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PROJECT TERMINAL EVALUATION

“SEYCHELLES’ PROTECTED AREAS FINANCE PROJECT”

UNDP PIMS 4656

GEF ID 5485

GEF FOCAL AREA: BIODIVERSITY

BD 1: IMPROVE SUSTAINABILITY OF PROTECTED AREA SYSTEMS

STRATEGIC PROGRAM OF GEF

OUTCOME 1.2. INCREASED REVENUE FOR PROTECTED AREA SYSTEMS TO MEET TOTAL EXPENDITURES REQUIRED FOR
MANAGEMENT OUTPUT 3: SUSTAINABLE FINANCING PLANS

EXECUTING ENTITY/IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS:

RESPONSIBLE PARTNERS:

REGION: AFRICA

COUNTRY: SEYCHELLES

Evaluation conducted by:

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from 16 June 2021 - 10 September 2021

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AG	Attorney General
BAU	Business as Usual
BIOFIN	Biodiversity Finance (project)
COVID 19	Corona Virus Disease 2019
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility (tax)
DoE	Department of Environment
ETF	Environment Trust Fund
FA4JR	Financial Assistance for Job retention
FACE	Funding Authorisation and Certificate of Expenditures
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEF STAP	GEF Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel
GIF	Green Island Foundation
GVI	Global Vision International
Gos	Government of Seychelles
ICS	Island Conservation Society
IDC	Island Development Company
MACCE	Ministry of Agriculture Climate Change and Environment
MEECC	Ministry of Environment Energy and Climate Change (now MACCE)
METT	Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool
MCSS	Marine Conservation Society of Seychelles
MPAs	Marine Protected Areas
MTR	Mid Term Review
MSP	Marine Spatial Planning
NIM	National Implementation Modality
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans
NS	Nature Seychelles
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
PA	Protected Areas
PAS	Protected Area System
PC-CTA	Programme Coordinator -Chief Technical Advisor
PCU	Programme Coordination Unit
PIR	Project Implementation Report
PPG	Project Preparation Grant
PPPs	Public Private Partnerships

PSC	Project Steering Committee
SCR	Seychelles Rupee
SeyCCAT	Seychelles Conservation & Climate Adaptation Trust
SESP	Social & Environmental Screening Procedure
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SIF	Seychelles Islands Foundation
SNPA	Seychelles National Parks Authority
STB	Seychelles Tourism Board
TEEB	The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity
TOC	Theory of Change
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNSD	United Nations Statistics Division
UniSey	University of Seychelles
USD	United States Dollar

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Table 1. Project Information Table of the Seychelles PAF project

Project Details		Project Milestones	
Project Title	Seychelles' Protected Area Finance	PIF Approval Date:	7 November 2013
UNDP Project ID (PIMS #):	4656	CEO Endorsement Date (FSP) / Approval date (MSP):	/ approval 3 December 2015 (SC meeting minutes 1 jan 2016)
GEF Project ID:	5485	ProDoc Signature Date:	28 December 2015
UNDP Atlas Business Unit, Award ID, Project ID:	00088837	Date Project Manager hired:	1 October 2016
Country/Countries:	Seychelles	Inception Workshop Date:	3 March 2016
Region:	Indian Ocean/East Africa	Mid-Term Review Completion Date:	10 August 2018
Focal Area:	Biodiversity	Terminal Evaluation Completion date:	10 September 2021
GEF Operational Programme or Strategic Priorities/Objectives:	BD 1: Improve Sustainability of Protected Area Systems	Planned Operational Closure Date:	30 September 2021
Trust Fund:	GEF Trust Fund BD		
Implementing Partner (GEF Executing Entity):	MEECC (changed to MACCE in 2021) – Executing Agency UNDP – Implementing Agency		
NGOs/CBOs involvement:	Marine Conservation Society of Seychelles (NGO) Nature Seychelles (NGO) The Nature Conservancy (INGO) Seychelles Island Foundation (Government Trust/Foundation) Green Island Foundation (Foundation) Seychelles Conservation and Climate Change Adaptation Trust (Government Trust)		
Private sector involvement:	North Island Seychelles Banyan Tree Seychelles Denis Private Island		
Geospatial coordinates of project sites:	GIS data: Sey_Protected_Areas_3Mar2017.dbf Sey_Protected_Areas_3Mar2017.prj Sey_Protected_Areas_3Mar2017.sbn Sey_Protected_Areas_3Mar2017.sbx Sey_Protected_Areas_3Mar2017.shp Sey_Protected_Areas_3Mar2017.shp.xml Sey_Protected_Areas_3Mar2017.shx		
Financial Information			
PDF/PPG	at approval (US\$)		at PDF/PPG completion (US\$)
GEF PDF/PPG grants for project preparation	100,000		97,648.75

Co-financing for project preparation	37,500	37,500
Project	at CEO Endorsement (USD)	at TE (USD)
[1] UNDP contribution:	150,000	150,000
[2] Government:	Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change (MEECC) 7,000,000 SNPA (GOS related) Seychelles Island Foundation (Government Trust) 3,200,000 1,400,000	6,717,171.84 1,228,352.32 1,560,386.58
[3] Other multi-/bi-laterals:		
[4] Private Sector:	North Island Seychelles (private sector) 226,981 Banyan Tree Seychelles (private sector) 184,000 Denis Private Island (private sector) 182,413	285,448 204,889 255,154
[5] NGOs:	Green Island Foundation 90,260 Nature Seychelles 1,570,000 Marine Conservation Society of Seychelles 160,000 The Nature Conservancy 1,000,000	171,659.58 2,833,516.29 383,946 1,452,777
[6] Total co-financing [1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5]:	15,013,654	15,243,300.61
[7] Total GEF funding:	2,776,000	2,776,900
[8] Total Project Funding [6 + 7]	17,790,554	18,020,200.61

Brief description of project

1. The Seychelles Protected Areas Finance project aimed to close the financing gap that had been limiting the ability of the system to manage and conserve its biodiversity effectively. It sought to put in place a consolidated framework for the financial, operational efficiency and coherency of the disconnected assemblage of protected areas in Seychelles (as well as the plan to expand the PA network, including a significant increase in the marine area of the exclusive economic zone).
2. The project objective was to improve financial sustainability and strategic cohesion of the Seychelles protected area system in a shifting and dynamic national economic environment. It hoped to address differing capacity among the large number of management entities, improve funding revenues, improve standardized management, and support financial sustainability in the overall system.
3. At the national level, it aimed to directly support the implementation of the National Protected Areas Policy 2013, and built on various projects and aimed to have multiple synergies with ongoing processes to enhance its strategic results achievement.
4. The project focused on two outcomes, namely (a) a protected areas system investment plan to direct long-term sustainable financing to the overall system and overall management capacity is improved (at site, institutional and systemic levels), thereby contributing to the overall national conservation agenda, and (b) more specific work and tailored support for the protected areas to generate reliable revenue and improve their management effectiveness, including financial autonomy of the Seychelles National Parks Authority (and including catering for the needs of an expanded state).
5. The project was implemented under the leadership of the Ministry of Agriculture, Climate Change and Environment (MACCE, then MEECC), with UNDP oversight, and with multiple partners implementing different parts of the project.
6. The project planned budget was USD 17,790,554, with USD 2,776,900 GEF contribution and USD 15,013,654 co-financing contributions.
7. The project ran for five years.
8. In line with the recently updated UNDP Evaluation Guidance for GEF Financed Projects¹, as well as the UNDP Evaluation Guidelines² and the new COVID-related guidelines³ developed by the Independent Evaluation Office of the UNDP, the Terminal Evaluation is being undertaken at the completion of the project, particularly to assess performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. As is standard for GEF projects, the evaluation has two primary purposes:
 - a. To provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and
 - b. To promote operational improvement, learning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNDP, MACCE and project partners.

Brief Report on Project Results Achievement

¹ <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/guidance/GEF/UNDP-GEF-TE-Guide.pdf>

² <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/>

³ Independent Evaluation Office. 2020. Adjusted Terms of Reference, Evaluations during COVID-19, Evaluation Guidelines. UNDP.

9. Annex 1 provides a detailed report on the achievement of project results within the Results Framework, and C. Project Results and Impacts under II. Findings provides the detailed narrative. Below is a brief summary of the project results.
10. Outcome 1; Output 1.1. A PA System (PAS) Financing & Investment Plan for Seychelles is adopted at the national-level, along with subsidiary investment plans at the site or sub-system levels, and these become a key instrument for implementing the 2013 PA Policy: This was not achieved by end of project although likelihood that a version of the financing plan will move forward and be accepted is taken up through MSP process;
11. Output 1.2. Site-level cost-effectiveness and conservation-effectiveness benchmarks are established to guide decisions on investment, co-management, delegation and cross-subsidization: Strongly achieved in terms of standardized management effectiveness with some minor limitations;
12. Output 1.3. An adequate legal framework is emplaced for implementing the PAS-wide investment programme with a multi-funding approach, adaptable to each PA: Proposal for financial contributions from hotels located in Protected Areas was not successfully taken up. The Nature Reserve and Conservancy Bill was not enacted by end of project (although likely it will in 2021) and this affected the MCSS project to develop temporal protected areas (TPA);
13. Output 1.4. Institutional capacity-building of SNPA and other key PA managing entities for the implementation of the Seychelles PA System Financing & Investment Plan in enhanced: Institutional capacity building was highly successful and included business plan training, enforcement training, marketing training, management plan training, and development of SNPA strategic plan.
14. For Outcome 2; Output 2.1. Institutional and policy barriers for an effective site-level revenue generation, collection and retention into the PA system are lifted, creating better conditions and incentives for reducing the PA finance gap: SNPA autonomy was achieved in 2019 however there is risk of sustaining of project results with the merger of the SNPA with Botanical Gardens Foundation and the reduction in revenues due to COVID-19 ;
15. Output 2.2. Essential touristic or other relevant infrastructure in selected PAs are developed and new cost-effective practices, systems and schemes are implemented, all with the aim of making these PAs more attractive to visitors, increasing their own revenue generation capacity, while safeguarding and protecting their conservation value: Some activities failed (e.g. Aldabra House construction, Silhouette co-management, some SNPA related activities), and some that were successfully achieved had been impacted by COVID-19 (e.g. Voluntourism on Cousin Island, nature trails on SNPA sites). It was found that there is an overall strong investment from the project to improve sites and generate income for individual sites;
16. Output 2.3. The operationalization of the SCCAT, and of other related environmental finance mechanisms to be adopted, takes the need for supporting biodiversity conservation into consideration, including the need to address the PAS financing gap: SeyCCAT was successfully operationalized, however no finance mechanism was adopted (although project maintains the support to Blue Grants as one mechanism, but others like the payment for ecosystem services (PES), conservation levy as expected by Indicator in logframe were not taken up).

Key Findings

17. **Project Design:** The project design was based on a robust PPG process that had strong stakeholder engagement and was an effective way to balance the different expectations from project partners.
18. Some aspects that could have picked up at design were: 1) better integration of Terminal Evaluation recommendations from other projects, 2) identification of risks to outputs that was beyond project's control e.g. legislation enacted (and thus political will), and 3) the challenge

of having partners contribute towards a systems approach when this had failed in previous projects. An arguable point is also the risk of the elections on the project implementation (as, while there were date changes that were unexpected, the timing of the election in terms of the year, was known).

19. The linkages of the project within the sector were strong and the PPG phase did a good job at making sure the project aligned with various ongoing and future projects.
20. **Project Implementation and Execution:** The project underwent a pretty solid and well-thought-out review process at Mid-Term that allowed the project to successfully shift and move forward towards the project results. However as stated above, some of the activities were impacted by the change in government and COVID-19 particularly during the last year of project implementation.
21. It was found that the project team was highly efficient and hard-working. The skilled Technical Advisor brought much integrated capacity into the project that should have long-lasting results.
22. The implementing partners generally successfully implemented their parts with some exceptions that were due to capacity and staff-turnover (e.g. SNPA where the project team had to provide support role) and institutional impasse (e.g. between SIF and LTD that led to Aldabra House being cancelled), or due to lack of collaboration and conflict (e.g. Activities on Silhouette island).
23. The MACCE took less leadership role than expected from project design. The project was eventually more strategically aligned with SeyCCAT and MSP process (based on MTR recommendation) to sustain project results in the longer term and uptake of some elements that the project was not able to achieve on its own.
24. Government ownership and championship of the project in general was not as strong as was hoped given the low level of uptake of actions that depended on government approval.
25. Co-financing was surprisingly achieved in the project and primarily due to other partners exceeding their contributions, which helped the shortfall from MACCE and SNPA. .
26. **Project results and impacts:** Outcome 1 and 2 were largely on track to be achieved until the change in government and COVID-19 radically shifted the potential.
27. The project overall had a mixed level of success in terms of its output-level achievements. The greatest achievement of the project was its focused support to SNPA, which successfully achieved financial autonomy, improved capacity and support to infrastructure, in terms of trails and services provided to visitors. .
28. The lack of partnership is an important consideration and a blockage to the system's success. In this project alone, several barriers due to lack of collaboration occurred, including: 1) lack of participation by one project beneficiary in the METT scores invalidates the entire procedure, 2) activities on Silhouette island not implemented due to conflicts between IDC, ICS and SNPA, 3) complaint to Minister bypassing the Steering Committee for an activity to support SeyCCAT Business Planning, among others. A recommendation has been made to this effect because this is a recurring problem that will only lead to more conflicts and barriers in the future unless dealt with strategically now and in a more nuanced way (looking at the social and group psychology aspects of the different partnerships and structure).
29. It was found that the project was efficient in terms of its synergies with other initiatives, its ability to have garnered strong co-financing support. However it was less efficient in terms of its use of influence (in terms of leadership within MACCE, for example) to move certain issues forward. The project did a relatively strong effort to adapt to the repercussions of COVID-19 and the change in Government.

30. Overall, the project managed to decrease the financing gap, which was the main aim of the project, although only at basic level, and without the increase of the expanded state. However, the potential is now higher and a step further giving the next projects and ongoing processes more lift to further close the gap, despite the challenges faced under COVID-19 and priorities of government (e.g. Repeal of CSR tax).
31. The longer-term impact as per the Theory of Change will depend on various elements, including (a) the level to which the partners collaborate, (b) the level of ownership and championship at government and political level, and (c) greater appreciation of the economic value of Protected Areas.

Conclusions

32. The project underwent some challenges in implementation – including the initial challenges that were then re-shifted during MTR, and then finally COVID-19 lockdown and restrictions as well as changes to government. Despite this, the project (team and implementation partners) did high quality work in the areas they had influence over.
33. The project certainly demonstrated some strong achievements to government that had not previously been seen in other projects – especially through the tangible and concrete support to SNPA. Foundations was laid and capacities developed for the PA managing entities that will have far-reaching and longer-term effects. Some missing links include stronger and more strategic engagement with the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Tourism.
34. The project was highly relevant to the country priorities and to its economic dependence on natural resources, although some challenges exist in terms of the visibility of this strategic relevance.
35. Championship in some instances was strong, but actionable championship from government could have been stronger. Leadership from MACCE and other levels of government, and partners collaborating and unifying, can go a long way in sustaining and improving project results and moving towards impact, as will a more coordinated approach to the MSP, SeyCCAT, BIOFIN and Climate Finance processes
36. The project aimed to increase sustainable financing under changing economic environments – and it certainly did that however its more ambitious hopes at the systemic level were not met .
37. For the project to attain its final impact where a critical mass of ecosystems are protected and financially sustainable, some key processes need to take place, including assessment and appreciation of PA contribution into the economy, as well as stronger government leadership.
38. In terms of government ownership, political will, and general re-investment into the protected areas system: there is a lot of high-level commitment to back conservation actions but it is seen as a “responsibility” and not as a “reinvestment into capital”, specifically in terms of the difference in GDP contributions by protected areas versus budget allocations by government to conserve these protected areas. There is heavy reliance on external funding sources. This is ultimately not just about financing (of protected areas), it is about the economic value system in general, which is growth fixated and where nature is still to a large, although changing, extent, seen as a free and unlimited resource in quantification terms (if you look at the National System of Accounts, which does not include natural capital or ecosystem services accounting). It is unlikely that higher prioritisation or budget allocations to conservation will occur under short-term economic response plans taken after the economic hits taken due to COVID-19.
39. Within this value system, in the short-term it will help biodiversity conservation goals if nature’s economic value becomes visible in the current economic value system.
40. To support the longer-term shift in economic values, and to support improved investment in the short-term, the business case of nature needs to be made. To do this more holistically, a

two-fold approach needs to take place: (1) integration of Natural Capital Accounting in the National System of Accounts, and (2) through case-study economic valuation of biodiversity and ecosystem services in two sectors that the government is focusing on under its economic diversification plan of the IMF reform, namely fisheries and agriculture, and tourism. The latter has been done to an extent in a fragmented way, but was supposed to be refined through the TEMPAs study⁴. Nonetheless this is being done through the MSP economic valuation study, which is also looking at economic diversification opportunities. This is outlined in the recommendation B.3. below.

41. The project has made a strong effort to attain the overall goal, despite the challenges,
42. Based on the above considerations, the project, overall is given a rating of Satisfactory.

Table 2. Summary of project ratings table for the Terminal Evaluation of the Seychelles’ Protected Areas Finance Project

Criterion	Rating
Monitoring and Evaluation	S
M&E Design at Entry	S
M& Implementation	HS
UNDP Implementation/Oversight and Implementation Partner Execution	S
Quality of UNDP Implementation/Oversight	S
Quality of Implementing Partner Execution	MS
Assessment of Outcomes	S
Relevance	S
Effectiveness	MS
Efficiency	S
Sustainability	ML
Financial resources	ML
Socio-political	ML
Institutional framework and governance	ML
Environmental	L
Overall Project Rating	S

Lessons Learned

Lesson 1: Design ambition, adaptiveness and flexibility and the role of GEF in times of change

43. Shifting approaches and adaptive flexibility in projects can be good, as was illustrated in this project in terms of partnerships with SeyCCAT and the MSP process (good recommendation generally at MTR), as well as the project flexibility also in terms of COVID-19.
44. However, there may be some lessons learnt for project design and for GEF in general in terms of how it is supporting SIDS and countries of change.
45. An echo is made to a lesson learnt from the Outer Islands Project Terminal Evaluation and is a recurring problem in general in Seychelles that the project design is overambitious, that indicators are developed that are not in the control of the project and thus more assumptions than drivers (also picked up in the Terminal Evaluation of the GEF NGO modalities project under lessons). The evaluators agree with the evaluator of the TE of the Outer Islands in stating that there might be a limitation to the GEF project document template that does not take into account the comparative size of a country like Seychelles (or SIDS in general) and this results in

⁴ Previous studies have also been done in other projects more than a decade ago (source: feedback from partners at prelim findings workshop).

the recurring problem of overdesign of projects which lead to implementation issues since capacity and human resources are rather limited.

46. Another lesson to take up with GEF and Implementing Agencies of GEF is the need to consider flexibility in terms of sensitivity to radical shocks affecting the system (like COVID-19 did). Some project partners might rightly argue how can project results be achieved, if a shock big enough to upset the basic survival of those actually doing the very work that lays the foundation of such achievements are felt. How can a project be able to support short-term shock survival while enhancing the resilience of future shocks and still achieving the results of the project? The evaluators do not have the answer to this, but it is an important point to consider for the GEF and the IAs in times of radical change while under the urgent need to meet the SDGs and enhance resilience in the system.

Lesson 2: Importance of building strong government institution and capacity of internal staff to maximise project benefits

47. The SNPA relied heavily on external support and internal staff were not effectively developed by the project (e.g. external consultant for the communication and marketing work versus longer term staff member), and the value of the work and institutional strength (versus individual strength) has a strong implication on follow-through and ownership of project results. As an example, the change in leadership at SNPA heavily affected the institution's implementation of the project..

Lesson 3: The need for Government endorsement and support of important projects undertaken by beneficiaries

48. The Aldabra House was to be a flagship achievement for the project and the cancellation was a great disappointment. Because the risk was already there at design, the project needed to be reflective in the instability and uncertainty in government decisions even when high-level support is garnered. Future project proposals need to be fully endorsed by the Government before being written into the project.

Lesson 4: Effective consultation, engagement and collaboration with key influencers (e.g. Ministry of Finance)

49. The non-approval of the Investment Plan by the Ministry of Finance highlights the need for stronger stakeholder engagement and consultation. There is a need to think strategically at the beginning of the project (even better at design, PPG phase) who the key influencers are, and make them responsible to achieve a certain output.

Recommendations

Table 3. TE Recommendations for the Seychelles PAF Project

Rec #	TE Recommendation	Entity Responsible	Time Frame
A	Category A: Ensuring (necessary) final project results achievement		
A.1.	SeyCCAT and MSP process to finalize the outstanding items of this project, including most notably the Financing Plan updating and the solutions there-in (including revisiting the WTP and PES), the biodiversity economic valuation study.	MACCE (SeyCCAT and MSP)	by end of year 2021
A.2.	Maximise institutional coordination between SeyCCAT, MSP, Biodiversity Finance Unit, Blue Economy GEF-7 Project, Climate Finance to drive project results and build stronger financing for	MACCE	Ongoing, starting immediately

Rec #	TE Recommendation	Entity Responsible	Time Frame
	protected areas (also linked to ecosystem resilience to climate change.		
A.3.	Finalise the institutional assessment of the SPGA and drive project results achieved for SNPA, maintain and build on infrastructural, structural and capacity support built by project	SPGA	by end of year 2021
B	Category B: Sustaining and further catalysing results for TOC impact		
B.1.	Develop information dissemination strategy to share best practices (and generally more in terms of overall GEF spending and results achievement under projects developed), integrate PCU and GEF work more strategically into the work programme of MACCE	MACCE and PCU	Starting immediately
B.2.	Partnerships for enhanced resilience Build coordination and partnership for enhanced resilience and mutual supportive environment. System fragmentation will risk system resilience and needs to be dealt with. (a) Use Advisory Board (from 2018) platform under the Nature Reserve and Conservancy Bill (b) Bring in external expertise on depth facilitation/conflict resolution in the set up and the first focus of the meetings to deal with recurrent barriers to moving forward that only depth facilitation processes will have a chance to resolve. (c) On a slightly different note and more at project level, or any project that includes partnerships for the entire system, an umbrella agreement could be signed by all partners agreeing to mutual cooperation and support toward the system before individual agreements are taken forward.	MACCE as leader & Project partners	2021/22
B.3.	Make nature's value visible in the economic agenda (1) Integration of Natural Capital Accounting in the National System of Accounts (through consultative discussions with National Bureau of Statistics and UNSD) (international technical and financial support option through UNSD), and (2) through case-study economic valuation of biodiversity and ecosystem services in two sectors that the government is focusing on under its economic diversification plan of the IMF reform, namely fisheries and agriculture, and then through tourism (depending on necessity building on MSP economic valuation study) (international technical and financial support option through UNEP The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity Office).	UNDP/MACCE can engage with Statistics Office, liaise with international partners through UN like UNSD and UNEP	Depends on work with National Bureau of Statistics and opportunity to connect

Rec #	TE Recommendation	Entity Responsible	Time Frame
	<p>Some of this could form part of existing work, and other under new work (external support to set this up is very likely, e.g. Natural Capital Accounting through United Nations Statistics Division – already some work has been done here for SEEA accounts for fisheries with the National Statistics Office in Seychelles in 2016, through the TEEB Office in UNEP links could be made for accounting, as well as for case studies (e.g. TEEB AgriFood for agriculture), all of which would strongly support re-financing for protected areas as a system.</p>		

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Evaluation Purpose

1. The UNDP/GEF Project “Seychelles’ Protected Areas Finance” (GEF ID 5485; UNDP PIMS 4656) aimed to support the protected area system of Seychelles (both at entity level and at the level of the system itself) in enhancing its ability to access financing to cover its conservation outcomes.
2. In line with the recently updated UNDP Evaluation Guidance for GEF Financed Projects⁵, as well as the UNDP Evaluation Guidelines⁶ and the new COVID-related guidelines⁷ developed by the Independent Evaluation Office of the UNDP, the Terminal Evaluation is being undertaken at the completion of the project, particularly to assess performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. As is standard for GEF projects, the evaluation has two primary purposes:
 - a. To provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and
 - b. To promote operational improvement, learning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNDP, MACCE and project partners.

B. Scope and Methodology of the Evaluation

3. The evaluation was conducted in an independent manner (see below under D. Ethics) by two evaluation consultants (here-in after referred to the as the “international evaluator” and the “national evaluator”) commissioned by the UNDP Seychelles Country Office. The evaluation was carried out between 23 July and 10 September 2021 under the general support and oversight of the UNDP Country Office, and facilitative support of the Project Coordinating Unit (PCU). The evaluation employed a participatory approach and stakeholders were informed of the evaluation process with opportunities to provide comments on the evaluation findings.
4. The parameters and focus of the evaluation included (as provided above under purpose) assessment of the project design and its implementation including flagging any issues and provide reasoning why these issues arose and how these were mitigated/adapted to, highlight learnings and good practices, and discuss the move to impact and sustaining project results.
5. A Theory of Change was reconstructed during the data collection phase of the project. This Theory of Change was then presented and discussed with key project partners involved in the evaluation, inputs were sought, and a marginally revised version can be found in section III.A. of this report.
6. The Theory of Change was predominantly used to guide the assessment of overall impact and sustaining of project results, as well as a useful tool to consider what recommendations could further allow the project to support the longer-term impact of financing protected areas in

⁵ <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/guidance/GEF/UNDP-GEF-TE-Guide.pdf>

⁶ <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/>

⁷ Independent Evaluation Office. 2020. Adjusted Terms of Reference, Evaluations during COVID-19, Evaluation Guidelines. UNDP.

order to have a protected area system made up of a critical mass of healthy and connected ecosystems fully integrated into the economic value system.

7. The two strategic higher-level questions guiding the evaluation (specifically related to Effectiveness related to project achievement of outcomes) are as follows:
 - a. To what extent did the project foster investment and enhance capacity for protected areas management toward the long-term financial and environmental sustainability of the protected area system? (Outcome 1)
 - b. To what extent did the project succeed in improving reliable revenue generation of better overall management effectiveness and accounting (for existing, and additionally the needs of an expanded state)? (Outcome 2)
8. The evaluation assessed project performance based on expectations set out in the project Logical Framework (Annex 1), and assessed impact within the context of the reconstructed Theory of Change. The evaluation was conducted using the evaluation criteria as set out in the 2020 UNDP Evaluation Guidance for GEF-Financed Projects. For each evaluation criterion, questions and indicators, sources and methods of verification have been outlined in the evaluation matrix (Annex 3). This evaluation matrix also provides an extended set of questions that supported and guided the evaluation process, including for the elements that are not rated.
9. The evaluation criteria used for UNDP GEF-financed projects as outlined in the new guidance is provided below in Table 4.

Table 4. Criteria and rating system as laid out by the TE Guidance for UNDP-supported GEF-financed projects 2020

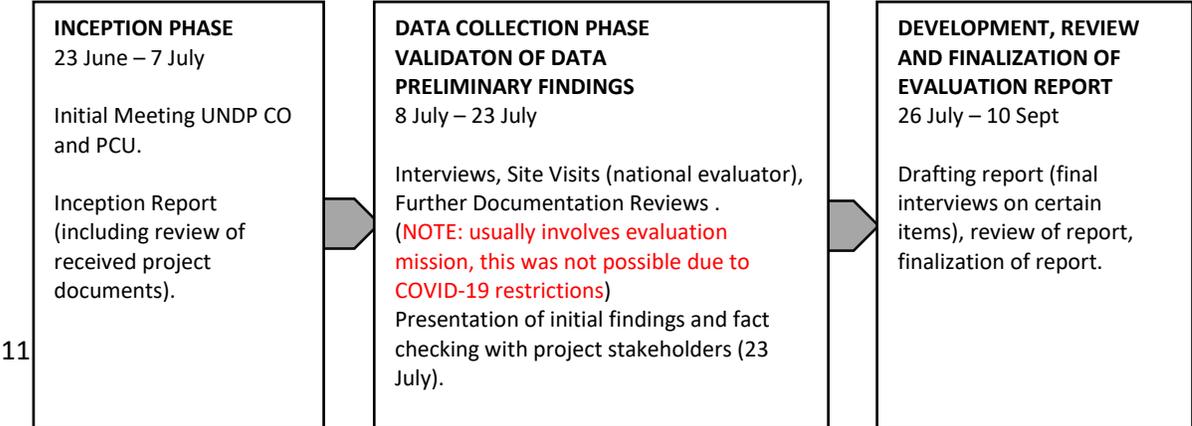
Evaluation Criterion	Ratings
1. Monitoring and Design (M&E) at entry 2. M&E plan implementation 3. Overall Quality of M&E	Highly Satisfactory (HS) (6) – no shortcomings, quality of M&E design/implementation exceeded expectations Satisfactory (S) (5) – minor shortcomings, quality of M&E design/implementation met expectations Moderately Satisfactory (MS) (4) – Moderate shortcomings, quality of M&E design/implementation was more or less met expectations Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU) (3) – Significant shortcomings, quality of M&E design/implementation was somewhat lower than expected Unsatisfactory (U) (2) – Major shortcomings, quality of M&E design/implementation was substantially lower than expected Highly Unsatisfactory (HU) (1) – Severe shortcomings in M&E design/implementation Unable to Assess (UA) – Available information does not allow an assessment of the quality of M&E design/implementation Overall Quality is the average of the two individual ratings (Design+Implementation)
1. Quality of UNDP Implementation/Oversight 2. Quality of Executing Agency (EA) (MAAIF) Execution 3. Overall Quality of Implementation/Oversight and Execution	Highly Satisfactory (HS) (6) – no shortcomings, quality of implementation/execution exceeded expectations Satisfactory (S) (5) – minor shortcomings, quality of implementation/execution met expectations Moderately Satisfactory (MS) (4) – Moderate shortcomings, quality of implementation/execution was more or less met expectations Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU) (3) – Significant shortcomings, quality of implementation/execution was somewhat lower than expected Unsatisfactory (U) (2) – Major shortcomings, quality of implementation/execution was substantially lower than expected Highly Unsatisfactory (HU) (1) – Severe shortcomings in implementation/execution Unable to Assess (UA) – Available information does not allow an assessment of the

	implementation/execution Overall Quality is the average of the two individual ratings (implementation+execution)
Relevance	Highly Satisfactory (HS) (6) – no shortcomings Satisfactory (S) (5) – minor shortcomings Moderately Satisfactory (MS) (4) – Moderate shortcomings Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU) (3) – Significant shortcomings Unsatisfactory (U) (2) – Major shortcomings Highly Unsatisfactory (HU) (1) – Severe shortcomings Unable to Assess (UA) – Available information does not allow an assessment of the implementation/execution
Effectiveness	Same as above
Efficiency	Same as above
Overall Project Outcome	Same as above, based on Relevance, Effectiveness and Efficiency. Calculations are detailed in Table 5.
Sustainability	Likely (L) (4) – there are little to no risks to sustainability Moderately Likely (ML) (3) – there are moderate risks to sustainability Moderately Unlikely (MU) (2) - there are significant risks to sustainability Unlikely (U) 1 – There are severe risks to sustainability Unable to assess (UA) – Unable to assess These are individually rated for financial, socio-political, institutional, framework and governance, environmental, and the overall (average score of individuals)

C. Data Collection and Analysis

10. The evaluation process including data collection and analysis is shown in Figure 1. below.

Figure 1. Evaluation Process for the Terminal Evaluation of the Seychelles Protected Areas Finance Project



11

evaluators developed an evaluation matrix (Annex 3) which consisted of an extended set of questions based on the strategic questions and the evaluation criteria laid out in the 2020 evaluation guidance.

