guidelines. No additional risks were identified as well even though a few risks were very clear and had already affected the Project’s implementation like the departure of the

¹⁵ UNDP GEF Project Document. Section 3.2: Project Results Framework. Page 51.

¹⁶ UNDP GEF Project Document. Section 3.2: Project Results Framework. Page 50.

¹⁷ UNDP GEF Project Document, Section 2.5: Key Risks and Assumptions. Pages 37-39.

PC. Although the Project document contains a comprehensive analysis of all possible risks, no proper follow up on risks management during the project implementation is recognized.

Risks weren't monitored carefully (no risk analyses/management measures in PIRs/QPRs) except listing the rating of the risks in the PIRs. For example, in the 2017 PIR, the overall risk rating was provided under section B. Overall rating which considered risks as “Substantial”. Also, under Section E. Critical Risk Management, two risks were identified; an operational and financial risk. The section identified key management responses to the two identified risks, however, it was noticed that none was implemented which has resulted in further delay in project implementation. It is to the TE consultant opinion, the Project should have gone a full Mid-term Review (MTR) as was proposed by the UNDP GEF RTA¹⁸. This would have helped to conduct a comprehensive review of the project progress, providing a clear and logical roadmap to implement the remaining activities, and identifying how best to prioritize activities and project deliverables. However, NES did not accept this suggestion due to “*there is no financial or other provision for conducting an MTR*”¹⁹, which has resulted in wasting an opportunity that could have helped the team in ratifying project implementation flaws.

The risks log has not been updated on an annual basis by UNDP MCO. It is not clear if there were mitigation measures identified for risks as the TE consultant could not get access to risks and issues logs. The TE consultant considers the management of the project's risks needs a lot of improvement. It was clear that not all the potential risks were identified during project implementation. Based on the abovementioned, it is the TE consultant's opinion that risks, and assumptions management were not in line with the UNDP GEF M&E standard, and hence, that had contributed to delay project implementation.

3.2.2 Lessons from other relevant projects incorporated into the project design.

The Project document listed four ongoing and new initiatives that are led by UNDP and UNEP and supported by the GEF in addition to one project that is supported and implemented by GIZ that the project was supposed to coordinate with and to learn from them. These projects are all related to ABS and biodiversity management and conservation in the Cook Islands or/and the Pacific, including *UNDP-GEF Full Size Project Strengthening human resources, legal frameworks and institutional capacities to implement the Nagoya Protocol; UNEP-GEF PAS Implementing the Islands Biodiversity Programme; UNEP-GEF PAS Prevention, Control, and Management of Invasive Alien Species in the Pacific Islands; Cook Islands Ridge to Reef Project; and . ABS Capacity Development Initiative.*²⁰

However, after careful review of the project document, the TE consultant noticed that no lessons from other relevant projects were incorporated into the project design.

3.2.3 Planned stakeholder participation

According to the project document, the project consultations were triggered with initial project design discussion with a wide range of stakeholders during the in-country mission as part of the PPG from 28 July to 1 August 2014. Around 31 participants, representing government agencies, the private sector, traditional leaders, and NGOs were part of the consultations. The project was built on earlier work led by the NES and assisted by the ABS Capacity Development Initiative, involved meetings and consultation processes to develop the draft national ABS policy in November 2013, which also involved a wide range of stakeholders at all levels.

The Project Document discussed the role of stakeholders and included a **Plan for the involvement of actors**. During project formulation, a preliminary stakeholder analysis was undertaken in order to identify key stakeholders, assess their interests in the project and define

¹⁸ Project 2017 PIR and Project NSC Special meeting for ABS project. 2 March 2018.

¹⁹ 2017 Project Implementation Report. Section E. Critical Risk Management.

²⁰ Project Document. Section 1.9. Coordination with other GEF financed and other initiatives. Pages 23-24.

their roles and responsibilities in project implementation. These included “*central government agencies concerned with the governance of ABS implementation and research permits (NES, OPM);*” in addition to other organization concerned with traditional medicine and technology development like “*Ta’unga Vairakau – Te Rito o te Vairakau Maori, and CIMTECH*”; agencies responsible for regulation of biological materials “*NES, The Cook Is National Biodiversity Steering Committee including the Natural Heritage Trust*”; traditional leaders “*House of Ariki and Te Koutu Nui*”; local environmental NGOs involved in sustainable biodiversity use “*Te Ipukarea Society*”; other organizations interested in regulating access to genetic resources in different sectors including “*Ministry of Agriculture, Sea Bed Minerals Authority, Ministry of Marine Resources*”; organizations involved in legal drafting and enforcement of relevance to ABS mainly the “*Crown Law Office, and The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration.*”

3.2.4 Replication approach

The replication of the Project activities was strengthened by the Project implementation arrangements, which involved numerous stakeholder representatives. The administrative arrangements developed by the project to implement the Nagoya Protocol through drafting an ABS policy for the Cook Islands and the administration of a public-private partnership for benefit-sharing from the utilization of traditional knowledge of Cook Islands Maori is supposed to be replaced in the following ways:

- the administrative arrangements and experience gained by NES and other government agencies of the Cook Islands from their oversight and involvement in the development of products derived from the application of traditional knowledge will be applicable to future instances of the utilization of traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources.
- the experience gained and developed through the organization of extensive consultation with stakeholders and, particularly, the active involvement of traditional Maori social institutions has already gained the support of local communities and this support may be applied to future instances of the utilization of traditional knowledge and genetic resources.
- the successful example of private sector investment in the research and development of products derived from Cook Islands resources increases the likelihood of future investment.
- the improved technical skills and knowledge of Cook Islanders developed through the training elements and public awareness programs of the project will be available for further research and development opportunities.
- the processing facility established by CIMTECH in the Cook Islands/ Rarotonga has the potential to be used for biological commodity trade extraction processes for essential oils and related products. The processing capacity could be replicated for many other ingredients and other natural oils. Experience gained at the facility would also be easily transferred to the operation of similar processing plants that might be established.

The Project impacts and deliverables, in cases where new access to genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge occurs, would facilitate considering the experience gained from the project, additional benefit-sharing agreements.

3.2.5 UNDP comparative advantage

UNDP comparative advantages lie in its global experience and local/regional presence in integrating policy development, developing capacities, and providing technical support. UNDP’s support in designing, accessing the GEF funding, and implementing activities are consistent with the UNDP, GEF and the Governments plans. Furthermore, UNDP MCO in Samoa is leading the implementation of several projects related to environment and biodiversity protection in the Cook Islands and the region.

UNDP is the GEF Implementing Agency for this project, with the UNDP Samoa MCO responsible for transparent practices, appropriate conduct, and professional auditing. The

Project was implemented in line with established GoCIs and UNDP procedures. UNDP MCO transferred quarterly payment to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Management (MFCM)/ DCD Division in the Cook Islands, MFCM/DCD process all payments as per submitted “requisition forms” prepared and submitted by NES through the concerned the Project team, following the Government procedures.

3.2.6 Linkages between the Project and other interventions within the sector

The Project has managed to build linkages with a few other relevant projects. It collaborated with two ongoing initiatives with a biodiversity focus, both were funded by the GEF, implemented by UNDP, and executed by NES; the Ridged to Reef and NBSAP. The main collaboration included:

- The three projects shared one steering committee (the National CBD Steering Committee). This was an excellent move as (i) it facilitated organizing the PSCs on regular faces as the same people are involved in the three projects and organizing one SC meeting for the three projects saved people’s time and allow them to effectively make decisions in relation to the three projects, and (ii) enhanced the collaboration between the three projects by sharing resources to undertake some tasks, or to fund joint activities. This has contributed to maximize the benefit and to reach more beneficiaries.

Overall, the Project had limited active cooperation with key ongoing initiatives. This cooperation should have been stronger as key projects are existing in the Country and cooperation with these projects would have helped the project team achieving its objectives.

3.2.7 Management arrangement

UNDP is the GEF Agency for the project and accountable to the GEF for the use of funds. The project was administered by UNDP using the national implementation modality (NIM), in line with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) Action Plan and Cook Islands Country Matrix for 2013-2017 and in-line with the United Nations Pacific Strategy, UNPS and UNDP strategic plan. Under the NIM modality, the Cook Islands National Environmental Service (NES) is the designated government institution responsible for the project towards the timely and verifiable attainment of project objectives and outcomes. The NES managed the implementation of all project activities. The NES designated personnel as a Project Manager (PM) and hired a full-time Project Coordinator (PC). The hiring of the PC took around 11 months due to limited financial benefits, following the limited Government’s salary scale. The PC carried out the day to day running of the project.

The UNDP MCO transferred funds to the MFEM - DCD Division as funded projects do. The PC then makes the request to DCD to make payments on NES behalf directly to the service providers bank account. The PM checks the paper before submitting to DCD.

The NES co -chaired the joint Project Steering Committee with Te Ipukarea Society (for the three-biodiversity related UNDP/GEF project) and was responsible for providing government oversight and guidance to the project implementation. The project team received technical backstopping provided from UNDP/GEF Regional Technical Advisor responsible for the project. This was evident in the organization of the IW and the different missions fielded by the UNDP GEF RTA to follow up on the project implementation. Support was also provided by the UNDP Environmental Focal Point at the UNDP MCO, with special focus on providing financial and administrative issues like preparing and approving annual work plans, issuing the Authorized Spending Limits (ASL), reviewing financial reports, etc.

The Project faced critical setbacks during its implementation, these include:

- The delay in assigning a PC has caused a one-year delay in project implementation.
- The assigned PC had no long-term technical support (no project technical advisor) and no financial-admin support. Hence, the PC was supposed to do all technical, financial, and administrative work in relation to the project. Knowing that the project is complex

at the technical level, and has an innovative approach, it was not an easy task to deal with the project with no long-term support.

- The departure of the PC eight months prior to project closure had caused a huge delay in project implementation. The PC has resigned in February 2019, the PSC had two options; (i) hire a new PC for a short period, a practical option that did not work as it was difficult to assign a professional manager for only 8 months, and (ii) assign a national consultant for a short period, an option that falls apart as the position is a combination of technical, financial and administrative position. The result is that the project was put on hold and most of the project’s activities have stopped.
- The delay due to recruiting the Policy consultancy team has meant a hold up on Policy and Legislation framework development (Component 1 & 2).

The below is a summary of the Project management arrangement:

A **Project Board (PB)** was supposed to be formulated to serve as the project’s coordination and decision-making body, as per the guidance in UNDP’s Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures (POPP). However, the Government agreed with UNDP to assign the Biodiversity Steering Committee as the Project SC and the Board. It was observed that the PB/NSC functioned very well during 2017 and 2018, however, it did not convene more than one time in 2019. To date, the PB has met TEN times; 2019-02-26, 2018-07-26, 2018-07-19, 2018-03-02, 2017-10-10, 2017-07-05, 2017-04-05, 2016-12-15, 2016-10-05, and 2016-07-05. Meeting notes were prepared robustly and shared with concerned parties. A good record of the PB meetings and minutes is kept at NES.

A **National Project Manager (PM)** was nominated (NES Manager - Island Futures Division), to follow up on the Project activity. The PM and PC are responsible to expedite the facilitation of approved activities and outputs as specified in the project document. The project document described the Project management unit as a unit composed of the PM, PC, consultants, and UNCBD, UNFCCC and UNCCD focal points. It was noticed that this PMU was never formulated and the work in relation to the project was limited to the PC mainly with support from the PM and the UNCBD focal point, as appropriate.

During the implementation phase, daily operations and management of work especially arranging and coordinating with consultant’s work were carried out by the PC. Reporting on the progress of the project was mainly down by the PC, approved by the PM, and submitted to the PSC.

The Project document was also referring to “a project implementation unit- PIU”. That was supposed to be comprised of a PC and supported by NES staff. This is in a way contradicting with its description of the PMU, its composition, and main tasks. By all means, the project neither formulated a PMU nor a PIU!

3.3 Project Implementation

The following aspects of project implementation have been assessed: adaptive management (changes to the project design and project outputs during implementation); partnership arrangements (with relevant stakeholders); feedback from M&E activities used for adaptive management; project finance; monitoring and evaluation; design at entry and implementation, and UNDP and EA. A six-level scale was used to rate the achievements of project implementation and adaptive management in terms of the criteria above as follows²¹.

The description of the evaluation and rating of the results is provided in the following paragraphs. The rating and a description of that rating are summarized in the TE Ratings & Achievements table 1, Page 6.

²¹ TOR for Terminal Evaluation: Highly satisfactory (HS) - the project has no shortcomings; Satisfactory (S)- minor shortcomings; Moderately satisfactory (MS)- moderate shortcomings; Moderately unsatisfactory (MU) - significant shortcomings; Unsatisfactory (U)- major shortcomings; and Highly unsatisfactory (HU) - severe shortcomings

3.3.1 Adaptive Management

The Project has introduced and applied a few adaptive management measures due to the delay it encountered at the beginning of the project as well as the slow progress of project implementation. The TE consultant observed the following adaptatively management measures taken by the Project. Some critical adaptive management measures were proposed by the UNDP GEF RTA in the 2017 PIR including *conducting a rapid internal MTR to identify how best to prioritize activities and project deliverables, particularly in respect of Components 1-2*²², however, the project team opted not to implement as “there is no financial or other provision”.²³

Summary of main changes requested, discussed and approved on the Project’s document during the Project’s IW (May 2016) is presented below. The changes were presented to the Project Steering Committee for approval based on the IW. A full description of the changes proposed during the IW is presented in **Annex 7**.

