Executing Agency:
United Nations Development Programme

Implementing Partner:
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and the Environment (MAFE)

Terminal Evaluation of UNDP-GEF Project: *Integrating biodiversity safeguards and conservation into development in Palau (IAS Project)*

(UNDP PIMS ID: 5645, GEF Project ID: 9208)

Final Report

Mission Members:
Mr. Roland Wong, International Evaluator

August 2024

SYNOPSIS

Title of UNDP-GEF project: Integrating biodiversity safeguards and conservation into development in Palau (IAS Project)

UNDP Project ID: PIMS 5645

GEF ID: 9208

Evaluation time frame: 16 July 2018 to 31 May 2024

Project implementations start date: 16 July 2018

Project end date: 16 July 2024

Date of evaluation report: 6 July 2024

Region and Countries included in the project: Republic of Palau

Implementing partner: Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Environment (MAFE)

Evaluation team members: Mr. Roland Wong, International Evaluator

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ABBREVIATIONS

Acronym	Meaning
ADB	Asian Development Bank
BD	Division of Biosecurity (with Ministry of Finance)
BMR	Bureau of Marine Resources
BNM	Belau National Museum
BoA	Bureau of Agriculture (with MAFE)
BoE	Bureau of Environment (with MAFE)
BoF	Bureau of Fisheries (Former Bureau of Marine Resources and with MAFE)
BoT	Bureau of Tourism (under Ministry of Human Resources, Culture, Tourism and Development)
CBO	Community based Organization
CRB	Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle
CRRF	Coral Reef Research Foundation
DFWP	Department of Forest and Wildlife Protection
EA	Environmental Assessment
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EDRR	Early Detection and Rapid Response
EIA	Environment Impact Assessment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EQPB	Environmental Quality Protection Board
EPU	Environmental Protection Unit
FD	Forest Division
FIB	Foreign Investment Board
FSP	Full Sized Project
GDP	Gross Domestic Production
GEB	Global Environmental Benefits
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEFSEC	Global Environment Facility Secretariat
GIS	Geographical Information System
IAS	Invasive Alien Species
ILSMF	Integrated Land and Seascape Management Framework
ILSMP	Integrated Land and Seascape Management Plan
ILSMS	Integrated Land and Seascape Management Strategy
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
JCB	Joint Coordinating Body
MAFE	Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and the Environment (former MNRET)
MNRET	Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment and Tourism
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MPA	Marine Protected Area
MSP	Medium Sized Project
MSY	Maximum Sustainable Yield

Acronym	Meaning
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NCSA	National Capacity Self-Assessment
NEPC	National Environment Protection Council
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NISC	National Invasive Species Committee
NISCO	National Invasive Species Committee Office
NISS	National Invasive Species Strategy
NISSAP	National Invasive Species Strategy and Action Plan
PA	Protected Area
PACC	Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change
PALARIS	Palau Automated Land and Resources Information System
PAN	Protected Area Network
PCS	Palau Conservation Society
PICRC	Palau International Coral Reef Center
PIF	Project Identification Form
PIR	GEF Project Implementation Report
PM	Project Manager
PMU	Project Management Unit
POPP	Program and Operations Policies and Procedures
PPG	Project Preparation Grant
PPLA	Palau Public Lands Authority
RBP	Regional Biosecurity Plan for Micronesia and Hawaii
RIMA	Rock Island Management Area
RISC	Regional Invasive Species Council
RISCO	Regional Invasive Species Coordination Office
RTA	UNDP Regional Technical Advisor
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SESP	Social and Environmental Screening Template
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
SGP	GEF Small Grants Program
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
SPREP	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Program
STAP	Scientific Technical Advisory Panel
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNDP-CO	UNDP Country Office
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

E-1. This report summarizes the findings of the Terminal Evaluation (TE) conducted during the 29 May - 7 June 2024 period for the UNDP-GEF project: "*Integrating biodiversity safeguards and conservation into development in Palau*" (hereby referred to as the IAS Project or the Project). This TE was prepared as an evaluation, with lessons learned, conclusions and recommendations primarily focused on the current setup of the IAS Project. This TE covers the implementation period of the Project from 16 July 2018 to 31 May 2024.

Project Summary Table

Project Details		Project Milestones	
Project Title	Integrating biodiversity safeguards and conservation into development in Palau (IAS Project)	PIF Approval Date:	19 April 2016
UNDP Project ID (PIMS #):	5645	CEO Endorsement Date (FSP) / Approval date (MSP):	25 May 2018
GEF Project ID:	9208	ProDoc Signature Date (Project start date):	16 July 2018
UNDP Atlas Business Un it, Award ID, Project ID:	Business Unit: UNDP-FJI Award #00105164 Project # 00106389	Date Project Manager hired:	2 April 2019
Country/Countries:	Palau	Inception Workshop Date:	6 November 2018
Region:	PAC	MTR Review Completion Date:	1 September 2021
Focal Area:	Multi-Focal Area	Terminal Evaluation Completion date:	6 July 2024
GEF Operational Programme or Strategic Priorities/Objectives	• GEF 6: Objective 2, Program 4: Prevention, Control and Management of Invasive Alien Species • GEF 6: Objective 4, Program 9: Managing the Human-Biodiversity Interface • LD2 – Ecosystem services in forest landscapes - PROGRAM 3 • LD3 – SLM in wider landscapes (integrated management)- PROGRAM 4 • SFM-1: Maintained Forest Resources • SFM-3: Restored Forest Ecosystems	Planned Operational Closure Date:	16 July 2024
Trust Fund:	GEF		
Implementing Partner (GEF Executing Entity):	Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Environment (MAFE)		
NGOs/CBOs involvement:	n/a		
Private sector involvement:	n/a		
Geospatial coordinates of project sites:	Latitude: 7° 51' 50" N Longitude: 134° 58' 25" E		