12. A combination of methods and tools were applied during the evaluation to collect information necessary to answer all evaluation questions in an evidence-based manner. These can be found below:
13. Inception Phase and Document Review: This included planning the evaluation and the development of evaluation questions. The Project Coordination Unit provided the majority of the project documentation mid-way through the inception stage and the evaluators were able to conduct a review of the documentation. The evaluators requested further documentation in the data collection phase. Prior to the evaluation, it was decided to **not conduct a country/field mission** because of travel restrictions due to COVID-19; a national consultant was brought on board to take on the national-level elements and to generally support the evaluation.
14. Data collection Phase (interviews and in-depth document review): The data collection had four key elements to it, namely
 - (a) The evaluators undertook a thorough documentation review of the project documents, including new project reporting received;
 - (b) The evaluators then conducted a series of semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, the majority of which were done with both evaluators present. Some interviews were conducted individually either by the international consultant, or by the national consultant (when time differences came into play, or when there were parallel interviews taking place at the same time, or when the national consultant could have direct face-to-face interviews). The majority of interviews were conducted on Zoom Professional.⁸ The selection of stakeholders to be interviewed was made by the evaluators, in agreement with the UNDP CO and the PCU. During the inception phase, the PCU delivered a list of stakeholders, to which the evaluators added additional stakeholders either as a result of self-initiative or on recommendations received during the first interviews with key project partners. In total, 23 interviews were held, lasting between a minimum of 30 minutes to a maximum of 3 hours, with the majority lasting 1 hour. In some cases, follow ups were made, either by phone, or by email, after interviews had taken place.
 - (c) Site visits were uncertain during the planning phase of the evaluation because of the COVID-19 limitations. The island of Praslin and La Digue was on lock-down in the first weeks of data collection and so it was decided that the national evaluator would be accompanied by the project manager to visit one site on Mahe island (Copolia) where some of the project investment for the Seychelles National Protected Areas (SNPA) had been placed. Towards the end of the data collection phase, the COVID-19 restrictions had been partially lifted and the national evaluator (accompanied by the project manager) was able to visit Curieuse Island. As a result, two site visits were conducted: (i) Copolia Nature Trail on Mahe island on 20 July 2021 (SNPA site), and (ii) Curieuse Marine National Park near Praslin island on 28 July 2021 (SNPA site). Photos for La Digue Veuve Special Reserve (SNPA site) were received from SNPA to verify project output at that location. The national evaluator also visited a signboard developed by the project on the way to Anse Major trail on 13 July 2021.
15. Validation of data: Once data was gathered through the documents review, interviews and site visit observations, this was organised according to the criteria and evaluation questions as laid out in the matrix. Where data from the three areas of collection demonstrated

⁸ A video conferencing and meeting platform under a Professional Subscription, <https://zoom.us/>

complementarity, these were used directly in the findings. In the cases where information did not coincide, additional interviews/follow-ups with relevant stakeholders were sought (either (i) through direct follow up with the project team, or (ii) through triangulation with other stakeholders and written sources).

16. Preliminary findings: The evaluators developed a preliminary findings note and presented these to the group of stakeholders on 23 July 2021 (online) for feedback and fact validation.
17. Development of Terminal Evaluation Report: The evaluators developed a draft terminal evaluation report and submitted it to the UNDP CO, who reviewed it and shared it with the project team and with project stakeholders for comment. Comments were shared with the evaluator for response and/or revision for finalisation of the Terminal Evaluation Report.

D. Ethics

18. In addition to the 2020 Evaluation Guidance, this evaluation was conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluations'⁹.
19. The evaluation was carried out in an independent, impartial, and rigorous manner. The evaluation process, therefore, was bound under its professional and ethical code of conduct, which included the following key factors: (a) all interviews and information were provided in confidence and anonymously and, as a result, no information can be traced back to a one direct source/individual, (b) those involved in the evaluation have had the opportunity to review the evaluation findings as well as the main evaluation report, (c) the evaluators were sure to have empathy and sensitivity to different contexts and cultures in which stakeholders work.

E. Limitations

20. A few limitations were faced during the evaluation process, as outlined below:
21. *Inability of the international evaluator to conduct country visit in person due to COVID-19/limitations in country to visit more sites*: Due to travel restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the international evaluator worked remotely with the national evaluator who conducted limited field visits and face-to-face interviews (also restricted by COVID-19). While this was the best option available given the COVID-19 constraints, this posed one major limitation, and that is that the international evaluator could not pick up on the nuances that usually come with face-to-face meetings, and field visits, in person. When conducting in-person evaluation missions, one is generally more aware of the nuances of implementation issues within any given project. While the roles and responsibilities were well laid out between the international and national evaluator, and the national evaluator had a strong contextual knowledge base and understanding to draw from, there is no substitute for the value added to any evaluation being able to run face-to-face meetings and actual real observations, in person.
22. *Zoom versus face-to-face*: Connected to the above restrictions, the majority of interviews were conducted using Zoom. Face-to-face interviews are more effective in many ways because there are no risks to interruptions in internet connectivity, or other technical issues faced with remote and digital interview processes (including often softer, less tangible ways or accessing

⁹ <http://www.uneval.org/document/download/548#:~:text=1.,Norms%20and%20Standards%20for%20Evaluation.>

information that go beyond merely verbal communication). The international evaluator does not believe that this posed a major limitation.

23. *Generally limited time-frame, time zone issues*: The evaluation was conducted over two and a half months (from start of contract and including review time). The evaluators were placed under pressure to submit deliverables in a relatively shorter timeframe than is customary in such evaluations, and this was only possible because there was no country mission. The international evaluator was in a time zone that is ten hours behind Seychelles; while this did not significantly affect the evaluation in terms of data collected (mostly because the majority of stakeholders were flexible to allow for interviews to take place from 15:00 onwards Seychelles time), it did limit the options for the stakeholders in their availability generally.

F. Project Background and Objectives

24. Protected areas management for biodiversity conservation outcomes (and resultant impacts on human wellbeing) can only be effective if commitments are made to finance such management. Protected areas contribute greatly to the health of ecosystem health and biodiversity conservation. Biodiversity in Seychelles contributes up to 60% to the Gross Domestic Product, but only 2% is reinvested into its conservation every year.¹⁰ Substantial external funding has been leveraged, but its generation is not uniform across the protected area system of Seychelles, with some protected areas thriving and others neglected. The overall gap for just mere basic management of the entire system is substantial – and this comes as a time when the country aims to significantly increase its protected area estate. Closing this gap is therefore of utmost importance, and sustaining such financial (re)investment. This is essentially what the Seychelles Protected Areas Finance project aimed to contribute to.
25. The project design documentation maintained that, under an ideal situation, Seychelles protected areas should be more cohesive and functional, while still operating under diverse protected area management arrangements, but that conservation finance should be leveraged by Seychelles with more ease, including through innovative solutions, and that there should be clarity on financial inflows and outflows pertaining to conservation. In the long term, funds should be channelled in a transparent and equitable manner to where the needs are, and that the financial gap is gradually closed with increased conservation benefits for the entire system.
26. Taking into account the increased threats and root causes of biodiversity loss, the project sought to enable putting in place a consolidated framework for the financial, operational efficiency and coherency of the disconnected assemblage of protected areas. It aimed to design an integrated new national system of protected areas, with aligned management standards and efficiencies across its constituent protected areas, to ensure sustainable financing in the short- and medium-term and provide the basis for the expansion of the PA state under the 30% increase as was planned.
27. At the time of project design, the protected areas system consisted of 25 protected areas (55,769 ha), and there was a process of proclamation of 8 new protected areas in the outer islands and 3 in the inner that would expand the area to 146,045 ha, expanding the estate three-fold. A further 30% of the exclusive economic zone (20,000,000 ha or 200,000 km²) was to be protected (i.e. a no-take zone as part of a marine spatial planning process) in exchange

¹⁰ Seychelles Protected Areas Finance Plan, 2016.

for a debt-swap negotiated with the Paris Club.¹¹ The plan to expand while at the same time not having effective management or financing of the existing system reflected a key challenge. The system at time of project design was neither integrated nor coherent, and individual sites were managed independently of each other with large disparities (in terms of management quality and financial sustainability) between the sites. To be able to achieve even the most basic management goals in the existing protected areas system, the annual financing gap of 2.7 million USD needed to be closed; for optimal management 6.5 million USD was needed (this excludes the expanded state).

28. To support closing this gap, the objective of project was therefore to improve financial sustainability and strategic cohesion of the Seychelles protected area system in a shifting and *dynamic national economic environment*, while also dealing with emerging threats and risks to biodiversity.
29. The project aimed to address two barriers: (1) systemic deficiencies and asymmetries between the protected areas impede effective financial planning and allocation, and (2) specific capacity deficits for leveraging protected areas finance have chronically kept revenue generation across the protected area system below acceptable benchmarks for conservation effectiveness.
30. The project aimed to address these barriers through two outcomes, namely through (a) a protected areas system investment plan to direct long-term sustainable financing to the overall system and overall management capacity is improved (at site, institutional and systemic levels), thereby contributing to the overall national conservation agenda, and (b) through more specific work and tailored support for the protected areas to generate reliable revenue and improve their management effectiveness, including financial autonomy of the Seychelles National Parks Authority (and including catering for the needs of an expanded state).
31. Some of the issues the project hoped to address included:
 - a. Differing capacities between the management entities,
 - b. Discrepancies in income among the park systems and the impact thereof on the overall conservation agenda (some sites were neglected while others were flourishing),
 - c. The level of funding was not covering even basic management of certain protected area sub-systems,
 - d. Marine protected area expansion was needed (because at time of design only 1% was protected),
 - e. The assemblage of protected areas under different modalities had some wins at local levels, but prevented an overview of the protected areas in terms of conservation and management effectiveness.

32. Below is a table outlining the components, outcomes and outputs of the project.

Table 5. Components, outcomes and outputs of the Seychelles’ Protected Areas Finance Project

COMPONENT	OUTCOME	OUTPUT
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¹¹ <http://www.finance.gov.sc/press-releases/26/Seychelles-closes-landmark-buyback-of-paris-club-debt-and-activates-marine-conservation-and-climate-change-adaptation-initiative>; <https://seycat.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/SSCOE-Debt-for-Nature-Seychelles-Case-Study-final.pdf>

COMPONENT	OUTCOME	OUTPUT
Enabling planning and legal framework for an improved use of existing and new PA finance	1. Protected Area (PA) investment is fostered and capacity for PA management, at site, institutional and systemic levels, is improved for directing the long-term sustainable financing of the PA system and generating conservation benefits.	1.1. A PA System Financing & Investment Plan for Seychelles is adopted at the national-level, along with subsidiary investment plans at the site or sub-system levels, and these become a key instrument for implementing the 2013 PA Policy. 1.2. Site-level cost-effectiveness and conservation-effectiveness benchmarks are established to guide decisions on investment, co-management, delegation and cross-subsidization. 1.3. An adequate legal framework is emplaced for implementing the PAS-wide investment programme with a multi-funding approach, adaptable to each PA.
Increased and more reliable revenue generation for PA management.	2. The overall ability of the PA system to generate reliable revenue is improved, both in view of improving its overall management effectiveness and of catering for the needs of an expanded estate.	2.1. Institutional and policy barriers for an effective site-level revenue generation, collection and retention into the PA system are lifted, creating better conditions and incentives for reducing the PA finance gap. 2.2. Essential touristic or other relevant infrastructure in selected PAs are developed and new cost-effective practices, systems and schemes are implemented, all with the aim of making these PAs more attractive to visitors, increasing their own revenue generation capacity, while safeguarding and protecting their conservation value. 2.3. The operationalization of the SeyCCAT, and of other related environmental finance mechanism to be adopted, takes the need for supporting biodiversity conservation into consideration, including the need to address the PAs financing gap.

33. The project aimed to develop a protected areas system investment plan to direct long-term sustainable financing to the overall system which would look at the traditional funding channels, but also investigate the efficacy of innovative funding schemes (including conservation tourism levies, subsidy reforms, payments for ecosystem services, among others). It also aimed to support the enactment of the Nature Reserve and Conservancy Bill (that had been developed through a previous GEF project¹²).

34. In terms of its management entity support, the project focused its work on the islands of Mahe (SNPA¹³ and Marine Conservation Society of Seychelles¹⁴), Praslin, La Digue, Coco and Curieuse (SNPA¹⁵), Silhouette (SNPA and Island Conservation Foundation¹⁶), Recife (Department of

¹² Strengthening Seychelles Protected Area System through NGO Management Modalities (GEF-4, GEF ID: 3925)

¹³ Copolia Nature Trail, Trois Freres Nature Trail, Morne Blanc Nature Trail, Dans Gala Nature Trail, Glacis Noire Nature Trail, Port Launay Nature Trail, Baie Ternay Marine Park, Morne Seychellois National Park, St Anne Island Group.

¹⁴ Two temporal protected areas both of which had not been designated as was planned at start of project; in process of being designated.

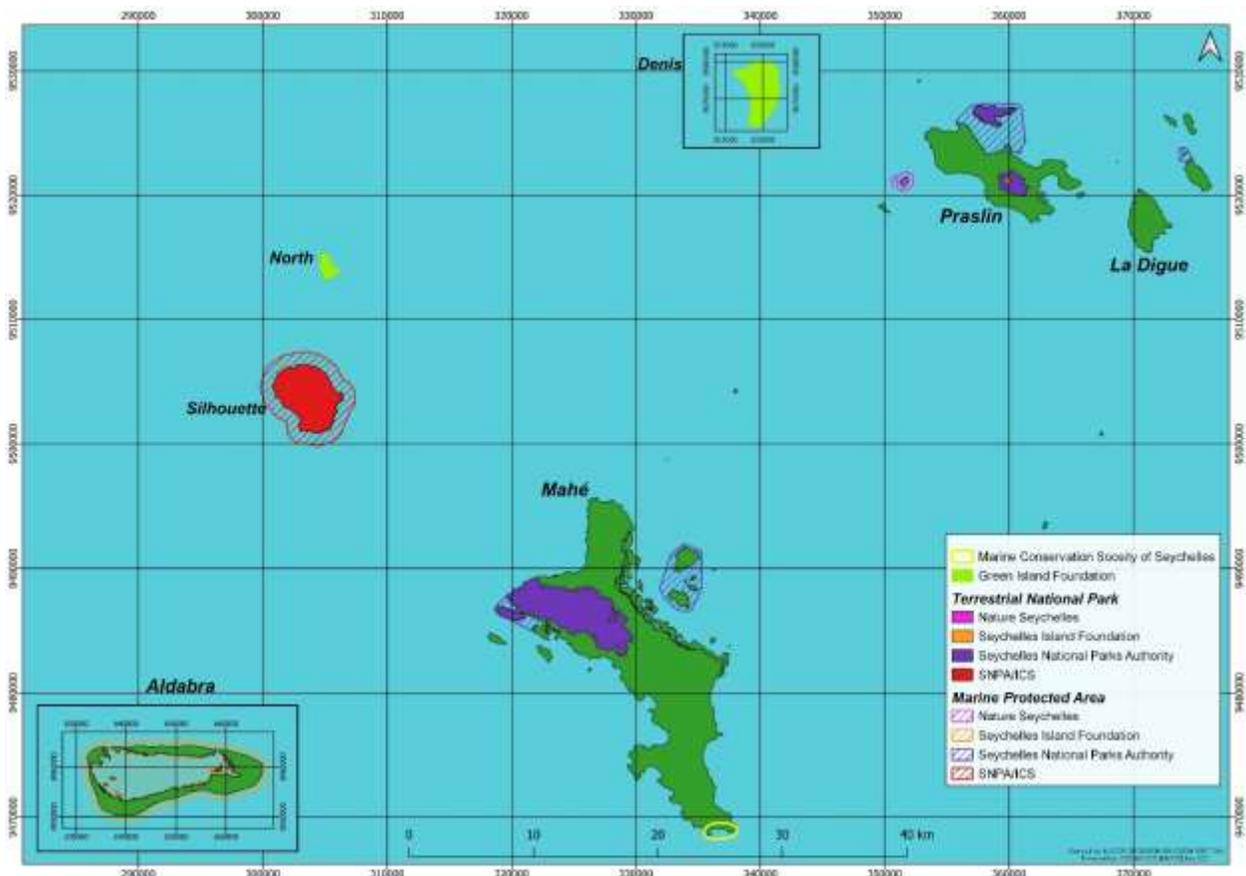
¹⁵ Praslin National Park, Curieuse Marine National Park, Ile Coco Marine Park, Veuve Special Reserve.

¹⁶ Both entities responsible for conservation on island, although this activity was dropped and as a result no work was done here during the project.

Environment¹⁷), Cousin (Nature Seychelles¹⁸), Aldabra (through a show-house built on Mahe, Seychelles Island Foundation¹⁹), and North and Denis (Green Island Foundation²⁰) (Figure 2).

35. Based on the needs highlighted through the project preparation phase, the majority support was geared towards the Seychelles National Parks Authority in terms of capacity, infrastructure, and strategic support to its move to autonomy (resulting in its ability to receive revenue and re-invest into its own management). Other management entities had smaller sub-projects (mostly related to improved management, revenue creation, proclamation of certain areas) but were also provided with support towards capacity development (in terms of enforcement, strategy and management plans, business plans, marketing strategies).
36. Lastly, the project also aimed to support in setting up and establishing the Seychelles Conservation and Climate Change Adaptation Trust with the purpose of supporting the financing of the expanded state under marine protection.

Figure 2. Sites of project intervention and their management entities for the Seychelles' Protected Area Finance Project (Map developed by Climate Change and Data Management Section, Climate Change Division, MACCE)



37. The project was for five years, starting in the beginning of 2016, although the project manager and technical advisor only came in later in the year (October 2016 for the project manager, and

¹⁷ Recife Island National Park.

¹⁸ Cousin Island Special Reserve.

¹⁹ House to illustrate the Aldabra Archipelago UNESCO World Heritage Site (this activity was also eventually cancelled).

²⁰ North Island eventually did not receive designation, Denis Island now designated Area of Outstanding Beauty.

July 2016 part time/August 2016 full time for the technical advisor). The project requested and got a six-month extension extending project closure to end September 2021.²¹

38. The project was directly aligned to national priorities in that the economy of Seychelles (specifically in regard to tourism, but also in all resource dependent sectors e.g. fisheries and agriculture) depends on healthy ecosystems. The project was aligned to the Protected Areas Policy 2013 (and its Output 1.1. directly responded to the 12th commitment of the policy). It was also relevant to the Seychelles' National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2015-2020), the Seychelles Sustainable Development Strategy (SSDS 2012-2020), the Blue Economy in Seychelles, and several legal frameworks and acts.
39. The project design preceded the development of the Global Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals, but project implementation particularly focused on SDG14 (healthy marine ecosystems) and SDG15 (healthy terrestrial ecosystems).

G. Project implementation structure and partners

40. The governance structure of the project was as follows:

- a. The UNDP Country Office was the implementing agency (IA) and provided quality assurance of the project, reviewed progress in the realization of the project outputs, and ensured the appropriate use of UNDP/GEF funds. It also provided support services, including procurement, contracting of service providers, human resources management and financial service including appointment of independent financial auditors and evaluators. The country office was responsible for ensuring that all activities, including procurement and financial services, were carried out in strict compliance with UNDP and GEF procedures. The UNDP-GEF Regional Technical Advisor (RTA) also provided additional oversight.
- b. The Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change (recently changed to Ministry of Agriculture, Climate Change, and Environment, MACCE, to which here-in after referred to as MACCE)²² was the executing agency (EA). The Ministry was responsible for the successful execution of the project, and through the National Project Director (the Principal Secretary of the Ministry) was responsible overall project coordination and championing the project.
- c. The project had a Steering Committee which was comprised of all project beneficiaries and relevant Ministry representatives and was chaired by the NPD (Principal Secretary of MACCE).²³ The Steering Committee planned to meet every six months (unless ad-hoc meetings needed to be called to address specific issues). The committee was to provide high level orientation and guidance, ensure that the project achieved its overall targets, review annual plans and reports as well as TORs, ensure collaboration between implementation partners, ensure integration and coordination of the project with related government and

²¹ This is further discussed under Findings – Implementation, and Efficiency

²² While it was the Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change (MEECC) for the majority of the duration of the project, the evaluators felt that to keep consistency in the report (i.e. refer to the same entity throughout the report by one name) it was appropriate to use the current Ministry name even if its mandate has been updated.

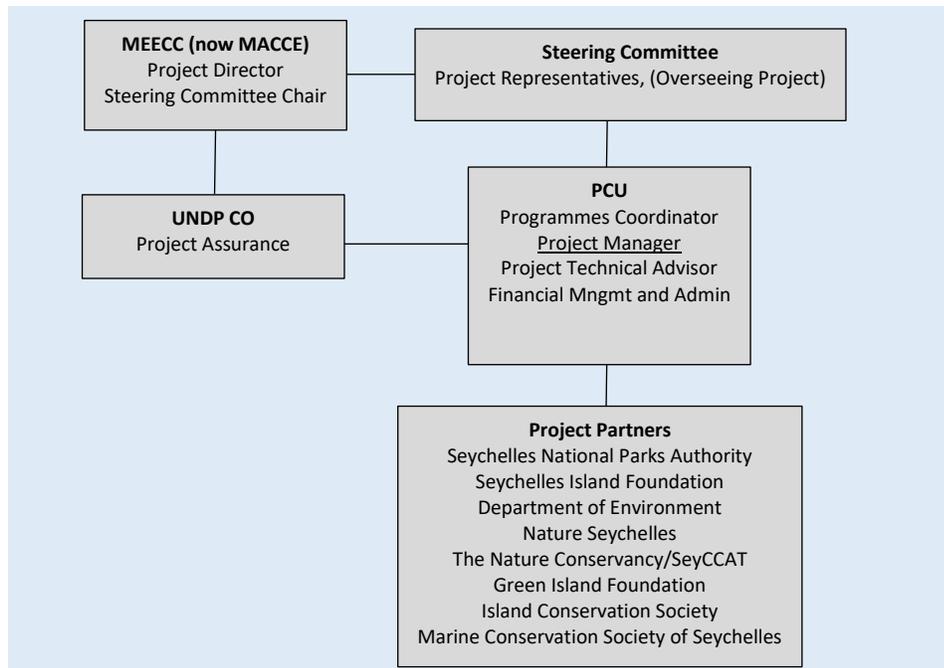
²³ MACCE Principal Secretary (Chair), PCU Coordinator (Secretary), PCU Project Manager, PCU Technical Advisor, Seychelles Island Foundation, Nature Seychelles, Marine Conservation Society for Seychelles, University of Seychelles, UNDP, Island Conservation Society, SNPA, Tourism Department, Department of Environment, Department of Blue Economy, The Nature Conservancy, SeyCCAT, Green Island Foundation, Economic Planning Department (Ministry of Finance).

donor-funded initiatives, and support in M&E and guidance to the mid-term review and terminal evaluation. A sub-committee was to be established to evaluate tenders if any major tenders were to be evaluated (consisting of 2-3 members of the Steering Committee).

- d. The day-to-day management of the project fell under the Programme Coordination Unit (PCU) of the MACCE, which was established (in 2008) by UNDP and MACCE to oversee, support, administer and coordinate the implementation of all GOS-UNDP-GEF environment and energy projects in Seychelles. The PCU team for this project comprised of the Programme Coordinator, the Chief Technical Advisor, and the Project Manager, as well as the Financial Officer and administrative staff.
 - e. Specific outputs were implemented through partnership agreements between MACCE and individual management entities. These included:
 - i. SNPA: to implementing specific activities within the protected areas under its responsibility, including nature trails, renovations, improving surveillance equipment, and other activities, at La Digue Veuve Special Reserve, Curieuse Island, Iles Cocos, Mahe, and others.
 - ii. SNPA and ICS (and IDC): to work together towards a co-management approach to operations at Silhouette Island.
 - iii. Seychelles Island Foundation: to build and design an Aldabra House Visitor Centre.
 - iv. Nature Seychelles: to develop and run a voluntourism programme on Cousin Island.
 - v. Green Island Foundation: to leverage support from the private sector to create and manage private protected areas in Seychelles on North and Denis Islands.
 - vi. Department of Environment: to start up management activities on the islands, including improving communications and restoring habitat.
 - vii. Marine Conservation Society of Seychelles: to test stewardship and consider funding mechanisms in relation to the passing of two temporal protected areas off Mahe.
 - viii. The Nature Conservancy: to set up and operationalize the Seychelles Conservation and Climate Change Adaptation Trust.
41. Adding to the section above under the PCU operations, the project was executed under a national implementation modality (NIM), with the project manager overseeing day-to-day administration of the project supported by an international Technical Advisor. The project manager was responsible for the project outcomes as specified in the project document, to the required standard of quality and within the specified constraints of time and cost. The project manager prepared Annual Work Plans (AWP) in advance of each successive year and submitted them to the PSC for approval. The project manager had to work closely with all partner institutions to link the project with complementary national programs and initiatives. The project manager reported in the first instance to the PC-CTA at the PCU, and was accountable to the Project Director for the quality, timeliness and effectiveness of the activities carried out, as well as for the use of funds.

42. The governance structure of the project and roles of partners can be found illustrated in Figure 1 below:

Figure 3. Project organisation chart as laid out in project document



H. Planned project financing

43. The project was financed through the GEF Trust Fund, all coming from the BD focal area to the amount of USD 2,776,900. Co-financing contributions was planned to the amount of USD 15,013,654, bringing the total project funding amount to USD 17,790,554.

I. Reconstructed Theory of Change

44. The project did not have a Theory of Change (TOC) developed during its design phase (this was not a requirement during the development of the project). For the purpose of informing the evaluation, and particularly for deepening the understanding in a larger context of economic value in terms of re-investment into natural capital and thus maintaining the health of critically important ecosystems, the evaluators have developed a reconstructed Theory of Change (the TOC diagram can be found below).

45. The project aimed to support, through various financing mechanisms (both at system level and through individual site revenue generation) and through more harmonised and effective management approaches, to close the funding gap needed for effective protected areas management and enhance financial sustainability (and support towards financial pathways for an expanded state).

46. The project objective was to *improve the financial sustainability and strategic cohesion of the Seychelles protected area system in a shifting and dynamic national economic environment, while also dealing with emerging threats and risks to biodiversity*. The evaluators have, in drafting the reconstructed Theory of Change (TOC), defined the longer-term longer-lasting

impact, resulting from the achievement of project outcomes and its objectives within a bigger framework of interventions and initiatives. The Theory of Change diagram (Figure 4) can be found below. In this TOC, the evaluators see the project objective as being the final intermediate state towards impact.