- There were minor changes in wordings but no major changes to the project outcomes and outputs. See the below table, changes were highlighted in red:

Original outcomes/outputs	Modified outcomes/outputs
Output 3.2: Application of improved extraction techniques to ‘Au’ (Hibiscus tiliaceus) to meet international standards.	Output 3.2 Improved extraction techniques to ‘Au’ (Hibiscus tiliaceus) to meet international standards.
Output 3.3: Scale-up production and undertake staff training to ensure analytical and laboratory capacities necessary to ensure consistent quality of the biologically active extract.	Output 3.3 Scaled-up production and training of staff to ensure analytical and laboratory capacities necessary to ensure consistent quality of the biologically active extract.
Output 3.4: Sustainable management plan for the collection of Hibiscus tiliaceus and improved conservation of its waterway habitats	Output 3.4 Sustainable management plan developed and implemented for collection of Hibiscus tiliaceus and improved conservation of its waterway habitats

- The project log-framework was reviewed a few minor changes were highlighted but nothing substantive was changed by way of indicators and targets.
- No changes reported on the total budget and on the co-financing, but some changes were introduced to some budget lines.
- Terms of Reference for the Project Coordinator and Project Manager have been amended to be in line with Cook Islands Policies and Procedures, and to consider the changes to the Project Manager position whereby an existing NES Staff is appointed as the PM.
- Instead of creating a Project Board to serve as the project’s coordination and decision-making body, the existing Cook Islands National Biodiversity Steering Committee has been asked after extending its function to also serve as the Projects Steering Committee (SC) for the NES project.

In summary, the Project has failed to develop and implement needed adaptive management measures and hence has missed an important opportunity to enhance its implementation and advance its progress by not developing/ implementing critical adaptive management measures. This has led to a substantial delay in project implementation.

²² Project 2017 PIR.

²³ Project 2017 PIR.

3.3.2 Partnership arrangements

The project promoted the functional example of a joint public-private-partnership. It permitted informed, coordinated and realistic work on the development of new standards and capacity building in the Cook Islands government. As the project include different stakeholders including the Government, presented by NES, the local traditional healers presented by the House of Ariki and the Koutu Nui, the private sector as it is presented by the CIMTECH and Matheson Enterprise, and the local NGO/CBO concerned with traditional medicine and technology development namely Ta'unga Vairakau – Te Rito o te Vairakau Maori. The project had entered into agreements with these stakeholders as follows:

- An agreement was reached between Matheson Enterprises and Koutu Nui and unanimously approved by the Koutu Nui general assembly.
- MOU between the Cook Islands Access and Benefit Sharing Project under the National Environment Service, and Matheson Enterprises Limited.
- An agreement was signed between CIMTECH and Pornellel Pharmaceutical.
- CIMTECH and CIMTMA and Matheson Enterprises.

The Project managed to reach to a wide range of stakeholders to involve them in various public awareness and consultation events. The Project organized very comprehensive Island-wise campaigns in 9 islands.

The general conclusion, the Project management has been able to involve some stakeholders in project implementation, however, other key stakeholders like the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Culture should have been strongly involved in this Project.

3.3.3 Feedback from M&E activities used for adaptive management

The Project did not use feedback from M&E to appropriately and adequately address new challenges and thereby ensure the achievement of established targets. The M&E plan including the LF, Project' IW and IR, Project's PIR and QPRs, and the TE should be used as a basis for adaptive management, however, this did not happen. The changes in the LF were discussed in detail in Section 3.2 Pages 24.

The UNDP Project Assurance role has been applied correctly and actively in assisting the project team in preparing annual work plans, prepare for the Project SC meetings, and follow up on the procurement and recruitment of national and international consultants. Furthermore, UNDP followed up- as required- on the development of the budget revisions and provided political support through the participation of the UNDP GEF RTA in a few PBs meetings.

The TE consultant observed key weaknesses in the Project monitoring cycle as a key Project's M&E activities did not provide enough information. The QPRs and PIRs were prepared as planned however these reports are incomplete mainly the risk sections. The PSC was very active and provided good support to the project team. To date, TEN PB meetings took place. As a medium-size project, the Project did not undergo a mid-term review. However, in the 2017 project PIR, the UNDP GEF proposed to conduct an MTR due to the project slow progress, however, this chance was wasted which could have significantly retrofitted the project. The UNDP MCO was satisfied with the level of support provided by the UNDP/GEF Office responsible for this Project; their provision of financial and administrative support was highly appreciated.

In conclusion, the TE considers that the UNDP and UNDP GEF project assurance roles have been correctly applied to this project.

3.3.4 Project Finance

The actual expenditure versus the originally planned budget was examined and assessed as well as the leveraged co-financing as presented in Table 3, which provides an overview of the

budgeted expenditures of the GEF Project of **US\$ 930,137**. As of August 2019, **US\$ 701,000.09** about (75%) of the Project total budget, has been dispersed. No commitment is in place except for the cost of the TE. The project still has around **US\$ 229,136** to be spent before the project closure. CIMTECH has a clear plan to disburse the remaining funding under component 3. However, due to the departure of the PC, the work was put on hold and NES – up until the TE mission- has no clear plan on how and when the project will be re-activated.

The Project budget included **US\$ 520,000** from the GoCIs as an in-kind contribution. The TE consultant could not get access to any data that would confirm the amount of co-financing from the Government during the evaluation mission. Same applies to the remaining proposed co-financing from the Aronga Mana and Te Ipukarea Society. No records were available concerning the project co-financing. However, later, the Project team managed to provide data on co-financing. Based on the new figures shared with the TE consultant, it shows that the project manages to get the agreed-upon in-kind contribution and reached **101%**. It was also noted that most of the co-financing is provided by the private sector. CIMTECH co-financing report showed that **US\$1,524,363** was mobilized by the project from CIMTECH and its partners as described in Table 4. This means that the project was able to mobilize around 85% of its committed co-financing from the private sector only.

The GEF grant and UNDP contribution have been monitored through the UNDP’s Atlas system.

Annual audits have been conducted for this Project in line with UNDP established procedures.

Table 3: Project Budget and Expenditures (US\$)

Project Component	Budget Approved							Committed budget (2019)	Total (US\$) (Spent and committed)	Difference between planned and actual (US\$)	
	(US\$)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total spent				% of budget spent
Component 1	93,014.00	707.6	10,574.2	10,098.9	39,301.1	-	60,681.8	65%	0	60,681.78	32,332.22
Component 2	148,822.00	318.7	8,379.3	17,893.1	70,395.8	-	96,986.9	65%	0	96,986.89	51,835.11
Component 3	604,589.00	14,365.9	173,290.8	287,111.9	53,731.1	-	528,499.7	87%	0	528,499.72	76,089.28
Project Management Cost	83,712.00	525.2	501.6	5,668.0	8,136.9	-	14,831.7	18%	0	14,831.7	68,880.3
TOTAL GEF	930,137.00	15,917.4	192,745.9	320,771.9	171,564.9	-	701,000.1	75%	0	701,000.09	229,136.91

Table 4: Co-financing of Project Partner (US\$)

Source of co-financing	Name of Co-financer	Type of co-financing	Amount confirmed at the CEO endorsement (US\$)	The actual amount contributed at the stage of TE (US\$)	Actual % of Expected Amount
Government	NES	In-kind	150,000	140,250	93.5%
Government	Crown Law	In-kind	150,000	0	0%
Government	MFEM	In-kind	50,000	40,000	80%
Government	MCD	In-kind	50,000	8,000	16%
Government	OPM	In-kind	50,000	0	0%
Government	NHT	In-kind	50,000	0	0%
	Island Council	In-kind	20,000	0	0%
	Aronga Mana	In-kind	50,000	0	0%
	Te Lpukarea	In-kind	50,000	0	0%
Private Sector	Matheson Enterprises	In-kind	50,000	0	0%
Private Sector	CIMTEH	In-kind	150,000	319,591	213%
UN	UNDP	In-kind	50,000	50,000	100%
Private Sector	Matheson Enterprises	In-Cash	50,000	0	0%
Private Sector	CIMTECH /Parnell Pharmaceuticals	In-Cash	579,000	966,522	166.93%
Total			1,499,000	1,524,363	101.7%

3.3.5 Monitoring and evaluation: design at entry and implementation (*)

M&E Design at Entry

The Project Document included the standard UNDP/GEF budgeted monitoring and evaluation plan. This M&E Plan included quarterly, yearly and at the end of the project activities with allocated budget linked with the Project’s work plan. It includes the project’s log-frame matrix with clear sets of indicators and targets, reports required to be prepared by the project like the quarterly progress report (QPR), annual project review/project implementation report (APR/PIR), risks, issues and quality logs, the terminal review report, and terminal evaluation report.

A total of US\$ 43,040, about 4.63% of the total GEF grant was allocated for the M&E activities. The TE consultant could not access the actual cost of the M&E during implementation and hence could not assess the use of M&E budget.

Based on the above, the M&E design at project startup is rated as:

Highly Satisfactory (HS)	Satisfactory (S)	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	Unsatisfactory (U)	Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)
	S				

Implementation of M&E

The TE reviews the project M&E during the actual implementation of the Project and considers that the M&E activities followed the M&E plan. The NES project team correctly followed up on the M&E activities as the majority of QPRs and PIRs (except for the years 2016 and 2019) were prepared and submitted on time. However, the quality of the report declined after the departure of the PC beginning of 2019. The terminal reports with the lessons learned were not prepared, QPRs for the first two quarters of 2019 were not prepared, and 2019 PIR did not include any update of risks and issues in addition to missing a lot of critical information such as partnerships with stakeholders, gender mainstreaming, detailed progress towards results, etc. However, UNDP and UNDP/GEF M&E roles both have been correctly applied to this project, based on the following notes:

- The Project’s M&E activities followed the UNDP/GEF standard procedures as the UNDP MCO has conducted several monitoring visits including attending Project’s activities.
- The project was subject to continuous monitoring by the UNDP Programme team. The UNDP MCO has been active in preparing the project work plans, budget revision, attending key project’s meetings like the IW, and following up on Project’s recruitment and procurement.
- The Project’s IW was organized in May 2016 however the inception report has been prepared and shared with concerned partners after 7 months. Some important adaptive management measures were introduced during the IW as explained earlier and after the visit of the UNDP/GEF RTA o the Cook Islands to review the project. The IR included changes proposed during the IW, it captured the discussion, the decisions, and provided an updated copy of the Project Document, and hence, the Inception Phase (Workshop and Report) represent a strength in the project cycle despite the delay in organizing the IW and the long delay in finalizing the IR.
- The Project Board (PB)/Project Steering Committee (PSC): during the IW, it was agreed that the Biodiversity Steering Committee will replace the Project Steering Committee and there is no need for a project board. The PSC was very active as several meetings were convened, critical issues were discussed during the meetings, and minutes were drafted and circulated to concerned stakeholders. To date, ten PSC meetings were convened, and very well-written minutes of the meeting are kept at NES.
- UNDP Regional Office in Bangkok, the UNDP/GEF Technical Advisor responsible for this Project has convened several site visits and provided a critical review in the project’s PIRs (2017 and 218). Three official visits were recorded to the project by the UNDP/GEF RTA. UNDP MCO’s provisions of financial resources have also been in accordance with project norms and in the timeframe.
- The UNDP MCO has helped the Project in mobilizing the international consultant to conduct the TE, in compliance with the UNDP established procedures.
- Annual Progress Reports / Project Implementation Report (APRs/PIRs). The PIRs are used as a critical analysis of the project’s status and are submitted to the PSC for review, discussion, and

endorsement. The Project prepared three PIRs for the years 2017, 2018 and 2019 however the last PIR report has a lot of missing information.

- Quarterly Progress Reports (QPRs); the QPRs are used to report on progress made based on the UNDP Enhanced Results-Based Management Platform (RBM). The Project prepared 11 QPRs; 2 for 2015, 1 for 2016, 4 for 2017 and 4 for 2018, no QPRs were prepared for 2019. The TE consultant observed that these reports missed key information required for UNDP RBM like the risks and issues logs, a work plan for the next quarter and its planned resources.
- Project Terminal Report (PTR). This report should be prepared at least one month before the end of the project and to be discussed during the terminal review meeting. Ideally, this report should be prepared by the Project team who has overseen all project’s operational issues since its inception. This report is not prepared yet.
- Terminal review meeting. The terminal reviewing meeting should be organized by project S, with the participation of its members to discuss the PTR and the TE report. No plan is in place yet to organize this meeting.

The M&E framework could have been strengthened by putting more emphasis on preparing the Project’s reports (QPRs and APRs/PIRs), which are crucial M&E tools for the UNDP/GEF Project.

Based on the above, the implementation of the M&E plan is rated as:

Highly Satisfactory (HS)	Satisfactory (S)	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	Unsatisfactory (U)	Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)
		MS			

3.3.6 UNDP and Implementing Partner implementation/execution coordination, and operational issues (*)

UNDP implementation (GEF IA):

UNDP has the Project Assurance role, which supports the PSC by carrying out objective and independent project oversight and monitoring functions. Key features of the UNDP implementation include:

- UNDP examined continuously the project implementation and worked closely with the project team.
- UNDP support to the project team is regarded as satisfactory and timely by the project team, mainly:
 - Reviewing project budgets and work plans and provide needed advice.
 - The follow up on the monitoring activity by UNDP MCO.
 - The provision of financial resources has also been in accordance with project norms.
 - Facilitate the Project’s recruitment/procurement.
 - Provide necessary advice and guidance for AWP’s development.
 - Continuous support by the UNDP/GEF RTA who fielded a mission three times to the Cook Islands and provided strategic guidance to retrofit project activities.
 - The UNDP Programme Officer followed up on the no-cost extension until October 2019. The request was submitted by the EA on 5 June 2018 to UNDP. UNDP requested the extension’s approval from the UNDP/GEF. A no-cost extension was granted on 6 September 2018.