47. The final impact of the TOC is/are thus: Protected area system of land, coasts and ocean is made up of representative and critical mass of healthy and connected ecosystems that are resilient to regime shifts and external shocks, and the system is fully integrated into the economic value system of Seychelles.
48. Analysis of the impact pathways was conducted in terms of the assumptions and drivers that underpin the processes involved in the transformation of outputs and outcomes to intermediate states to impact. The intermediate states are the transitional conditions between the project outcomes and the intended longer-term impact. The drivers are the significant external factors that are expected to contribute to the realization of the intended impact and which *can* be influenced by the project. The assumptions are the external factors that are expected to contribute to the realization of the intended impact and which are beyond the control of the project (and can be seen as risks and some were in fact identified as risks in the project design). In the case of this project, some of the assumptions were seen as drivers and these will be discussed below.
49. The project outcomes, the way they were formulated, were focusing on two streams, namely (1) overall system support through a investment plan, enabling legal frameworks, and capacity building towards harmonized management, and (2) specific entities are supported to generate reliable revenue and improve effectiveness to close the gap also for an expanding state. While Outcome 2 does include the overall effectiveness in terms of an expanded state of which the SeyCCAT process was aligned to, the evaluators believe the Output (2.3) would have been better placed under Outcome 1 given that SeyCCAT was geared more at the system level. The same sentiment was shared during the Mid-Term Review where the system approach to be taken was to focus more on supporting SeyCCAT. The evaluators understand that the output was placed under Outcome 2 because at design (a) the SeyCCAT and MSP processes were still in their infancy and not planned to take such a central approach, and (b) it was envisaged that MACCE would take on a stronger leadership role in terms of coordinating the PA management entities towards a systemic approach as per Outcome 1. However, in reality, and as was recommended at MTR, the systemic approach resulted to be more strategic in terms of supporting SeyCCAT and the MSP process.²⁴ As a result, under implementation and from the view point of the Terminal Evaluation, the SeyCCAT output seems to fit more appropriately under Outcome 1. The evaluators decided not to change this in the Theory of Change structure, because the change would not affect the actual outcomes-intermediate state-impact pathways, nor will it have any significant impact on the evaluation of the logical framework of the project. However, it is important to note here and take into consideration.
50. The transition from the achievement of outputs to outcomes depends on the following (*driver/assumptions*) to have been met:
 - a. For Outputs 1 to Outcome 1: Driver/Assumption 1: financing plan is fully adopted and owned by the country. This was seen as a driver in that it was included as an indicator to be achieved by the project, and something that the project thought it had influence

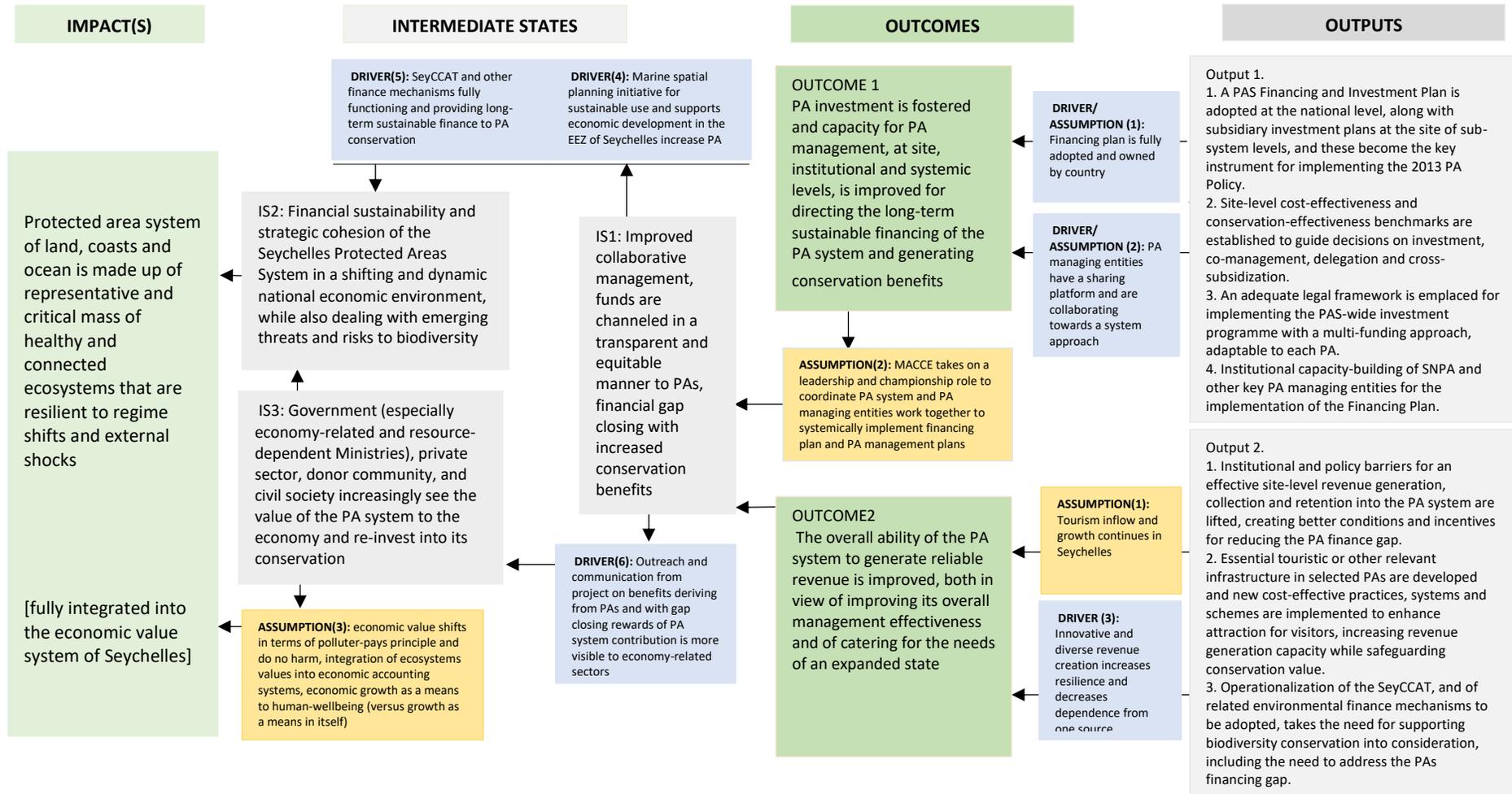
²⁴ See the MTR recommendations around the systems approach.

over. In fact, it should have been seen as an assumption, because while the project can put in place all the necessary actions to support its passing, the acceptance and passing is not ultimately up to the project, but that of external stakeholders; Driver/Assumption 2: protected areas managing entities have a sharing platform and are collaborating towards a systems approach. This was also in some ways seen by the project as a driver, and while it had some influence in how the Steering Committee operating in a democratic fashion, the project did not have influence over the willingness of partners to collaborate, and thus the evaluators would also see this more as an assumption that needed to be met for the outcome to be reached (at the systemic level). Whether these assumptions were met will be further discussed under the Effectiveness section.

- b. For Outputs 2 to Outcome 2: Assumption 1: Tourism inflow and growth continues in Seychelles. Seeing as a lot of the revenue generation depended almost entirely on tourism, this assumption would have needed to be met for the system to generate sufficient financing, this assumption will be discussed in detail throughout the evaluation as it was not met due to the COVID-19 having a devastating impact on tourism.
 - c. There was also a driver under the control of the project for the pathway between Outputs 2 and Outcome 2, namely Driver 3: innovative and diverse revenue creation increases resilience and decreases dependence from one source.
51. These assumptions and drivers are tested in the evaluation (mostly under Progress to Impact, and Outcomes Achievement).
52. There are three intermediate states between the achievement of project outcomes and the longer-term impact. For **Outcome 1**, there is assumption (*MACCE takes on a leadership and championship role to coordinate the PA system and PA managing entities work together to systematically implement financing plan and PA management plans*) that needs to be met in order to reach the IS1: improved collaborative management, funds are channelled in a transparent and equitable manner to protected areas, financial gap is closing with increased conservation benefits. If this assumption is met, and IS1 is reached then two inter-linked drivers (4: *Marine spatial planning initiative for sustainable use and supports economic development in the EEZ increase protected areas*, 5: *SeyCCAT and other finance mechanisms fully functioning and providing long-term sustainable finance to PA conservation*) support the move the IS2: financial sustainability and strategic cohesion of the Seychelles protected areas system in a shifting and dynamic national economic environment, while also dealing with emerging threats and risks to biodiversity, which will lead to impact being reached.
53. For **Outcome 2**, the outcome itself will support reaching IS1, and through a supporting driver influenced by the project (6: *outreach and communication from project on benefits deriving from protected areas and with financial gap closing rewards of protected area system contribution is more visible to economy-related sectors*) will reach IS3: government (especially economy-related and resource-dependent ministries), private sector, donor community, and civil society increasingly see the value of the protected areas system to the economy and re-invest into its conservation. For IS3 to reach impact though, the assumption that *the economic value system shifts in terms of polluter pays principle, do not harm, integration of ecosystem values into economic accounting systems, economic growth as a means to human wellbeing (rather than growth as a means in itself)* has to be met.

54. These pathways to impact, including the assumptions and drivers, will be thoroughly considered across the Findings section, particularly Effectiveness, Overall Project Outcome, Sustainability and Progress to Impact sections.

Figure 4. Reconstructed Theory of Change for the Terminal Evaluation of the Seychelles' Protected Areas Finance Project



II. FINDINGS

A. Project Design/Formulation

55. An assessment of the quality of the project design was conducted. The following project documents were used for the review of the project design: the Project Document, the tracking tools, the UNDP Initiation Plan, the GEF CEO Endorsement Request Document addressing the GEF review comments.

Analysis of Results Framework: project logic and strategy, indicators

56. The GEF STAP review at PIF was positive with only minor edits, and with strong approval to move forward to PPG phase. The GEF review comments on the project document highlighted some key issues, including:

- a. The commitment of government to allow SNPA to retain its own revenues, and generally central government support to PAs, which the project design team addressed sufficiently;
- b. The need to clarify the set-up of SeyCCAT and how this would be aligned to the sustaining of finance to the PA system, which the project detailed substantially through adding an additional annex;
- c. Some issues regarding the ability of the system to leverage more tourism because of the scattered nature of investments across several islands (some being remote), the project design team aimed to address this by explain how the relevance and essential nature of the sites to the overall system and attractiveness to tourism.

57. Overall, the project design team did address the comments in a detailed and comprehensive manner, but the strategy of government leadership that was alluded to in the review comment process could have been considered more effectively. In fact, the project did not garner as much government ownership as it probably should have (whether this was within the project's sphere of influence is questionable and further discussed in further sections of this report).

58. The project was country-driven in that it contributed to the objectives of the Seychelles Sustainable Development Strategy (2012-2020), particularly under the Biodiversity, Forests and Agriculture Thematic Area. It also contributed to the NBSAPs, and directly to the Protected Areas Policy 2013. It also aimed to support the passing of the Nature Reserve and Conservancy Bill. The prodoc sufficiently covered the alignment to country priorities in the Policy, Legal and Regulatory Framework and under Country Ownerships and Project's Policy Fit.

59. The project document did not have a Theory of Change. It was not a requirement during project design (GEF-5) and thus the project design cannot be assessed on this. The reconstructed Theory of Change (developed by the evaluators) has been used to guide the assessment of project design thinking.

60. As a result of this process, as well as the assessment of the project results framework, the evaluators have found the following to be pertinent:

61. The overall objective, and the components and outcomes, were generally feasible and practical in terms of the time frame and cost of the project (including its substantial co-financing), although given the amount of flexibility and adaptation the project team had to manage the evaluators are inclined to wonder about the ambition of the project at design. In terms of the outputs, it is likely that the number of outputs may have been ambitious given the limitation of government processes faced at implementation as well as the sheer number of processes that had to be ongoing (even under a large partnership arrangement).

62. The evaluators believe that the SeyCCAT Output (2.3) would have been better placed under Outcome 1. This has already been elaborated on in the Theory of Change section above. However, the evaluators understand that at design, the justification for placing Output 2.3. under Outcome 2 was a result of two thought processes, namely (a) that at project design it was assumed that MEECC (MACCE) take on a strong leadership role in terms of coordinating and sustaining results, and (b) the SeyCCAT/MSP process was still in its infancy at the time and thus without the central role that it had at MTR.
63. The overall financing gap to be used as an indicator of the project objective was a straight-forward approach, as well as the use of the financial score-cards. Overall, the indicators system was robust and quantitative with baseline, mid-term and end-of-project targets.
64. In terms of broader developmental impacts, the PPG had a strong stakeholder engagement process. The GEF STAP review requested more community involvement at PIF review stage, the PPG actively involved local communities and PA managing stakeholders through a highly participatory process. The STAP also picked up the need to set up measures and mechanisms to overcome conflicts and disagreements, the response at PPG phase was detailed²⁵, however how this was effectively and practically done is further analysed in the project implementation section of this report.
65. The gender dimension was covered as best as the project design team could under the requirements at the time and is comparable to other projects of this nature, although a general comment needs to be made on the focus on numbers (i.e. ratio of men and women participating, employment opportunities, trainings) as an indicator of effective leadership and participation is not effective if the patriarchal norm, for instance, is that women do not have the same relative power in decision-making. This has been improved in the new GEF-7, but needs to be considered all the same in the way indicators are developed.

Assumptions and Risks

66. Of the four risks identified in the PIF, two were retained in the project document.²⁶ Four additional risks were identified during the PPG phase²⁷, which conducted a thorough risk analysis and SESP process.
67. Generally, the project document outlined the risks in a robust and logical manner, and measures taken (even for low risk levels) to mitigate these risks were well outlined and articulated (perhaps with the exception of one which is discussed further below).
68. Two risks that were retained from PIF remain highly relevant in terms of how the project may or may not have been able to mitigate effectively. The risk *ongoing conflicts and misunderstandings between public institutions, private sector partners, NGOs undermine*

²⁵ Response item 6 under comments at PIF stage, Annex B of CEO Endorsement Request. "It is important to highlight that we have embedded in project design mitigation measures to avoid any "misunderstanding" among the PA managing entities and resource users. The development of the PA policy adopted in 2013 is the first important step towards a more integrated approach for the management of PAs in Seychelles. Preparing the Policy has been a highly participatory and consultative process among institutions managing PAs and stakeholders understand the importance to have a cohesive approach. This positive evolution will be strengthened with the development of the PA Act which will clearly define the role and the responsibilities of all the stakeholders, as well as the development adoption of a PA System (PAS) Financing & Investment Plan foreseen under Output 1.1 in addition to institutional and policy barriers work under Output 2.1. Activities under these outputs will establish and make use of well-coordinated and consultative mechanisms for achieving the goals. The project will support these processes by ensuring that a cohesive approach is adopted to PA finance. This is in fact embedded both under several activities under both components. The project will also build-up institutional capacities in terms of financial management based on exchange of experiences and lessons learnt."

²⁶ The two that were not retained included "increased incidents of piracy limits implementation of sea protection measures and conservation work on the islands – low risk" and "expanded Pas, especially expanded marine no-take zones, cause conflict with fishing communities" – although these risks were not discussed within the GEF STAP review, nor in much detail in the CEO Endorsement Request, although covered under Risks and Safeguards in the Prodoc. It is assumed by the evaluators that these two risks were not appropriate given the nature of the project focusing on financing specifically.

²⁷ (1) SeyCCAT not established, (2) down turn in tourist numbers, (3) climate impacts on sustainability of PAs, (4) infrastructural development and increased boat traffic as result of tourism numbers in eco sensitive areas

partnership approaches could have been articulate and elaborated more effectively in its mitigation approach (in terms of the steps – which at prodoc seem generic to the evaluators²⁸), in addition it depended heavily on the passing and enforcing of the legislative framework which was out of the project’s control. The other risk that will need further scrutiny in terms of the evaluation is the government ownership and support of the PA revenue retention and other income stream ideas being proposed by the project – the mitigation strategy maintained that the risk could be easily dealt with through a capacity building service package that shows incentive (including framing correctly the messaging) to garner support. As to how much the project actually managed to achieve this will be further examined (and has been included as an assumption in the project’s reconstructed Theory of Change).

69. One risk that was not picked up at PIF nor at PPG phase, but that the evaluators would have expected, at least as a mention, is the timing of the election coinciding with the last months of the project. It may not have been realistic to, at the time, assume that the election would have the result that it had (opposition winning for the first time in 44 years); however, at any rate an election generally is expected to have some form of disruption. At the very least, the project should have picked this up in design given the election was planned for 2020.²⁹
70. An external risk that could not have been anticipated at project design (although was picked up in the risk identification of “downturn in tourist numbers” which was rated low but had strong mitigation in place in case – which needs to be tested in terms of the implementation of this mitigation) was the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The project suffered delays and other implementation difficulties as a result, and this will be further discussed under risk management later in this report.

Lessons from other relevant projects (e.g. same focal area) incorporated into project design

71. The project aimed to build on a GEF project that had been implemented prior, “Strengthening Seychelles Protected Area System through NGO Management Modalities” (GEF-4, GEF ID 3925). It also had linkages and synergies with other GEF projects (these were picked up at PPG phase), including the GEF/World Bank “SWIOFish3” (GEF-6- GEF ID 9563), linked through the SeyCCAT and Marine Spatial Planning process, the “Expansion and Strengthening of the Protected Areas Subsystem of the Outer Islands of Seychelles and its Integration into the Broader Land and Seascape” (GEF-5, GEF ID 4717), and the “Ridge-to-Reef Integrated Management of Marine, Coastal and Terrestrial Ecosystems in the Seychelles” (GEF-6, GEF ID 9431). Other projects were also aligned, and an informative table of synergy possibilities was outlined in both the CEO endorsement request as well as the project document³⁰.
72. The project also aimed to integrate with the in-country BIO Finance (BIOFIN) project, which the evaluation will investigate further in terms of potentials for collaboration.
73. Some lessons and recommendations from previous Terminal Evaluations (most notably the NGO modalities project did not seem to be directly taken up in the project design of the PAF project.³¹

²⁸ E.g. facilitate consultative development of legislative framework, strengthen governance framework, open dialogue – given the fact that this is a recurring problem in projects, the mitigation could have tried something new (e.g. hold depth facilitation processes at inception to build bonds/mend previous traumas relating to present conflicts).

²⁹ While Seychelles was considered a politically stable country, some mention of a planned election resulting in at least minimal turnover could have posed a risk in project design would have been the minimum expectation.

³⁰ Table 16 of Prodco, Section A.7 under CEO Endorsement request.

³¹ E.g. not having the passing of a bill be part of the project’s responsibility as a direct indicator as was brought up as a lesson learnt under the Terminal Evaluation of the GEF/UNDP NGO Modalities project.

Planned stakeholder participation

74. The PPG process had a robust stakeholder participation process. A Steering Committee just for the PPG process was commissioned to review TORs and oversee the direction of project design – of which a good representative of stakeholders were involved.
75. Full participation at various levels, including community level were conducted. The stakeholder engagement plan and the stakeholder matrix (which was further expanded from PIF stage) were robust and well-laid out.
76. The only issue that could have been picked up better in terms of the stakeholder engagement is the recurring problem of partnership and conflicts as already laid out under risks.

Linkages between project and other interventions within the sector

77. The project had strong integration with the sustainable development plan, and the country related policy processes, as already stated under the project document background previously.
78. Sufficient planning around BIOFIN integration at project design was conducted, although the implementation thereof will be further investigated.
79. The marine spatial planning exercise of the country's exclusive economic zone with the support of The Nature Conservancy started in 2014 and was an important step in determining the areas for protection and linkages with the project.
80. As mentioned under lessons from other projects above, a strong list of players and complimentary projects was outlined (as well as how the project was mutually beneficial) in the prodoc and CEO endorsement request.
81. The PCU manages all GEF projects related to environment and energy, and thus synergy is expected.

Gender responsiveness of project design

82. Gender considerations were integrated into the project's design (under section 2.3.4 in the project document) through the identification of various mechanisms through which the project could achieve gender mainstreaming such as assessing the financial impacts of the project on men and women and addressing any differences, and assessing how entrepreneurial potential of women matches the needs for parks development, and much emphasis was placed on ratio of women inclusion in trainings, decision-making platforms, etc. As mentioned previously, the emphasis on numbers alone is not particularly helpful, and the more solid mechanisms relating to access may not have been easily measurable through the project without an actionable gender strategy (which did come in later in the project).
83. In terms of alignment to national strategies on gender, the activities were aligned to the Seychelles Sustainable Development Strategy which had two objectives looking at understanding the alignment of gender within social development processes, and to increase grassroots participation and gender in the design of an environmental health programme. The project also aimed to support the National Gender Policy.
84. Gender specific expertise in the development of the project was not sought, nor was this a requirement at the time the project was designed. At design the gender aspects in generally were not highly detailed, although the UNDP Gender Marker rating and other important gender considerations were implemented despite the omission in design.

Social and Environmental safeguards

85. The SESP was outlined under Annex 7 of the project document. Two risks in the final project document were carried over from the SESP process, which included the climate change impact on the sustainability of the PA system, and infrastructural development impacts. Impact and probability ratings were generally low.
86. No disagreements were made by the STAP review, and given that processes were not as advanced as they are now in terms of SESP reporting, the evaluators consider the SESP process in this project design as detailed and well considered.

B. Project Implementation

Adaptive Management

87. Despite a relatively strong start (excluding the delays in recruitment of the project manager and technical advisor), the project suffered from various set backs and had to under-go a number of changes and adaptations (both at strategic and at smaller levels of implementation) at MTR. These were not picked up as major changes to project implementation, but rather “endorsing and emphasizing key actions already initiated by the project with some suggestions as to how these actions might be refined”³². The MTR did an excellent job at redirecting the project and giving practical, implementable solutions to allow the project to achieve its objective and logical framework to the best extent possible by the end of project.
88. The management response agreed and felt the MTR recommendations were well expressed and justified, and the Steering Committee meeting that took place in October 2018 addressed the responses in a strategic manner without any major issues coming up from members of the steering committee.
89. Overall, the MTR covered the following key strategic elements:
 - a. *The PA System Approach.* The project document outlined in various ways that the project would attempt to drive a more systemic, coordinated approach to what essentially was a fragmented approach and what was seen as a barrier to the conservations outcomes of the greater protected area system especially taking into account the ambition of increasing the estate. Previous projects had already attempted to work on this with little success (and this is one reason why the terminal evaluators believe this should have been more strategically thought through in design). The MTR maintained that the project should realise that it would not be able to address this central issue, that more ownership and coordination is needed from MACCE, and that it should instead focus on its primary mandate which was to develop and trial financial mechanisms. The MTR also recommended a shift to strategically support the MSP and SeyCCAT process in order to set up the longer-term financing through the expanded estate. The project team was very flexible and responsive to this recommendation and probably was able to redirect the project in a more strategic way as a result. In a sense, the issue of Silhouette was seen as a microcosm of the difficulties in getting partners to work together towards a more system approach generally and the lack of perceived power of MACCE to jump in and coordinate an effective system process.³³
 - b. *SNPA financial autonomy:* While the autonomy was (surprisingly, given the risks to this mentioned at project inception) achieved for SNPA, there were some critical changes in operational modalities that risked sustaining of successful project-related results, namely (a) the sudden nature in which autonomy was granted (versus the

³² Management response to MTR comments. 2 October 2018.

³³ This was just an example of an activity that failed because SNPA and IDC could not come to an agreement on the way they would co-manage the island.

phased approach that was planned and expected), and (b) the move of the highly performing CEO and the subsequent resignation by the Deputy CEO in the first quarter of 2018, both of which necessitated further strategic support to the SNPA from the project, as recommended by the MTR, and further implemented successfully by the project.

- c. *User pays levy and general tourism industry barriers to supporting project results (re finance mechanisms)*: At the time of MTR, tourism numbers were booming and was directly linked to the natural resource base. The project was facing barriers to any of the financial mechanisms (e.g. conservation levies attached to willingness to pay surveys). As part of the MTR management response, the UNDP undertook to support the project in liaising between the ministries (MACCE, Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of Finance) to provide information and justification (with the idea of using the TEMPAs study) to promote more active engagement and break the barriers. The terminal evaluators consider this as not having been fully achieved but with potential to achieve in the future (if strategically pushed) for the following reasons: (i) no TEMPAs study was ultimately done³⁴, (ii) various presentations took place on the financing plan and essential elements including conservation levies to both Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Tourism without successful interest to pursue it further, SeyCCAT took on further willingness to pay studies and further presented and it was also not taken up.
 - d. *Best practice and scaling up*: the MTR noted a few best practice showcasing opportunities and recommended that the project work to develop knowledge products and disseminate these through various networks. While the project did a good job at sharing best practices on various platforms and through various avenues of the project (both at individual PA management entity, as well as the overall project results level), the bigger ambition of sharing results on various international platforms was curbed by the COVID-19 pandemic.
90. The MTR covered a long list of actions related to changing activities and re-aligning or revising indicators. These were generally well taken up with a few minor exceptions for which comments at terminal evaluation are included under the logical framework tracking Annex 1.
 91. There was a lack of capacity at SNPA and as a result there were delays suffered at the start of project implementation (up until the end of 2018). SNPA also went through significant leadership changes (three times) throughout the implementation of the project. When there was change in leadership (the CEO and the Deputy leaving one after the other), the project team had to step in a lot and directly support implementation. The project manager and Technical Advisor went out of their way to support the SNPA during this time and keep project activities moving. SNPA also received significant support from the Project Manager when it came to putting the internal structures in place to deliver the activities of the project.
 92. Toward the last months of project implementation two major disruptions took place, namely the COVID-19 pandemic, and the legislative and presidential elections resulting in a radical turn over in government, both of which necessitated additional adaptive management will be discussed below in more detail. This resulted in a justification for a six-month extension to the project.
 93. **COVID-19** affected project management and adaptiveness in the following ways:

³⁴ Due to sensitivities coming from the tourism industry, too many barriers and eventually the project gave up, although an economic valuation study has been picked up in the MSP process (Source: Steering Committee minutes, interviews with stakeholders).

- a. Results framework achievement: It restricted large scale stakeholder consultations required to finalise PA management plans and organise capacity building sessions, e.g. the enforcement training; limits to recruit international consultants as part of the SeyCCAT business plan support; limited importation of materials to finalise some of the infrastructure work under SNPA; limited the amount of outreach and communication the project could do (including international events),
 - b. General project management and oversight: severely limited interaction through face to face and visits because project implementation partners were forced to work from home.
 - c. Economic revenue and sustaining of financing generally: massive economic disruptions occurred due to tourism numbers crashing and as a result PA managing entities struggled to stay afloat and faced severe resilience shocks. Especially SNPA which had just received financial autonomy was tested severely in terms of its resilience to stay afloat.
 - d. Health and social issues: which had direct impact on the partners and their ability to carry out day to day tasks.
94. These were generally well handled by the project team as far as it was able to, through (a) bringing some training online, (b) creating online platforms for sharing.
95. There was a lot of email communication and steering committee discussion around how the project may be able to support PA management entities directly. There were some requests related directly to financially supporting NGOs working on protected areas to stay afloat during the pandemic. The requests were denied based on the fact that the GEF expenditure regulations provided for strict alignment to the project results framework. Efforts were made to support in other ways that could have aligned to project results, but no common ground could be achieved on this. There was some discontent at partner level as to how this was managed (related to consultancies to support SeyCCAT versus directing finances toward emergency response to NGOs struggling with their management due to the crisis), and some of this was taken to Minister level as a complaint. Ultimately the SeyCCAT support was dropped (both because exchange rates were volatile and funds were not eventually available to push some processes through, and also because of the complaint blocking this process).
96. The government eventually provided COVID-19 emergency response relief through Financial Assistance for Job Retention (FA4JR) assistance and through the Environment Trust Fund (ETF) which covered barebone operations until January 2021.
97. **Elections and government turn-over.** The Government is undergoing a transformation at all levels following the results of the Presidential and National Assembly elections in October 2020. This has had implications for several Ministries, Departments and Agencies.
98. The government change has affected the project through government reshuffle and some decisions moving forward which have meant that the project had to engage in “re-discussions” at the level of sustaining results, including affecting e.g. (a) SNPA autonomy as it has now been merged with the Botanical Gardens, (b) the Oceans Authority as envisaged through the MSP process will likely take on another shape or form which is being re-discussed now, (c) uptake of various financial mechanisms that were being pushed at SeyCCAT level, including the fact that any levies will not be looked upon favourably (in addition losing existing tax revenue: the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) tax being repealed, which many PA management entities wholly relied on).
99. The project team did not have to adapt massively to these changes as they did not significantly affect project results overall, but will have a major effect on the sustainability

of project results. The project team made a strong effort to align its processes on the further ongoing processes after project closure so that results are sustained.

Actual stakeholder participation and partnership arrangements

100. The stakeholder engagement plan was implemented and the progress and final end of project result as outlined under the PIR 2021 was robust.
101. The MTR commented on the level of engagement of government as positive, citing that the president reportedly committed to the MSP process, and that key government ministries support the project. At the time there was an opportunity to link closer to the Ministry of Tourism because the Minister of Environment had changed position to the Minister of Tourism.
102. At the time, the MTR also advised that, given the dependence of the project on a range of government approvals, that it was key that the National Project Director championed the project to ensure that the project could progress efficiently.
103. The evaluators are not convinced, given the amount of outstanding items that depended on government approval (even before COVID-19 and the elections), that either of the two above points really effectively came to fruition.
104. At the time of the MTR, the project had developed a brief paper for the Department of Blue Economy under the Vice President's Office on a national tourism levy on air arrivals; this presentation was repeated also under SeyCCAT later in the project (regarding the Willingness to Pay (WTP) survey), but there was no success in uptake. In June 2018, the cabinet approved the recommendations to establish an Oceans Authority, but the new government has decided against this and has brought the MSP process back to the drawing board in terms of how the governance framework will move forward (at least at the time of finalising this evaluation).
105. Regarding the Biodiversity Finance Unit and BIOFIN process, while the project seemed to have made a concerted effort to align with BIOFIN, the apparent rigid process under BIOFIN and other issues caused a barrier to effective integration (despite a few smaller integrative activities like the SNPA marketing support elaborated on further below).
106. In terms of the project and the connection to the Environmental Trust Fund (ETF), the water levy and sooty tern egg proceeds and percentage of export profit on the Coco de Mer were avenues to be pursued and the MTR did recommend to actively engage more with the ETF (and perhaps have a member on the SC, this was not ultimately done). There is no ETF board now as projects are vetted directly through the MACCE. ETF did significantly financially support the PA managing entities to stay afloat during critical months of the COVID-19 pandemic.
107. The evaluators believe that there was generally good engagement with stakeholders in terms of partner support, the, Steering Committee was highly democratic (although may

have benefitted from depth facilitation using e.g. Mindells Theory of Deep Democracy³⁵ and to some extent ran the risk of suffering from the Paradox of Tolerance³⁶, some SC representation could have been at higher level), and there were also other issues (partners not so happy with e.g. the leadership by Steering Committee, one partner went above the Steering Committee to complain to the Minister about the funding of a consultancies, some sentiments that there were too many consultancies³⁷).

108. Most partners have vested interest in long-term success although it was clear through the challenges faced in the project that collaboration is not something that partners are doing actively. Some collaborations and lessons sharing did exist, but challenges and barriers continue (including among some partners, strong personalities and unwilling-ness to compromise). As a result, there were missed opportunities to work together (e.g. the dropping of the activity on Silhouette, the lack of full participation in system-level activities by some partners, the lack of sharing ideas and upscaling of activities to other entities).
109. Communication and outreach was strongly conducted after the recommendations in the MTR to showcase best practices. Engagement and outreach also took place with various stakeholders including school clubs, wildlife clubs, and others. More information on this is elaborated on replication potential below.
110. The gender action plan was highly appropriate, effective and adaptive as the project activities had had excellent participation and contributions from women – the ‘Gender Analysis of PCU Current Implementation Programme’ document mentions that gender was adequately mainstreamed amongst partners for instance 40% of CEOs are female
111. Steering Committee predominantly female (61%), women occupy a high number of senior positions in the project implementation network (within 6 of the 7 implementing partners are in leadership positions).
112. The 2018 PIR reports “although the project has not specifically focused on gender equality, project activities have had excellent participation and contributions from women” – this could be considered as adaptability of the gender action plan, given the project had not initially focused on gender equality.
113. From the early stages, the project established stakeholder involvement as per 2.3.4 of the project document – all stakeholders were consulted and participated in training on enforcement, management planning and business planning.
114. The project ensured that there was an equal representation of women – inclusivity was a key aspect when it came to trainings and project meetings. For the final reporting period (PIR 2020), it was stated that females had taken up 100% of new contracts.

Project Finance and Co-Finance

115. A comparison of planned and actual expenditures are shown in Table 6 below. In year 1, the actual project spending was 72% of planned spending, rising to 75% in year 2, and

³⁵ The term Deep Democracy was developed by the physicist Arny Mindell, and is a methodology developed to foster a deeper level of dialogue and inclusivity.

³⁶ The paradox of tolerance states that if a group/society is tolerant without limit, its ability to be tolerant is eventually seized or destroyed by the intolerant. This is a comment by the international evaluator based on interviews with the project partners on the platforms of communication and deeper frustrations around how decisions were taken (even if there was no evidence of lack of inclusivity).

³⁷ Interviews with project partners, and project team.

99.2% in year 3. The initial under-spending by the project in the first two years are allocated to (a) the project manager being hired late in year 1, and (b) some activities being deferred due to delays in spending by some implementing partners.³⁸ For years 4 and 5, actual expenditures were above planned expenditures (103% year 4, 148% year 5).

116. The project has a GEF grant of US\$2,776,900 of which 97% had been spent at terminal evaluation (see table 6).
117. Changes to original fund allocations for Silhouette: The PSC meeting No 5 of 2019 stated that 0% of project funds had been spent as of 31st Dec 2018. The two partners could not come to an agreement on the implementation of the activity and as a result, the amount (USD 200,000) was reallocated to SNPA for another activity. SNPA used these funds to undertake a floating structure for ticket verification (was designed but not carried forward), Boardwalk in Veuve Reserve La Digue island, Mangrove Boardwalk on Curieuse island, toilet facility at Copolia trail and communications products.
118. Funds remaining for SIF Aldabra House (\$4942.06) were reallocated to tour guide training in Q1 2021.
119. Aside from Silhouette, reallocation of funds from the project budget lines was not discussed at the PSC meeting.
120. The original closing date for the project was 16 March 2021. A six-month extension was requested by MACCE due to project activities being delayed as a result of COVID-19 as well as the change in government after the Presidential and National Assembly Elections in 2021. This extension was approved by GEF, bringing the actual closing date to 30 September 2021.
121. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the local currency (Seychelles Rupee) lost value relative to the dollar (from SCR 12.7 to SCR 21.2 in January 2021). Budget planning in SCR for Q1 resulted in lower-than-expected USD being transferred to the project. During implementation the SCR rate improved against the dollar (to SCR 15), therefore the transferred amount was insufficient to implement some activities. This issue was taken into consideration in forthcoming allocations.
122. BDO LLP independently audited the project 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2020 under a long-term agreement with UNDP, for which 2016, 2017 and 2018 was rated as satisfactory. In 2019, no financial audit was carried out. Financial audit is carried out by the UNDP-CO and according to UNDP procedures and based on audit threshold with low risk at \$600,000, medium risk \$450,000 and high risk \$300,000. In 2020 UNDP Mauritius and Seychelles risk rate was revised from low risk to medium risk. In view that in year 2019 spending (\$431,357) was below the threshold for medium risk it was not subjected to audit.
123. There was notable delay (in excess of 3 months) in financial reporting /submission of Funding Authorisation and Certificate of Expenditure (FACE) forms (February to May 2020 and June to September 2020). The project team stated that delay in was due to COVID-10 national lock-down and closure of office.

³⁸ Interviews, SC meeting minutes, financial budget reviews.

124. The auditors also recommended that the Aide memoire for all procurement procedures be updated and the Public Procurement Act prevail in case of variances.

Table 6. Expenditure planned (as outlined in ProDoc) and actual (as of July 2021)

Year	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020		2021		Total	
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual								
Outcome 1	152,429	106,706.91	223,675	196,644.91	148,296	236,437.61	52,803	26,033.12	28,730	1,286.92	0	15,428.35	605,933	582,537.82
Outcome 2	374,000	252,398.80	569,250	388,659.55	496,975	394,997.44	328,196	397,871.61	270,646	466,917.06	0	79,512.53	2,039,067	1,980,356.99
Project Management	15,000	34,387.87	30,500	37,010.85	35,500	43,965.18	35,500	7,453.04	15,400	0	0	9,275.45	131,900	132,092.39
Total	541,429	393,493.58	823,425	622,315.31	680,771	675,400.23	416,499	431,357.77	314,776	468,203.98	0	104,216.33	2,776,900	2,694,987.20

125. The co-financing information provided to the evaluators can be found in Tables 7 (planned and actual) and 8 (actual) below. The narrative follows the tables.

Table 7. Co-Financing Table for the PAF project

Co-financing (type/source)	UNDP (USD)		Government (USD)		Other (USD)		Total (USD)	
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual
Grants								
Loans								
In-kind		150,000	7,000,000	6,717,171.84	8,013,654	8,376,128.77	15,013,654	15,243,300.61
Cash								
Totals		150,000	7,000,000	6,717,171.84	8,013,654	8,376,128.77	15,013,654	15,243,300.61

Table 8. Detailed contributions for co-financing actually realised for the PAF project

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount (USD)

Private sector	North Island Seychelles	Cash	Investment mobilized	285,448
Private sector	Denis Private Island	Cash	Investment mobilised	255,154
Private sector	Banyan Tree Seychelles	Cash	Investment mobilised	204,889
NGO	Green Island Foundation	Cash	Investment mobilised	171,659.58
NGO	Nature Seychelles	Cash	Investment mobilised	2,833,516.29
NGO	Marine Conservation Society of Seychelles	Cash	Recurrent Expenditure	383,946
NGO	Seychelles Island Foundation	Cash	Investment mobilised	1,560,386.58
NGO	The Nature Conservancy	Cash	Investment mobilised	1,452,777
Government	Ministry of Agriculture, Climate Change and Environment	Cash	Investment mobilised	6,717,171.84
Government-Parastatal	Seychelles National Parks Authority	Cash	Recurrent expenditure	1,228,352.32
UN Agency	UNDP	In Kind	Investment mobilised	150,000
Total Co-financing				15,243,300.61

126. Despite concern at MTR that the project was not going to attain full co-financing, the actual co-financing at terminal evaluation was 101% of the planned co-financing amount (Table 10, Table 11).
127. The co-financing from the Ministry of Agriculture, Climate Change and Environment was originally US\$7 million and expected to come from the Seychelles Conservation and Climate Adaptation Trust Fund SeyCCAT. SeyCCAT was created through the debt to nature swap whereby the Seychelles debt (US\$21.6 million) would be swapped for protection and conservation of protected areas and development of innovative funding mechanism. However the amount of funding leveraged (US\$15.2 million) was less than anticipated (US\$ 80 million). From 2018 to 2020 SeyCCAT had disbursed only USD 592,069.46. The difference in co-financing from MACCE was made up through the Environment Trust Fund (\$703,478.74), through NGO grants, supporting the PCU (office rental, utilities,) (\$498,550.67), Financial Assistance for Job Retention (FA4JR) contributions from Government to the NGOs during the SARS Covid 19 pandemic (\$293,960.02) and support to deep sea exploration (200m depth) in the outer islands of Seychelles by the Nekton Oxford Deep Ocean Research Institute (Nekton) (\$1,322,836.58; being 25% of their budget cost).
128. Partner organisations (except SNPA and Banyan Tree hotel) exceeded their co-financing amounts. The Banyan Tree hotel was closed for renovation for an extended amount of time, which resulted in the attainment of only 89% of its intended co financing commitment.
129. Although SIF did not complete the Aldabra House, the intended co-financing was developed through exhibition content development, concept and detailed design of Aldabra House, Aldabra's Eco School educational programmes, the Aldabra clean Up project and operational costs including merchandising and transportation
130. The evaluators were satisfied that the project team made great effort to track and ensure co-financing was received and reported by the various project implementing partners.

Monitoring & Evaluation*

M&E Design at Entry*

131. The GEF CEO endorsement request and the project document outlined the monitoring and evaluation plan, with the Inception Phase, monitoring responsibilities and events (like quarterly reporting), learning and knowledge sharing, auditing, communications, clearly detailed. The monitoring and evaluation work plan and budget is laid out in Table 18 of the project document.
132. The logical framework included a baseline, and relevant and appropriate targets. Most indicators were SMART, although some indicators and outputs (such the adoption of the finance plan (5a), and having legal framework emplaced (1.3) were outside of the project's control.
133. The time frames and roles and responsibilities of the implementation of the M&E, while not very detailed, were generally well-articulated. The inception phase, MTR and terminal evaluation were all fully budgeted for.

M&E Implementation*

134. The project manager was mostly responsible for quarterly reporting and for the PIR which were then reviewed, revised and added to by the MACCE and the UNDP. Project partners were also reporting regularly (in some cases they perceived it as "over-reporting" and burdensome). The quality of reporting was strong both in quarterlies and the PIRs.

135. The tracking tools were done at Inception, Mid-Term Review and just before Terminal Evaluation. One partner did not participate in the last update and thus the figures for this entity had to be taken from the MTR which brought the overall score down.
136. Steering Committee minutes were kept and were detailed and could be well followed in terms of decisions processes taken.
137. The MTR was a strong piece of work and supported adaptive management of the project (as already outlined under adaptive management).
138. Risk management of COVID-19 was adequate given the project's capacity and influence and the late-ness in which this happened.

Monitoring & Evaluation	Rating
M&E Design at Entry	S
M&E Plan Implementation	HS
Overall Quality of M&E	S

UNDP Implementation and Oversight, Implementation Partner execution and overall assessment of implementation/oversight and execution*

139. *UNDP oversight*: the PPG process was strong, but could have benefitted from the learnings of Terminal Evaluations from previous projects, and some risks could have been better identified.³⁹ The PCU arrangement (i.e. one unit within MACCE working only on GEF projects) has benefitted UNDP oversight and coordination because it only has one communications stream to handle. The UNDP Initiation Plan was of good quality and the stakeholder engagement plan in general has been particularly strong.
140. There was some staff turn-over in the last half year of the project, which did not seem to have a significant impact even-though it was during the time of the effects of COVID-19 and the election results.
141. The management response from UNDP and project team and resultant Steering Committee sign-off to the MTR was of high quality and supported the project in its flexibility and adaptiveness to move its project results forward. In fact, the MTR in general was pivotal to driving the project, and the management response aided the project in moving forward significantly until the double hit by the election results and the COVID-19 pandemic.
142. UNDP had to step in when it came to the Aldabra House cancellation by SIF (in terms of deciding whether funds should be reimbursed or not) and seemingly followed a due diligence process in this effort.
143. Other project "hiccups" where UNDP did not step in (and perhaps should have as the GEF IA) included the Silhouette activity that was dropped due to lack of compromise between the SNPA and the IDC (this was left to the Project Director⁴⁰ and ultimately the project Steering Committee decided to drop the activity and allow SNPA to propose an alternative to the use of the funds)⁴¹, as well as when Nature Seychelles breached agreement with MACCE about the end of project completion of the tracking tools (which was going to be handled internally by the NPD but also did not move forward)⁴².

³⁹ E.g. the NGO modalities project.

⁴⁰ The two CEOs would not compromise. The Project Director wanted to take it to the Cabinet to take a decision but apparently the timelines of the project did not allow for this (interview with Project Director) – a decision to cabinet would have likely delayed processes significantly.

⁴¹ Although it is uncertain how much the UNDP CO would have had any influence over the process.

⁴² Again, difficult to say how much influence UNDP would have had in this process.

144. The UNDP CO got involved when there was a request made to re-direct funds from consultancies instead towards keeping some of the NGOs (managing entities) afloat during the COVID-19 pandemic. The UNDP CO and PCU proffered that if the NGOs could make a case that funds would support project outcomes, this could be done. There was no such case made. However, government did step in and supported the basic short-term needs until January 2021 (as already mentioned in other sections of this report).
145. *MACCE implementation*: MACCE implementation for the sake of the terminal evaluation is broken down into two pieces, (a) leadership, overall coordination, and championship, and (b) project implementation.
146. The National Project Director was in charge of championing and leading the project overall, and chaired the Steering Committee. There was also support from the Minister and other senior government officials (e.g. within the Department of Environment). In some instances, championship and leadership was effective (e.g. SNPA move to autonomy and the request to support SNPA more strongly, support during COVID-19 and championing at Cabinet level the financial support to PA managing entities, the project continuity towards the end and post-project on the Minister of Environment coming from the CEO position at SNPA during the project lifetime and this having a strong buy-in and knowledge of the project). In some other cases, MACCE leadership was lacking (e.g. driving the financial plan more actively, taking stronger decisions at SC level about certain items⁴³, following up on financial solutions, coordinating the PA system overall and the partners).
147. In terms of implementation through the PCU team, the project overall had a strong and hard-working project team who really made best efforts to move what was an ambitious and difficult project (with some indicators not under the project's direct influence) forward using flexible and adaptive approaches. The programme coordinator who retired in 2019 was a strong strategic supporter and overall coordinator bringing the partners together, especially during the design and the inception phase in the absence of senior project staff, who only came in late in 2016 (approximately six months into implementation).
148. As already mentioned, the project struggled to get moving on the more systemic approach, had some outputs that were in limbo or delayed, and the MTR came at a very opportune time and allowed for the project to shift gear and move forward much more strategically and allowed the project team to be guided effectively and objectively.
149. The Technical Advisor (TA) was very much appreciated for his skill, expertise, and professionalism and made a big impact on the project as well as to PCU support in general. The TA also supported partners beyond expectations on their capacity and product development, and also supported the capacity development of the project manager. The project manager was lauded as hard-working and reflexive and made strong efforts to manage the expectations and differing opinions in what was a project with many partners and implementation aspects. The manager had extremely good record keeping and made concerted efforts in supporting partners in their implementation, especially SNPA. All project stakeholders (with one exception) highlighted the effectiveness and efficiency of the project manager.⁴⁴
150. The Steering Committee was there to oversee and make the decisions under the leadership of MACCE. It intended to meet every six months although this was not always done. In fact,

⁴³ Interviews with project partners, e.g. on multiple items from Finance Plan, to TEMPAs study, outputs achievements, etc.

⁴⁴ One partner did relay that the project was "badly managed" but this was not echoed by any of the other partners in the project. Based on evidence from project high level decision-making and reporting, progress reports and interviews, the evaluators are of the opinion that the project manager over-performed in the tasks and made the strongest efforts to be helpful and move the project into the direction as guided. This said, the leadership and seniority was perhaps in some instances missing in terms of taking decisions (which only comes with longer-term experience in positions such these), this was also further limited by some limitations of perceived leadership coming from MACCE.

there were 8 meetings in five years, with one additional one being planned for 2021 (has been delayed for various reasons, including to finalise Monitoring and Evaluation elements like the quarterly reporting, PIR and Terminal Evaluation)⁴⁵.

151. The Steering Committee was generally a good platform in terms of presenting on progress and making decisions as a team. Some things were deferred multiple times (e.g. financial plan follow up, TEMPAs studies); this and feedback from some members makes the evaluators believe that there may have been some lack of leadership in decision-taking by the Steering Committee.
152. The Steering Committee was well-attended with most participants attending all of the meetings. Two representatives from the two ministries for which the project needed support to push strategic objectives through (Finance, and Tourism), were represented and attended four (tourism) and three (finance) times. Despite attendance and representation, key elements were not embraced within the two ministries. For Finance, the position represented the Economic Planning Department and the representative was not available for an interview.⁴⁶ Regarding tourism, the representative is senior and well versed on the interconnections between tourism and protected areas and has been involved in the GEF process through other projects. The international evaluator made the assumption, based on lack of movement on key items regarding tourism-related items (and the push-back from the tourism industry on e.g. the conservation levy), that the risk management section (versus, e.g. Strategy and Policy, or even Product Development)⁴⁷ may not have been the appropriate section to push what was needed for the project. However, the representative maintained that the mandate was of no relevance given that information flow would have been the same regardless of which section represented and the general sentiment among project partners was that the representative was appropriately placed. This said, despite representation and other higher-level links (e.g. Minister of Environment moving over to Tourism just before MTR), key strategic items the project needed government approval on (particularly from Finance and Tourism) were not given approval.
153. In terms of the different partners implementing the project, overall management of the different items and partner reporting was good (with some respondents feeling that the reporting burden was high, and others maintaining that financial reporting could have been better⁴⁸).
154. SNPA went through multiple leadership changes, that coupled with capacity limitations meant that the project team had to make extra effort in supporting implementation with SNPA. In some cases this included hiring additional staff for certain phases of the project to ensure things kept moving.
155. Some partnership implementation issues included:
 - a. SIF having to cancel their activity of building the Aldabra House (this is covered under Output achievement below). The process taken by SIF (in detail explained by SIF during the evaluation interview as well as with UNDP and MACCE, as well as the correspondence through SC meeting minutes and UNDP/PCU/SIF emails) was perhaps leaning on its over-confidence on its high level links, given that the risk of the land issue with the roads authority was already there at project

⁴⁵ Having a meeting in advance of these may have supported these processes.

⁴⁶ The international evaluator spoke to the Director of the Department who was not in this role in the first years of project implementation – this level probably would have been pitched better in terms of the Steering Committee representation given the strategic needs of the project, but a more junior position was represented.

⁴⁷ In the experience of the evaluator working across various countries in the region, generally government positions and mandates make a big difference in how strategy is taken up within government.

⁴⁸ The evaluators could not find evidence of this, although no audits were done of the amounts spent among the partners, and the auditors did pick up some issues as outlined under project finance and co-finance.

design/inception and SIF never considered the possibility that it might block the activity in the way it did. Instead of going through the project formal processes (because SIF had higher level connections than the project did), SIF tried to pursue the land issue itself and finally was not given permission to build, even when SIF publicly announced the cancellation in the hope that this would create some public outcry and pressure to support the Aldabra House cause. The cancellation was unfortunate but understandable under the circumstances, and UNDP and PCU decided that SIF had conducted its activities as far as it could.

- b. Nature Seychelles did not take part in the final tracking tools for the project citing that they were trying to stay afloat and thus had more important priorities, despite this in essence breaching an agreement without a formal process taken to exit this duty.
- c. The IDC and SNPA could not come to an agreement for Silhouette co-management to an extent that the entire activity had to be cancelled and the site being excluded from the project.

156. The project partners had their capacities built, although many managing entities already had high capacity and in some cases managed to implement their activities well. In terms of sharing and working together, with a few exceptions (e.g. Nature Seychelles learning from the SNPA online payment system and taking it on themselves, MCSS and DoE having good lines of communication in terms of monitoring), the partners could have worked together better and there were some concrete ideas on this in the MTR that did not come to fruition. The project ultimately did not have much influence (MACCE leadership and ownership may have improved this) in terms of improving on the inconsistent coordination and collaboration (other than the METT tracking tools and the efforts made to push system-level financial mechanisms which did not come to fruition).

UNDP Implementation/Oversight and Implementing Partner Execution	Rating
Quality of UNDP Implementation/Oversight	S
Quality of Implementing Partner Execution	MS
Overall Quality of Implementation/Oversight and Execution	MS

Risk Management

157. As mentioned in the Design Review, some risks were relatively well laid out, and some others need to be tested through the evaluation (most notably risk 2 and 3 in Table 9).

158. A risk log was kept throughout the project and updated yearly with mitigation notes and management responses.⁴⁹ Three additional risks identified during project implementation were added in this risk log. Overall risks were well captured in the risk log. A summary risk assessment at terminal evaluation is provided in Table 9 below.

159. Four risks in particular warrant a bit more discussion at terminal evaluation, two of which were identified at project design, and two which came up in implementation.

160. *Ongoing conflicts and misunderstandings between public institutions, private section partners, NGOs undermine partnership approaches and implementation of cooperative governance arrangements for the protected areas system.* This has come up in many past Terminal Evaluations of GEF projects in the past. The project tried to mitigate this risk by facilitating the consultative development of a legislative and policy framework, but having

⁴⁹ PAF risks log, updated July 2021.

knowledge sharing co-development of work plans, achievement of equal partnerships, a collaborative platform e.g. in 2018 a PA National Advisory Committee was established (which has not moved since). Some partner organisations do not want or envisage the existence of a system and prefer to continue in a loose network, despite this risking system-level conservation outcomes. It is clear that despite efforts to bring partners around the table through various consultative processes and high levels of democracy, there is perceived mistrust among partners and a competition versus collaboration approach. The MTR realised this and recommended that the project leave the coordination and leadership of this issue under the auspices of the MACCE. The issue is more embedded and nuanced in terms of past traumas, mistrust and overall unwillingness to be seen as a team (given history of fragmentation, development of progress, perception of lack of capacity or willingness among different institutions, lack of perceived drive from government to support and thus no incentive to look to government in terms of leadership⁵⁰), and will require a much more deliberate, focused approach to deal with. But it will need to be dealt with in some way (and a recommendation is made to this effect) or the risk to project results in the future will continue (including decreasing resilience of the entire system if more shocks are to come in the future).

161. *Government does not support proposals for PA revenue retention, undermining a key element in the project's strategy the effective and strategic use of government finance to PAs.* This risk was retired under the risk log in 2018 when the move to autonomy was committed and the revenue retention by SNPA was possible. It brought out of retirement, so to speak, in 2020 when some additional issues were still pending in terms of SNPA ability to increase its fees, which was then further impacted by COVID-19 which cut down tourism numbers drastically. The evaluators have reworded this risk to account for many other items under the project's strategy that required government approval *Government does not support proposals brought forward by project on financial solutions to close the finance gap, including revenue retention, conservation levy, PES* for which the evaluators maintain that the risk has continued and will continue into the sustainability aspects of the project. The MTR stated that some strategic aspects of the project really depended on government approval and the championship of MACCE was vital in this regard. Seeing as these items (financial solutions and financial plan, including PES, conservation levy, or at least one system-level mechanism as laid out by a revised indicator under MTR, neither a key strategic piece of work like the TEMPAs study⁵¹) were not approved by government illustrates the relevance of this risk.
162. Two major further disruptions took place that had impact on project and BAU of country as a whole, and these were identified as risks in the risk log during implementation and warrant further discussion.
163. *Presidential and legislative elections and subsequent restructuring (October 2020 until current):* This has had various impacts, including (a) new cabinet announced and minister reshuffling (the Minister of MACCE was not affected, although agriculture was added to its mandate, and a new PS and Deputy was instated), (b) the Department of Blue Economy (previously at Vice-President office level) was put under the Ministry of Fisheries and Blue Economy which resulted in delays on MSP implementation dates and what the governance framework will be (Oceans Authority proposal is likely to not go through), strategic direction change, (c) the SNPA was merged with Botanical Gardens to become the Seychelles Parks and Gardens Authority (project is providing facilitative processes through a consultancy on institutional assessment), (d) tax changes, including the removal of the CSR tax vital to protected areas conservation, (e) re-engagement at various levels in terms

⁵⁰ Interviews and summative findings from previous evaluations.

⁵¹ Which already before COVID-19 the project was told to "tread carefully" because there was pushback from tourism on this work.

of the steps that the project and its supportive processes (e.g. MSP) had made. There are opportunities and challenges that remain unknown as to the sustaining of project results as at terminal evaluation.

164. *The COVID-19 pandemic*, which not only affected the project operations and results achievement but has put a risk to sustaining project results and has had devastating impacts on the overall protected area management effectiveness of the management entities, through various impacts, including (a) loss of revenue from tourism and tourism industry support in general because the industry is struggling to survive itself⁵², (b) operations and limitations in terms of access and mobility, (c) delays in project implementation and overall changes needing to be made on the final activities (e.g. training) as well as existing activities across the board, (d) meetings and other strategic sessions in terms of advancing the overall financing work of the MSP process, (e) communications and outreach ideas coming to a halt (in terms of best practice sharing), (f) basic bare-bone operations and survival of managing entity partners in terms of core operating costs risking actual conservation outcomes, (e) negative social impacts in general (health, family dynamics, social structures, etc). While coming in late in the project, the COVID-19 pandemic will have a major role in terms of the project overall impact achievement as well as sustainability in the write up. The Government as supported the managing entities to stay afloat through the FA4JR and ETF.

Social and Environmental Safeguards

165. It is difficult for the evaluators to conduct a full SESP risk assessment of a project (under GEF-5) that did not have as stringent requirements during design and implementation stage as the Guidance for Terminal Evaluations requires in the new GEF cycles. The Social and Environmental Screening Template was generally well-outlined at design for what was required at that stage.

166. This said, the two risks identified from an SESP process seem to be adequate. Other risks were described more in detail above with regard to their appropriateness at design, as well as new risks that came up during project implementation. The two risks COVID-19 and national election results had major impacts, which have been discussed in detail under the section above.

Table 9. Risk assessment table of the Terminal Evaluation of the Seychelles’ Protected Areas Finance Project

#	Original Risk (in ProDoc)	Revised Risk	Original Rating (I/L & Significance)	Revised Rating (I/L & Significance)	TE Findings on the revision
1	ECONOMIC Although the negotiations for the debt nature swap are successful, the Seychelles Climate Change Adaptation Trust Fund is not established.	Unchanged.	Low	Unchanged	This risk was appropriately retired in the risk log.
2	STRATEGIC Ongoing conflicts and misunderstandings between public institutions, private sector partners, NGOs and resource users	Unchanged.	High	High	Some risk log comments included the partnership development consultative processes that attempted to curb resistance to system-level

⁵² Downturn in tourism numbers where the project justified mitigation by “includes strategies towards diversifying sources of income to PAs away from tourism given the sector’s volatility” project attempted to do this in some ways, but certain barriers existed and was also majorly disrupted by COVID. The fact remains that the initial plans for diversification did not come to fruition (for various reasons, including push back from partners, government lack of approval of financing plan) but would have supported resilience to this shock.

#	Original Risk (in ProDoc)	Revised Risk	Original Rating (I/L & Significance)	Revised Rating (I/L & Significance)	TE Findings on the revision
	undermine partnership approaches and implementation of cooperative governance arrangements for the Protected Areas System.				work. MTR response recommended to shift focus from this and leave this to the mandate of MACCE leadership and focus on system through SeyCCAT. System level movement not successful and risk remains on project results sustainability.
3	<u>STRATEGIC</u> Government does not support proposals for PA revenue retention, undermining a key element in the project's strategy the effective and strategic use of government finance to PAs.	Government does not support proposals brought forward by project on financial solutions to close the finance gap, including revenue retention, conservation levy, PES.	Medium	High	The revenue retention specifically related to the autonomy of SNPA was successful (although later curbed by COVID-19), but other key elements that needed government approval were not finally accepted.
4	<u>FINANCIAL</u> Downturn in tourist numbers.	Linked to new risk under COVID-19	Low	High	Too much dependence on tourism decreased resilience when COVID-19 hit despite project putting in place some mitigation that was not taken up because of lack of partner and other interest.
5	<u>ENVIRONMENTAL</u> Climate impacts may negatively affect the long-term sustainability PAs*		Low	Unchanged	During the project lifespan this risk did not significantly affect the project (unless one looks at it from a system and longer-term perspective).
6	<u>ENVIRONMENTAL</u> Potential negative environmental impacts from infrastructural development impacts and increased boat traffic as a direct result of project activities in ecologically sensitive areas*		Low	Unchanged	Project monitored this and had minimal impact.
7	<u>STRATEGIC/POLITICAL</u> Presidential and legislative elections (October 2020) and subsequent restructuring (Nov 2020, Feb 2021, April 2021)	Unchanged	High	Unchanged	Various changes in terms of reshuffle of government and structure, priorities changed, uptake of certain items considered done had to be brought back to drawing board.
8	<u>FINANCIAL</u> Foreign exchange rates drastically changing, following COVID-19 impact	Unchanged	High	Unchanged	Although some partners mentioned this could have gone both ways (in some ways more rupees were available), although if the project was working in rupees then less dollars were disbursed. The risk log stated that the fluctuations

#	Original Risk (in ProDoc)	Revised Risk	Original Rating (I/L & Significance)	Revised Rating (I/L & Significance)	TE Findings on the revision
					impacted on the project team's ability to deliver on work plans (including on some of the TORs that SeyCCAT had to seek alternatively funding for).
9	<u>OPERATIONAL</u> Global COVID-19 pandemic	COVID-19 pandemic has impact on project results achievement and sustainability	High	High	Massive impact on all project partners on achieving their conservation goals and staying afloat, high dependency on tourism meant low resilience to shock, government assistance supported in short-term, consultative processes and final activities were affected by project as well as finalisation of some important items.

C. Project Results and Impacts

Progress Towards Objective and Expected Outcomes*

167. The evaluators have updated and provided comments and status within the results framework of the project based on the evaluation, this can be found in Annex 1; additionally, an annex (Annex 2) has been added on the progress at activity level. This particular section's narrative should be read in conjunction with the results framework in Annexes 1 and 2.

Outcome 1: Protected Area investment is forested and capacity for protected areas management, at site, institutional and systemic levels, is improved for directing the long-term sustainable financing of the protected areas system and generating conservation benefits

168. The project catalysed an increased amount of financing through public and private investments in the protected areas of Seychelles and significantly improved the capacities of PA management entities such as the SNPA. SNPA has become financially autonomous due to the project. Generally, long-term sustainable financing mechanisms have been developed (to an extent) for all participating PA management entities.

Output 1.1. A PA System Financing & Investment Plan for Seychelles is adopted at the national level, along with subsidiary investment plans at the site of sub-system levels, and these become a key instrument for implementing the 2013 PA Policy

169. A first attempt to develop a financing and investment plan was made in 2016 in a document and process led by the Project Technical Advisor and a local consultant. The document entitled "National level Sustainable Financing Plan for Protected Areas in Seychelles" identified existing revenue mechanisms (e.g. government recurrent budget, bilateral and multilateral grants, environmental fines, donations, entrance and user fees) as well as new potential sources of funding e.g. Payment of Ecosystem Services (PES) for water quality applied to water bottling companies, development of blue carbon market, biodiversity offset, PPPs, bio prospecting, and contributions from industrial fishing. The

plan was based on six objectives⁵³, for each of which a set of activities was developed with lead organisations and timelines.

170. A kick-off workshop was held on 20 October 2016 and included 24 participants with most project partners represented and a final validation workshop was held on 30 November 2016. Following the validation, the project Steering Committee lead by MACCE sought the approval of the Ministry of Finance before submission to the Cabinet of Ministers. The approval was never received despite several attempts including a presentation to the Ministry of Finance and email exchanges.⁵⁴
171. In 2019, the project re-oriented the activity for this output towards the supporting the costing of the MSP. The investment plan entitled “Financing options to implement 400, 400,000km² of new Marine Protected areas under the Seychelles Marine Spatial Plan” was published in January 2019 and considered five existing finance options (GOS budget, Grants, Blue Grants Fund, Permit fees for marine users) and six potential finance options (Blue Enterprise Fund, Environmental levy, CSR, Reallocation of fuel concession, private donations and Impact investment for island development). Three scenarios are considered with management costs (1) basic management in both zones 1 and 2 {USD 30,171,143}, (2) Optimal management in zones 2 and basic management in zone 1 {USD 34,883,509} and (3) optimal management in both zone 1 and 2 {USD 42,744,711}. Zone 1 relate to high biodiversity with no /limited fishing permitted while zone 2 are medium biodiversity with sustainable use areas.
172. The process to develop the MSP financing plan started with a similar “kick off workshop” which was held on 19 February 2019 and included 41 participants to present the three possible management scenarios and receive feedback and input on the management components that form the scenarios. Based on the result of the workshop, the management scenarios were used to develop a costing and identify the possible public and private financing to activities linked to the Zones 1 and 2 activities. A validation workshop was held on 28th May 2019 and attended by 29 participants including representatives of Economic Planning Department in the Ministry of Finance.
173. The evaluators note that for the first investment plan there was no representation from the Economic Planning Department of the Ministry of Finance for both the kick-off, and the validation workshop. The kick-off workshop had a representative from the Blue Economy Department, the validation workshop had no representation from Ministry of Finance.⁵⁵ The fact that the Steering Committee identified the Economic Planning Department as a key partner to endorse the plan, the Steering Committee should have guided the project team to have put more emphasis on consultation at this stage. It is also noted that some recommendations from the kick off workshop were not finally included in the plan, including economic valuation of PA for business case⁵⁶ and climate finance⁵⁷.
174. For the MSP Costing Plan, challenges and delays occurred due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the election of the new Government which resulted in delay in government endorsement. The new government repealed the CSR tax, which was one of the options

⁵³ (1) to strengthen the institutional framework for the PA network, through development of a PA National Advisory Committee, 2) Reduce the expenditures of PA institutions, 3) improve financing of existing PA from tourism sector, 4) diversification of revenue from tourism, 5) financing of expanded PA network is improved and 6) strengthen capacity of PA institution in PA finance

⁵⁴ Interviews with MACCE, project team. At MTR, it was recommended that the Project Director champion this more strongly, there were discussions at PS level where review was to be committed but this was not eventually done, other correspondents within MACCE said that there were several emails back and forth and that the Ministry of Finance were not in agreement with the mechanisms in the plan.