The PC maintained good and regular communication with key Project’s stakeholders, followed up regularly on the consultants’ work and kept UNDP informed of the Project progress.

UNDP is recognized as a supportive partner to the GoCIs. Although the project took more than one year to start implementing its activities, evidence gathered during the TE mission indicates that UNDP and NES worked closely to accelerate the project’s implementation which is indicated by the development of an MOU between NES and CIMTECH prior to hiring the PC. The Project is considered as well managed according to the UNDP and the GEF guidelines.

Rating for UNDP implementation is Satisfactory:

Highly Satisfactory (HS)	Satisfactory (S)	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	Unsatisfactory (U)	Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)
	S				

NES Execution

The Project followed the NIM modality; with very limited support of an external consultant (a few national consultants and one international expert).

The Project team (only a Project coordinator was assigned), was located at NES. The NES has contributed to support the Project’s activities through the involvement of key staff in the project’s implementation like the CBD focal point and the administrative assistant.

NES Deputy Director Manager – Islands Futures Division was assigned the Project manager role (equivalent to the National Project Director Role) to follow up continuously on the Project implementation and to provide the needed political support on behalf of the Government. The NES has involved different staff members in implementing the project’s activities. An agreement was developed between NES and CIMTECH in relation to the project’s implementation mainly for component 3. The NES is committed to continuing the work that has been started on the project to ensure the smooth implementation of the project’s activities after the completion of the Project. However, there is no exit strategy and the sustainability plan are not prepared yet. The project is planned to be closed by October 2019 and no plan is in place on how to proceed with the remaining activities after the project closure.

Rating for execution by NES as:

Highly Satisfactory (HS)	Satisfactory (S)	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	Unsatisfactory (U)	Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)
		MS			

3.4 Project Results

3.4.1 Overall Results (attainment of objectives) (*)

Evaluation of the achievements of results in terms of attainment of the overall objective as well as identification of project’s outcomes and outputs in line with the UNDP/GEF evaluation guidelines were the two main areas the TE consultant focused on. For this, the performance by the outcome is analyzed by looking at three main aspects as identified by the UNDP/GEF evaluation guide:

- (i) general progress towards the established baseline level of the indicators;
- (ii) actual values of indicators by the end of the Project vs. designed ones; and
- (iii) evidence of relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency of the results as well as how this evidence was documented.²⁴

The summary of the evaluation of the attainment of the objective of the project is presented in Table 5. The assessment of progress was done based on observations, findings, data collection and observations during the site visit at the Cook Islands, interviews with key stakeholders, data provided in the project’s reports, and technical reports reviewed.

The Capacity Development Scorecard was prepared in 2015 during the formulation of the Project document. This scorecard was indicated that the Project was able to enhance the national capacity however, it failed to achieve the intended target. **Annex 8** presents the updated CDSC at the time of the TE, August 2019.

The overall quality of results of the Project are rated as:

Highly Satisfactory (HS)	Satisfactory (S)	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	Unsatisfactory (U)	Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)
			MUS		

²⁴ UNDP/GEF Terminal Evaluation Guide

Table 5: Matrix for rating the Achievement of Outcomes

The key is used for indicator assessment (Color Coding):

Green = completed, the indicator shows successful achievement
Yellow = On target to be achieved by the end of the project
Red = Not on target to be achieved by project closure

PROJECT OBJECTIVE AND OUTCOMES	INDICATOR	BASELINE	END OF PROJECT TARGETS	Progress until the TE. August 2019	TE comments	Rating
Project Objective: To develop and implement a national Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) framework, build national capacities and support an ABS Agreement based on Traditional Knowledge and Public-Private Partnership	Number of ABS laws in compliance with the Nagoya Protocol	Earlier draft Act developed in 2005 but is non-compliant with the NP	ABS Act approved by Parliament that incorporates traditional knowledge regulatory framework and is in line with NP	Draft National ABS Policy has been completed through national public consultations. The policy was ready to go through for national endorsement via the National Biodiversity Steering Committee, National Sustainable Development Committee, Cabinet in February 2019, however, the project was put on hold with the loss of the project coordinator. As of June 2018, the National Environment Service is in the process of developing a National Environment Policy leading up to a complete revision of the National Environment Act. The policy development team is working with SPREP on merging the ABS Policy with the overarching Environment Policy in order to have an integrated Policy and future legislation. This forms part of the Exit Strategy for the project, with the development of the ABS legislation, national consultations and then ratification of the Nagoya Protocol being integrated into the work of NES beyond October 2019 (project closure date).	Not on target to be achieved by project closure	MUS
	Level of institutional and personnel capacity for implementation of the national ABS framework measured by the UNDP/GEF ABS Capacity Development Score	43 out of a possible 75 = 57%	Improved institutional and personnel capacity indicated by an increase of at least 15% over the UNDP/GEF ABS Capacity	The updated scorecards showed that the capacity increased from 43 to 50 points out of a possible 75 point. The increase is less than the target. The project increased the capacity by 9.67% while the target is 15%.	Not on target to be achieved by project closure	MUS

PROJECT OBJECTIVE AND OUTCOMES	INDICATOR	BASELINE	END OF PROJECT TARGETS	Progress until the TE. August 2019	TE comments	Rating
			Development Scorecard baseline score			
Outcome 1	Strengthened National Regulatory and Institutional Framework for ABS					
	Nagoya Protocol is ratified	Signatory to Nagoya Protocol	Cook Island is a party to the Nagoya Protocol	Pending completion of ABS legislation, the institutionalization of ABS framework and process prior to submission to Cabinet for endorsement.	Not on target to be achieved by project closure	US
	Operational national ABS institutional framework indicated by: ABS National Focal Point is established. The national agency mandated to coordinate ABS activities. An institutional framework, administrative systems, rules and procedures in place to facilitate the implementation of the national ABS framework.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary ICNP National Focal Point nominated • OPM coordinates ABS activities • Draft rules and procedures being used in an <i>ad hoc</i> manner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent ABS National Focal Point nominated to CBD. • National Environment Services mandated to coordinate ABS activities. • Formalized ABS rules and procedures in place 	Road-mapping proposal for ABS framework based on CIMTECH ABS case-study was developed. The collaboration of NES-ABS PMU, Ministry of Cultural Development and Matheson Ent (CIMTECH) in determining the pathway forward for ABS and the foundation for practical actions with tangible measures. No progress on this outcome until the Policy and Legislation is in place however as part of the exit strategy, the eventual ratification of the NP will be integrated into the work on NES. Permanent ABS National focal point is not yet nominated. The NES is not mandated to coordinate ABS activities. No formalized ABS rules and procedures in place.	Not on target to be achieved by project closure	MUS
	Percentage of ABS agreements aligned to NP and ABS National Legislation requirements	0, not yet identified	100% ABS Agreements identified and aligned to NP and ABS National Legislation	One agreement has been amended to align with NP and ABS principles. The existing ABS agreement between CIMTECH and Koutu Nui appraised by Regional Project Advisor for Asia-Pacific within the UNDP-GEF Global ABS Project	Some progress has been achieved	MS
Outcome 2	Capacity building and awareness-raising for the implementation of the National ABS Framework					

PROJECT OBJECTIVE AND OUTCOMES	INDICATOR	BASELINE	END OF PROJECT TARGETS	Progress until the TE. August 2019	TE comments	Rating
	Cook Islands biodiversity database expanded with information regarding traditional uses of plants and other organisms (number of records)	Information held on 4,500 existing species	Information on traditional uses of plants included in the database	The TK Register was introduced at the public consultations and ABS educational awareness workshops on each of the 9 islands encouraged the registering of TK with the Ministry of Cultural Development. Majority of islands resolved to have their own internal registers established due to the sacredness of TK especially in traditional medicine practices. Some information included under each species used for traditional medicines. Biodiversity database is currently being upgraded to enable greater functionality and input of new species/data and this work is not yet complete to allow additional input from ABS.	Some progress has been made but will not be fully achieved by the end of the project.	MUS
	Improved facility and capacity for partners indicated by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Government staff with knowledge and facility to monitor bio-prospecting projects and documentation • Streamlined Government decision process to create IRCCs • Number of a research institution and private sector people with knowledge on ABS and on responsibility, operation, and opportunities regarding ABS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 government staff have knowledge of ABS legislation, rules, and procedures. • No streamlined decision process. • Less than 5 people from research institutions and the private sector have knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 30 government staff have knowledge and capacity to monitor bio-prospecting projects and documentation • IRCC created • At least 5 people from research institutions and the private sector have participated in two workshops 	<p>The capacity of government staff has increased.</p> <p>IRCC was not created.</p> <p>According to the project's record, more than 5 people from research institutions and the private sector have participated in 2 workshops.</p>		MS

PROJECT OBJECTIVE AND OUTCOMES	INDICATOR	BASELINE	END OF PROJECT TARGETS	Progress until the TE. August 2019	TE comments	Rating
	No. of stakeholders reached by the ABS awareness campaign	11 stakeholders	23 stakeholders reached by the ABS awareness campaign	Educational awareness and public consultations workshops held with the islands' communities of the Cook Islands. Community presentations, posters, news articles, TV interviews, documentary, and short ads have been produced in both English and Maori.	completed, the indicator shows successful achievement	HS
	Enhanced understanding of the ABS regime and the value of traditional knowledge associated with genetic and biological resources for improved policymaking and on-the-ground conservation, sustainable use and fair and equitable sharing of benefits.	Limited awareness of stakeholders	Increased awareness of stakeholders	Achieved with educational awareness and public consultations workshops held with the islands' communities of the Cook Islands. Community presentations, posters, news articles, TV interviews, documentary, and short ads have been produced in both English and Maori. Policy translation from English to main Cook Islands dialects (Rarotonga and Manihiki) and to be circulated to the stakeholders once reviewed and finalized	completed, the indicator shows successful achievement	HS
Outcome 3	Bio-discovery and benefit-sharing based on the Traditional Knowledge on Bone and Cartilage Regeneration					
	Strengthened ABS agreement between CIMTECH and <i>Te Koutu Nui</i>	Exiting agreement has not been reviewed with NP compliance in mind	Revised agreement compliant with NP (e.g. including specifying monetary and non-monetary benefits)	Additional Benefits Schedule with Co-financing partners submitted. Corporate Structures completed Trust Structuring for the final vehicle for fund disbursement with NES Clauses pending legal and accounting teams	completed, the indicator shows successful achievement (95%)	HS
	Monetary and non-monetary benefits received by State and local communities from CIMTECH- <i>Te Koutu Nui</i> ABS Agreement	State: \$0; non-monetary benefits include increased certification and regulatory skills Communities: \$0; provides some local	To be determined during the first months of project implementation Will include as a minimum 25% of income to support ra'ui (biodiversity)	Four people are fully involved in the process. And, there are a group of locals who are following wild harvesting plans, utilizing locals to go and bring the materials like coconuts, leaves, etc. Monetary and non-monetary benefits include Cook Islands scientific capacity being enhanced, & increased skills and employment. Community educational enhancement in culture through Cook Islands Language -Te Reo programs and Traditional Knowledge Research & delivery platforms.	completed, the indicator shows successful achievement (95%)	S

PROJECT OBJECTIVE AND OUTCOMES	INDICATOR	BASELINE	END OF PROJECT TARGETS	Progress until the TE. August 2019	TE comments	Rating
		employment (3 – 4 local people employed)	conservation and sustainable use) and increase in employment	Non-monetary benefits received by state and local communities by way of these formal annual community platforms which are led by Te Koutu Nui in conjunction with Matheson Enterprises/ CIMTECH and supported by Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education and Ministry of National Environment Services. Te Reo programs and TK (R&D) reach all Early Childhood Education aged children and their parents plus Secondary School Children and instill encouragement to research and retain the values of traditional knowledge and promote ABS via cultural reenactments, performances, and speeches. Koutu Nui trust structure ensures the provision of at least 25% for the Koutu Nui and Taunga Vairakau (traditional healers), technology transfers allow for support to additional scientific and development projects, highly skilled laboratory manager employed plus part-time employees		
	Safety protocols for Au extraction and standardization developed	Only basic passive and active safety and quality assurance based on common sense and workplace good design	Safety protocols created and introduced based on production safety, toxicological and efficacy component assurance studies	Safety processes standardized, however final production system and standards due by the end of the year. Material Safety Data Sheet used and accepted internationally	Partially completed, the indicator shows successful achievement (90%)	MS
	Accreditation and extract certification achieved	Basic quality monitoring undertaken and current extract non-compliant for certain export objectives	New quality standards meet Good Laboratory Practice and NP and Industry-compliance certification processes achieved	Extraction processes now using standardized specialized equipment and standardized using gas chromatography and mass spectrometry. Working towards GLP	Partially completed, the indicator shows successful achievement of part of the target.	MS

PROJECT OBJECTIVE AND OUTCOMES	INDICATOR	BASELINE	END OF PROJECT TARGETS	Progress until the TE. August 2019	TE comments	Rating
					(90%)	
	The volume of <i>Hibiscus tiliaceus</i> harvested in a sustainable manner as indicated by a wild harvest management plan	Limited harvesting is undertaken	At least 50 Kg of <i>Hibiscus tiliaceus</i> plant materials harvested during the project period (maximum annual harvest) will be determined by the wild harvest management plan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The wild harvest management plan is prepared. ▪ Site inspection is ready. ▪ Environmental assessments for land clearing is prepared. ▪ Geographical scoping and population mapping commenced identifying wild harvest sites are identified. 	completed, the indicator shows successful achievement (95%)	S

3.4.2 Relevance (*)

The project is highly relevant to UNDP activities in the Cook Islands. The project at the design stage was in line with the endorsed UNDP Sub Regional Program Document for Pacific Island Countries 2013 – 2017, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2013 – 2017 and the endorsed UNDAF Action Plan and Country Results Matrix of the Cook Islands. The project was designed to contribute to UNDAF Outcome 1 “By 2017 the most vulnerable communities across the PIC’s are more resilient and select government agencies, civil society and communities have enhanced capacity to apply integrated approaches to environmental management, climate change adaptation, mitigations, and disaster risk reduction”.²⁵

This Project also contributed to meet the GoCIs National Sustainable Development Plan, it “meets Goal 6 of the Cook Islands National Sustainable Development Plan to ensure that equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources will be incorporated into appropriate policy and regulatory frameworks for access to genetic resources and its associated traditional knowledge.”²⁶

The Project is highly relevant for the GoCIs as it addressed an important topic and derived directly from the GoCIs national priorities and development plan. The Cook Islands had an ABS Bill called the “Biological Research and Benefits Bill” drafted in 2006. This Bill was based on implementing the CBD Bonn guidelines, prior to the adoption of the Nagoya Protocol in 2010. This project was proposed to re-design the Bill to incorporate Nagoya Protocol compliance elements. The Bill also needed to be realigned to complement the *Traditional Knowledge Act* (2013) that established a register of traditional knowledge administered by the Ministry of Cultural Development. Under this recently passed Act, local communities are likely to start registering traditional knowledge relating to biological resources (as well as handicrafts and other expressions).