⁵⁵ Workshop attendance lists.

⁵⁶ Although there was a lot of to- and fro to do a TEMPA study, this was also not eventually done, but picked up by the MSP through its own economic valuation study.

⁵⁷ Although blue carbon was included, and since there has been much climate finance work done in the MSP and other processes, such as through the NDP Partnership including a consultant who is supporting capacity to access climate finance in various sectors (energy, blue economy, etc).

considered in the plan. The downturn in tourist arrivals due to COVID-19 also limited the options to embrace the proposed conservation levy and other options related to tourism. The plan thus needed updating (and contextualising to new circumstances) and this update process is currently ongoing at the time of finalising the terminal evaluation. The evaluators consider that both investment plans are of high quality and are good proposals but that the limitation holds that neither has been adopted (as was planned) by end of project.

Output 1.2. Site-level cost-effectiveness and conservation-effectiveness benchmarks are established to guide decisions on investment, co-management, delegation and cross-subsidization

175. The project design results framework made use of financial scorecards (indicators 1,2,4 and 7), capacity score cards (indicator 6) and management effectiveness tracking tool (METT) (indicator 3) and developed a baseline for site level cost effectiveness, capacity and conservation management effectiveness at PPG.
176. This assessment was also carried out at mid-term and at end of project. This was the first time that benchmarks for PA and PA management entities in Seychelles were done and laid a foundation for tracking performance (that is standardized). The results are displayed in Annex 1.
177. The terminal evaluation noted that end of project targets for indicator 1a⁵⁸ was not reached (although all components had improved over baseline scores). This was attributed to (a) the Nature Reserve and Conservancy Bill had not been passed by end of project, (b) the government budget is not directly targeting PA or allocating funds towards the PA system, and (c) lack of operationalizing the payment for ecosystem services.
178. Indicator 1b⁵⁹ was achieved for all except SIF, ICS, and Nature Seychelles (who did not participate in the end of project assessment).⁶⁰ ICS suffered delays in implementation of its business plans which resulted in lower scores, and SIF was yet to develop safeguards to ensure that increased numbers of visitors do not adversely affect conservation outcomes.⁶¹
179. Indicator 2⁶² was achieved for the basic management scenario and project over 5 years but not the optimal scenario. The project succeeded in reducing the financing gap from USD 2.7 million to USD 777,729.
180. The end of project targets for indicator 3⁶³ were achieved except for SNPA sites Curieuse and Morne Seychellois National Park. The absence of a finalized implemented management plan for Morne Seychellois caused the site to miss the target. For Curieuse it was deemed at mid-term that the baseline scores were too high and should have been significantly downgraded.⁶⁴
181. For indicator 4⁶⁵ relating to an increase of 50% of finances available, the ratings at end of project was 36% and therefore not achieved. The main reason for this was the loss of the CRS tax, which had previously been used for PA management.
182. End of project targets for indicator 6⁶⁶ was not achieved and this is attributed to the impact of COVID-19 which resulted in the loss of capacity as foreign staff left the country and were

⁵⁸ Scores for the entire PA system and for three components of the scorecard (legal, business planning tools, tools for revenue generation)

⁵⁹ Overall scores for each of six main sub-systems assessed separately per managing entity: SNPA, DoE, SIF, ICS, Nature Seychelles, GIF.

⁶⁰ Nature Seychelles did not participate in the final assessment, breaching the partnership agreement, citing that they had to prioritize staying afloat during the crisis (COVID-19 pandemic).

⁶¹ Akira Solutions, June 21; Management effectiveness and financial sustainability for protected areas; An assessment of GEF tracking tools for the Seychelles Protected Areas Finance project.

⁶² Absolute and relative financing gap for entire PA System.

⁶³ Evolution in METT scores for indicator sites reflect improvements in conservation security.

⁶⁴ Mid-term review.

⁶⁵ Total finances available to the PA system from various sources.

⁶⁶ Independent application of the Capacity Development Scorecard for PA system management with analytical notes shows steady improvements in capacity levels

unable to return. It was stated by the assessor that progress against indicator 6 was difficult because the baseline was done for only done for three entities (SNPA, ICS, PCU, the latter not a PA managing entity). In addition, the majority of the sites managed by ICS had not yet achieved PA status.

183. Indicator 7 was 100% achieved and the autonomy of the SNPA was considered by the majority of project stakeholders as one of the greatest achievements of the project (alongside the capacity building support to the institution).
184. Based on feedback from respondents, the evaluation notes the limitation of the METT and financial score card methodology in the context of a SIDS like Seychelles. In particular, subjectiveness of the ratings could be negated by allowing the same entity to carry out the scoring at mid term and end of project. Additionally, two islands, namely North and Denis Islands, were included in the initial evaluation despite not having PA status.
185. However, and generally, respondents also maintained that Output 1.2 really strengthened management monitoring across the system.
186. Output 1.3. An adequate legal framework is emplaced for implementing the PAS-wider investment programme with a multi-funding approach, adaptable to each PA
187. Hotel contribution: The project supported an assessment⁶⁷ on the implementation of entrance fees for hotel guests within the Marine Parks, multi access pass and amended entrance fees. The assessment was carried out in December 2016 and recommended that SNPA reduce as much as possible the handling of cash inside the MPA. Several options were proposed along that line including the development of an online payment system. The assessment also recommended payment for entry into terrestrial protected areas with long-term strategy to pay at point of entry to Seychelles. With regard to contributions from hotels within or in proximity to MPAs, a hotel contribution based on the number of rooms was investigated and was being negotiated which would be paid directly to SNPA. The simplest solution was that guests purchase a multiple entry pass that would be paid by the hotel to SNPA and included in the accommodation rate.
188. The online payment system has been operationalized by SNPA in 2021. However, cash payments are still being carried out in MPAs and will need time to be completely phased out. The contribution from hotels received serious pushback from the Seychelles Tourism Association (STA) and has thus not been implemented.⁶⁸ This issue is further compounded by COVID-19, which has significantly decreased the number of tourists visiting the islands leading to most hotels resorting to requesting financial assistance from the Government (FA4JR).
189. Nature Reserve and Conservancy Bill: The bill was drafted and approved by stakeholders in 2018 but has yet to be enacted into law. The evaluation noted that this issue appears unchanged in the PSC meeting no 3 in October 2017 and in no 4 in September 2018. In PSC meeting no 5 held in February 2019, it was stated that public consultative meetings had been carried out on Mahe and Praslin and comments were being compiled for submission to AG. It was expected that this would be completed in the next 2 weeks, when the document will be re-submitted to cabinet for approval, although it was recommended in the public meetings, that a final draft be re-circulated for public review. Once approved by cabinet, the bill will be submitted to the National Assembly for their endorsement. In PSC meeting no 6 held July 2019 it was reported that cabinet had endorsed the white paper in June 2019 and instructed the AG to finalise the bill for gazetting by September 2019 before being presented to the National Assembly for endorsement. In PSC meeting no 7 held on

⁶⁷ Spenceley A. Evaluation of Tourism Development within Protected Areas Management by the SNPA; Part 2 Entrance fee collection and reporting system, Dec 2016

⁶⁸ Interviews with project partners.

25 February 2020, it was reported that final draft has been received from AG office for final check and ready for tabling to National Assembly. It was to be reviewed by the Bills Committee of the National Assembly. In PSC meeting no 8 held in October 2020 it was stated that the National Assembly elections are taking place and the Bill will wait on for the National Assembly resume before it can be tabled. At the time of finalising this terminal evaluation, the bill was waiting to be tabled in the 2021 assembly calendar.⁶⁹

190. Temporal Protected Areas by MCSS: The concept note from MCSS was to develop an innovative funding mechanism that was to be tested on case study sites for the operationalization of temporal protected areas. The project supported a staff member at MCSS to work on this concept and prepare a nomination file for gazetting. The MCSS has been working on the TPAs (monitoring and enforcement) as if they had been gazetted. However, because of the delay in the passing of the bill, the TPAs are yet to be legally enforced. Therefore, the proposed funding mechanism has not been applied.

Output 1.4. Institutional capacity-building of SNPA and other key PA managing entities for the implementation of the Seychelles PA System Financing and Investment Plan is enhanced

191. Business plan training: A business-planning workshop for protected areas managing entities was held 4-13 September 2017.⁷⁰ The workshop was attended by 21 project partners representing all beneficiaries of the project and facilitated by the Technical Advisory of the project. A needs assessment was conducted prior to the workshop (July 2017) to identify the priorities of each PA and ensure that the training is designed to address the needs of all PA managing entities.
192. The objectives of the business plan training were to (a) help PA managers identify their action as running a business (not for profit, but to achieve their financing needs for conservation), (b) determine what each PA would like their business plan to achieve (c) plan how to initiate the business plan process (d) identify the most relevant components and information required for their plan, (e) identify and priorities the most appropriate financing solutions, and (f) share experiences, ideas and strategies.
193. A database of resources was made available to all participants and included over 40 examples of business plan guidelines and existing business plans from across the world. The training featured a case study exercise where participants were able to review four selected business plans, discussed relative strengths and weaknesses of each and determine which components could be implemented within their organization.
194. The participants' feedback was that they were highly satisfied with the training and would recommend it.⁷¹
195. Management plans training and development: A three-day course on protected areas management was held between 25-27 April 2017 (facilitated by an international trainer). The course objective was to enhance critical thinking skills about planning, learn skills in PA planning related to objective setting, indicators, stakeholder assessment and to provide opportunities for dialogue around management strategies.
196. The course was attended by 28 participants and included presentations, working groups, and plenary discussions. Participants' feedback was that they were highly satisfied with the course (90.48%).⁷²
197. An additional day (28 April 2017) was spent on a one-day training course on "Seychelles protected area management for IUCN Category VI – sustainable use areas", where 15

⁶⁹ Interviews with MACCE.

⁷⁰ This workshop was jointly implemented between the PAF project and the Outer Islands project.

⁷¹ Protected Areas Business Planning Workshop Report, as well as interviews with project stakeholders.

⁷² Management planning workshop report.

participants attended. Training needs assessment conducted ahead of the course had identified “visitor use management planning” as the type of training most important for staff development. The aim of the course therefore was aligned to this aspect and intended to also expose participants to important concepts and principles related to protected area management planning.

198. Training on good governance and financially autonomous entity was also provided specifically to SNPA including further support on legal and regulatory processes related to supporting the move to autonomy for SNPA which was considered helpful to the SNPA.
199. Enforcement training: A seven-day enforcement training was held for the SNPA at the Seychelles Policy Academy, and like the business plan training, was a collaborative effort with the Outer Islands Project. The aim of the training was to build legal capacity of PA management staff and other environment officers. A total of 26 environment officers (9 SNPA, 6 Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change and 11 from Outer Project partners) were trained in various aspects of law enforcement and environment laws. The SPA trainers focused on *the power of arrest, power of observation, search and seizures, Identification and preservation of evidence, statement taking, interrogation of suspects, how to give evidence in court, preparation of case files* whilst SNPA trainers covered provisions of the Environment Protection Act and coco de mer decree as well as *roles, duties and powers of environment officers and first officer on scene*. Participants also undertook practical session and a guided tour of the Courts on the last day. Specific feedback from participant was that the course was very useful and ought to be carried out more frequently (biannually).
200. A second enforcement training was planned for 2020 but could not be conducted due to COVID-19 limitations – it was then envisaged to do this online, but the policy academy was overwhelmed with COVID-19 work and did not have the capacity to have an online training at the time. An enforcement manual was developed instead for self-guidance and training.
201. A tour-guide training was conducted in addition with savings from the above training being cancelled. This was done online through the Tourism Seychelles Academy.
202. Marketing and communication training for environmental NGOs: The project carried out a one-day training session on Marketing and Communication on 9 October 2018. The trainer was from a marketing agency based in Seychelles and the aim was to identify further collective marketing activities, which can be supported by the project on behalf of the Protected Areas. A total of 27 participants attended from Government and most of the PAF project partner institutions as well as others such as Unisey, GVI, MSP and SeyCATT and Plant Conservation Action Group.
203. Support national part-time marketing and communication officer at SNPA: The project paid for a local communications firm to support the SNPA with its transition to a financially autonomous organisation by bolstering its marketing and communications effectiveness. The support was from September 2018 to August 2019. Initial work (Sep-Nov 2018) centred around the developing the Marketing & Communication and then progressed into the review of SNPA branding (Dec 18 – Feb 19), which had been done under a prior project, but still had not been widely adopted within the organisation.
204. A desktop audit was carried out and a series of gaps in branded material, from letterheads to business cards and e-mail signatures were designed, and a protocol established for their use.
205. From March 19 to May 19 publications were carried out with the intention of drawing more attention to the SNPA and its parks within Seychelles and overseas, including the major undertaking of a 10-year anniversary magazine for SNPA. A workshop was conducted

with SNPA staff to emphasize the importance of employee role with respect to the brand as well as structuring content for media outlets.

206. The final quarter (Jun-Aug 19) focused on sustainability and transitioning for SNPA staff to be better equipped to continue the work without the consultancy. Activities such as liaising with the media, preparing press releases and media follow-ups were handed over to SNPA staff. The consultant⁷³ noted that SNPA has an improved presence on web and social media especially with the creation of an Instagram page. However, the consultant stated that SNPA did not have a full-time communications person and this caused delays in achieving specific outputs and the failure to incorporate SNPA marketing materials into the national tourist marketing institution such as Seychelles Tourism Board (STB), which is responsible for marketing Seychelles as a destination, presents a missed opportunity.
207. The evaluation considers the latter as an important element that was missed during the development of this assignment and also within the Marketing and Communications Strategy. The SNPA Marketing effort could have been better aligned with that of the country for inclusion in international fairs for increased visibility. The evaluation found the branding carried out e.g. banners, Veuve Reserve ticket, business cards etc to be well designed and professional. The 10th year anniversary magazine is well designed and professional and should be made available on the website. A key finding relates to the impact of the activity to support the SNPA as it was not adequately measured / quantified in terms of before and after benefits (number of users interacted with etc.) especially since the final recommendations stated that a dedicated communications and marketing team or person was required. It could have been more beneficial and sustainable for the project or SNPA to hire a communications officer and have them involved with the firm hired to provide this kind of support longer-term.
208. Develop Marketing and Communications Strategy for SNPA: From September to December 2018 the project developed the Marketing & Communications Plan 2019-2024 for the SNPA with the inputs from the PAF project Technical Advisor and a local Design and Communications consultant. The plan was developed from literature reviews, online surveys, and focus groups with boat operators (Praslin and Mahe) that spanned two months as well as a focus group with key tourism partners.
209. A validation workshop was held on 5 December 2018 for stakeholders to endorse the plan. The plan includes a stakeholder assessment and adapted communication methods such as printed channels (leaflets, posters, signboards, briefings, newsletter) online platforms (website, videos, emailing lists, social media), media platform (national newspapers, international travel sites, local and international media), face-to-face communication (school visit, public meetings conferences, planned events), and telephone (SMS alert). A budget was developed that included capital and recurrent costs for these methods of communications. The footnote to the budget table stated that capital cost required in Yr 1 was SCR 75k and same every three years. Staff cost (2pax) amounted to SCR 312,000 with annual operating budget of SCR 260,350. The total annual budget was calculated at SCR 572,350 (without capital cost). Although the plan seems well structured, the evaluators are of the opinion that the indicative budget could have presented these expenses in a format that is consistent with SNPA budget allocations and supported by a detailed implementation schedule. In view of changes of CEO at SNPA, and the COVID-19 pandemic, the strategy was not implemented as planned.
210. Production of information packets for hotels and boat operators: From October to November 2019, the project developed colored information brochures with support of a local environmentalist for SNPA sites including Baie Ternay, Curieuse, Glacis Noire, Ile Coco, Veuve, St.Anne, Praslin National Park and Morne Seychellois National Park. These were

⁷³ SNPA Vizier Communications Final Consultancy Report.

designed electronically and without date and time so that it can be reproduced in print over the years as required by the SNPA. The evaluators found these brochures to be particularly informative as it provides an overview of the geology, history, how to access the area and what is there to observe and do once you are there. Background information is also provided on the flora and fauna found within these areas e.g Coco de Mer, Aldabra giant tortoises and marine species and habitats.

211. The new Government decided in 2021 to merge the SNPA with the Botanical Gardens Foundation to create a new institution (Seychelles Parks and Gardens Authority). At the time the project is supporting an institutional review of SNPA and this assessment was adapted towards assessing the SPGA aimed at streamlining and better coordinating activities in the new organization.
212. A high quality SNPA strategic plan (2017-2021) was developed which gained its own momentum and was hailed as best practice (and approved by government) by government and outside of Seychelles. A review of the strategic plan was done in 2019 by the SNPA board, the board was going to take up the issue of review and well as writing of the new plan. However, with the change of government and the dissolution of the board this item has not been dealt with (although will likely be picked up under the new leadership).
213. Overall, the output was well achieved and the capacity attained within SNPA is hailed by key project partners as the greatest contribution by the project, other project entities appreciated the capacity development support.

Outcome 2: The overall ability of the PA System to generate reliable revenue is improved, both in view of improving its overall management effectiveness, and of catering for the needs of an expanded state

214. Although there is no PA system⁷⁴, there has been improved management effectiveness through capacity building as evidenced in the METT scores for all for all PA managing entities under this project. Development and adoption of PA business plans has led to reliable revenue streams (which have been impacted by COVID-19).
215. Unfortunately, the sustainability of Outcome 2 is threatened by drastic changes to tourist numbers, which impacted the Seychelles in 2020 and 2020 as a result of COVID-19. The project did not have sufficient diversified revenue “wins”⁷⁵ and thus resilience to a drop in tourism was non-existent.

Output 2.1. Institutional and policy barriers for an effective site-level revenue generation, collection and retention into the PA system are lifted, creating better conditions and incentives for reducing the PA finance gap

216. The SNPA is financially autonomous as of January 2019. The move to autonomy was immediate rather than the phased approach which was planned. Despite this, the project supported greatly the move to autonomy and the SNPA was moving ahead independently and able to retain all of its revenues. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, the SNPA (among all other PA managing entities participating in this project) had to request government support to stay afloat.
217. In 2021, the SNPA was merged with the Botanical Gardens and the project has been supporting this merger through an institutional assessment as mentioned previously.

Output 2.2. Essential touristic or other relevant infrastructure in selected PAs are developed and new cost-effective practices, systems and schemes are implemented , all with the aim

⁷⁴ As already discussed in previous sections of the report (most notably “Adaptive Management”), the MTR found that the system approach was not going to be under the control of the project and that the project should shift its focus on its core mandate being financing.

⁷⁵ This was covered under the financial plan and in discussions but was never concretely focused on.

of making these PAs more attractive to visitors, increasing their own revenue generation capacity

218. Terrestrial nature trails: Nature trails within SNPA sites were upgraded to enhance accessibility and create a more pleasing visitor experience. This was achieved through development of basic trail infrastructure such as steps, small bridges, the installation of benches and shelters that provide temporary respite against fatigue and the weather. Old wooden text heavy signboards were replaced with modern synthetic signboards that provide more visual information to park visitors.



Figure 5: Copolia nature trail; from left to right, site office & toilet, boardwalk, viewpoint shelter, benches and signage

219. The national evaluator's opinion is that the signage is of higher quality and longer lasting as well as more intuitive in communicating information compared to what was previously installed. Nonetheless, in at least one other location (Bel Ombre) the signboard was vandalized with what seems like a thrown rock. The SNPA will need to consider this aspect in future upgrades of these facilities so that they are more vandal-proofed to the extent possible.
220. A key outcome is that one of these trails (Copolia trail; see figure 5) has become a paid nature trail on Mahe Island, which is a first for the island. At this area the project constructed the site office/visitor paying area and toilets as well as other infrastructures making the trail quite popular with locals and tourists. In terms of scalability the SNPA may consider post project designing trails that does not allow incoming trail visitors to share paths with those returning as this severely limits the number of visitors that can be accommodated.
221. La Digue Veuve Special Reserve: The La Digue Veuve Special Reserve is home to the Seychelles black paradise fly catcher (Veuve), an endemic bird of the Seychelles. The project supported the construction of the Veuve visitor centre, which now charges an entrance fee of Rs 150 per non-Seychelles citizens for unguided visit and Rs 200 for a guided tour. The centre sells souvenir and other branded merchandise as well as provides information to visitors. The project also supported the fencing of the entire La Digue Veuve Special Reserve, construction of shelters, boardwalk within the site, trail markings and signage (figure 6).



Figure 6: The Veuve Special Nature Reserve on La Digue island, from left to right, the visitor center built under the project and accompanying furnishings, boardwalk, shelter and trail markings

222. Curieuse Island & Marine National Park: On the island of Curieuse, two barbeque areas were designed and constructed by the project one at Baie Laraie (figure 7) and the other at Anse Josee. The Baie Laraie site was visited during terminal evaluation and is the main boat landing area where visitors get the chance to interact with land tortoises that roam freely on the island. There is a tortoise nursery that is home to juvenile tortoises and access to a large mangrove habitat where besides the barbeque area, the project supported the re-development of what is now the longest boardwalk in Seychelles and constructed a new visitor water closet facility. During the visit it was noticed that the barbeque area was being put to use by at least 6 boat operators and there were at least 25 tourists and 10 boats in the area. Besides the entrance / landing fee of \$22, the SNPA charges tour operators Rs 50 (\$3.30) per table to use the newly constructed facilities. Each table sits at least 10 people. The facility is sufficient to cater for the amount tourists with estimated sitting capacity for 120 guests. The evaluator concluded that this facility is being put to use and very much required however there is scope to improve the visual appearance e.g. painting that can be done post project to bring to standards with other infrastructures. Additionally the table fee may be increased in time to cover operation and maintenance costs.

The other main project outcome visited at Baie Laraie was the boardwalk, which spanned the entire width of the marshy mangrove area. The boardwalk was constructed with synthetic materials, which is expected to be more lasting than wood however at least two boards were noticed damaged during the visit and lay unrepaired and two entire boards were also found nearby in the marsh suggesting that maintenance and site cleaning may not yet be optimised. The sustainability of this and other project investment will need to be assured by the SNPA.

223. The other project site located at Anse José could not be visited due to time constraints is the site of the ex-leper colony and the location of Doctor's house (named after an Irish doctor who was stationed there when the island was a leper colony). The Doctor's house is now a museum, which showcase the history of the island. There the project supported installation of CCTV cameras and photovoltaic panels (progress report 2021 Q2), to increase the amount of renewable energy use and reduce the carbon footprint of the island. A second and larger barbeque area was also built at Anse José.



Figure 7: On the island of Curieuse from left to right, barbeque area constructed for tourism operators at Baie Laraie, (outside and inside views) comprising of 12 stations with seating capacity for 120 people, signage and boardwalk to access the marsh and mangrove habitats and demarcation buoys

224. North and Denis Islands: North Island and Denis Island are privately owned islands and both have hotels that cater to specific clientele that favour exclusivity and remoteness. The Green Island Foundation (GIF) is carrying out conservation activities on both islands. The islands and their surrounding marine areas were not under any legal designation at the start of the project.

225. Nonetheless, they were included in the project on the basis that they will be soon receiving protected area designation. The project supported the development of visitor centres on both islands and this included all furnishing, posters and other communication materials. The private resorts were responsible to build the infrastructure as part of their co-financing

commitment. According to the progress report 2021 Q2 and interview held with GIF partner, the North island visitor centre is up and running.

226. The centre on Denis Island is cited as not operational because of delays in renovation work carried out in 2020 due to COVID-19. The building is being used as temporary storage area until renovation work is completed. All project furnishings were sent to Denis Island by the project team and is accounted for. In terms of innovative funding mechanism, Denis island is implementing an environmental fund where visitors, particularly long term returning visitors can voluntarily contribute towards environment /conservation activities.
227. It is important to note that these islands are exclusive resorts with structured fee systems that are published and maintained with international partners. Discussion with GIF official indicated that changing resort fees are not straightforward and require owner approval and timeline of at least 6 months. The implementation of additional funding sources for Protected Areas/conservation was compounded by the fact that these islands did not have Protected Area status during project implementation. This is still the case at terminal evaluation although in March 2020, Denis Island attained the designation of Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty under the National Parks and Nature Conservancy Act. This process was facilitated by the MSP process, which had started designating the marine areas around the inner islands.
228. Aldabra House: The project intended to develop exhibition content for the Aldabra house that was to be constructed by the Seychelles Island Foundation on Mahe island. SIF developed and submitted architectural plans to the planning authority in April 2018 but a year later they had still not received planning permission. The issue centered on a conflict with a new roadway to be developed by the Department of Transport. The 2019 Q2 progress report stated that in July 2019 new issues arose namely the need to develop a traffic plan for the area and Government intention to build a 4MW PV farm in the lagoon opposite the Aldabra House. An interview with SIF at terminal evaluation confirmed that since project inception SIF had realised that part of the land earmarked for this project was not transferred to them and was earmarked for development /expansion of motorway. There was confidence that this will be resolved since the SIF board consists of high-level officials and its patron is the president. The project supported a full-time coordinator to work on the Aldabra house project and develop communication materials and exhibition content. SIF developed the tender dossier for the works including detailed technical specifications. However, SIF failed to resolve the land issue and on 29 July 2019, SIF informed the Steering committee via email that the SIF board had decided to cancel the project. It was stated that the location of the site was key component of the Aldabra house project as the site replicated the movement of tides on the Aldabra archipelago and this is why the concept could not be developed at another site. All activities intended under the project was completed except installation and commissioning activities to include installation of lighting sound media and special effects.⁷⁶
229. Silhouette activity by SNPA, IDC and ICS: This activity failed because the two institutions (SNPA and IDC) could not come to a compromise. Some partners felt MACCE should have taken more leadership in moving this activity but response from MACCE was that timelines of the project were too tight to take this further up the chain (e.g. to cabinet). The Steering Committee finally decided to allow for the funds to be reallocated to other activities under SNPA (e.g. building a rangers HQ and ticket verification point at Ste Anne Marine Park and upgrading information materials for the SNPA parks).

⁷⁶ The cancellation by SIF was first announced publicly in the hope that this would create enough public outcry to pressure the government in coming to a compromise on the house development versus the highway. This "bluff" did not work out as was hoped and the commitment to cancel had to be made. SIF and UNDP and the project team had meetings to discuss the way forward and SIF was prepared to reimburse the amount provided. It was decided by the project and UNDP that sufficient work had been done through the exhibition materials to warrant some of the work as complete. SIF hopes to keep the plans and move the house development forward in another way in the future.

230. Voluntourism by Nature Seychelles: A paying volunteer programme for Cousin island was developed under the project by Nature Seychelles, whereby paying volunteers can undertake conservation work on the island of Cousin. The activity was supposed to be tested for its potential to be upscaled to other protected areas within Seychelles.⁷⁷ The volunteer programme was rebranded as “Conservation Bootcamp”⁷⁸.
231. A conservation boot camp coordinator was recruited and toolkit for managing the paying volunteer programme developed. Nature Seychelles confirmed that they had received 141 applications by Q2 of 2018 being 84 in 2017 and 57 in 2018. 29 participants had attended from May 2017 to June 2018. The volunteers spent the majority of time undertaking Seychelles Magpie Robin monitoring, turtle hatching monitoring, tourist management and tour guiding, beach profile monitoring, tropic birds and white terns breeding success monitoring amongst others.
232. The project also supported renovation works on the field station on Cousin island and its furnishings. It also supported renovation work on the conservation centre at Amitie on Praslin and the construction of small volunteer accommodation on Mahe⁷⁹.
233. The Conservation Bootcamp was successful with positive feedback from those who attended,⁸⁰ and has also been listed as one of the top training opportunities under Conservation Careers.⁸¹ The course is a maximum of 4 weeks. There were some efforts made to allow for Seychelles citizens and African citizens in general to participate either free of charge or at discount through e.g. the James Michel Foundation and through the Blue Economy Department, but these were not successful for various reasons.⁸²
234. The Institute of Madagascar partnered with Nature Seychelles to send 10 participants on concrete training as part of their greater programme, which Nature Seychelles claimed was successful. The hope for Nature Seychelles is to attach the programme to university-related partnerships in the long-term.
235. There was additional support (related to Outcome 1) from the project through consultants developing a business plan to further grow the Conservation Bootcamp. This business plan was ultimately not followed; even though Nature Seychelles found it of good quality, they did not find it implementable because too many initial investment resources and time was needed to initiate.⁸³
236. The Conservation Bootcamp has been closed down since COVID-19 restrictions started and has at time of evaluation not opened up again. However, the concept is a good model, and the evaluators see that it has been shared on platforms such as Panorama solutions, and generally the marketing and outreach for the bootcamp has been very good.
237. The monetary benefits are not the primary gain (in fact, Nature Seychelles maintained that income received was negligible and only really covered basic costs), but the main benefit was the capacity support (and the obvious benefit of capacity development of upcoming conservationists). The model overall would be worth replicating to other areas if found feasible.
238. Installation of VHF system for effective communication at Praslin and La Digue with sub-base at font B’offay and La Digue: The project procured VHF radios for communications

⁷⁷ The evaluators were told that there was a similar conservation volunteer programme set up that had been operation on Curieuse for some years before Nature Seychelles tried it (by GVI), but there was no evidence from either partner that there had been interaction or learning between the two.

⁷⁸ With its own logo, branding concept, marketing, etc. <http://natureseychelles.org/get-involved/conservation-boot-camp>

⁷⁹ PAF 2018 Q2 Progress Report

⁸⁰ Based on interview with Nature Seychelles verified through social media pages (comments, video taken, etc).