The project was supposed to help the GoCIs in developing national administrative processes for issuing ABS license, negotiating and enforcing agreements to be very clear and to make sure that stakeholders are aware of their roles in promoting ABS. Since 2012, there was an ABS Capacity Development Initiative that has been working with the NES for the development and clarification of policies, processes, and roles necessary for the design of an effective ABS system.

Based on the abovementioned the Relevance is rated as Relevant (R).

Relevant (R)	Not Relevant (NR)
R	

3.4.3 Effectiveness and efficiency (*)

Effectiveness

The project got delayed for more than a year in the process to assign a PC. It was also put on hold for the last 6 months due to the departure of the PC. The limited support provided to the PC has affected the project implementation tremendously as the PC was the only person appointed to follow up on the project activities, no project advisor, no admin/finance assistant and no national consultants/experts to help with the implementation of the technical components except the policy development consultant. The education focal point of NES, as well as the CBD focal point, have helped in the implementation of the public awareness activities and the policy consultations, respectively.

This set up has affected the speed of implementation and slightly affected the focus of the project. The Project has been able to complete a few expected results, but no work is going on to finalize and achieve the rest before the end of the Project. The Project objective and main outcomes have not been achieved, and most of the established targets will not be met by the end of the project.

²⁵ Project Document, Section 6.3 Project’s Alignment with UNDP’s Programme for Cook Islands. Pages 72-73.

²⁶ Project Inception Report, Subsection 1.2: Importance of the CKI ABS Project. May 2015.

Considering the above-mentioned facts, Effectiveness was rated **Moderately Unsatisfactory (MUS)**.

Efficiency

Project efficiency is considered **Moderately Satisfactory (MS)** for the following reasons:

- Considering the one-year delay at the beginning of the project, the adaptability and flexibility of the project team, UNDP, and CIMTECH have been decent enough to alter the project’s status in order to achieve some of the project’s intended outputs. Major project results under component three have been achieved in 2 years, furthermore, the quality of several project’s results was examined and approved by the PSC.
- The capacity of the project to ensure that co-financing pledged to the project during the project’s formulation phase materializes during the project’s implementation phase is rated as Satisfactory (S).
- NES partnership with CIMTECH has proved to be a positive factor in advancing the work and has contributed tremendously to the successful implementation of the project. Private-Public Partnership (PPP) for this type of project is critical as establishing a private enterprise or partnering with an established enterprise by involving local traditional healers/beneficiaries through the House of Ariki or the Koutu Nui is proved to be practical, and helped the government advancing the work to achieve the project intended outcomes.
- The M&E of the project was undertaken according to UNDP and GEF procedures and it is rated as Satisfactory (S) while reporting following UNDP/GEF guidelines as undertaken and supported by the project- up until 2019 - was deemed Satisfactory (S).
- Identification and management of risks and logs are rated as Moderately satisfactory (MS) as throughout project implementation the most critical risks were identified but not without defining appropriate risk ratings and management responses identified and formulated.
- The capacity of the project to build partnerships and linkages with stakeholders to tap on additional resources during the project’s implementation phase is rated as Moderately Satisfactory (MS).
- The project involved men and women equally into project activities, however, there was no data segregated by sex. Gender mainstreaming is therefore rated as Moderately Satisfactory (MS).

3.4.4 Country Ownership

As stated in the Project Document “*The Cook Islands is a signatory to the Convention on Biological Diversity, signed in 1992, ratified in 1993 and entered into force in the same year. The Convention on Biological Diversity is a legal instrument used in the Cook Islands to guide the development of strategies that balance the appetite for economic development and the protection of its ecological biodiversity. Integrated in the Cook Islands National Sustainable Development Plan and other associated plans, this convention is one of the most locally well-known and accepted at all levels, be it government, traditional, NGO, community, and associated stakeholders.*”²⁷ Further, The Cook Islands had an ABS Bill called the “*Biological Research and Benefits Bill*” drafted in 2006. This Bill was based on implementing the CBD Bonn guidelines, prior to the adoption of the Nagoya Protocol in 2010. This bill needed to be significantly re-designed to incorporate Nagoya Protocol compliance elements. It also needed to be realigned to complement the Traditional Knowledge Act (2013) that established a register of traditional knowledge administered by the Ministry of Cultural Development. Under this Act, local communities are likely to start registering traditional knowledge relating to biological resources (as well as handicrafts and other expressions).

The country ownership was evident during the Project formulation stage; it was further reiterated during project implementation and that is evident in the strong interest and participation of the House of Ariki and the Te Koutu Nui in project’s SC and different activities mainly national consultations on ABS Policy. Concerned NES team attended and participated

²⁷ UNDP GEF Project Document. Section 2.2 Country Ownership: Eligibility and Drivers. page 24.

in different project’s events and have also provided technical support to the PS whenever needed. Specifically, the national CBD focal point attended all consultations organized in the outer-islands and provided technical support to the PC. Furthermore, the education officer supported the project in developing and implementing the project’s related activities in the field of awareness and education.

The Government had appointed NES deputy director as the National Project Manager while the SC was chaired by NES Director. All Projects deliverables were shared with the PSC and got approved by authorized stakeholders.

The project is considered very strategic as it was supposed to help the Cook Islands in redesigning the *Biological Research and Benefits Bill* to incorporate Nagoya protocol as well as to realign it to complement the *Traditional Knowledge Act*. Also, it built on the strategic partnership between the CIMTECH and the *Te Koutu Nui* 2012 agreement which is the first ABS-related agreement that allows CIMTECH / mainly its locally based company: Matheson Enterprises to commercially produce *TeTika* Skincare product. *TeTika* products sales by CIMTECH rely on Bioactive Cook Islands Oils produced in the Cook Islands. Up to 16% of the value of CIMTECH sales returned to the Cook Islands. The *Te Koutu Nue* holds 10% of the shares of CIMTECH, however, under the ABS project, CIMTECH/Matheson Enterprise entered into agreement with the *Te Koutu Nui* and increased the share of the *Te Koutu Nui* to 25%. So, 25% of CIMTECH/Matheson Enterprises profit distributed to CIMTECH shareholders goes directly to the Cook Islands. As a result, there has been a good national momentum to support the ABS project.

3.4.5 Mainstreaming

The Project was able to mainstream several Government and UNDP priorities, but it failed to mainstream others. Below is full description of the project’s mainstreaming efforts:

- Although the project provided political and financial incentives to lead to the development of a national ABS framework; however, it did not manage to finalize the preparation of the needed ABS framework.
- The project design did not include gender analysis and did not specifically focus on gender-related impacts; however, the project involved women and men in its PSC.
- The project team and consultants included women and men. In fact, the PC, PM and the two national consultants are women. Reviewing the project consultations indicated that the team who was involved in the consultation in Rarotonga and the outer islands were all women. As the project did not disaggregate data by sex, it was difficult for the TE to assess the total number or percentage of women participating in the project’s events.
- The Project targeted both women and men in their capacity building and public awareness components.
- The Project partnered with the NBSAP and Ridge-to-Reef (R2R) projects and have shared the same steering committee which is also the national biodiversity steering committee at the national level.
- The project succeeded in promoting the adoption of an ABS framework through its public awareness program. Stakeholders interviewed during the mission showed high interest and support of having an ABS framework.

3.4.6 Sustainability (*)

The Project’s main approach to sustainability is to “*establish the scientific basis for the monitoring and control of the harvesting of the plant species at the outset. This allows for a more targeted and sustainable approach to supply and sustainability of the value chain, reducing guesswork and improving the acceptance of all environmental controls.*” The use of local plants in traditional medicine is known in the country and used widely. The traditional knowledge, however, is not spread all over the community as in each island there are a few “traditional healers” who are considered as an expert in extracting, mixing, and preparing different types of medicines for different health issues. Yet, there was no scientific proof, no testing or certifications available and hence

commercializing these products was not an easy task. However, the “relatively small investment by the GEF would contribute to further financial, social, institutional and environmental sustainability in the use of the genetic resource and the distribution of benefits through the value chain”.

The partnership established between the Matheson Enterprises and the Te Koutu Nui is one of the main approaches to ensure that the proper research is established, and this might help to increase the chances of further external investment from private sectors. The “GEF funding will help further the R&D, increasing the chances of further external investment from private investors, and/or the potential for R&D to be licensed, tested for clinical effectiveness and safety, and then eventually commercialized”.

Sustainability is defined as the likelihood of continued benefits after the project ends. The assessment of sustainability considers, therefore, the risks that are likely to affect the continuation of project outcomes. Below is the assessment of the four risks categories based on the UNDP/GEF TE guidelines:

Financial risks

The financial sustainability of the project relies entirely on the private sector. As anticipated in the project document, the private sector element of the project was supposed to be “supported through the ongoing development and sale of bioactive skincare products through the Te Tika product line established by CIMTECH and Matheson Enterprises and subject to the ABS Agreement with the Te Koutu Nui.”

However, the project has not yet prepared an exit strategy or a sustainability plan. Although Matheson Enterprises is committed to continuing its work on the R&D and has a five-year plan to move the extracted materials to a final product that is used in hospitals and medical centers, no government commitment is in place to support the Matheson Enterprises efforts.

Based on the above discussion, the financial risks are moderate, and sustainability is rated as:

Likely (L)	Moderately Likely (ML)	Moderately Unlikely (MS)	Unlikely (U)
	ML		

Socio-economic risks

The plan was to expand Te Tika sales through the lifetime of the project. This means some local employment for sales/marketing and supply, as well as continued employment of staff at the factory (Matheson Enterprises). Now, in the factory and its laboratory, around 3 people work as a part-timer and one technical expert who is running the Gas Chromatography and other experiment equipment exist. Other part-timer employment exists for cultivation of *Hibiscus* and other materials necessary to produce the extract such as the coconut. It is expected that once the extracted material is transferred into a therapeutic product for accelerated bone healing, the production line with being expanded, and technology transfer would likely have some spin-off benefits for employees.

Also, the ability for the Cook Islands to provide facilitated access to tropical terrestrial and tropical marine organisms under Nagoya Protocol compliant ABS laws will provide a significant comparative advantage.

Based on the above-mentioned Socio-economic Risk, risks are moderate and thus the sustainability is rated as

Likely (L)	Moderately Likely (ML)	Moderately Unlikely (MS)	Unlikely (U)
	ML		

Institutional framework and governance risks

The project main approach to establish institutional sustainability was to embed ABS capacity within the government of the Cook Islands and the broader Cook Islands community. Hence, the project involved national and local institutions associated both with access to biological resources and with the generation of knowledge. Furthermore, the project expected that the institutional sustainability will be supported by the creation of an ABS permits portal for the

NES as well as review emerging and established codes of practice, model ABS agreements and use of model clauses as recommended by the terms of the Protocol. However, most of these outputs were not achieved and hence the proposed ABS framework (establishing a legal and administrative framework) within the Cook Islands was not achieved as well.

The Institutional framework and governance risks are moderate, and sustainability is:

Likely (L)	Moderately Likely (ML)	Moderately Unlikely (MUL)	Unlikely (U)
	ML		

Environmental risks to sustainability

The preparation of the *Wild Harvest Management Plan* would ensure the sustainable cultivation of the *Hibiscus tiliaceus*. Although the level of operation is very small currently, CIMTECH facility should ensure appropriate bunding, fume extraction, handling, and clean-up of any potentially hazardous solvents used in their operations.