⁸¹ See her: <https://www.conservation-careers.com/conservation-jobs-careers-advice/nature-seychelles-podcast/>

⁸² Including lack of applications and funders dropping their support.

⁸³ Including visits to Europe to universities, massive networking, initial investment in terms of financial costs, etc – based on interview with Nature Seychelles.

however in view of high coverage of GSM mobile network in the Praslin and La Digue it was found that there is no need to install VHF for communication between the islands. The VHF system was installed on SNPA boats for use in marine communication.

239. Increased surveillance at Ile Cocos: Before the project, there were no demarcation and mooring buoys at Ile Cocos, which is part of the marine national park making it difficult for rangers to manage boats in the area. The project installed demarcation and mooring buoys at Ile Cocos however it was stated that with the SE monsoon (April – October), some of these buoys were lost due to rough seas and swells. The SNPA is now removing them during this season and re-installing during the NE trade winds (November to March) until another solution is found.
240. Recife island by DoE: Recife is an uninhabited island, managed by the Department of Environment since 1996 through the Biodiversity Conservation and Management Division. This rocky granitic island situated 34 km east of Port Victoria, with a total area of 0.13 km², has sparse vegetation and supports large colonies of seabirds during the breeding season from June to mid-September. Recife island was declared under the National Parks and Nature Conservancy Act as a Special Nature Reserve in 2010 as part of a national declaration to increase the total surface area of Seychelles under legal protection to 50%. Most importantly, Recife Island designation and status is established under the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) listing category, because of its diversity and abundance of wildlife. Though it is yet to be awarded a classification under the IUCN Protected Area System (PAS), it is expected that management plan developed under the project would facilitate such classification.
241. The project supported development of vegetation mapping of Recife Island, habitat rehabilitation⁸⁴, eradication of rabbits and development of Management plan. The focus initially was on rehabilitation activities (removal of invasive species-beach morning glory and rats tail) and eradication of rabbits, which negatively affects the vegetation regeneration and high mortality rate amongst the island's remaining Mapou woodland along with the decrease in abundance of coconut palms (*C. nucifera*), veloutye and mangrove (*Rhizophora mucronata*). Consequently, the decline of vegetation had led to a considerable decrease in the number of available nesting sites for tree-nesting seabird species like namely the Lesser Noddy (*Anous tenuirostris*) and White tern (*Gygis alba*). However from interview held at Terminal evaluation it was stated that during project implementation the DoE decided to control the rabbit population instead of complete eradication and in parallel start researching on the role that the species play on the ecosystem of the island.
242. The management plan of Recife does not contain documented population of rabbits and targets for their elimination. This could have been done at project design to measure the effectiveness of the activity. It was found that previous shooting exercise managed to kill 29 rabbits hence the method of elimination / population control may need to be optimised post project, or alternative solutions need to be sought.

Output 2.3. The operationalization of SeyCCAT, and of other related environmental finance mechanisms to be adopted, takes the need for supporting biodiversity conservation into consideration, including the need to address the PAS financing gap

243. SeyCCAT was successfully operationalized and its capacity developed. SeyCCAT has been able to attached financing through a debt swap (and through other funding opportunities) to support the MSP process.

⁸⁴ Recife island Special Nature Reserve Habitat Rehabilitation and Rabbit eradication Final Report 2016

244. The project was extremely helpful in terms of the establishment of offices, equipment and tools to get SeyCCAT set up. The Technical Advisor sat on the Finance Committee and supported SeyCCAT and the MSP process with several technical inputs.
245. When the systemic focus of the project shifted to having more strategic support to SeyCCAT and the MSP, the project attempted to support SeyCCAT in championing various financial mechanisms under the finance plan (including the WTP surveys and conservation levy, testing the feasibility of the Blue Enterprise Fund). The MTR attempted to change Indicator 9a to “one financial mechanism implemented”, this was finally not achieved by the project.
246. The debt swap (which was aligned to MACCE co-financing coming from SeyCCAT) dropped from USD 80 mil envisaged to USD 21.6 million (this money was earmarked towards Blue Grants, which is now in its fifth phase). The SeyCCAT has since been very active in leveraging further financing and through the PAF project lifespan has been able to leverage 4.7 million USD (this is outside of the support from PAF). The project attempted to support SeyCCAT further through various TORs (including those under the project, eg. Updating the finance plan of MSP, and those not directly under project but linked to the project because of long-term support to PA financing, e.g. development of SeyCCAT business plan), these are carrying on in their own right but without any financial support from the project.⁸⁵
247. The project has been able to hand off some of the project elements not achieved (e.g. finance plan, economic valuation study, financing gap for expanded state) to the MSP process that is ongoing and likely to move project results forward.

Table 10. Summary Progress Towards Results Matrix for the Seychelles’ Protected Areas Finance Project

Indicator	Achievement rating / Progress	Justification
Objective	SATISFACTORY	.
Indicator 1a: Scores for the entire PA System and for the three components of the scorecard:		Overall end of project targets for the three components was not reached
Indicator 1b: Overall scores for each of the six main sub-subsystems, as assessed separately by PA managing entities: SNPA, DoE, SIF, ICS, NS, GIF		SNPA, GIF and DoE has already reached EOP targets Projection over 5 years has already reached EOP target ICS and SIF did not reach their targets and Nature Seychelles did not participate in the end of project assessment
Indicator 2: Absolute and relative annual financing gap for the entire PAS (using the six main PA sub-systems as a proxy): (a) under a basic PA management scenario: (b) under an optimal PA management scenario; (c) projected over 5 years under a basic PA management scenario		EOP target already achieved for basic scenario, but not for optimal scenario, although there is a significant improvement Projection over 5 years has already reached EOP target
Indicator 3: Evolution in METT Scores for indicator sites reflect improvements in conservation security in terrestrial and marine ecosystems		EOP target achieved for Vallée de Mai, Silhouette Island National Marine Park, La Digue Veuve Special Reserve, Recif Island Special Reserve Improvement against mid term score for Curieuse Island from (73% to 74%).

⁸⁵ For various reasons, most of them that the project could not afford to support these (mostly due to foreign exchange losses) (SeyCCAT were able to extend their business plans to include a broader scope of work and were financed through external partners for that piece of work). SeyCATT is also conducting a MTR of the Blue Grants to develop a blue grants strategy (here the project did not support this work because a project partner did not agree with this particular support to the SeyCCAT and took the complaint to the Minister of MACCE) – source: various interviews and email correspondence.

		Morne Seychellois National Park (50% to 53%) Denis (59% to 62%) & North Island (68% to 71%)
Outcome 1:	SATISFACTORY	
Indicator 4: Total finances increase by 50%, based on 6 sub-systems		Total finances available to the PA system increased from \$5.4 million to \$7.3million at EOP. Increase is 36% over baseline.
Indicator 5a. PAS Financing & Investment Plan approved by Government and under implementation		Plan is completed but not yet approved.
Indicator 5b. 4 PA Investment plans actively implemented (sites, sub-system, system level).		SNPA, MCSS, SIF Strategic Plan completed; Business plan developed for Denis and North [Note: Business Plans are embedded within Strategic Plans]
Indicator 6: Capacity Development scorecards 70% by the end of the project		The overall Capacity Scores (Systemic, Institutional and Individual) increased from an average of 60% to 61.6%. The baseline is not comprehensive across sites/systems – it only covers SNPA, ICS and PCU
Indicator 7. 100% of PA generated revenue retained in PA system		SNPA achieved financial autonomy
Outcome 2:	SATISFACTORY	
Indicator 8: SNPA's ability to retain its site-level revenues (a) SNPA status is upgraded and it reaches <i>more</i> financial autonomy b) at least 50% of SNPA' site-generated revenue can be retained by the institution		Duplicates indicator 7. See above
Indicator 9a: <i>Current domestic revenue sources</i> maintained – 1/ existing environment & conservation budgets are enough to cover the gap for state run sub-system; 2/ Government levies; 3/ park entry fees & SNPA fees will be fully retained; 4/ Public private finance mechanisms; 5/ Forms of cross-subsidization		Park entrance fees introduced at Veuve Special Reserve and Copolia nature trail
Indicator 9b: International revenue sources. The SeyCCAT is fully operational & disbursing		The SeyCCAT is operational and disbursing.
Indicator 9c: Innovative finance (PES – water and/or flood & sediment control, Carbon credits, Biodiversity Offsets, Hydropower potential) – at least 1 trail; Indicator modified at MTR towards supporting SeyCCAT, (financing at the system level) – namely the Blue Enterprise Fund, and the Tourism Conservation Levy		Blue Grants Fund was successfully created (the project PIR states, but evaluators disagree that this was the intention of this particular indicator – the BGF was already disbursing when the MTR was done), but the mechanisms under the project (e.g. conservation levy, Blue Enterprise, PES) were not successful

Relevance*

248. The project was well-aligned to country priorities, both at government level, and within the UN framework at country level. The project seemed to speak directly to government priorities (in terms particularly of the SNPA support).

249. Despite coming in half-way through the project⁸⁶, gender aspects were integrated and guided by the Gender Policy and were relevant in what they aimed to achieve through the project.
250. The project took into considerations the foundations laid by previous and complimentary projects (as already outlined under relevance in project design above). The project was also very good in its shift to support the longer-running MSP process and is likely to find some sustaining of project results in this process, including some linkages made to SWIOFISH (which was concerned with sustainable use zoning in the fisheries sector). It would have been good to see more alignment with the BIOFIN process and through integration of the project's results into the Biodiversity Finance Unit. It is understood by the evaluators that this was not by lack of effort by the project to integrate – going forward this will form part of one of the recommendations.
251. Stakeholder engagement was very strong throughout the project from the side of the project team. There should have been stronger links made with the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Finance. This would have been more effectively done through greater leadership and championship from MACCE (or alternatively including some funds to support these Ministries in directly leading some activities).⁸⁷
252. Overall, government engagement and leadership in this project, should have been stronger. There may have been various reasons for this, including the high turn-over in leadership e.g. at Ministerial level and frequent cabinet reshuffles, as well as Ministries working in silos and not always communicating effectively with each other in general.⁸⁸ The high-level leadership and interest is there, but when it came to actually making decisions that would have created long-term project results impact, these were lacking (most notably the finance plan and the mechanisms to actually finance the protected areas and not only depend on external donors to do so), leading the evaluators to believe that while the value of protected areas to the economy and wellbeing of Seychelles is obvious to some, it is not as appreciated by others. A further recommendation is made to this effect, including making nature visible in the Seychelles economy (especially given that the country's economy is currently undergoing IMF reform which has been shown in the past to negatively affect social and environmental outcomes⁸⁹). This paragraph is also linked to effectiveness below.

Effectiveness*

253. The project overall has had a mixed level of success in terms of its output-related achievements. Some outputs (as outlined in detail above) were not fully or successfully implemented. In other instances some outputs were quite successful in their achievement (particularly in relation to the project's support to SNPA).
254. Given this, as well as the COVID-19 which had negative ripple effects across the entire project and more notably sustaining the momentum of its achievements, the project managed to make some impactful achievements in terms of the wider Theory of Change

⁸⁶ This was not a prerequisite at project design.

⁸⁷ The evaluators understand from various stakeholders that effort was placed by the project and MACCE to engage with the Ministry of Finance, including a number of high-level meetings and presentations by the project (as is outlined in other sections of this report), but the evaluators maintain that there were gaps in communication and follow-up and/or methods of engagement that may have resulted in better outcomes. In addition, direct budgetary support to Ministries is not accepted within the GEF rules, but then alignment needs to be made within the priorities of the said Ministry to not tack on "additional" work.

⁸⁸ Various interviews with various stakeholders.

⁸⁹ E.g. http://www.tstubbs.net/uploads/4/0/5/3/40534697/forster_et_al._-2019_-_how_structural_adjustment_programs_affect_inequality_a_disaggregated_analysis_of_imf_conditionality.pdf, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/34277054_Structural_Adjustment_and_the_Environment_Impacts_of_the_World_Bank_and_IMF_Conditional_Loans_on_Developing_Countries,

(which will be discussed in more detail under the Catalytic/Replication Effect and Progress to Impact below).

255. The evaluators find that some achievements set at project design were overambitious and designers would have been able to avoid these by taking into account recommendations made in previous Terminal Evaluations (especially related to indicators that should have been seen as assumptions, like the passing of the bill and the finance plan through cabinet, as well as the risk of partners not willing to work together towards a systems approach).
256. In fact, the GEF STAP review of the PPG did pick up through highlighting and questioning the proposed activities of Output 2.2. aimed at reducing gaps with increased revenue but questioned the lack of role and ownership in terms of enhancing central government support. The response to this was that the role, contribution and distribution of government support to the PA system more broadly will be powered through the financial plan.⁹⁰ Given that government never really endorsed or championed the financial plan, the evaluators believe this to not have been successfully achieved (i.e. stronger central government support) by the end of the project.

Efficiency*

257. The project suffered from some delays due to (a) late recruitment of key project staff, (b) disagreements between IDC, ICS and SNPA that could not be rectified through Steering Committee level decisions (including partners not agreeing on outputs, one partner taking a complaint to the minister, even though tourism and finance being on the steering committee and various tos-and-fros, key decisions being blocked by these sectors when it came to the financial mechanisms), (c) impacts of COVID-19, and (d) impacts of the government reshuffle after the elections. These caused the failure of some project results attainment but also will have an impact on the sustaining of project results.
258. Some minor examples where efficiency could have been improved are picked up below:
- a. Under Activity 1.3.4 (baseline monitoring), 2016 Q3 progress report stated that there may be some financial constraints to the project implementation as the funding allocated to this component was very restricted (could this have been better planned at design?);
 - b. The unexpected cost issues for Aldabra exhibition vs house construction/development under Activity 2.2.11 (2016 Q4 progress report), and the eventual cancellation of the house even though the risks were known at design (could better risk management have been put in place here?);
 - c. SNPA (Output 2.1) needed much more support than was planned and project team went out of their way to get this done – this was very important and effective eventually (but perhaps more efficient if it had been better picked up at PPG).
259. Despite this, it is of the evaluator's opinion (and validated by the majority of project partners), that the project team went out of their way (particularly the Project Manager and the Project Technical Advisor) to make things work, and the quality of the project outputs are a testament to this (project output quality is also directly related to the capacity of some of the project partners).
260. What is particularly surprising is the project's success in the co-financing aspects of the project which had a major role to play in achieving the results it did manage to achieve. Despite the debt swap decrease which at MTR was expected to bring the co-financing

⁹⁰ CEO Endorsment.

down radically, the government stepped up (largely through its support of Nekton project and financial towards the COVID-19 pandemic) to match the co-financing it had promised at project start. The project partners also contributed largely to the co-financing aspects.

261. Some small synergies on top of the larger synergy processes (e.g. MSP), include the Activity for SNPA (1.4.2) on strengthening the communications and marketing; the project managed to leverage financing support from the UNDP BOFIN for a consultant appointed in December 2016 to conduct tourism assessment of SNPA products and infrastructure, various studies as a result were to be used in the strategy. In addition, some capacity building activities were done in conjunction with the Outer Islands project.
262. The project tried to achieve a lot in a relatively short period of time, and for some of the mechanisms, the country is just not ready (innovative mechanisms) – some steps, particularly the value of nature to the economy, need to be taken before financial mechanisms can be fully owned and championed by the resource and economy related ministries and non-government stakeholders.

Overall Project Outcome*

Strategic question 1: *To what extent did the project foster investment and enhance capacity for protected areas management toward the long-term financial and environmental sustainability of the protected areas system?*

263. The biggest success of the project is certainly the contribution made to SNPA in terms of its move to autonomy and the capacity built (along with the strategic plan, which was used as a best practice example in various other platforms within the country and outside), although issues around this process occurred (i.e. more suddenly than the phased approach that was planned). Overall, the project was highly beneficially to SNPA, including through the infrastructure, training, filling the gaps in capacity, the online payment system, and enabling the sustaining of autonomy (on track until COVID-19 hit). Now with the merger, there are some sustainability aspects uncertain and mixed opinions about future success, although the evaluators maintain that the foundation has been built and the value add by the project is very strong (i.e. without the project support, it is highly unlikely the SNPA nor the merger would be where it is today).
264. In terms of fostering investment overall, the financing plan has not been accepted formally by government, neither did more system-level financial mechanisms (e.g. PES, conservation levy). However, the project did certainly set up SeyCCAT and support the Marine Spatial Planning process which was seen as the system approach (as recommended at MTR). Other options like the setting up of the Biodiversity Finance Unit in DoE and the new fundraiser position at SeyCCAT might support sustainability here.⁹¹
265. The management effectiveness of the PA network has certainly improved and the hope to create a standardized process has worked. The sustaining of this result will depend on how much the MACCE is able to champion and coordinate the managing entities.
266. The transition to a system operation overall (as identified in the MTR, as well as in multiple past GEF projects) is difficult because even though the benefits of a system approach can be seen, the history of fragmentation and some possible competition-versus-collaboration habits (including perceived mistrust between institutions⁹²) have entrenched a barrier to the effective flow towards a system. This assumption (2) in the TOC (partners collaborating towards a system approach) was not met, which has implications on the power of Outcome 1 to actually move toward impact (See Theory of Change figure).

⁹¹ The new position will be revisiting the plan, mobilising new funds through sustainable financing options tested through the project but also new ones – a full time dedicated position will support this process much more strongly. (source: interviews with project partners)

⁹² Even though stakeholder engagement is strong, participation is strong, there are underlying power relations and mistrust among partners – Source: interviews with project stakeholders, review of project documentation on stakeholder engagement.

267. As already mentioned, the project managed to decrease the financing gap under the basic management scenario; in terms of a greater outcome-level achievement, the evaluators consider this aspect for Outcome 1 (not for Outcome 2) achieved.

Strategic Question 2: *To what extent did the project succeed in improving reliable revenue generation of better overall management effectiveness and accounting (for existing, and additionally the needs of an expanded state)?*

268. This was to an extent achieved at site level, and some potentials for the future exist (through, e.g., the SNPA entrance fees supported through the project).

269. National innovative financing mechanisms did not fully materialize. Most potential in terms of moving financing forward systemically is through the SeyCCAT debt swap (Blue Grants Funds) and through the 4.7 mil USD funding leveraged (outside of this project) which will be burdened by the expanded estate (i.e. more will be needed than is currently available). The WTP and tourism conservation levy was not taken up (lack of political will initially and then COVID-19 has not helped its cause) although it is envisaged to be picked up again in the future. The Blue Enterprise Fund was not found to be feasible, the PES was not taken up either. Some possible innovations exist in Blue Carbon and this is being pushed outside of the support of this project.

270. In terms of sustaining outcome results, COVID-19 will affect project results here very much because there is very little resilience in the system due to over-dependence on tourism. There were plans in the design and financing plan (Strategic Objective 4 – diversification of non-tourism based revenue for the existing PA network is strengthened) looking at e.g. government allocation⁹³, reduce transaction costs⁹⁴, innovative financing mechanisms, and a TEMPA study was supposed to be part of this but did not materialize and is to an extent taken up in the MSP process (business case building on the BIOFIN work).

Assessment of Outcomes	Rating
Relevance	S
Effectiveness	MS
Efficiency	S
Overall Project Outcome Rating	S

Sustainability*

Financial Sustainability*

271. While some things are quite uncertain given the COVID-19 and government reshuffle (including the linkages therein of a new government trying to promote economic development in a desperate time of economic downturn), there are various factors that project results are likely to continue to be sustained beyond project, and are discussed below.

272. *SeyCCAT and the MSP process:* the MSP process is pitched at a high level and nested within the Blue Economy process overall, on which Seychelles will be depending on. SeyCCAT has managed to leverage sufficient funding to (a) continue Blue Grants and other funding mechanisms toward conservation, and (b) grow its core operations and therefore be able to leverage more funding support to the conservation goals of protected areas, most

⁹³ In a way this was done through government emergency support during COVID-19, but from a short-term relief perspective.

⁹⁴ To an extent taken up in the costing analysis which really did look at enhancing cost-effectiveness for MSP implementation.

notably through a new fundraising position that will use the financial solutions from the finance plans to re-visit and re-negotiate towards PA finance as well as look for new options. Additionally, the MSP process is conducting an economic valuation study that will show the value of protected areas in particular sectors.

273. *Biodiversity Finance Unit*: This unit has been set up as part of the BIOFIN process and is mandated to leverage the financing necessary towards biodiversity conservation. The capacity development and set up of this will be supported through the GEF-7 Blue Economy Project. Seeing as Protected Areas play a great role in the conservation of biodiversity in the Seychelles, there should be financial support to these through the work of this unit.
274. *Other projects GEF and other funding*: Ongoing and new project processes are continuing and will use this project's foundation to support protected areas financing, including through e.g. the SWIOFish 3, the MSP process in general, and the Blue Economy Project. Another addition, not part of the project, is through a COVID-19 Travel app that was developed called Travoris that allowed travellers to track how they can enter the country and what they need and also provided for an opportunity to provide small donations to the protected areas.⁹⁵
275. *Government allocation*: MACCE has certainly championed relief support to the managing entities. However, in terms of greater government decisions, the dropping of the CSR tax, the drive to drop tax burdens in general, and the IMF reform process will likely have a negative impact on environmental allocations in general unless the government makes a concerted effort to allocate dedicated budgets to PA management (as a investment into the health of its resource-dependent economic sectors: fisheries, tourism and agriculture).
276. *Climate finance*: Although this is not a particular focus right now other than through SeyCCAT (e.g. blue carbon), the setting up of climate finance capacity through various activities including the placement of a consultant to help government access and manage climate finance may lead to ecosystem-based adaptation finance access and payment for ecosystem services. This is however speculative at this stage.

Socio-political sustainability*

277. The capacity development element of this project in general has been strong, and has benefitted the institutional capacity of the entire system. Results will likely be maintained through the management plans, business plans and the tracking of results there-in (depending on how much ownership is taken by MACCE to coordinate this further).
278. At managing entity level, this will likely be sustained although it is difficult to tell how it will be prioritized in terms of how much COVID-19 and the change in government has disrupted the BAU and put entities into a hand-to-mouth position in present to near-future.
279. The lack of cooperation and partnership (although there are exceptions to this) across the system is a missed opportunity for sustaining and scaling of project results and sharing, especially when times are hard. Evaluators speculate that new shocks⁹⁶ may force the system⁹⁷ into mutual support versus competition (although only if concerted efforts to do some form of depth facilitation processes to support this are made). The leadership and support from MACCE to the greater network will determine this to a great extent.

⁹⁵ This was not done under the project. It is a Covid related tracking PCR Test based in Switzerland; See <https://www.nation.sc/articles/8677/transport-ministry-explains-importance-of-travoris>

⁹⁶ As we are reaching limits and starting to breach planetary boundaries, new shocks will continue to come and resilience will be needed.

⁹⁷ Here the evaluators are not referring to the label "PA system" per se, but actually using the wording of systems theory in terms of shocks on any "system" in particular, and in this case, the system of protected areas.

280. The new government has placed climate change and the environment high on the agenda (at least verbally), but at the same time it is trying to lesson the tax burden (in other words – actions and words are not linking up)⁹⁸. The sustaining through more valuation placed on healthy ecosystems will depend on the communication and integration of the MSP process within the more technical levels (e.g. Economic Planning Department) of the Ministry of Finance. There is the perception that not only is external funding support to protected areas enough, there might be more coming in than what is actually being spent on conservation.⁹⁹ For government to take more ownership, this perception (and the greater value system of nature into the economy) will need to be dealt with.

Institutional framework and governance sustainability*

281. The SNPA has had a lot of foundational support and if COVID-19 would not have happened, it is very likely that the institution would have become self-sufficient. There is some uncertainty now in its sustainability due to COVID-19, and will likely only pick up once tourists start coming in. The decision to merge the SNPA with the Botanical Gardens has garnered mixed reactions, some seeing it as an opportunity, others as a burden, in terms of sustaining project results. The project, in its final support, is helping the merged institution conduct an institutional assessment. The new board will be more business-orientated and likely support some institutional restructuring to market and manage its operations, which in terms of financing will be positive, but in terms of conservation outcomes will only be positive if the entity remains to its core mission of biodiversity conservation. A lot of the activities necessitated external support during the project (e.g. marketing, construction) which may have implication on sustaining ownership if there was no internal implementation for these activities.

282. The MACCE leadership is of utmost importance and the plans of the Minister in terms of greater integration of GEF projects in general into the MACCE infrastructure and core work, as well as the fact that the Minister himself was former CEO and very active high-performing partner during the project for SNPA, there will likely be some strategic opportunity for the Ministry to take on more reigns that it had previously during project implementation.

283. The institutionalisation of the Biodiversity Finance Unit should further integrate and push financing of protected areas into the future (including diversification of funding sources).

284. The SeyCCAT and MSP process will continue and push some of the core results forward as already mentioned under financial sustainability above. While there are certainly high level links for SeyCCAT and MSP in terms of governance, it seems that these are relatively hands-off and more ownership by government will have a large influence on the sustainability of the MSP process and the financing of PAs as part of this.

Environmental sustainability*

285. Overall, the project aimed to finance protected areas to actually close gaps for conservation outcomes. In this sense environmental sustainability is high. Its support of further expanding the state is also improving environmental sustainability.

286. The only risks to this might be increase in tourist numbers through the project activities which may or may not have an impact (although this was measured through the tracking tools) – given that tourism numbers have decreased substantially this is unlikely to have a large effect but should be considered in future endeavours.

⁹⁸ E.g. the elimination of the CSR tax without actually replacing this with government budget has put protected areas management and conservation at risk.

⁹⁹ Interviews with stakeholders.

Sustainability	Rating
Financial resources	ML
Socio-political	ML
Institutional framework and governance	ML
Environmental	L
Overall Likelihood of Sustainability	ML

Country Ownership

287. The ownership of project results is generally good in Seychelles, and this project support to SNPA in particular was highly valued by the country. This project managed to garner support through various processes that seems to have been stronger than other previous projects.¹⁰⁰ Most partners are likely to carry on the activities supported by the project.
288. There is a general feeling that the GEF projects under the PCU are not fully integrated into the MACCE infrastructure and as a result are perceived as “outside” and so sustainability is often an issue (i.e. meaning that the next GEF project needs to pick it up instead of organic sustaining of project results owned by MACCE and the country in general).¹⁰¹ It will be important to re-think strategically the integrated manner in which the PCU sits within MACCE, its relationship with UNDP, and how core operations and areas of focus are conducted in the country. The new Minister will likely have a strategic influence and improve MACCE leadership and ownership of project results.
289. While the country is small and access to high level politicians is high, and particularly the MSP process has been able to be pitched at quite a high level, the actionable support in terms of political will (especially regarding financial mechanisms) seem to be lacking.
290. Strong champions exist at various levels within the conservation sector, but are lacking in some key institutions (e.g. the economy and resource-dependent sectors that are not necessarily directly linked to conservation), and with a growth in such champions, the project results and the Theory of Change in general, could have much stronger impact.

Gender equality and women empowerment

291. The gender action plan came in late but was well implemented and integrated into project activities, the success to which has already been alluded to in previous sections under Findings in this report.
292. In terms of sustainability, it will be important to integrate gender considerations into the longer-term funding mechanisms (including access and power relations), particularly e.g. into the Blue Grants Strategy.
293. The Blue Economy Project has taken on a strong gender mainstreaming approach likely to support sustaining of gender empowerment results started through this project.

Cross-cutting issues

294. This project did not have any socio-economic indicators attached (even through at PIF stage it was pushed to have more community involvement and then PPG phase actually had strong community participation). The MSP process will likely have strong socio-economic indicators in terms of the zoning and access to different populations (e.g. in the fisheries sector, for instance).

¹⁰⁰ Interviews with project stakeholders.

¹⁰¹ Interview with Minister of MACCE.

295. Achievements of the project will depend quite a bit on diversification of funding sources (less dependence on tourism) and how resilient the overall system will become – and this will again be based on how far partnerships can improve on their collaborative and systems-level efforts. The project did not manage to achieve this (probably mainly because it was out of its sphere of influence and requires much more leadership from MACCE).

GEF Additionality

296. This project was approved prior to the adoption of the GEF additionality framework (December 2018), and thus the evaluation cannot provide an assessment of the dimensions of GEF additionality that the new guidance stipulates. It can make some commentary on GEF additionality in general in terms of the project's overall objectives and outcomes.

297. From viewing the co-financing aspects of the project, the project added value but also proved commitment from partners to take ownership of its results. The outcome-level achievement can be attributed to GEF but also to a large extent the co-financing that was leveraged.

Catalytic/Replication Effect and Progress to Impact

298. The project has definitely added value and had successes that will be further catalysed through ongoing and future processes (including the financial mechanisms – some of which are uncertain given the priority of the new government under COVID-19 limitations and economic upsets¹⁰²).

299. The project managed to start the closing of the financial gap, the further closing for the expanded state will take place under the SeyCCAT and MSP process.

300. Some of the activities under the project have certainly got replication potential, including the further proclamation of Temporal Zones, some of the revenue generation activities, the conservation capacity support and revenue generation through e.g. the Conservation Bootcamp. However, the replication of these is uncertain and depends on the further uptake.

301. Some of the products developed through the project have certainly been revelled as best practice (e.g. the SNPA strategic plan, some of the business plans, the finance plan, the costing plan under MSP for which the Technical Advisor had put in much effort and guidance) and will be further used as possible templates in further work within country and in other countries.

302. At MTR, the reviewer recommended that strategic communications be conducted to share best practices of the project. The ambitions for this was higher initially and has been curbed by COVID-19 (including international platforms mostly but also national level show and print media, including banners, booklets at airports and hotels). Project interventions have been shared on the Panorama platform. A film crew was commissioned to do little mini-videos of all the partner interventions as well as the system overall. Lots of outreach was done with wildlife clubs and schools (through partners and through the project itself). A technical case study has been written up and is on the website. Marketing and communications for some partners has been quite strong (e.g. Nature Seychelles for its Conservation Bootcamp). A long list of knowledge management and communications messages and channels is shared in detail in the 2021 PIR project report. This outreach and further outreach by partners and the PCU will further elevate the project and enhance its replication potential.

¹⁰² E.g. the conservation fee hotel guests, and others outlined under the Financial Plan.