The Environmental risks are moderate, and sustainability is:

Likely (L)	Moderately Likely (ML)	Moderately Unlikely (MS)	Unlikely (U)
	ML		

Overall rating:

Some of the associated risks are negligible and thus, the overall rating for Sustainability is:

Likely (L)	Moderately Likely (ML)	Moderately Unlikely (MS)	Unlikely (U)
	ML		

3.4.7 Impact

The Project has achieved a major milestone in relation to the bio-discovery and benefit-sharing based on the Traditional Knowledge on Bone and Cartilage Regeneration outcome, however, it achieved limited progress in relation to strengthening the national regulatory and institutional framework for ABS. The project has achieved the following:

- Draft National ABS Policy has been completed through national public consultations. The policy is ready to go through for national endorsement via the National Biodiversity Steering Committee, National Sustainable Development Committee, Cabinet.
- Road-mapping proposal for ABS framework based on CIMTECH ABS case-study. The collaboration of NES-ABS PMU, Ministry of Cultural Development and Matheson Ent (CIMTECH) in determining the pathway forward for ABS and the foundation for practical actions with tangible measures.
- Existing ABS agreement between CIMTECH and Koutu Nui is appraised.
- The TK Register was introduced at the public consultations and ABS educational awareness workshops on each of the 9 islands encouraged the registering of TK with the Ministry of Cultural Development. Majority of islands resolved to have their own internal registers established due to the sacredness of TK especially in traditional medicine practices.
- Some information included under each species used for traditional medicines. Biodiversity database is currently being upgraded to enable greater functionality and input of new species/data and this work is not yet complete to allow additional input from ABS.
- Educational awareness and public consultations workshops held with the islands' communities of the Cook Islands. Community presentations, posters, news articles, TV interviews, documentary, and short ads have been produced in both English and Maori.
- Biodiversity Clearing House under construction which includes the ABS project and educational materials.
- educational awareness and public consultations workshops held with the islands' communities of the Cook Islands

- Community presentations, posters, news articles, TV interviews, documentary, and short ads have been produced in both English and Maori.
- Policy translation from English to main Cook Islands dialects (Rarotonga and Manihiki) and to be circulated to the stakeholders once reviewed and finalized.
- Additional benefits agreed via Corporate Structures and Trust Structures as a vehicle for fund disbursement in accordance with governance guidance from NES. Revised agreement completed in line with NP resulting in significantly increased Koutu Nui share of project benefits
- Monetary and non-monetary benefits include Cook Islands scientific capacity being immensely enhanced, & increased skills and employment.
- Community educational enhancement in culture through Cook Islands Language -Te Reo programs and Traditional Knowledge Research & delivery platforms.
- Non-monetary benefits received by state and local communities by way of these formal annual community platforms which are led by Te Koutu Nui in conjunction with Matheson Enterprises/CIMTECH and supported by Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education and Ministry of National Environment Services. Te Reo programs and TK (R&D) reach all Early Childhood Education aged children and their parents plus Secondary School Children and instill encouragement to research and retain the values of traditional knowledge and promote ABS via cultural reenactments, performances, and speeches.
- Koutu Nui trust structure ensures the provision of at least 25% for the Koutu Nui and Taunga Vairakau (traditional healers), technology transfers allow for support to additional scientific and development projects, highly skilled laboratory manager employed plus part-time employees.
- Material Data Safety sheet concluded. This has thus far provided adequate guidance for export of material to Australia. It is ready to submit as output and be readily accessible those in need of it.
- Extraction processes now using standardized specialized equipment and standardized using gas chromatography and mass spectrometry. Working towards GLP.
- A wild harvest management plan is prepared. Geographical scoping and population mapping completed identifying wild harvest sites. Summary mapping reported. Data collated yet to be formally published.

4. Conclusions, Recommendations & Lessons

4.1 Conclusions

The project was least successful in strengthening national regulatory and instructional framework on ABS (the first outcome). Community consultations were organized in all islands to discuss the draft National ABS Policy. The policy was translated to the Maori language as well. The policy was ready to go through for national endorsement via the National Biodiversity Steering Committee, National Sustainable Development Committee, Cabinet in February 2019, however, the project was put on hold with the loss of the project coordinator. The project team got to know that ABS legislation should be developed after developing a policy. This has delayed the development of the needed regulatory framework. Furthermore, as of June 2018, the National Environment Service is in the process of developing a National Environment Policy leading up to a complete revision of the National Environment Act. The NES is planning on merging the ABS Policy with the overarching Environment Policy in order to have an integrated Policy and future legislation. Although NES considers this forms a part of the Exit Strategy for the project, with the development of the ABS legislation, national consultations, and then ratification of the Nagoya Protocol being integrated into the work of NES beyond Oct 2019. The TE consultant does not see it like that.

One of the significant challenges the project faced was due to deficiencies in the project management arrangement at the design stage, which was not – unfortunately- addressed during the project inception phase or during implementation. These deficiencies were most apparent with respect to the structure of the project management. Knowing the ABS is a new topic to many countries and the technical capacity to manage such a project might need support, the project document should have proposed a project technical advisor to provide support to the project team at least on a quarterly basis. The absence of administrative and financial support put additional burden on the project coordinator as the later had to deal with all issues pertaining to the project, these include technical, financial, and administrative. Furthermore, the UNDP/GEF project management requires intensive M&E activities including quarterly and annual reporting. Special training should have been offered to the PC to help in complying with these requirements. The NES also has its own internal procedures; hence, the project coordinator needed to learn and adapt to master the NES procedures, UNDP/GEF project management procedures and to follow up on all technical, financial and administrative aspect of the project. The project document proposed that a Project manager (PM), government official, appointed to support the PC. It was noticed that most of the PM duties were moved to the PC during the inception phase. This has complicated the already complex project set-up.

The Cook Islands has its own procedures of advancing work at the project level. For example, to develop an ABS legislation, a national ABS policy is required, and nation-wide community consultations should be organized, and comments should be integrated prior to submitting the ABS policy to the Cabinet for approval. This was not envisaged in the project document, not accounted for and hence has contributed significant delays in outcome 1 implementation. Pursuing Cabinet approval required a great deal of effort on the part of NES that has caused a great delay in preparing the intended ABS submission for the Cabinet.

Individuals with practical, hands-on experience with implementing this project learned significant lessons about how to coordinate and manage a project that addresses a new and complex suite of issues, with relatively limited funds, short implementation period, and limited technical and operational support, and presumably will be able to apply them in the future.

The key questions for this evaluation concerned relevance, the achievement of outputs, effectiveness, sustainability, and replicability, and factors affecting project performance. The overall rating for this project based on the evaluation findings is **Moderately Unsatisfactory**.

The project reports indicated that the deliverable related to strengthening national regulatory and institutional framework for ABS reached less than **40%** achievement; the capacity building and awareness-raising for the implementation of the national ABS framework achieved around

75%, and the project reported the bio-discovery and benefit-sharing based on the traditional knowledge on bone and cartilage regeneration 95% achieved. Based on the review and assessment and taking into consideration the complex nature of the Project, the overall rating on the achievement of results is **Moderately Satisfactory**.

Although the Project is very much acknowledged by the GoCIs, and very relevant to UNDP and the Government's national plans, without a confirmed financial commitment and institutional arrangement to follow up on the project's activities, prospects for sustainability are ambiguous, and overall sustainability is considered **moderately likely**.

4.2 Corrective actions for the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the project

For the Design

Corrective Action 1: discuss through intensive consultations the proposed project management structure. Identify who is doing what and prepare a very realistic project work plan that takes the technical and administrative capacity at the country level into consideration. The development and finalization of the project log-frame should also be done in full consultations with the stakeholders. A capacity assessment should be carried out during the project design to define the capacity of the executing partner to implement the project. Carrying out this kind of capacity assessment should provide valuable insight on how to develop the components, outcomes, deliverables, and activities to focus on a capacity gap at the individual, organizational, and institutional level.

For the Implementation

Corrective Action 2: As there is always a gap between project development and approval (around a year in average), and in the majority of case there is another gap between the project signature and commencement of project activities due to countries procedures in signing project document, or in hiring qualified teams and setting up project management units and offices, it would be advisable for project designers to take these issues into consideration as many of the project's activities were supposed to be implemented within the first six months of project's initiation, the project implementing agency should also take care of this during the inception report and take the advance of the ability to make changes to the project document, during the IW, to (i) update the actual situation against the context at the time the project document was written; (ii) assess the time and funding proposed for implementation against actual national capacity to deliver; (iii) revise project components and deliverables accordingly; and (iv) develop work plans on this basis.

For the Monitoring and Evaluation

Correction Action 3: Although the project managed to prepare, submit and discuss the QPRs and PIRs in the PSC meetings. The information provided in these reports needed to get enhanced. For example, risks were updated regularly on quarterly bases, however, many critical risks were not identified and hence no mitigation actions were taken to reduce their impacts on the project's progress.

Correction Action 4: If a capacity assessment exercise was not done as part of the project development process, it should be carried out at the beginning of the project. If a capacity assessment was done as part of the project development process and the results included in the project document, these should be reviewed and updated during the inception phase. This would provide a basis for revising the project's components, outcomes, deliverables, and activities.

4.3 Actions to follow up or reinforce the initial benefits of the project

The TE consultant would like to make the following recommendation to ensure that a clear set of actions to follow up or reinforce the initial benefits of the Project are identified:

This ABS project needs an exit strategy to avoid leaving the ABS partners (Koutu Nui, CIMTEH and NES) in limbo, the UNDP MCO and UNDP GEF RTA to look at the possibility of extending the project for another 5-6 months and help the NES in reallocating the remaining budget to ensure enable the ABS partners finalizing the project’s activities. Subject to the approval for a project extension at no cost, the following activities are recommended to be implemented during the extension period:

1. Re-hire the PC – using a different contractual modality - to follow up on the pending activities as the PC has already gained the needed knowledge on NES internal procedure, UNDP/GEF M&E procedures, and know the whole project.
2. Re-hire the two national consultants for policy and legislation development to finalize the work on the two documents as per the original contracts.

The consultants, under NES and UNDP supervision, should do the following:

- a. National Consultants to consult with key national and local CKI stakeholders and refined the final draft ABS Policy;
- b. National Consultants to finalize the Policy submission package and submit to the Cabinet;
- c. National Consultants to draft the legislative measure based on the final draft ABS Policy;
- d. Consultants to consult with the key stakeholders on the draft legislative measure with key national and local CKI stakeholders;
- e. NES to finalize the draft legislative measure and submit to Cabinet;
- f. NES to provide effective and timely technical and administrative support to the consultant’s requirements; and
- g. NES with the support of the national consultant to finalize NES guidelines on ABS as aligned to National Policy on ABS, draft CKI ABS policy, and draft legislative measure;

Recommendation 1: NES to develop a project terminal report that includes the project exit strategy to ensure the Project’s results sustainability (UNDP/ NES).

Recommendation 2: NES to follow up vigorously on the remaining project’s activities and transfer the needed funds to CIMTECH to ensure that component 3 of the project finalized its work before project closure (UNDP, NES, CIMTECH/Matheson Enterprises).

Recommendation 3: NES to institutionalize linkages with other ongoing activities and initiatives to ensure the delivery of the remaining results like Ridge-to-Reef and the National Environmental Policy and Act review initiative (NES).

Recommendation 4: NES to develop a dissemination plan, through its media and education team, for the project “public awareness and outreach tools” to ensure future initiatives would build on the Project activities and results and will incorporate the project’s products in its work. (NES).

Recommendation 5: The work on ABS has just begun through this Project. The GoCIs should develop clear mechanisms concerning the follow up on CIMTECH activities pertaining to the project’s activities (NES, UNDP).

Recommendation 6: As other countries are working on and/or planning to work on ABS. NES and UNDP to capture lessons learned from this Project and share at the national/ regional/ and global level. The successful involvement of the private sector and the expected benefits the local healers through the Koutu Nui receive, should be documented and shared (NES, UNDP, and CIMTECH).

There is still the potential to achieve more, but it will require investing in a continuation phase of the Project. Thus, Project’s stakeholders should develop and endorse a clear work-plan to ensure the achievement of the remaining deliverables with the support of the stakeholders.

4.4 Proposals for future directions underlining main objectives

Submitting the draft ABS polity to Cabinet, draft an ABS Legislation and submit to Cabinet, ensure that an ABS focal point is nominated at the country level and initiate the process to ratify the Nagoya Protocol. The achieved milestones under component three are very important; furthermore, these are also sustained due to the signed agreement between CIMTECH and the Koutu Nui. Yet, achievements under component 1 and 2 need to be institutionalized and well-integrated in NES work plans.

According to CIMTECH Plans, the work at the national level should continue to:

1. The laboratory would expand to – national testing capacity -national laboratory.
2. Develop partnerships with key pharmaceutical partners from other countries like partners based in New York. Focus on manufacturing daily or on a weekly basis. Promote eco-tourism.
3. Integrate into the Cook Islands health care system - integrate into the Pacific Islands.
4. Anti-doping agencies – not illegal in sport – a market for elite athlete accelerators bone injury.
5. CI sell into developed markets – most need – rather than the most money – meet the need – value will follow the utility.
6. Focus also on other markets like healing horses bone injury.

4.5 Best and worst practices in addressing issues relating to relevance, performance, and success

The project demonstrated several good and worst practices, some of these are:

Best practice:

- ABS future projects should not only focus on making the linkages between ABS, biodiversity conservation and sustainable livelihoods but also on integrating that into the project's objectives, components, activities and major deliverables. This ABS project while focused on ABS and Nagoya protocol, it also integrated sustainable livelihood and biodiversity conservation into its design mainly through component number 3.
- The involvement of the private sector in component 3: research and development, processing of the plant bark to get the extract, testing it and converting it to the final products need a dedicated research institute partnering with a company or a company with a strong R&D. This project proves that a local company with the interest, vision, and needed support can achieve the work that might need many people to do.