303. In terms of progress to impact, some assumptions have thus far not held, but might further come into play in future to support the pathway of outcomes to impact. These include particularly (1) financing plan adopted and owned by country, (2) managing entities collaborate towards a system approach, (3) tourism inflow sparks up again, (4) MACCE takes on a stronger leadership and coordination role.
304. These, coupled with the MSP process, and SeyCCAT, is likely to improve the financial sustainability (provided that longer-term financing mechanisms and not donor-only support or income from one source like dependence on tourism are leveraged) towards protected areas.
305. The real longer-term, longer lasting impact will depend on the economic value shifts and that government and economic growth focused sectors in other levels of society actually see the value of nature (as the economic foundation) and the importance of re-investment (as you would for any capital that needs reinvestment to function) for the protected area system to expand and make up the critical mass needed to enhance resilience of the natural and economic system. While the project has certainly taken steps forward along this pathway to impact, the continuing of this pathway will depend on the recommendations made in the report and the interventions and levels of championship of the different actors of influence in the country.

D. Main Findings, Conclusions, Recommendations, Lessons Learned

Main Findings

306. The below section summarizes the key findings of the Terminal Evaluation detailed in the content of this report.
307. **Project Design:** The project design was based on a robust PPG process that had strong stakeholder engagement and was an effective way to balance the different expectations from project partners.
308. Some aspects that could have been picked up at design were: 1) better integration of Terminal Evaluation recommendations from other projects, 2) identification of risks to outputs that was beyond project's control e.g. legislation enacted (and thus political will), and 3) the challenge of having partners contribute towards a systems approach when this had failed in previous projects. An arguable point is also the risk of the elections on the project implementation (as, while there were date changes that were unexpected, the timing of the election in terms of the year, was known).
309. The linkages of the project within the sector were strong and the PPG phase did a good job at making sure the project aligned with various ongoing and future projects.
310. **Project Implementation and Execution:** The project underwent a pretty solid and well-thought-out review process at Mid-Term that allowed the project to successfully shift and move forward towards the project results. However as stated above, some of the activities were impacted by the change in government and COVID-19 particularly during the last year of project implementation.
311. It was found that the project team was highly efficient and hard-working. The skilled Technical Advisor brought much integrated capacity into the project that should have long-lasting results.
312. The implementing partners generally successfully implemented their parts with some exceptions that were due to capacity and staff-turnover (e.g. SNPA where the project team had to provide support role) and institutional impasse (e.g. between SIF and LTD that lead

to Aldabra House being cancelled), or due to lack of collaboration and conflict (e.g. Activities on Silhouette island).

313. The MACCE took less leadership role than expected from project design. The project was eventually more strategically aligned with SeyCCAT and MSP process (based on MTR recommendation) to sustain project results in the longer term and uptake of some elements that the project was not able to achieve on its own.
314. Government ownership and championship of the project in general was not as strong as was hoped given the low level of uptake of actions that depended on government approval.
315. Co-financing was surprisingly achieved in the project and primarily due to other partners exceeding their contributions, which helped the shortfall from MACCE and SNPA. .
316. **Project results and impacts:** Outcome 1 and 2 were largely on track to be achieved until the change in government and COVID-19 radically shifted the potential.
317. The project overall had a mixed level of success in terms of its output-level achievements. The greatest achievement of the project was its focused support to SNPA, which successfully achieved financial autonomy, improved capacity and support to infrastructure, in terms of trails and services provided to visitors. .
318. The lack of partnership is an important consideration and a blockage to the system's success. In this project alone, several barriers due to lack of collaboration occurred, including: 1) lack of participation by one project beneficiary in the METT scores invalidates the entire procedure, 2) activities on Silhouette island not implemented due to conflicts between IDC, ICS and SNPA, 3) complaint to Minister bypassing the Steering Committee for an activity to support SeyCCAT Business Planning, among others. A recommendation has been made to this effect because this is a recurring problem that will only lead to more conflicts and barriers in the future unless dealt with strategically now and in a more nuanced way (looking at the social and group psychology aspects of the different partnerships and structure).
319. It was found that the project was efficient in terms of its synergies with other initiatives, its ability to have garnered strong co-financing support. However, it was less efficient in terms of its use of influence (in terms of leadership within MACCE, for example) to move certain issues forward. The project did a relatively strong effort to adapt to the repercussions of COVID-19 and the change in Government.
320. Overall, the project managed to decrease the financing gap, which was the main aim of the project, although only at basic level, and without the increase of the expanded state. However, the potential is now higher and a step further giving the next projects and ongoing processes more lift to further close the gap, despite the challenges faced under COVID-19 and changing priorities of government (e.g. the repeal of the CSR tax).
321. The longer-term impact as per the Theory of Change will depend on various elements, including (a) the level to which the partners collaborate, (b) the level of ownership and championship at government and political level, and (c) greater appreciation of the economic value of Protected Areas.
- 322.

Conclusions

323. The project underwent some challenges in implementation starting with the initial challenges that were realigned during MTR, and finally COVID-19 lockdown and restrictions as well as changes to government. Despite this, the project (team and implementation partners) did high quality work in the areas they had influence over.

324. The project certainly demonstrated some strong achievements to government that had not previously been seen in other projects – especially through the tangible and concrete support to SNPA. Foundations were laid and capacities developed for the PA managing entities that will have far-reaching and longer-term effects. Some missing links include stronger and more strategic engagement with the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Tourism.
325. The project was highly relevant to the country priorities and to its economic dependence on natural resources, although some challenges exist in terms of the visibility of this strategic relevance.
326. Championship in some instances was strong, but actionable championship from government could have been stronger. Leadership from MACCE and other levels of government, and partners collaborating and unifying, can go a long way in sustaining and improving project results and moving towards impact, as will a more coordinated approach to the MSP, SeyCCAT, BIOFIN and the Climate Finance processes.
327. The project aimed to increase sustainable financing under changing economic environments – and it certainly did that. However, its more ambitious hopes at the systemic level were not met.
328. For the project to attain its final impact where a critical mass of ecosystems are protected and financially sustainable, some key processes need to take place, including assessment and appreciation of PA contribution into the economy, as well as stronger government leadership.
329. In terms of government ownership, political will, and general re-investment into the protected areas system: there is a lot of high-level commitment to back conservation actions but it is seen as a “responsibility” and not as a “reinvestment into capital”, specifically in terms of the difference in GDP contributions by protected areas versus budget allocations by government to conserve these protected areas. There is heavy reliance on external funding sources. This is ultimately not just about financing (of protected areas), it is about the economic value system in general, which is growth fixated and where nature is still to a large, although changing, extent,¹⁰³ seen as a free and unlimited resource in quantification terms/externality (if you look at the National System of Accounts, which does not include natural capital or ecosystem services accounting). It is unlikely that higher prioritisation or budget allocations to conservation will occur under short-term economic response plans taken after the economic hits taken due to COVID-19, unless strategic changes take place in this regard.
330. In the short-term, it will help biodiversity conservation goals if nature’s economic value becomes visible in the current economic value system.
331. To support the longer-term shift in economic values, and to support improved investment in the short-term, the business case of nature needs to be made. To do this more holistically, a two-fold approach would ideally take place: (1) integration of Natural Capital Accounting in the National System of Accounts, and (2) through case-study economic valuation of biodiversity and ecosystem services in key sectors that the government is focusing on under its economic diversification plan of the IMF reform, namely fisheries and agriculture, and tourism. The latter has been done to an extent in a fragmented way, but was supposed to be refined through the TEMPA study¹⁰⁴. Nonetheless this is being done

¹⁰³ Some strong policy alignment in Seychelles exists that certainly qualitatively values ecosystem services and natural capital, including the Blue Economy Roadmap. The Vision 2033, among others.

¹⁰⁴ Previous studies have also been done in other projects more than a decade ago on natural capital accounting (source: feedback from partners at prelim findings workshop).

through the MSP economic valuation study, which is also looking at economic diversification opportunities. This is further outlined in the recommendation B.3. below.

332. The project has made a strong effort to attain the overall goal, despite the challenges,

333. Based on the above considerations, the project, overall is given a rating of Satisfactory.

Table 11. Summary of project ratings (as guided by the 2020 UNDP Terminal Evaluation Guidance for GEF-financed Projects)

Criterion	Rating	Summarized Notes	Rating number
Monitoring and Evaluation	S	Generally good M&E with minor shortcomings in design.	5
M&E Design at Entry	S	Generally well-laid out, some indicators were not fully appropriate given the influence of the project, baselines well established at PPG phase.	(5)
M&E Implementation	HS	Very regular reporting, good record keeping in general, quarterly reports, PIRs on time, partner reports on time, adaptive management and MTR response good.	(6)
UNDP Implementation/Oversight and Implementation Partner Execution	S	Overall strong management although leadership and direction could have been stronger for greater results achievement.	5
Quality of UNDP Implementation/Oversight	S	Generally good oversight, strong PPG process, good communication and working relationship with PCU, could be stronger in terms of GEF rules and regulations and oversight.	(5)
Quality of Implementing Partner Execution	MS	Good day to day management, would have benefited from more leadership and coordination from MACCE, some activities not completed by partners because of lack of collaboration.	(4)
Assessment of Outcomes	S	Generally outcomes achieved although some higher level achievement goals not achieved but likely to be achieved in future.	5
Relevance	S	Highly relevant project but evaluators not sure as visible as it should have been from the point of strategic relevance to political influence.	(5)
Effectiveness	MS	Mixed level of success, some outputs achieved, some not. the more strategic higher level achievements not fully achieved.	(4)
Efficiency	S	Given the external shocks, the project did a pretty good job at keeping to time and resources (despite a six month extension).	(5)
Sustainability	ML	Strong processes in place to allow for results to be sustained although potential for move to impact although depends on government leadership.	3
Financial resources	ML	Some potentials exist but have been affected by COVID-19 in terms of going beyond donor support.	(3)
Socio-political	ML	Needs more action behind government commitment.	(3)

Criterion	Rating	Summarized Notes	Rating number
Institutional framework and governance	ML	SNPA good foundational base should help with merger, MACCE potential to take on stronger leadership potential.	(3)
Environmental	L	With greater management effectiveness and expanded state, environmental sustainability likely to have been improved through project.	(3)
Overall Project Rating	S	Overall project achieved its objective even if strategic elements had not been taken up by end of project, there is enough evidence to show that ongoing processes will build on these and move to impact beyond the project.	5

Recommendations

Rec #	TE Recommendation	Entity Responsible	Time Frame
A	Category A: Ensuring (necessary) final project results achievement		
A.1.	SeyCCAT and MSP process to finalize the outstanding items of this project, including most notably the Financing Plan updating and the solutions there-in (including revisiting the WTP and PES), the biodiversity economic valuation study.	MACCE (SeyCCAT and MSP)	by end of year 2021
A.2.	Maximise institutional coordination between SeyCCAT, MSP, Biodiversity Finance Unit, Blue Economy GEF-7 Project, Climate Finance to drive project results and build stronger financing for protected areas (also linked to ecosystem resilience to climate change.	MACCE	Ongoing, starting immediately
A.3.	Finalise the institutional assessment of the SPGA and drive project results achieved for SNPA, maintain and build on infrastructural, structural and capacity support built by project	SPGA	by end of year 2021
B	Category B: Sustaining and further catalysing results for TOC impact		
B.1.	Develop information dissemination strategy to share best practices (and generally more in terms of overall GEF spending and results achievement under projects developed), integrate PCU and GEF work more strategically into the work programme of MACCE	MACCE and PCU	Starting immediately
B.2.	Partnerships for enhanced resilience Build coordination and partnership for enhanced resilience and mutual supportive environment. System fragmentation will risk system resilience and needs to be dealt with. (a) Use Advisory Board (from 2018) platform under the Nature Reserve and Conservancy Bill (b) Bring in external expertise on depth	MACCE as leader & Project partners	2021/22

	<p>facilitation/conflict resolution in the set up and the first focus of the meetings to deal with recurrent barriers to moving forward that only depth facilitation processes will have a chance to resolve.</p> <p>(c) On a slightly different note and more at project level, or any project that includes partnerships for the entire system, an umbrella agreement could be signed by all partners agreeing to mutual cooperation and support toward the system before individual agreements are taken forward.</p>		
B.3.	<p>Make nature's value visible in the economic agenda</p> <p>(1) Integration of Natural Capital Accounting in the National System of Accounts (through consultative discussions with National Bureau of Statistics and UNSD) (international technical and financial support option through UNSD), and</p> <p>(2) through case-study economic valuation of biodiversity and ecosystem services in two sectors that the government is focusing on under its economic diversification plan of the IMF reform, namely fisheries and agriculture, and then through tourism (depending on necessity building on MSP economic valuation study) (international technical and financial support option through UNEP The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity Office).</p> <p>Some of this could form part of existing work, and other under new work (external support to set this up is very likely, e.g. Natural Capital Accounting through United Nations Statistics Division – already some work has been done here for SEEA accounts for fisheries with the National Statistics Office in Seychelles in 2016, through the TEEB Office in UNEP links could be made for accounting, as well as for case studies (e.g. TEEB AgriFood for agriculture), all of which would strongly support re-financing for protected areas as a system.</p>	<p>UNDP/MACCE can engage with Statistics Office, liaise with international partners through UN like UNSD and UNEP</p>	<p>Depends on work with National Bureau of Statistics and opportunity to connect</p>

Lessons Learned

Lessons Learned

Lesson 1: Design ambition, adaptiveness and flexibility and the role of GEF in times of change

334. Shifting approaches and adaptive flexibility in projects can be good, as was illustrated in this project in terms of partnerships with SeyCCAT and the MSP process (good

recommendation generally at MTR), as well as the project flexibility also in terms of COVID-19.

335. However, there may be some lessons learnt for project design and for GEF in general in terms of how it is supporting SIDS and countries of change.

336. An echo is made to a lesson learnt from the Outer Islands Project Terminal Evaluation and is a recurring problem in general in Seychelles that the project design is overambitious, that indicators are developed that are not in the control of the project and thus more assumptions than drivers (also picked up in the Terminal Evaluation of the GEF NGO modalities project under lessons). The evaluators agree with the evaluator of the TE of the Outer Islands in stating that there might be a limitation to the GEF project document template that does not take into account the comparative size of a country like Seychelles (or SIDS in general) and this results in the recurring problem of overdesign of projects which lead to implementation issues since capacity and human resources are rather limited.

337. Another lesson to take up with GEF and Implementing Agencies of GEF is the need to consider flexibility in terms of sensitivity to radical shocks affecting the system (like COVID-19 did). Some project partners might rightly argue how can project results be achieved, if a shock big enough to upset the basic survival of those actually doing the very work that lays the foundation of such achievements are felt. How can a project be able to support short-term shock survival while enhancing the resilience of future shocks and still achieving the results of the project? The evaluators do not have the answer to this, but it is an important point to consider for the GEF and the IAs in times of radical change while under the urgent need to meet the SDGs and enhance resilience in the system.

Lesson 2: Importance of building strong government institution and capacity of internal staff to maximise project benefits

338. The SNPA relied heavily on external support and internal staff were not effectively developed by the project (e.g. external consultant for the communication and marketing work versus longer term staff member), and the value of the work and institutional strength (versus individual strength) has a strong implication on follow-through and ownership of project results. As an example, the change in leadership at SNPA heavily affected the institution's implementation of the project..

Lesson 3: The need for Government endorsement and support of important projects undertaken by beneficiaries

339. The Aldabra House was to be a flagship achievement for the project and the cancellation was a great disappointment. Because the risk was already there at design, the project needed to be reflective in the instability and uncertainty in government decisions even when high-level support is garnered. Future project proposals should be fully endorsed by the Government before being written into the project.

Lesson 4: Effective consultation, engagement and collaboration with key influencers (e.g. Ministry of Finance)

340. The non approval of the Investment Plan by the Ministry of finance highlights the need for stronger stakeholder engagement and consultation. There is a need to think strategically at the beginning of the project (even better at design, PPG phase) who the key influencers are, and make them responsible to achieve a certain output.

ANNEX 1: PROJECT LOGICAL FRAMEWORK INCLUDING TE COMMENTS

	Indicator	Baseline	Targets by End of Project	Revised baseline and targets after MTR	TE Comments
Project Objective: to improve the financial sustainability and strategic cohesion of Seychelles protected area system, while also dealing with emerging threats and risks to biodiversity in a shifting national economic environment					
1	Evolution in key scores from the Financial sustainability scorecard for national systems of PA	Total points, total possible points and % achieved based on the application of the scorecard in 2015	Percentage scores across the board see and increase of at least 40% and 80% from the baseline, my mid terms and EOP respectively. Increases show a balanced and steady progress verified across the components and PA sub systems		

	Indicator	Baseline	Targets by End of Project	Revised baseline and targets after MTR	TE Comments
1a	Scores for the entire PA system and for the three components of the score card				82% achieved at EOP (EOP targets not achieved)
	Total	17% (37 out of 225)	28%	On target to be achieved	Total scores (for all three components): 23%
	Component 1 : Legal regulatory and institutional	17% (16 out of 95)	28%		Component 1) Legal, regulatory and institutional frameworks: 25%
	Component 2: Business planning and tools for cost effective management	19% (11 out of 59)	34%		Component 2) Business planning and tools for cost-effective management: 25%
	Component 3: Tools for revenue generation	14% (10 out of 71)	22%		Component 3) Tools for revenue generation by PAs 18%

	Indicator	Baseline	Targets by End of Project	Revised baseline and targets after MTR	TE Comments
1b	Overall scores for each of the six main sub systems as assessed separately by PA managing entities	Absolute and percentage scores from 2015 21 (9%)	Percentage scores reach at least the following by mid term and EOP	Not on target to be achieved: <i>North and Denis island to be removed</i>	3/6 of sub systems reaching EOP targets
	SNPA	16 (7%)	18%		Overall scores for each of the six main sub-subsystems, as assessed separately for PA managing entities provided below:
	DoE	41 (18%)	13%		SNPA: 24% (100% Achieved)
	SIF	62 (28%)	33%		DoE: 13% (100% Achieved)
	ICS	50 (22%)	50%		SIF: 30% (91% Achieved)
	NS	16 (7%)	40%		ICS: 32% (64% Achieved)
	GIF		13%		NS: 22% (Did not participate)
					GIF: 18% (100% Achieved)
2	Absolute and relative annual financing gap for the entire PAS (using the six main PA subsystems)			On target to be achieved	Overall Target 66% (2/3) achieved

	Indicator	Baseline	Targets by End of Project	Revised baseline and targets after MTR	TE Comments
	as a proxy)				<p>100% Achieved</p> <p>77% Achieved</p> <p>100% Achieved</p> <p>The EOP target has been achieved for basic scenario, as well as projected 5 years for the same scenario. However achievement for optimal</p>
	(a) Under a basic PA management scenario	\$2.7 million, or 51% of total finances available to PAS	Less than 30% of total finances available to PAS		
	(b) Under an optimal PA management scenario	\$6.7 million, or 124% of total finances available to PAS	Less than 50% of total finances available to the PAS		
	(c) projected over 5 years under a basic PA management scenario	\$13.6 million,	Less than \$8 million		

	Indicator	Baseline	Targets by End of Project	Revised baseline and targets after MTR	TE Comments
					scenario was not achieved (77% Achieved)
3	Evolution in METT scores for indicator sites (listed here) reflects improvements in conservation security in terrestrial and marine ecosystems	Absolute and percentage METT scores in 2015 (out of 102 points)	METT scores expressed in percentages by EOP	On target to be achieved; nota <i>North and Denis island to be removed</i>	
	SIF-Vallee de Mai				
	NS-Cousin Island Special Reserve	81 (79%)			SIF-Vallee de Mai - 85 (100% Achieved)
	GIF – Denis Island	76 (75%)			NS-Cousin Island Special Reserve -77 (96% Achieved)
	GIF – North Island	65 (64%)	- All scores below 50% at the baseline increase to at least 60%		GIF – Denis Island – 62 (97% Achieved)
	ICS- Silhouette Island National /marine park	71 (70%)			GIF – North Island -71 93% Achieved
	DOE – Recif Island	59 (58%)			ICS- Silhouette Island National /marine park-65
	SNPA- Curieuse National / Marine Park	57 (56%)	- All scores between 50 % and 60% at baseline, increase to at least 65%		
	SNPA – La Digue Veuve Special Reserve	74 (73%)			
	SNPA- Morne Seychellois	49 (48%)			

	Indicator	Baseline	Targets by End of Project	Revised baseline and targets after MTR	TE Comments
	National Park	47 (46%)	- All scores above 60% at the baseline increase with at least 5 additional percent points		(100% Achieved) DOE – Recif Island-67 (100% Achieved) SNPA- Curieuse National / Marine Park – 74 (95%) SNPA – La Digue Veuve Special Reserve -65 (100% Achieved) SNPA- Morne Seychellois National Park -53 (88% Achieved)
Outcome 1: Protected Area (PA) investment is fostered and capacity for PA management, at site, institutional and systemic levels, is improved for directing the long term sustainable financing of the PA system and generating conservation facilities				MTR rating: Satisfactory	
Outputs					
1.1: PA system Financing and investment plan for Seychelles is adopted at the national level, along with subsidiary investment plans at the site of sub systems levels and these become a key instrument for implementing the 2013 PA policy					
1.2 Site level cost effectiveness and conservation effectiveness benchmarks are established to guide decisions on investments, co-management, delegation and cross subsidization					
1.3 An adequate legal framework is emplaced for implementing the PAS wide					

	Indicator	Baseline	Targets by End of Project	Revised baseline and targets after MTR	TE Comments
	investment program with a multi funding approach adaptable to each PA				
	1.4 Institutional capacity building of SNPA and other key PA managing entities for the implementation of the Seychelles PA System Financing & Investment Plan is enhanced				
4	Total financing available to the PA system from various sources (based on financial analysis of the six main sub systems covering 88% of the PA estate and functioning as a proxy for the overall PAS)	\$5.4 million p.a. as measured in 2015 and referring to baseline year 2013	Increases by at least 50% by EOP and meets the financing needs for a basic management scenario (i.e. \$8 million p.a. or more)	On target to be achieved	72% achieved (36% instead of 50%). EOP was \$7.3 million
5	On the adoption of financial planning as a key tool for improving PAS financial sustainability	broken down as below	broken down as below		Overall Targets 100% achieved overall.
5a	Existence and effective application of a PA System (PAS) Financing & Investment Plan for Seychelles	Only 1 PA financing plan (though not an investment plan) is being implemented in Seychelles, namely for the SIF PA sub-system; it was prepared in 2013 on the basis of a study carried out under another GEF project and it is probably outdated now	The PAS Financing & Investment Plan for Seychelles has been completed, approved by government and it is under implementation – as independently assessed by the TE by EOP	On target to be achieved	Target 100% achieved based on EOP targets Financing Plan for the Seychelles Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) developed and being updated.

	Indicator	Baseline	Targets by End of Project	Revised baseline and targets after MTR	TE Comments
5b	Number of subsidiary investment or financing plans at the site or at the sub-system's level	There are no financing or investment plan at the PAS level	At least 4 PA investment plans are actively implemented in Seychelles and they may either focus on the site level or at the system / sub-system level	On target to be achieved	Target 100% achieved
6	Independent application of the Capacity Development Scorecard for PA system management with analytical notes shows steady improvements in capacity levels	Overall score was 60% in 2013	70% by EOP and with capacity areas for PAS management that are important for Seychelles duly identified	Not on target to be achieved: Measurement of progress against indicator 6 is problematic as the baseline was only established for SNPA, ICS and the PCU at project design. Furthermore, assessments by other projects (namely the Outer Islands project in November 2016, and the planned capacity assessments under the proposed R2R project (GEF6) indicate that an additional assessment by PAF is	Target 88% achieved o Systemic Capacity remained at 60%; o Institutional Capacity increased from 67% to 67.8% o Individual Capacity increased from 48% to 57.1%

	Indicator	Baseline	Targets by End of Project	Revised baseline and targets after MTR	TE Comments
				not needed at this stage. It is recommended that the project undertakes an assessment for ICS and SNPA, which can act as indicators for capacity building, with particular emphasis on SNPA to help inform capacity development for the Terminal Evaluation.	
Outcome 2: The overall ability of the PA system to generate reliable revenue is improved, both in view of improving its overall management effectiveness and of catering for the needs of an expanded estate				MTR Rating Satisfactory	
Outputs: 2.1 Institutional and policy barriers for an effective site-level revenue generation, collection and retention into the PA system are lifted, creating better conditions and incentives for reducing the PA finance gap 2.2 Essential touristic or other relevant infrastructure in selected PAs are developed and new cost-effective practices, systems and schemes are implemented, all with the aim of making these PAs more attractive to visitors, increasing their own					

	Indicator	Baseline	Targets by End of Project	Revised baseline and targets after MTR	TE Comments
	revenue generation capacity, while safeguarding and protecting their conservation value				
	2.3 The operationalization of planned and possibly other relevant innovative funding mechanisms (such as the SCCAT to be created in connection with the debt-for-nature swap initiative) makes clear provisions for biodiversity considerations, in particular to address the PAS financing gap				
7	Percentage of PA generated revenues retained in the PA system for re-investment across the main sub-systems and for each individual sub-systems: Across the 6 main PA sub-systems* SNPA sub-system DoE sub-system SIF sub-system ICS sub-system	As assessed in 2015 through the application of the Financial Sustainability Scorecard for Seychelles' PAS and referring to Baseline Year 2013: 67% 0% 100% 100% 100% 100%	Reaches 100% across all sub-systems by EOP	On target to be achieved <i>North and Denis island to be removed</i>	Target 100% achieved. Achieved as SNPA formally moved to financial autonomy in January 2019, retaining all its generated revenues. % of revenue retained for: • SNPA sub-system 100% • DoE sub-system 100% • SIF sub-system

	Indicator	Baseline	Targets by End of Project	Revised baseline and targets after MTR	TE Comments
	NS sub-system GIF sub-system * which covers 88% of the PA estate and likely 80-90% of all PA finance flows.				100% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICS sub-system 100% • NS sub-system 100% • GIF sub-system 100%
8	SNPA's ability to retain its site-level revenues Note: SNPA's financial autonomy is dictated by the category of parastatal that it falls under, which in turn defines whether it is a budget dependent institution or not	(a) Since 2008, SNPA has been downgraded to being a budget-dependent institution; (b) 100% of SNPA's site-generated revenues are reversed to Treasury and not retained by the entity	(a) SNPA status is upgraded and it reaches more financial autonomy; (b) at least 50% of SNPA' site-generated revenue can be retained by the institution	On target to be achieved	Target 100% achieved. SNPA financial autonomy was approved in January 2019 and all funding generated from SNPA sites is retained by the institution.
9	Number of revenue sources for the PA system in the form of PES and their full exploitation in Seychelles	<i>[broken down as below]</i>	<i>[broken down as below]</i>		Overall target 90% achieved. Based on EOP targets Indicator 9a is reporting 100% achievement (the

	Indicator	Baseline	Targets by End of Project	Revised baseline and targets after MTR	TE Comments
	[broken down as below]				<p>same as 2019)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicator 9b is reporting 100% achievement (the same as 2019) Indicator 9 c is reporting 75% achievement (an increase since 2019 - reported 50%).
9a	<p>Current domestic revenue sources:</p> <p>1. Existing (environment and conservation) sector budgets</p>	<p>All 5 mechanisms are currently in use in Seychelles, but for all of them the full potential for revenue generation is only partially exploited, as follows:</p> <p>1. The budget is insufficient to minimally cover the gap</p> <p>2. Government levies do</p>	<p>All 5 mechanisms are maintained and at least 2 of them are fully exploited by EOP, as follows:</p> <p>1. The conservation sector budget is enough to cover the gap for the state-run sub-system.</p>	<p>On target to be achieved</p>	<p>Targets 100% achieved.</p> <p>The following indicators are almost fully exploited;</p> <p>Target 1. The conservation sector budget is enough to cover the gap for the state-run sub-system. State budget allocation to SNPA was US\$ 1.6 million in 2017 and has shown a steady increase since 2015.</p> <p>Target 2. Government</p>

	Indicator	Baseline	Targets by End of Project	Revised baseline and targets after MTR	TE Comments
	2. Existing government levies destined wholly or partly for PA funding	not benefit the PAS			levies –the project has been supporting for the implementation of hotel contribution and amended entrance fees, however negotiations have been further delayed since covid-19).
	3. Park entry fees	3. A significant portion of park entry fees are not retained by the system	3. Park entry fees generated at SNPA sites will be full retained by the entity		Target 3. Park entry fees generated at SNPA sites will be full retained by the entity. SNPA retained all its revenue from January 2019. SNPA increased Marine Park entry fees, and introduce terrestrial park fees in 2020.
	4. Public-private finance initiatives	4. The legal environment does not encourage PPP initiatives			Target 5. Cross-subsidization exists between PAs within the same PA management organisation. A Public-Private subsidisation example, will be SIF which is a government established organization which already cross-subsidise for its two UNESCO sites sites;
	5. Forms of cross-subsidization initiatives based on public-public or public-private ownership	5. PA finance cross-subsidization initiatives remain few and ad hoc			

	Indicator	Baseline	Targets by End of Project	Revised baseline and targets after MTR	TE Comments
	structures.				<p>Aldabra and Vallee de Mai, In 2021 SIF also undertook the management (and funding) for the Fond Ferdinand nature reserve which was being managed by an NGO.</p> <p>Additionally the project has invested in the Curieuse BBQ area structures (and visitor centre to be completed with SNPA funds), however PP subsidisation negotiations has been delayed in prioritizing activities because of the reduced visitor numbers during Covid-19</p>
9b	<p>International revenue sources:</p> <p>1. More general arrival charge to cover all</p>	<p>There are 3 discernable mechanisms and they are not being exploited for PA finance, of these:</p> <p>1. No "PA access passport" has been conceived.</p>	<p>At least 1 mechanism is operational by EOP, as follows:</p> <p>2. The SCATT is fully operational and disbursing</p>	Achieved	<p>Target 100% achieved.</p> <p>For revenue source option 2.</p> <p>Target 1. During the development of the PA system Finance Plan, PA Authorities strongly</p>

	Indicator	Baseline	Targets by End of Project	Revised baseline and targets after MTR	TE Comments
	<p>entries or a modest “PA access passport” of around 5-10 USD per passenger.</p> <p>2. Debt for Nature/Adaptation Swap</p> <p>3. Other donor sources including linking PA to climate funding</p>	<p>2. The Debt for Nature/Adaptation Swap is still in its infancy.</p> <p>3. It is not obvious that climate finance can effectively benefit the PAS.</p>			<p>rejected the notion of a national arrival fee. This was therefore not included within the Plan. Since that time, however, two organisations have begun to explore this option under parallel processes.</p> <p>The SeyCCAT is currently analysing options for introducing an Airport Arrival Fee, using regional bench-marking and a wider willingness-to-pay analysis.</p> <p>Target 2. The SeyCCAT is operational and disbursing funds/grants (to date SeyCCAT has disbursed over \$1,543,450.71 from the Blue bonds and Debt Swap proceeds). It is expected to grow its asset base by the end of the project</p>