Worst practice:

- The small project management team might be very efficient in terms of project financing; however, it had its bad consequences on project implementation and performance. UNDP GEF projects asked not to invest a lot in project management, but that does not mean that you ask one person to implement the whole project.

5. Annexes

Annex 1. ToR

Annex 2. List of documents reviewed

The following documents were reviewed as part of the TE work:

Document Title	
1.	UNDP GEF Project Document
2.	GEF CEO Endorsement Request
3.	The Project’s Identification Form (PIF)
4.	List of participants – training and capacity development
5.	Capacity Building Score Card - at CEO endorsement
6.	Capacity Building Score Card - at TE
7.	CIMTECH Progress Reports
8.	Project Inception Workshop Report
9.	Project Implementation Reports (PIRs) for 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2018
10.	CIMTECH Co-financing Table
11.	Training sessions reports – photos and videos
12.	Project’s media campaign
13.	Minutes of the Project Board Meetings
14.	Project Log-frame
15.	Technical reports produced by the national consultants (Draft Policy Report)
16.	Request Letter from Implementing Partner requesting no cost extension
17.	Approval from the UNDP GEF on the project no-cost extension
18.	ABS Project Documentary
19.	Sample of ABS Consultation – media coverage
20.	ABS Project Work Plans, 2018 and 2019
21.	ABS Project Budget Balance Report 2019
22.	ABS 2018 Quarter 1 Project Work Plan
23.	ABS Project Extension Work Plan
24.	ABS 2018 Q4 Budget Revision
25.	ABS Project CDRs for years 2-15, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019
26.	ABS Key risks and assumptions
27.	ABS project results’ framework
28.	ABS indicative work plan

29.	Monitoring and evaluation plan and budget
30.	Checklist for review of project document
31.	PAC presentation 2014
32.	ABS LPAC minutes
33.	Project PAC report
34.	LOA- UNDP and NES
35.	Inception Workshop Group Photos
36.	Signed project document
37.	Request for Extension – Letter
38.	Approval for the request for an extension
39.	ABS COP Publication/ CI Page 222
40.	CIMTECH financed extraction glassware
41.	Lab. Equipment financed by CIMTECH
42.	Listing of non-grant laboratory assets
43.	Co-investment overview- Parnell
44.	Parnell Pharmaceuticals holding reports 2015 and 2016.
45.	ABS framework discussion paper ¹⁹ – Transformation process. Te Toutu Nui Revised ABS Agreement
46.	Lab. Operating procedures
47.	Central Laboratory feasibility study
48.	CIMTECH facility – internal layout
49.	6 power-point presentation, ABS project – by CIMTECH
50.	CIMTECH Quarterly Progress Reports (word and excel format) – 18 documents.
51.	Application of improved extraction techniques
52.	Material safety export safety data
53.	The shipping process for dangerous goods
54.	Au Harvesting Guidelines
55.	The detailed Parameters of GIS mapping
56.	Possible AU Harvest Sites
57.	Possible Au Locations
58.	Promotional materials for Te Tika – Booklet, video, win prices presentation, etc
59.	ABS project quarterly progress reports, 13 reports

60.	Face forms and work plans for all years
61.	Pa Enea Consultations. 10 Islands including Rarotonga. Minutes of meetings. List of attendees, photos, presentation.
62.	Project steering committee meetings minutes.
63.	Project flow chart
64.	Matheson Ent Ltd_ Signed MOU
65.	Internal Control Audit reports
66.	Report_ Project_ Initiative_ Country Consultation

Annex 3: Itinerary

International Expert Dr. Amal Aldababseh

Terminal Evaluation of the project

“Strengthening the Implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit Sharing in the Cook Islands”

Mission period: 25 August – 2 September 2019

Rarotonga, The Cook Islands

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	26th Aug	27th Aug	28th Aug	29th Aug	30th Aug
9 am					CIMTECH Facility with Kyle Matheson and Laboratory review with Myo Min
10 am	Louisa Karika - NES (Project Manager)	Elizabeth Munro - NES (CBD focal point)	Sub-Chief	Project documents review- NES	SKYPE Call with Graham Matheson
11 am			Paul Allsworth/ Tupe Short. Koutu Nui		Project Review with Jennifer Henry
12noon					
1 pm					
2 pm	Maureen Hilyard - Policy Consultant (at NES office)	Matilda Tairea - Policy Consultant	Matilda Tairea /Consultant	Skype call with UNDP	
3 pm			Former Project Coordinator/ Emily Pierre		
4 pm					
6 PM				Skype call with UNDP/GEF RTA	Project Review with Jennifer Henry
7 PM					

Annex 4. List of persons interviewed

	Name	Title
1.	Ms. Louisa Karika	Project manager
2.	Ms. Elizabeth Munro	CBD focal point
3.	Ms. Maureen Hilyard	Policy Consultant
4.	Ms. Matilda Tairea	Policy Consultant
5.	Mr. Kyle Matheson	CIMTECH
6.	Mr. Myo Min	CIMTECH
7.	Ms. Jennifer Henry	CIMTECH
8.	Dr. Graham Matheson	CIMTECH
9.	Mr. Paul Allsworth	Koutu Nui
10.	Ms. Tupe Short	Koutu Nui
11.	Ms. Emily Pierre	Former Project Coordinator
12.	Mr. Gabriel Jaramillo	UNDP GEF RTA
13.	Ms. Frances Brown	Programme Associate-Environment & Climate Change Unit / UNDP MCO
14.	Ms. Anne Trevor	UNDP MCO – Programme Officer
15.	Mr. Michael Green	Former UNDP GEF Advisor
16.	Ms. Jeffery Leung Wai	UNDP MCO – Programme Analyst
17.	Ms. Yvette Kerslake	UNDP MCO – ARR/ PM
18.	Mr Taufao Taufao	UNDP MCO – M & E Officer

Annex 5. Evaluative Question Matrix

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Indicators	Means of Verification
i. Project Strategy		
1. Project design		
Review the problem addressed by the project and the underlying assumptions. Review the effect of any incorrect assumptions or changes to the context of achieving the project results as outlined in the Project Document.	Reported adaptive management measures in response to changes in context.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project progress reports. ▪ Interviews with project staff and key stakeholders.
Review the relevance of the project strategy and assess whether it provides the most effective route towards expected/intended results. Were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated into the project design?	Reported progress toward achieving the results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project progress reports. ▪ Interviews with project staff and key stakeholders.
Review how the project addresses country priorities. Review country ownership. Was the project concept in line with the national sector development priorities and plans of the country?	<p>Endorsement of the project by governmental agencies.</p> <p>Provision of counterpart funding.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Documents endorsements and co-financing. ▪ Interviews with UNDP, project staff and governmental agencies.
Review decision-making processes: were perspectives of those who would be affected by project decisions, those who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the process, taken into account during project design processes?	Level of participation of project partners in project design and actual inclusion in project implementation arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interviews with stakeholders. ▪ Project progress reports.
Review the extent to which relevant gender issues were raised in the project design.	Level of gender issues raised outlined in project documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project documents
2. Results Framework/ Log frame:		
Undertake a critical analysis of the project’s log frame indicators and targets, assess how “smart” the midterm and end-of-project targets are (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound), and suggest specific amendments/revisions to the targets and indicators as necessary.	Indicators and targets of outcome and outputs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project framework

Are the project’s objectives and outcomes or components clear, practical, and within its time frame?	The stated contribution of stakeholders in project implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interviews with stakeholders.
Examine if progress so far has led to or could in the future catalyze beneficial development effects (i.e. income generation, gender equality and women’s empowerment, improved governance, etc...) that should be included in the project results framework and monitored on an annual basis.	Indicators of the project’s outcome (from the project results framework)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Field visits and interviews with local stakeholders involved with these projects and the direct beneficiaries.
Ensure the broader development and gender aspects of the project are being monitored effectively. Develop and recommend smart ‘development’ indicators, including sex-disaggregated indicators and indicators that capture development benefits.	Measures were taken to ensure proper project implementation based on project monitoring and evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project’s reports. ▪ Interviews with PSC/Project board members ▪ Minutes of interviews with key stakeholders
ii. Progress Towards Results		
3. Progress towards outcomes analysis		
Review the logframe indicators against progress made towards the end-of-project targets using the Progress Towards Results Matrix.	Output level indicators of the Results Framework.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project progress reports. ▪ Tangible Product (publications, studies, etc.) ▪ Interviews with the project’s staff, partners, and stakeholders.
iii. Project Implementation and Adaptive Management		
4. Management arrangement		
Review the overall effectiveness of project management as outlined in the Project Document. Have changes been made and are they effective? Are responsibilities and reporting lines clear? Is decision-making transparent and undertaken in a timely manner? Recommend areas for improvement.	Level of implementation of mechanisms outlined in the project document	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interviews with project staff and partners. ▪ Project progress reports.
Review the quality of execution of the Executing Agency/Implementing Partner(s) and recommend areas for improvement.	Level of satisfaction (among partners and project staff) of overall management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interviews with project staff, consultants, and partner organizations

	by Implementing partner.	
Review the quality of support provided by the GEF Partner Agency (UNDP) and recommend areas for improvement.	Level of satisfaction (among partners and project staff) of overall management by UNDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interviews with project staff, consultants, and partner organizations
5. Work planning		
Review any delays in project start-up and implementation, identify the causes and examine if they have been resolved.	Level of compliance with project planning / annual plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project progress reports. ▪ Interviews with project staff.
Are work-planning processes results-based? If not, suggest ways to re-orientate work planning to focus on results?	List of results proposed in the work plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project work plan.
Examine the use of the project’s results framework/ logframe as a management tool and review any changes made to it since project start.	Level of compliance with project results framework and logframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project progress reports. ▪ Interviews with project staff.
6. Finance and co-finance		
Consider the financial management of the project, with specific reference to the cost-effectiveness of interventions.	Level of compliance with project financial planning / annual plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project financial reports. ▪ Interviews with project staff.
Review the changes to fund allocations as a result of budget revisions and assess the appropriateness and relevance of such revisions.	Level of compliance with project financial planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project financial reports.
Does the project have the appropriate financial controls, including reporting and planning, that allow management to make informed decisions regarding the budget and allow for the timely flow of funds?	<p>Quality of standards for financial and operative management.</p> <p>Perception of management efficiency by project partners and project staff/ consultants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interviews with the project and UNDP finance staff. ▪ Financial reports.
Informed by the co-financing monitoring table to be filled out, provide commentary on co-financing: is co-financing being used strategically to help the objectives of the project? Is the Project Team meeting with all co-financing partners regularly in order to	Level of co-financing in relation to the original planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Financial reports of the project. ▪ Interviews with project management

align financing priorities and annual work plans?		staff and UNDP RTA.
7. Project-level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems		
Review the monitoring tools currently being used: Do they provide the necessary information? Do they involve key partners? Are they aligned or mainstreamed with national systems? Do they use existing information? Are they efficient? Are they cost-effective? Are additional tools required? How could they be made more participatory and inclusive?	Measures were taken to improve project implementation based on project monitoring and evaluation. Level of implementation of the M&E system. Changes in project implementation as result of supervision visits/missions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project progress and implementation reports. ▪ Interview with project staff, UNDP team, and key stakeholders.
Examine the financial management of the project monitoring and evaluation budget. Are sufficient resources being allocated to monitoring and evaluation? Are these resources being allocated effectively?	The number of cases where resources are insufficient. The number of cases where budgets were transferred between different budget lines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project progress reports/ financial reports/ consultant contracts and report
8. Stakeholder Engagement		
Project management: Has the project developed and leveraged the necessary and appropriate partnerships with direct and tangential stakeholders?	Level of participation of project partners in project design and actual inclusion in project implementation arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interviews with key stakeholders
Participation and country-driven processes: Do local and national government stakeholders support the objectives of the project? Do they continue to have an active role in project decision-making that supports efficient and effective project implementation?	Endorsement of the project by governmental agencies. Provision of counterpart funding Perception of ownership by national and local agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interviews with national partners, UNDP and project staff. ▪ Project progress reports/PIR. ▪ Documented endorsements and co-financing.
Participation and public awareness: To what extent has stakeholder involvement and public awareness contributed to the progress towards the achievement of project objectives?	Perceived level of collaboration and coordination.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interviews with the Project Management team.

	The stated contribution of stakeholders in the achievement of outputs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interviews with stakeholders. ▪ Citation of stakeholders' roles in specific products like publications
9. Reporting		
Assess how adaptive management changes have been reported by the project management and shared with the Project Board.	Reported adaptive management measures in response to changes in context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project progress reports ▪ Interviews with project staff and key stakeholders
Assess how well the Project Team and partners undertake and fulfill GEF reporting requirements (i.e. how have they addressed poorly rated PIRs, if applicable?)	Level of alignment with the GEF mandate and policies at the time of design and implementation; and the GEF NPIF/ CBD.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Comparison of project document and annual reports and policy and strategy papers of local-regional agencies, GEF and UNDP. ▪ Interviews with UNDP, project and governmental agencies.
Assess how lessons derived from the adaptive management process have been documented, shared with key partners and internalized by partners.	Reported adaptive management measures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project progress reports. ▪ Interviews with project staff and key stakeholders.
10. Communications		
Review internal project communication with stakeholders: Is communication regular and effective? Are there key stakeholders left out of communication? Are there feedback mechanisms when communication is received? Does this communication with stakeholders contribute to their awareness of project outcomes and activities and investment in the sustainability of project results?	<p>The degree to which plans were followed up by project management.</p> <p>Perception of effectiveness.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project progress reports. ▪ Interviews with project staff and key stakeholders.
Review external project communication: Are proper means of communication established or being established to express the project progress and intended impact to the public (is there a web presence, for example? Or did the project implement appropriate outreach and public awareness campaigns?)	<p>Stated the existed means of communication.</p> <p>The degree to which plans were followed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project progress reports. ▪ Interviews with project staff and key stakeholders

	up by project management.	
iv. Sustainability		
Validate whether the risks identified in the Project Document, Annual Project Review/PIRs, and the ATLAS Risk Management Module are the most important and whether the risk ratings applied are appropriate and up to date. If not, explain why.	Identified risks and mitigation measures during project design and the updated risk-log sheet in ATLAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project document ▪ Progress report ▪ Risk log
11. Financial risks to sustainability.		
What is the likelihood of financial and economic resources not being available once the GEF assistance ends (consider potential resources can be from multiple sources, such as the public and private sectors, income-generating activities, and other funding that will be adequate financial resources for sustaining project’s outcomes)?	<p>Estimations on financial requirements.</p> <p>Estimations of the future budget of key stakeholders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Studies on financial sustainability. ▪ Documented estimations of the future budget. ▪ Interviews with project staff and key stakeholders
12. Socio-economic risks to sustainability.		
<p>Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize the sustainability of project outcomes?</p> <p>What is the risk that the level of stakeholder ownership (including ownership by governments and other key stakeholders) will be insufficient to allow for the project outcomes/benefits to be sustained?</p> <p>Do the various key stakeholders see that it is in their interest that the project benefits continue to flow?</p> <p>Is there sufficient public/stakeholder awareness in support of the long-term objectives of the project?</p> <p>Are lessons learned being documented by the Project Team on a continual basis and shared/transferred to appropriate parties who could learn from the project and potentially replicate and/or scale it in the future?</p>	<p>Key factors positively or negatively impacted project results (in relation to the stated assumptions).</p> <p>Main national stakeholders participate actively in the implementation and replication of project activities and results.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interviews with project staff, key stakeholders. ▪ Project progress reports. ▪ Revision of literature on context ▪ Documentation on activities of key stakeholders
13. Institutional Framework and Governance risks to sustainability		

<p>Do the legal frameworks, policies, governance structures, and processes pose risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project benefits? While assessing this parameter, also consider if the required systems/ mechanisms for accountability, transparency, and technical knowledge transfer are in place.</p>	<p>Key institutional frameworks that may positively or negatively influence project results (in relation to stated assumptions)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Analysis of existing frameworks. ▪ Interviews with project staff and key stakeholders
<p><i>14. Environmental risks to sustainability</i></p>		
<p>Are there any environmental risks that may jeopardize the sustenance of project outcomes?</p>	<p>Number of identified risks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Risk log and management response.

Annex 6. The questionnaire used for the interviews

- I. Relevance - How does the Project relate to the main objectives of the GEF and to the environment and development priorities of the Cook Islands?**
 1. Is the Project relevant to the GEF objectives?
 2. Is the Project relevant to UNDP objectives?
 3. Is the Project relevant to the Cook Islands development objectives?
 4. Does the Project address the needs of target beneficiaries?
 5. Is the Project internally coherent in its design?
 6. How is the Project relevant considering other donors?
 7. What lessons have been learned and what changes could have been made to the Project to strengthen the alignment between the Project and the Partners' priorities and areas of focus?
 8. How could the Project better target and address the priorities and development challenges of targeted beneficiaries?

- II. Effectiveness - To what extent are the expected outcomes of the Project being achieved?**
 1. How is the Project effective in achieving its expected outcomes?
 2. How is risk and risk mitigation being managed?

- III. Efficiency - How efficiently is the Project implemented?**
 1. Was the adaptive management used or needed to ensure efficient resource use?
 2. Did the Project logical framework and work plans and any changes made to them use as management tools during implementation?
 3. Were the accounting and financial systems in place adequate for Project management and producing accurate and timely financial information?
 4. Were progress reports produced accurately, timely and respond to reporting requirements including adaptive management changes?
 5. Was Project implementation as cost-effective as originally proposed (planned vs. actual)? Was the leveraging of funds (co-financing) happening as planned? Were financial resources utilized efficiently?
 6. Could financial resources have been used more efficiently?
 7. Were there institutionalized or informal feedback or dissemination mechanism to ensure that findings, lessons learned and recommendations pertaining to Project design and implementation effectiveness were shared among Project stakeholders, UNDP and GEF Staff and other relevant organizations for ongoing Project adjustment and improvement? Did the Project mainstream gender considerations into its implementation?
 8. To what extent were partnerships/ linkages between institutions/ organizations encouraged and supported?
 9. Which partnerships/linkages were facilitated? Which one can be considered sustainable?
 10. What was the level of efficiency of cooperation and collaboration arrangements? (between local actors, UNDP/GEF and relevant government entities)
 11. Was an appropriate balance struck between utilization of international expertise as well as local capacity?
 12. Did the Project consider local capacity in the design and implementation of the Project?

IV. IMPACTS - What are the potential and realized the impacts of activities carried out in the context of the Project?

1. Will the project achieve its objective that is to improve fiscal measures for collecting, managing, and allocating revenues for global environmental management?
2. How is the Project impacting the local environment such as impacts or likely impacts on the local environment; on poverty; and, on other socio-economic issues?

V. Sustainability - Are the initiatives and results of the Project allowing for continued benefits?

1. Are sustainability issues adequately integrated into Project design?
2. Did the Project adequately address financial and economic sustainability issues?
3. Is there evidence that Project partners will continue their activities beyond Project support?
4. Our laws, policies, and frameworks being addressed through the Project, in order to address the sustainability of key initiatives and reforms?
5. Is the capacity in place at the national and local levels adequate to ensure the sustainability of the results achieved to date?
6. Did the Project contribute to key building blocks for social and political sustainability?
7. Are Project activities and results being replicated elsewhere and/or scaled up?
8. What are the main challenges that may hinder the sustainability of efforts?

Annex 7: Changes made during the Project’ Inception Workshop.

Summary of main changes requested discussed and approved on the Project’s document during the Project’s IW (May 2016). The changes were presented to the Project Steering Committee for approval based on the IW.

- No changes to note on the Project summary tables.
- There were minor changes in wordings but no major changes to the project outcomes and outputs. See the below table, changes were highlighted in red:

Original outcomes/outputs	Modified outcomes/outputs
Outcome 1: Strengthened National Regulatory and Institutional Framework on ABS	Outcome 1: Strengthened National Regulatory and Institutional Framework on ABS
Output 1.1: Nagoya Protocol ratified by Parliament. Output 1.2: Strengthened National Regulatory and Institutional Framework on ABS Output 1.3: ABS Rules and Procedures developed. Output 1.4: Existing ABS Agreements aligned to NP and ABS National Legislation	Output 1.1: Nagoya Protocol ratified by Parliament. Output 1.2: Strengthened National Regulatory and Institutional Framework on ABS. Output 1.3: ABS Rules and Procedures developed. Output 1.4: Existing ABS Agreements aligned to NP and ABS National Legislation
Outcome 2: Capacity Building and Awareness Raising for the Implementation of the National ABS Framework	Outcome 2 Capacity building and awareness-raising for the implementation of the National ABS Framework
Output 2.1: Upgraded facilities and staff skills for bioprospecting and TK documentation. Output 2.2: the Improved technical capacity for implementing ABS activities Output 2.3: Increased awareness of ABS and associated national regulatory and institutional framework among a wide range of stakeholders	Output 2.1 Upgraded facilities and staff skills for bioprospecting and TK documentation Output 2.2 Improved technical capacity for implementing ABS activities Output 2.3 Increased awareness of ABS and associated national regulatory and institutional framework among a wide range of stakeholders
Outcome 3: Bio-discovery and Benefit-sharing based on the Traditional Knowledge on Bone and Cartilage Regeneration	Outcome 3 Bio-discovery and benefit-sharing based on the Traditional Knowledge on Bone and Cartilage Regeneration
Output 3.1: A Stronger CIMTECH and Te Koutu Nui ABS Agreement regarding Cartilage and Bone Regeneration Output 3.2: Application of improved extraction techniques to ‘Au’ (Hibiscus tiliaceus) to meet international standards.	Output 3.1 Strengthened CIMTECH and Te Koutu Nui ABS Agreement regarding Cartilage and Bone Regeneration. Output 3.2 Improved extraction techniques to ‘Au’ (Hibiscus tiliaceus) to meet international standards.

<p>Output 3.3: Scale-up production and undertake staff training to ensure analytical and laboratory capacities necessary to ensure consistent quality of the biologically active extract.</p> <p>Output 3.4: Sustainable management plan for the collection of Hibiscus tiliaceus and improved conservation of its waterway habitats</p>	<p>Output 3.3 Scaled-up production and training of staff to ensure analytical and laboratory capacities necessary to ensure consistent quality of the biologically active extract.</p> <p>Output 3.4 Sustainable management plan developed and implemented for collection of Hibiscus tiliaceus and improved conservation of its waterway habitats</p>
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- The project log-framework was reviewed a few minor changes were highlighted but nothing substantive was changed by way of indicators and targets.
- No changes reported on the total budget and on the co-financing, but some changes were introduced to some budget lines.
- Terms of Reference for the Project Coordinator and Project Manager have been amended to be in line with Cook Islands Policies and Procedures, and to consider the changes to the Project Manager position whereby an existing NES Staff is appointed as the PM.
- Instead of creating a Project Board to serve as the project’s coordination and decision-making body, the existing Cook Islands National Biodiversity Steering Committee has been asked after extending its function to also serve as the Projects Steering Committee (SC) for the NES project.

Annex 8: Capacity Development Score Card

UNDP/GEF ABS Capacity Development Scorecard

Project Name: Strengthening the Implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit Sharing in the Cook Islands.

At the terminal evaluation time

August 2019

Strategic Area of Support	Issue	Scorecard	Initial score	Score at TE	NES comments	Comments
1. Capacity to conceptualize and formulate policies, laws, strategies, and programs	The Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS) agenda is being effectively championed /driven forward	0 -- There is essentially no ABS agenda; 1 -- There are some persons or institutions actively pursuing an ABS agenda, but they have little effect or influence; 2 -- There are a number of ABS champions that drive the ABS agenda, but more is needed; 3 -- There are an adequate number of able "champions" and "leaders" effectively driving forwards an ABS agenda	2	2		The NES has had an ABS agenda for several years as evidenced by their drafting of an ABS Bill several years ago. Staff also attend and contribute to ABS Capacity Development Initiative regional meetings. The OPM has had a research policy and permit process. The Ministry of Cultural Development has developed a TK Law. CIMTECH and KN have an existing ABS agreement. Each of these organizations has its champions and leaders, but greater coherence is needed between the different organizations and a clearer regulatory framework for ABS.

Strategic Area of Support	Issue	Scorecard	Initial score	Score at TE	NES comments	Comments
	There is a legally designated institution(s) responsible for ABS with the capacity to develop a national ABS framework (i.e., laws, policies and/or regulations)	0 -- There is no institution(s) responsible for ABS; 1 – The institution(s) has financial resources but has limited personnel and expertise; 2 – The institution(s) has financial resources and personnel but limited expertise; 3 – The institution(s) has sufficient financial resources, personnel, and expertise.	1	1		The institutions have limited financial resources and limited personnel for developing a national ABS framework. They also have limited legal expertise for drafting ABS regulations. The Crown Law office may assist with drafting, but this comes at a cost. The OPM will provide policy support for the framework.
	There is a legally designated institution(s) responsible for ABS and able to update the ABS national framework	0 – The institution(s) does not have the financial resources, personal, and expertise; 1 – The institution(s) has financial resources but has limited personal and expertise; 2 – The institution(s) has financial resources and personal but limited expertise; 3 – The institution(s) has sufficient financial resources, personnel, and expertise.	0	1	ABS is a key outcome of the National Environment Service 2019/20 Business plan	To date there is not a legally designated institution, however, the NES and OPM have taken lead roles in drafting ABS regulations and controlling permits respectively. There is a limited budget for ABS/permits.

Strategic Area of Support	Issue	Scorecard	Initial score	Score at TE	NES comments	Comments
2. Capacity to implement policies, legislation, strategies, and programs	There is a legally designated ABS institution(s) responsible for ABS that can facilitate the implementation of the national ABS framework.	0 – The institution(s) does not have the financial resources, personal, and planning/management skills; 1 – The institution(s) has financial resources but has limited personal and planning/management skills; 2 – The institution(s) has financial resources and personal but limited planning/management skills; 3 – The institution(s) has sufficient financial resources, personnel and planning/management skills.	0	1	As above	As above
	The ABS institution (s) is effectively led	0 – The ABS institution(s) has a total lack of leadership; 1 – The ABS institution(s) has weak leadership and provides little guidance; 2 – The ABS institution(s) has a reasonably strong leadership but there is still need for improvement; 3 – The ABS institution(s) is effectively led	2	2	NES have some leadership on ABS but have limited time, personnel to commit to it.	NES and OPM have some leadership on ABS but have limited time, personnel and finance to commit to it.

Strategic Area of Support	Issue	Scorecard	Initial score	Score at TE	NES comments	Comments
	Human resources for ABS management are well qualified and motivated	0 -- Human resources are poorly qualified and unmotivated; 1 -- Human resources qualification is spotty, with some well qualified, but many only poorly and in general unmotivated; 2 – Human Resources in general reasonably qualified, but many lacks in motivation or those that are motivated are not sufficiently qualified; 3 -- Human resources are well qualified and motivated.	2	2	In general, human resources are well qualified. The main issue is that they are unable to commit to ABS processes due to a large workload.	In general NES and OPM, human resources are well qualified. The main issue is that they are unable to commit the required time to address ABS processes due to a large workload.