	Indicator	Baseline	Targets by End of Project	Revised baseline and targets after MTR	TE Comments
9c	<p>Novel/innovative sources incl. PES:</p> <p>1. Payments for water services related to PAs (e.g. direct water abstractions by water bottling plants, and agricultural producers)</p> <p>2. Payments for flood and sedimentation control (this option might legitimately be linked to Debt for adaptation swap). In this case revenues used to support this form of “ecosystem-based adaptation” as provisioned by PAs</p> <p>3. Carbon sequestration credits</p> <p>4. Biodiversity offsets</p>	None of the 5 potential mechanisms have been trialed in Seychelles	<p>At least 1 mechanism have been trialed by EOP, most likely the following:</p> <p>4. Biodiversity offset or compensation for damage shows promise after a pilot implementation supported by the project</p>	<p>On target to be achieved ; Indicator changed to : supporting SeyCCAT to develop their Blue Enterprise Fund and Tourism Conservation Levy</p> <p>EOP target: At least 1 mechanism trailed, most likely Blue Enterprise Fund or Tourism Conservation Levy</p>	<p>Targets 70% achieved. PIR rated as 100%</p> <p>Tourism conservation levy not implemented so is the Blue Enterprise Fund. PIR 2021 identified this indicator as 100% achieved.</p> <p>As per Mid-term recommendation:</p> <p>Target 1. Change Indicator 9c to:</p> <p>a). SeyCCAT – tourism conservation levy and b). Blue enterprise funds.</p> <p>Target 2. By the EOP at least one will be trailed,</p> <p>Target 3. Continue to monitor the others.</p>

	Indicator	Baseline	Targets by End of Project	Revised baseline and targets after MTR	TE Comments
	<p>(separate project input)</p> <p>5. Hydropower potential related to PAs</p>				<p>For the new indicators,</p> <p>Target 1. Change of indicators, was approved by the steering committee in Feb 2018.</p> <p>Target 2a. (SeyCCAT Trialled – tourism conservation levy) - A comparative analysis of the introduction of tourism conservation levies in SIDS countries has been completed and approved by the SeyCCAT Board.</p> <p>Target 2b. (Blue enterprise funds) - A \$56m blue enterprise has been proposed to finance blue economy business models, complementing the existing blue investment fund to finance fisheries management. However Blue Enterprise Fund was not feasible in a</p>

	Indicator	Baseline	Targets by End of Project	Revised baseline and targets after MTR	TE Comments
					<p>feasibility study.</p> <p>Target 3.</p> <p>1) PES has been included within the new Water Policy for the country as well as in the Water Act.</p> <p>2) Carbon sequestration credits are under-developed in Seychelles although the possibility of valorising blue carbon sequestration in sea grass beds was discussed during the PA Financial Plan process.</p> <p>3) A hydropower plant was proposed by the Public Utilities Corporation (PUC) utilizing water flow from the Mare aux Cochons water catchment of Morne Seychellois NP.</p>

ANNEX 2: LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWED AND EVALUATION MISSION SCHEDULE

#	Agency	Name	Title and Role	Role in project	Date Consulted
1	Ministry of Agriculture Climate Change and Environment - Programme Coordination Unit (PCU)	Mr Daig Romain	Project manager	Project team	Wed 7 th July 5pm local time
2	Ministry of Agriculture Climate Change and Environment - Programme Coordination Unit (PCU)	Mr Andrew Rylance-	Finance & Economic Advisor	Project team	Thu 8 th July 1am local time
3	Ministry of Agriculture Climate Change and Environment (MACE)	Mr Alain de Comarmond	Principal Secretary for Environment;	Chairperson of the Steering committee, (From June 21 replaced with Mr. Denis Matatiken), National Project Director	Fri 9 th July 6pm local time
4	Nature Seychelles (NS)	Mr. Nirmal Shah & Ms Kerstin Henri	CEO Director	Project beneficiary	Thu 15 th July 3pm local time
5	Marine Conservation Society Seychelles (MCSS)	Ms Rabia Somers	Scientific Coordinator	Project beneficiary	Fri 9 th July 5pm local time
6	Seychelles National Parks Authority (SNPA)	Mr Selby Remy	Chief Executive Officer till June 21 (replacement being awaited)	Project beneficiary	Tue 13 th July 10 am local time
7	Green Islands Foundation	Ms Wilna Accouche	General Manager	Project beneficiary	Mon 12 th July 5pm local time
8	Seychelles' Conservation and Climate Adaptation Trust	Ms Angelique Pouponneau (SeyCCAT)	Chief Executive Officer	Project beneficiary	Mon 12 th July 4pm local time
9	Ministry of Agriculture Climate Change and Environment (MACE)	Ms Marie-May Muzungaile	Director General Biodiversity, Conservation and Management Division	Project beneficiary	Mon 12 th July 5pm local time
10	Seychelles Island Foundation	Dr Frauke Fleicher Dogley	Chief Executive Officer	Project beneficiary	Tue 13 th July 3 pm local time
11	Ministry of Agriculture Climate	Mr Denis Matatiken	Principal Secretary of	Member of SC	Tue 20 th July

	Change and Environment (MACE)		MACE From June 21; New National Project Director		4 pm local time
12	TNC-Seychelles Marine Spatial Plan	Ms Helena Sims	Project Manager	Project beneficiary	Fri 16 th July 4pm local time
13	Ministry of Agriculture Climate Change and Environment - Programme Coordination Unit (PCU)	Ms Elke Talma (PCU)	Secretary of the SC PCU Programme Coordinator	Project team	Wed 14 th July 11 am local time
14	Tourism Department	Ms Philomena Hollanda	Director Risk Management	Member of SC	Thu 15 th July 4 pm local time
17	Island Conservation Society	Mr Pierre Andre Adam	Chief Executive Officer	Project beneficiary	Wed 14 th July 2:00 pm local time
20	Ministry of Agriculture Climate Change and Environment - Programme Coordination Unit (PCU)	Ms Fabrina Molle	Financial Officer	Project accountant	Tue 13 th July 11:00 am local time
21	UNDP	Ms Preethi Nair (UNDP)	National Project Coordinator	UNDP	Fri 16 th July 3pm local time
22	UNDP	Ms Oksana Vovk	Programme and Operations Specialist	UNDP	Fri 16 th July 3pm local time
23	Ministry of Finance, Trade, Investment and Economic Planning	Mr Lenny Palit	Senior Economist	UNDP	Sat 17 th July 3pm local time
24	Ministry of Agriculture Climate Change and Environment (MACE)	Mr. Wills Agricole	GEF Operational Focal Point Technical Advisor for Climate Change	Member of SC	Tue 20 th July 5 pm local time
25	Ministry of Agriculture Climate Change and Environment - Programme Coordination Unit (PCU)	Mr. Andrew Grieser-Johns	PCU Programme Coordinator (retired)	MACCE	Mon 19 th July 6pm local time
26	UNDP	Mr. Roland Alcindor	Programme Coordinator	UNDP	Wed 21 st July 3pm local time
27	Ministry of Agriculture Climate Change and Environment (MACCE)	Mr. Flavien Joubert	Minister	Project beneficiary	Thur 29 th July 5pm
28	Ministry of Agriculture Climate Change and Environment (MACCE)	Ms. Kai Kim Chiang	Consultant supporting climate finance		Thursday 29 th July 6pm

20	UNDP	Ms. Penny Stock	GEF Regional Technical Advisory	UNDP	Tuesday 3 rd August 3pm UK time
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ANNEX 3: EVALUATION MATRIX

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Questions
Project Design	
Analysis of Results Framework: project logic and strategy, indicators	How were the project's objectives and components clear, practicable and feasible within its time frame?
	Was the project designed to address country priorities and be country-driven?
	<p>Did the Theory of Change include: a clear definition of the problem to be addressed and its root causes, desired outcomes, an analysis of barriers to and enablers for achieving outcomes, consideration of how to address barriers, a plan for a phased withdrawal of the project, and responses for the project to focus on?</p> <p>How were outcomes and outputs consistent with the Theory of Change?</p> <p>Was there a clearly defined and robust Theory of Change?</p>
How did the project aim to capture broader development impacts (i.e. income generation, gender equality and women's empowerment, improved governance, livelihood benefits, etc.) by using socioeconomic co-benefits and sex-disaggregated/gender-responsive indicators and targets, where relevant?	
How were the indicators in the Results Framework SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attributable, Relevant, Time-bound/Timely/Trackable/Targeted)?	

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Questions
Assumptions and Risks	How were the assumptions and risks well-articulated in the PIF and project document?
	How were the stated assumptions and risks logical and robust, and did they help to determine activities and planned outputs?
	How were any externalities (i.e. effects of climate change, global economic crisis, etc.) relevant to the findings?
Lessons from other relevant projects (e.g. same focal area) incorporated into project design	How were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated in the project design?
Planned stakeholder participation	How 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?
	What were the planned stakeholder interactions, as set out in the project document Stakeholder Engagement Plan?
	How were the partnership arrangements properly identified and roles and responsibilities negotiated prior to project approval?
Linkages between project and other interventions within the sector	Were linkages established with other complementary interventions? Was there planned coordination with other relevant GEF-financed projects and/or other initiatives?
Gender responsiveness of project design	How were gender considerations integrated in the project's design, including through a gender analysis with the specific context of the project for advancing gender equality and women's empowerment and a gender action plan with a specific implementation plan for the delivery of gender activities, with indicators, targets, budget, timeframe and responsible party?
	How was the project aligned with national policies and strategies on gender equality?

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Questions
	<p data-bbox="488 244 1863 336">How were gender issues integrated in the project's strategy, rationale and theory of change, including how advancing gender equality and women's empowerment will advance the project's environmental outcomes? Identify any gaps in integrating or addressing gender issues in these areas.</p> <p data-bbox="488 379 1863 440">What gender expertise was used in the design and development of the project? Was it adequate? This could be in the form of external consultant and/or internal UNDP capacity. Identify any gaps in gender expertise.</p> <p data-bbox="488 515 1863 544">How was the UNDP Gender Marker rating assigned to the project document realistic and backed by the findings of the gender analysis?</p>
Social and Environmental Safeguards	Assess any environmental and social risks as identified through the SESP in line with UNDP Social and Environmental Standards and the management measures outlined in the Project Document SESP and any management plans.
Project Implementation	
Adaptive Management	<p data-bbox="488 711 1863 804">What significant changes did the project undergo as a result of recommendations from the Mid-Term Review, or as a result of other review procedures? Explain the process and implications. (Consider presenting the MTR recommendations, management responses to the recommendations, and TE team comments in a table format.)</p> <p data-bbox="488 879 1863 908">If the changes were extensive, how did they materially change the expected project outcomes?</p> <p data-bbox="488 1018 1863 1046">Were the project changes articulated in writing and then considered and approved by the Project Board?</p>

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Questions
Actual stakeholder participation and partnership arrangements	How did the project develop and leverage the necessary and appropriate partnerships with direct and tangential stakeholders?
	Participation and country-driven processes: o How did local and national government stakeholders support the objectives of the project? How did they have an active role in project decision-making that supported efficient and effective project implementation?
	How did stakeholder involvement and public awareness contribute to the progress towards achievement of project objectives? Were there any limitations to stakeholder awareness of project outcomes or to stakeholder participation in project activities? Was there invested interest of stakeholders in the project's long-term success and sustainability? How did actual stakeholder interaction compare to what was planned in the project document and Stakeholder Engagement Plan? Include challenges and outcomes on stakeholder engagement, as evolved from the time of the MTR.
	How appropriate and adaptive was the gender action plan in facilitating gender mainstreaming objectives.
	How were women's groups, NGOs, civil society orgs and women's ministries adequately consulted and involved in project design? If not, should they have been?
	How were stakeholder engagement exercises gender responsive?
	For any stakeholder workshops, were women-only sessions held, if appropriate, and/or were other considerations made to ensure women's meaningful participation?

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Questions
Project Finance and Co-finance	Variances between planned and actual expenditures, and the reasons for those variances
	Identification of potential sources of co-financing as well as leveraged and associated financing;
	Whether strong financial controls were established to allow the project management to make informed decisions regarding the budget at any time, and allow for the timely flow of funds and for the payment of satisfactory project deliverables
	Whether the project demonstrated due diligence in the management of funds, including periodic audits
	Any changes made to fund allocations as a result of budget revisions and the appropriateness and relevance of such revisions
	Whether there was sufficient clarity in the reported co-financing to substantiate in-kind and cash co-financing from all listed sources
	Reasons for differences in the level of expected and actual co-financing;
	Extent to which project components supported by external funders was well integrated into the overall project
	Effect on project outcomes and/or sustainability from the extent of materialization of co-financing

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Questions
	Whether there is evidence of additional, leveraged resources that have been committed as a result of the project. Leveraged resources can be financial or in-kind and may be from other donors, NGOs, foundations, governments, communities or the private sector.
<i>Monitoring & Evaluation: design at entry (*), implementation (*), overall assessment of M&E (*)</i>	
M&E design at entry:	Was the M&E plan well-conceived, practical and sufficient at the point of CEO Endorsement? Was it articulated sufficiently to monitor results and track progress toward achieving objectives?
	Did the M&E plan include a baseline, SMART34 indicators and data analysis systems, and evaluation studies at specific times to assess results?
	Were baseline conditions, methodology, logistics, time frames, and roles and responsibilities well-articulated?
	Was the M&E budget in the project document sufficient?
	Did the M&E plan specify how the project will keep the GEF OFP informed and, where applicable and feasible, involved, while respecting the independent nature of the TE process?
M&E implementation	Was the M&E plan sufficiently budgeted and funded during project preparation and implementation?
	Was data on specified indicators, relevant GEF Tracking Tools/Core Indicators gathered in a systematic manner?
	Extent of compliance with progress and financial reporting requirements, including quality and timeliness of reports;
	Value and effectiveness of the monitoring reports and evidence that these were discussed with stakeholders and project staff;

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Questions
	<p data-bbox="488 244 1879 304">Extent to which the GEF OFP was kept informed of M&E activities; and extent to which the Project Team used inclusive, innovative, and participatory monitoring systems</p> <p data-bbox="488 331 1576 360">Extent to which information provided by the M&E system was used to improve and adapt project performance;</p> <p data-bbox="488 384 1861 445">Whether the M&E system included proper training for parties responsible for M&E activities to ensure that data will continue to be collected and used after project closure</p> <p data-bbox="488 459 1794 552">How were perspectives of women and men involved and affected by the project monitored and assessed? How were relevant groups' (including women, indigenous peoples, children, elderly, disabled, and poor) involvement with the project and the impact on them monitored?</p> <p data-bbox="488 587 1794 647">Was there adequate monitoring of environmental and social risks as identified through the UNDP SESP and in line with any safeguards management plan's M&E section?</p> <p data-bbox="488 662 1368 691">Whether the projects' Theory of Change was reviewed and refined during implementation</p> <p data-bbox="488 722 1872 783">Whether PIR self-evaluation ratings were consistent with MTR and TE findings. If not, were these discrepancies identified by the Project Board and addressed?</p> <p data-bbox="488 794 1767 823">TEs for FSPs should also consider whether changes were made to project implementation as a result of the MTR recommendations.</p> <p data-bbox="488 879 983 908">Extent of the Project Board's role in M&E activities</p>
<i>UNDP implementation/oversight (*), Implementing Partner execution (*) and overall assessment of implementation/oversight and execution (*)</i>	
Quality of UNDP oversight	Extent to which UNDP delivered effectively on activities related to project identification, concept preparation, appraisal, preparation of detailed proposal, approval and start-up, oversight, supervision, completion and evaluation. This includes but is not limited to: Adequacy quality and timeliness of UNDP support to the Implementing Partner and Project Team; Candor and realism in annual reporting; Quality of risk management, Responsiveness to significant implementation problems (if any), Adequate oversight of the management of environmental and social risks as identified through the UNDP SESP.
Quality of IP execution	Extent to which the Implementing Partner effectively managed and administered the project's day-to-day activities under the overall oversight and supervision of UNDP. This includes but is not limited to the following: Whether there was an appropriate focus on results and timeliness; Appropriate use of funds, procurement and contracting of goods and services; Quality of risk management; Candor and realism in annual reporting o Adequate management of environmental and social risks as identified through the UNDP SESP and implementation of associated safeguards requirements (assessments, management plans; if any).

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Questions
Risk Management	Were new risks or changes to existing risks reported on in the annual PIRs and/or MTR (if applicable)?
	How did those risks affect project implementation?
	What systems and tools were used to identify, prioritize, monitor and manage those risks?
	Were action plans developed and followed? Was escalation necessary?
	Were any risks overlooked and what were the consequences of that?
	Was the project's risk register properly maintained during implementation?
	Did the Project Team keep the Project Board informed of new risks, changes to existing risks and the escalation of risks?
Social and Environmental Standards	An analysis of the implementation of the safeguards management measures (for example: ESMP, Indigenous Peoples Plan), as outlined in the SESP submitted at CEO Endorsement and/or prepared during implementation. (For projects without management plans, refer to Question 6 in the SESP template.)
	Findings on the effectiveness of those safeguards management measures and any lessons learned.
	Description of revisions to the original (CEO Endorsement-stage) SESP, if applicable. Specifically, what new risks were identified during implementation (if any)? Were existing risks' ratings (Low, Moderate, Substantial and High) changed; how? Were the revisions appropriate given the context of the project at the time? Were they done in a timely manner? How were management measures adjusted, if at all?
Project Results and Impacts	
Progress towards objective and expected outcomes	Individually assess achievement of outcomes against indicators

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Questions
	Assess the extent to which outcomes were achieved and also the extent to which outcome achievement was dependent on delivery of project outputs and other factors that may have influenced (e.g. project design, extent and materialization of cofinancing, etc)
<i>Relevance (*)</i>	
	Extent of delivery of outputs, and also identify and assess the factors that affected delivery of outputs
Alignment with national priorities:	Extent to which the project's objectives were in line with the national development priorities
	Extent to which the project was appropriately responsive to political, legal, economic, institutional, etc., changes in the country
	Extent to which the project was formulated according to national and local strategies to advance gender equality
Alignment with UNDP and GEF strategic priorities, relevance to international instruments	Extent to which the project was in line with the UNDP Strategic Plan, CPD, UNDAF, United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), SDGs and GEF strategic programming
	Extent to which the project contributed to the Theory of Change for the relevant country programme outcome
	What is the relevance of the entire project in relation the SDGs framework and their targets? Global environmental benefits?
	Relevance to the Seychelles Blue Economy: Strategic Policy Framework and Roadmap Charting the future (2018-2030)
Stakeholder engagement:	Extent to which relevant stakeholders participated in the project
	Extent to which the project was formulated according to the needs and interests of all targeted and/or relevant stakeholder groups
	Extent to which the intervention is informed by needs and interests of diverse groups of stakeholders through in-depth consultation
Relevance to and complementarity with other	Extent to which lessons learned from other relevant projects were considered in the project's design

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Questions
initiatives:	
<i>Effectiveness (*)</i>	
Level of effectiveness in achieving the expected outcomes, outputs and objectives	Extent to which the project contributed to the country programme outcomes and outputs, the SDGs, the UNDP Strategic Plan, GEF strategic priorities, and national development priorities; and factors that contributed to the achieving or not achieving intended outcomes and outputs
	- To what extent did the project foster investment and enhance capacity of PA management toward the long-term financial and environmental sustainability of the PA system?
	- To what extent did the project succeed in improving reliable revenue generation for better overall management effectiveness and accounting for the needs of an expanded state?
	Areas in which the project had the greatest and fewest achievements; and the contributing factors;
	Extent to which the intervention achieved, or expects to achieve, results (outputs, outcomes and impacts, including global environmental benefits) taking into account the key factors that influenced the results
	Constraining factors, such as socio-economic, political and environmental risks; cultural and religious festivals, etc. and how they were overcome;
	Any alternative strategies that would have been more effective in achieving the project's objectives;

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Questions
Gender	Extent to which the project contributed to gender equality, the empowerment of women and a human rights-based approach?
	Extent to which a gender responsive and human rights-based approach were incorporated in the design and implementation of the intervention.
<i>Efficiency (*)</i>	
Resource allocation and cost effectiveness	- Was the project as cost-effective as originally planned?
	- Was adaptive management used or needed to ensure efficient resource use?
	- Were there any delays in implementation/ achievement of outputs?
	- Were there any issues experienced around project co-financing and how were they addressed? - What were some of the financial gaps identified?
Project management and timeliness	Extent to which a project extension could have been avoided (for cases where an extension was approved) - Were there any delays in implementation/ achievement of outputs?
	- Were the project activities anyhow affected by COVID-19?
	- Were progress reports produced accurately and timely, and did they respond to reporting requirements including adaptive management changes?
	- Did the project make use of the most relevant capacity and the most capacitated
<i>Sustainability: financial(*), socio-political(*), institutional framework and governance(*), environmental(*), overall likelihood of sustainability(*)</i>	
Financial sustainability	- To what extent are the continuation of project results and eventual impact of the project dependent on (external) financial resources?

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Questions
	<p data-bbox="483 331 1879 363">- What is the likelihood that adequate financial resources will be or will become available to sustain the results of the project?</p> <p data-bbox="483 437 1879 469">What additional factors are needed to create an enabling environment for continued financing?</p> <p data-bbox="483 539 1879 571">What has been the success of the financial mechanisms / potential of success ?</p>
Socio-political sustainability	<p data-bbox="483 604 1879 668">- Are there any social or political factors that may influence positively or negatively the sustenance of project results and progress towards impact?</p> <p data-bbox="483 708 1879 772">- Is the level of ownership by the Seychelles' government and collaborating partners running PAs sufficient to allow for the project results to be sustained?</p> <p data-bbox="483 844 1879 876">- What is the quality of governance and accountability in Seychelles? Did it have a major impact on the entire project?</p> <p data-bbox="483 948 1879 1011">- Are there sufficient government and other stakeholder commitment and incentives to increase revenue for PA system as well as to conserve biodiversity in new Marine Protected Areas?</p>
Institutional framework and governance sustainability	<p data-bbox="483 1042 1879 1106">How committed are individual owners of PAs in introducing effective practices, systems and schemes to make their sites at PAs more attractive?</p> <p data-bbox="483 1121 1879 1201">How has the project developed appropriate institutional capacity (systems, structures, staff, expertise, etc.) that will be self-sufficient after the project closure date? SNPA capacity</p> <p data-bbox="483 1281 1879 1345">How has the project identified and involved champions (i.e. individuals in government and civil society) who can promote sustainability of project outcomes?</p>

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Questions
	<p data-bbox="483 244 1865 304">Has the project achieved stakeholders' (including government stakeholders') consensus regarding courses of action on project activities after the project's closure date?</p> <p data-bbox="483 363 1865 424">Does the project leadership have the ability to respond to future institutional and governance changes (i.e. foreseeable changes to local or national political leadership)?</p> <p data-bbox="483 483 1865 512">Can the project strategies effectively be incorporated/mainstreamed into future planning?</p> <p data-bbox="483 547 1865 576">Is the institutional change conducive to systematically addressing gender equality and human rights concerns?</p>
Environmental sustainability	<p data-bbox="483 679 1865 708">Are there environmental factors that could undermine the future flow of project environmental benefits?</p> <p data-bbox="483 775 1865 804">Will certain activities in the project area pose a threat to the sustainability of project outcomes?</p>
Country ownership	<p data-bbox="483 911 1865 940">Did the project concept have its origin within the national sectoral and development plans?</p> <p data-bbox="483 1007 1865 1035">Have outcomes (or potential outcomes) from the project have been incorporated into the national sectoral and development plans?</p> <p data-bbox="483 1070 1865 1131">Are relevant country representatives (e.g., governmental official, civil society, etc.) actively involved in project identification, planning and/or implementation?</p> <p data-bbox="483 1182 1865 1211">Has the recipient government maintained financial commitment to the project?</p> <p data-bbox="483 1254 1865 1283">Has the government approved policies and/or modified regulatory frameworks in line with the project's objectives?</p>

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Questions
	Were the relevant country representatives from government and civil society involved in project implementation, including as part of the Project Board?
	Was an intergovernmental committee given responsibility to liaise with the Project Team, recognizing that more than one ministry should be involved?
Gender equality and women's empowerment	Discuss how effective the project was in contributing to gender equality and women's empowerment.
	Describe how gender results advanced or contributed to the project's environment, climate and/or resilience outcomes.
	Indicate whether the gender results achieved are short-term or long term.
	Is there any potential negative impact on gender equality and women's empowerment? If so, what can be done do to mitigate this?
	Indicate which of the following results areas the project contributed to (indicate as many results areas as applicable and describe the specific results that were attributed to the project): Contributing to closing gender gaps in access to and control over resources; Improving the participation and decision-making of women in natural resource governance; Targeting socio-economic benefits and services for women.
	Discuss any further points on the project's gender results in terms of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, country ownership, sustainability and impact.
	Use the Gender Results Effectiveness Scale (GRES), if useful.

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Questions
Cross-cutting Issues	<p data-bbox="488 244 1879 336">Positive or negative effects of the project on local populations (e.g. income generation/job creation, improved natural resource management arrangements with local groups, improvement in policy frameworks for resource allocation and distribution, regeneration of natural resources for long term sustainability)</p> <p data-bbox="488 411 1816 472">Extent to which the project objectives conform to agreed priorities in the UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD) and other country programme documents</p> <p data-bbox="488 547 1861 608">Whether project outcomes have contributed to better preparations to cope with disasters or mitigate risk, and/or addressed climate change mitigation and adaptation, as relevant</p> <p data-bbox="488 667 1809 727">Extent to which poor, indigenous, persons with disabilities, women and other disadvantaged or marginalized groups benefited from the project;</p> <p data-bbox="488 770 1839 831">Poverty-environment nexus: how the environmental conservation activities of the project contributed to poverty reduction and sustaining livelihoods</p> <p data-bbox="488 890 1223 919">Extent to which the project contributed to a human rights-based approach</p>
GEF Additionality	<p data-bbox="488 1010 1039 1031">Are the outcomes related to the incremental reasoning?</p> <p data-bbox="488 1042 1794 1102">Are there quality quantitative and verifiable data demonstrating the incremental environmental benefits? Do self-evaluations provide evidence of the outcomes achieved in creating a more supportive environment as envisaged at the endorsement stage?</p>

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Questions
	Can the outcomes be attributed to the GEF contribution as originally anticipated? Do monitoring and evaluation documents provide evidence of the causality between the rationale for GEF involvement and the incremental environmental and other benefits directly associated with the GEF-supported project?
	Are the outcomes sustainable? Is there evidence that project outcomes, both environmental and otherwise, are likely to be sustained beyond the project end? (The TE report can refer to the Sustainability section) If broader impact was anticipated, is there evidence at the completion stage that such a broadening is beginning to occur, or actions towards the broadening have been taken?
Catalytic/Replication Effect	What are project lessons learned, failures/lost opportunities to date? What might have been done better or differently?
	Did the project have an effective exit strategy?
	What factors of the project achievements are contingent on specific local context or enabling environment factors?
	What needs remain to improve the scalability or replication of project outcomes?
	List key knowledge products that were used to help share lessons and experiences
	Assess knowledge management results and impacts, lessons, best practices, adaptive management actions, portfolio/policy implications, dissemination, and sharing to inform new GEF project/programme design and scale up/replication
Progress to Impact	Environmental stress reduction (e.g. GHG emission reduction, reduction of waste discharge, etc.); indicate the scale at which the stress reduction is being achieved
	Environmental status change (e.g. change in population of endangered species, forest stock, water retention in degraded lands, etc.);
	Contributions to changes in policy/legal/regulatory frameworks, including observed changes in capacities (awareness, knowledge, skills, infrastructure, monitoring systems, etc.) and governance architecture, including access to and use of information (laws, administrative bodies, trust-building and conflict resolution processes, information-sharing systems, etc.);

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Questions
	<p data-bbox="488 244 792 264">Consideration of Theory of Change</p> <ul data-bbox="488 276 1845 387" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="488 276 1514 296">- Is there an improvement in revenue collected for the enhancement of biodiversity in PAs of Seychelles?<li data-bbox="488 331 1845 387">- What is the level of improvement when it comes to the use of existing Protected Area Finance? What planning and legal framework led to this improvement?

ANNEX 4: PROJECT DOCUMENTATION LIST

1	Government of Seychelles and UNDP 2015; Project Document; Seychelles Protected Areas Finance Project + Annexes
2	GOS-UNDP-GEF; Seychelles Protected Area Finance Project May 2016, Inception Report
3	Midterm Review of the GEF funded Seychelles' Protected Areas Finance Project-Bann C; 2018
4	UNDP-GEF Management response to the Midterm Review of Seychelles' Protected Areas Finance Project (PAF Project) 2.10.18
5	Progress Report Q1 2021 – Protected Area Finance Project
6	2020 Project Implementation Review
7	2019 Project Implementation Review
8	2018 Project Implementation Review
9	2017 Project Implementation Review
10	2016 Q1 Progress Report
11	2016 Q2 Progress Report
12	2016 Q3 Progress Report
13	2016 Q4 Progress Report
14	2017 Q1 Progress Report
15	2017 Q2 Progress Report
16	2017 Q3 Progress Report
17	2017 Q4 Progress Report
18	2018 Q1 Progress Report
19	2018 Q2 Progress Report
20	2018 Q3 Progress Report
21	2018 Q4 Progress Report
22	2019 Q1 Progress Report
23	2019 Q2 Progress Report
24	2019 Q3 Progress Report
25	2019 Q4 Progress Report
26	2020 Q1 Progress Report
27	2020 Q2 Progress Report
28	2020 Q3 Progress Report
29	2020 Q4 Progress Report
30	2021 Q1 progress report
31	Project Steering Committee meeting no 1
32	Project Steering Committee meeting no 2
33	Project Steering Committee meeting no 3
34	Project Steering Committee meeting no 4
35	Project Steering Committee meeting no 5
36	Project Steering Committee meeting no 6
37	Project Steering Committee meeting no 7
38	Project Steering Committee meeting no 8
39	PAF Audited Report 2016, 2017
40	PAF Audited Report 2018
41	PAF Gender Action Plan July 2019- March 2021
42	PAF Gender Analysis of PCU current implemented Programmes – March 2016- March 2021
43	UNDP Initiation Plan
44	GEF Tracking Tools (from CEO Endorsement, midterm and terminal stages)

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- 45 **CEO endorsement request**
- 46 **Co-financing data** with expected and actual contributions broken down by type of co-financing, source, and whether the contribution is considered as investment mobilized or recurring expenditures
- 47 Electronic copies of **project outputs** (booklets, manuals, technical reports, articles, etc.)
- 48 **Financial management data**, including actual expenditures by project outcome, including management costs, and including documentation of any significant budget revisions