Strategic Area of Support	Issue	Scorecard	Initial score	Score at TE	NES comments	Comments
	The ABS institution(s) is able to adequately mobilize sufficient quantity of funding, human and material resources to effectively implement their mandate	0 – The ABS institution(s) is severely underfunded and has no capacity to mobilize sufficient resources; 1 – The ABS institution(s) has some funding and is able to mobilize some human and material resources but not enough to effectively implement its mandate; 2 – The ABS institution(s) has a reasonable capacity to mobilize funding or other resources but not always in sufficient quantities for fully effective implementation of their mandate; 3 – The ABS institution(s) is able to adequately mobilize sufficient quantity of funding, human and material resources to effectively implement its mandate	1	2	ABS is a key outcome of the National Environment Service 2019/20 Business plan	The NES with the support of OPM are willing to contribute to this project through the provision of human resources, however, all funding available to the agencies are already committed to other outputs.

Strategic Area of Support	Issue	Scorecard	Initial score	Score at TE	NES comments	Comments
	The ABS institution(s) is effectively managed, efficiently deploying its human, financial and other resources to the best effect	0 -- While the ABS institution(s) exists it has no management; 1 -- Institutional management is largely ineffective and does not deploy efficiently the resources at its disposal; 2 -- The ABS institution(s) is reasonably managed, but not always in a fully effective manner and at times does not deploy its resources in the most efficient way; 3 -- The ABS institution(s) is effectively managed, efficiently deploying its human, financial and other resources to the best effect	2	2		Time constraints and limited staff affect this capacity.
	The ABS institution(s) is audited and publicly accountable	0 – The ABS institution(s) is not being held accountable and not audited; 1 – The ABS institution(s) is occasionally audited without being held publicly accountable; 2 – The ABS institution(s) is regularly audited and there is a fair degree of public accountability but the system is not fully transparent; 3 – The ABS institution(s) is highly fully audited, and publicly accountable	3	3		The Cook Islands Government has stringent rules and regulations that govern the operations of all its agencies, making them fully responsible and accountable for the spending of public funds.

Strategic Area of Support	Issue	Scorecard	Initial score	Score at TE	NES comments	Comments
	Enforcement of ABS regulations	0 -- No enforcement of regulations is taking place; 1 -- Some enforcement of regulations but largely ineffective; 2 -- ABS regulations are regularly enforced but are not fully effective; 3 -- ABS regulations are highly effectively enforced	1	1	ABS are enforced on some research permit applications	There is a willingness from the government to develop and enforce ABS regulations, however, there are no regulations yet and not many cases to date. Research permits are enforced but there is limited capacity to do this.
	Individuals are able to advance and develop professionally	0 -- No career tracks are developed and no training opportunities are provided; 1 -- Career tracks are weak and training possibilities are few and not managed transparently; 2 -- Clear career tracks developed and training available; HR management, however, has inadequate performance measurement system; 3 -- Individuals are able to advance and develop professionally	2	2/3		There is a career track, but personnel sometimes hired under the consultancy and provisional contracts. Also, opportunities to grow in organizations are limited. Only one person in the Genetic Resources group is on a career track.

Strategic Area of Support	Issue	Scorecard	Initial score	Score at TE	NES comments	Comments
	Individuals are appropriately skilled for their jobs	0 -- Skills of individuals do not match job requirements; 1 -- Individuals have some or poor skills for their jobs; 2 -- Individuals are reasonably skilled but could further improve for the optimum match with job requirement; 3 -- Individuals are appropriately skilled for their jobs	2	3	Individual staff at NES have completed the ABS online course. Individuals in various agencies have the relevant skills to perform their jobs to the best of their ability	Individuals in various agencies have the relevant skills to perform their jobs to the best of their ability however, an area like ABS demands other specialist skills.
	Individuals are highly motivated	0 -- No motivation at all; 1 -- Motivation uneven, some are but most are not; 2 -- Many individuals are motivated but not all; 3 -- Individuals are highly motivated	2	2		Many individuals in government agencies are imbued with the spirit of service.

Strategic Area of Support	Issue	Scorecard	Initial score	Score at TE	NES comments	Comments
	There are appropriate mechanisms of training, mentoring, and learning in place to maintain a continuous flow of new staff	0 -- No mechanisms exist; 1 -- Some mechanisms exist but unable to develop enough and unable to provide the full range of skills needed; 2 -- Mechanisms generally exist to develop skilled professionals, but either not enough of them or unable to cover the full range of skills required; 3 -- There are mechanisms for developing adequate numbers of the full range of highly skilled ABS professionals	2	3	Individual staff at NES have completed the ABS online course	The small population in the Cook Islands affects the flow of new staff
3. Capacity to engage and build consensus among all stakeholders	ABS has the political commitment	0 -- There is no political will at all, or worse, the prevailing political will runs counter to the interests of ABS; 1 -- Some political will exists, but is not strong enough to make a difference; 2 -- Reasonable political will exists, but is not always strong enough to fully support ABS; 3 -- There are very high levels of political will to support ABS	3	3		Strong interest has been shown in recent years. The recent TK Law was passed through parliament suggesting continued support and interest for ABS.

Strategic Area of Support	Issue	Scorecard	Initial score	Score at TE	NES comments	Comments
	Degree of public support on ABS issues	0 -- The public has little interest in ABS and there is no significant lobby for ABS; 1 -- There is limited support for ABS; 2 -- There is general public support for ABS and there are various lobby groups strongly pushing them; 3 -- There is tremendous public support in the country for ABS	1	3	There was strong support of ABS by various stakeholders during community consultation	There are interest and support from some quarters – people in government and the Aronga Mana. However, there is probably little general knowledge of ABS except for the CIMTECH case. Support and media interest, in this case, seems high on Rarotonga but may be different on other islands.
	The ABS institution(s) is mission-oriented	0 -- Institutional mission is not defined; 1 -- Institutional mission is poorly defined and generally not known and internalized at all levels; 2 -- Institutional mission well defined and internalized but not fully embraced; 3 – Institutional mission is fully internalized and embraced	3	3		The NES is required under its governance structure to be mission oriented. NES has embraced this and so has their stakeholders.

Strategic Area of Support	Issue	Scorecard	Initial score	Score at TE	NES comments	Comments
	The ABS institution(s) can facilitate the partnerships needed to achieve its objectives	0 – The ABS institution(s) operate in isolation; 1 – The ABS institution(s) has facilitated some partnerships, but significant gaps and existing partnerships achieve little; 2 – The ABS institution(s) has facilitated many partnerships with a wide range of national and local agencies, private sector and NGOs but there are some gaps and partnerships, are not always effective and do not always enable efficient achievement of ABS objectives; 3 – The ABS institution(s) has facilitated effective partnerships with national and local agencies, the private sector and NGOs to enable achievement of ABS objectives in an efficient and effective manner	2	3	NES has been successful in facilitating partnerships across sectors for support of its projects. There has been unwavering support from stakeholders due to the impact environment projects have on the lives of people and their communities.	NES has been successful in facilitating partnerships across sectors for support of its projects. There has been unwavering support from stakeholders due to the impact environment projects have on the lives of people and their communities. There is a willingness from key stakeholders to work with NES to ensure ABS objectives are achieved.

Strategic Area of Support	Issue	Scorecard	Initial score	Score at TE	NES comments	Comments
4. Capacity to mobilize information and knowledge	The ABS institution(s) has the information it needs to enforce the national legal/policy ABS framework and to facilitate ABS deals	0 -- Information is virtually lacking; 1 – The ABS institution(s) has access to some information, but is of poor quality, is of limited usefulness, or is very difficult to access; 2 – The ABS institution(s) has access to a lot of information which is mostly of good quality, but there remain some gaps in quality, coverage, and availability; 3 – The ABS institution(s) has the information it needs to enforce the national legal/policy framework and facilitate ABS deals.	2	3	ABS policy has been completed and with the review of the Environment Act, ABS will be incorporated into the Environment Policy and legislation and regulations	NES will work with Crown Law office and OPM to develop the types of information required to enforce and implement the ABS legislation and framework but may need training to broker deals on ABS agreements.
	Individuals from the ABS institution(s) work effectively together as a team	0 -- Individuals work in isolation and don't interact; 1 -- Individuals interact in a limited way and sometimes in teams but this is rarely effective and functional; 2 -- Individuals interact regularly and form teams, but this is not always fully effective or functional; 3 -- Individuals interact effectively and form functional teams	3	3		NES has an excellent working relationship with its key stakeholders and partners.

Strategic Area of Support	Issue	Scorecard	Initial score	Score at TE	NES comments	Comments
5. Capacity to monitor, evaluate, report and learn	ABS policy or law is continually reviewed and updated	0 -- There is no policy or law, or it is old and not reviewed regularly; 1 -- Policy or law is only reviewed at irregular intervals; 2 -- Policy or law is reviewed regularly but not annually; 3 -- Policy or law is reviewed annually	0	0	Draft ABS policy is complete and with the review of the Environment Act this may change	ABS law is in development. However, a research permit system is in place and there is an ABS agreement via contract (CIMTECH-KN)
	Society monitors ABS projects	0 -- There is no dialogue at all; 1 -- There is some dialogue going on, but not in the wider public and restricted to specialized circles; 2 -- There is a reasonably open public dialogue going on but certain issues remain taboo; 3 -- There is an open and transparent public dialogue about the state of the ABS projects	1	2	Community aware and understand the importance of ABS	ABS is generally only discussed by communities when it is associated with a certain project (e.g. CIMTECH). Knowledge from some sectors of the community probably higher than others. Those on Rarotonga may be better informed than those on outer islands.
	Institutions are highly adaptive, responding effectively and immediately to change	0 -- Institutions resist change; 1 -- Institutions do change but only very slowly; 2 -- Institutions tend to adapt in response to change but not always very effectively or with some delay; 3 -- Institutions are highly adaptive, responding effectively and immediately to change.	2	2		Any change has its own transformation and adaptation period. NES and its ABS partners are no different.

Strategic Area of Support	Issue	Scorecard	Initial score	Score at TE	NES comments	Comments
	The ABS institution(s) has effective internal mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation, reporting and learning on ABS projects	0 -- There are no mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation, reporting or learning; 1 -- There are some mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation, reporting, and learning but they are limited and weak; 2 -- Reasonable mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation, reporting, and learning are in place but are not as strong or comprehensive as they could be; 3 -- Institutions have effective internal mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation, reporting, and learning.	1	2	MMR has incorporated ABS as part of their permitting process	Limited monitoring of research permits by OPM. This is currently under review with a view to improving monitoring mechanisms. NES will also be required to establish, as part of the framework monitoring mechanisms specifically for ABS.
	Individuals from ABS institutions are adaptive and continue to learn	0 -- There is no measurement of performance or adaptive feedback; 1 -- Performance is irregularly and poorly measured and there is little use of feedback; 2 -- There is the significant measurement of performance and some feedback, but this is not as thorough or comprehensive as it might be; 3 -- Performance is effectively measured and adaptive feedback utilized	2	2		All government agencies, as part of good governance principles, are required to carry out comprehensive performance assessments. This assessment process is always hampered by the lack of ability of agencies to reward good performance.
			42	53.5		

Annex 9: Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form

Evaluators/Consultants:

1. Must present information that is complete and fair in its assessment of strengths and weaknesses so that decisions or actions taken are well-founded.
2. Must disclose the full set of evaluation findings along with information on their limitations and have this accessible to all affected by the evaluation with expressed legal rights to receive results.
3. Should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual informants. They should provide maximum notice, minimize demands on time, and respect people's right not to engage. Evaluators must respect people's right to provide information in confidence and must ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source. Evaluators are not expected to evaluate individuals and must balance evaluation of management functions with this general principle.
4. Sometimes uncover evidence of wrongdoing while conducting evaluations. Such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body. Evaluators should consult with other relevant oversight entities when there is any doubt about it and how issues should be reported.
5. Should be sensitive to beliefs, manners, and customs and act with integrity and honesty in their relations with all stakeholders. In line with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evaluators must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender equality. They should avoid offending the dignity and self-respect of those persons with whom they come in contact in the course of the evaluation. Knowing that evaluation might negatively affect the interests of some stakeholders, evaluators should conduct the evaluation and communicate its purpose and results in a way that clearly respects the stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.
6. Are responsible for their performance and their product(s). They are responsible for the clear, accurate and fair written and/or oral presentation of study limitations, findings, and recommendations.
7. Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation.

Terminal Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form

Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System:

Name of Consultant: AMAL ALDABABSEH

Name of Consultancy Organization (where relevant): INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANT

I confirm that I have received and understood and will abide by the United Nations Code of Conduct for Evaluation.

Signed at Jordan (Place)

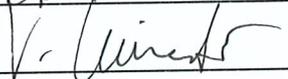
on 16 December 2019 (Date)

Signature:



Annex 10: Evaluation Report Clearance Form

(to be completed by CO and UNDP GEF Technical Adviser based in the region and included in the final document)

Evaluation Report Reviewed and Cleared by UNDP Country Office	
Name:	<u>VERONA LINNEWEBER, DRR</u>
Signature:	<u></u> Date: <u>20/2/2020</u>
UNDP GEF RTA	
Name: Gabriel Jaramillo	Date: 19 February 2020
Signature:	