Financial Information		
PDF/PPG	**At approval (US$ million)**	**At PPG/PDF completion (US$ million)**
GEF PDF/PPG grants for project preparation	**0.150**	**0.150**
Co-financing for project preparation	-	-
Project	**At CEO Endorsement (US$ million)**	**At TE (US$ million)**
[1] UNDP contribution:	**0.000**	**0.000**
[2] Government:	**18.616**	**20.243**
[3] Other multi-/bilaterals:	-	**0.856**
[4] Private Sector:	-	**0.200**
[5] NGOs:	**4.055**	**6.478**
[6] Total co-financing [1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5]:	**22.671**	**27.777**
[7] Total GEF funding:	**4.234**	**3.846**
[8] Total Project Funding [6 + 7]	**25.615**	**31.623**

Project Description

E-2. Palau's economy is projected to become increasingly dependent on tourism that is rising by 30% annually, necessitating new tourism infrastructure and service industries. Agriculture and fisheries, even though contributing barely 4% to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) continues to provide the main livelihood for about 20% of Palau's population. Local food security is a national priority, given the heavy reliance on food imports, and these three sectors (agriculture, fisheries, and tourism) are now growing in line with Palau's national development policies and plans. However, increasing pressures from tourism and agriculture and fisheries development activities are also resulting in rapidly increasing pressures on the country's natural resources and biodiversity; and the rich terrestrial and marine natural resources, on which tourism (and agriculture and fisheries) depend, are especially vulnerable to such pressures.

E-3. Palau is also home to the greatest area of continuous native forest in Micronesia. Palau houses the most diverse terrestrial biodiversity in the Micronesia region and one of the most biologically diverse marine environments globally, providing a wide variety of habitats. Endemism in terrestrial habitats is high with more than 1,000 endemic species and 82% of Palau's land area being forest (Paras 15-19). Recent rapid economic progress has dramatically placed pressure on land and marine resources with threats to biodiversity and ecosystem services. The country's knowledge base on biodiversity, and capacity for its stewardship were weak (Paras 20-22). In addition, Palau has developed several sector-based national policies in agriculture, forestry, and climate change that are not integrated with the 2020 National Master Plan, and there was no existing system in terms of a policy, legal, regulatory and institutional framework for integrated land and seascape planning and management (Paras 23-24).

E-4. The IAS Project aimed to address the negative impacts of unsustainable sector-led development practices on biodiversity-rich landscapes of Palau, including its productive coastal and marine ecosystems, while taking into account climate change adaptation needs and inclusive and equitable social and economic development for dependent communities, and safeguarding against threats to biodiversity and the introduction and spread of Invasive Alien Species (IAS) through the tourism and related sectors. The objective of the Project was to mainstream biodiversity conservation into integrated land and seascape governance, planning and management in Palau.

E-5. The United Nations Development Pacific Strategy 2018-2022 identified "Climate Change, Disaster Resilience, and Environmental Protection" (under Outcome 1) as a priority where "by 2022, people and ecosystems in the Pacific are more resilient to the impacts of climate change, climate variability and disasters; and environmental protection is strengthened". This Outcome was to be achieved on the IAS Project through four outcomes:

- Outcome 1: Enhanced national institutional framework for integrated planning and management of land and seascapes.
- Outcome 2: Integrated multi-sector land and seascape "Ridge-to-Reef" planning and management operational in Babeldaob states to reduce threats to biodiversity and improve ecosystem services to benefit communities and state economies.
- Outcome 3: Integrated multi-sector planning and management operational in 264,686 ha of seascapes and coastal areas in the Southern Lagoon to reduce threats to biodiversity and improve ecosystem services to benefit communities and state economies; and
- Outcome 4: Knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation support, equitable gender benefits and biodiversity conservation in Palau.

E-6. The IAS Project promoted an integrated approach towards fostering sustainable land management and biodiversity conservation, seeking to balance environmental management with development needs. One of the activities was to set-up a multi-sector planning platform to balance competing environmental, social, and economic objectives.

Project Results

E-7. Actual outcomes of the IAS Project are summarized in Table A in comparison with intended outcomes.

Table A: Comparison of Intended Project Outcomes from the Inception Report to Actual Outcomes

Intended Outcomes in Project Results Framework of July 2021 (see Appendix F)	Actual Outcomes as of June 2024
Objective: To mainstream biodiversity conservation into integrated land and seascape governance, planning and management in Palau	**Actual achievement toward objective**: Palau has some momentum in managing biodiversity through actions of this Project, reaching all of its targets (Para 0) and the successful transfer of knowledge on best practices sustainable land, coastal and marine resources (Para 154). However, a larger issue that threatens biodiversity is the need for Palau to reform its food policy system to gradually become less reliant on food imports. This reduces GHG emissions linked to food imports to comply with UNFCCC convention's obligations but threatens biodiversity through intensification of agriculture and aquaculture, and increased fishing activity (Paras 162-167).
Intended Outcome 1: Enhanced national institutional framework for integrated planning and management of land and seascapes	**Actual Outcome 1**: National and state institutional frameworks for integrated planning and management of land and seascapes has been enhanced along with increased national and state capacities to formulate and manage these frameworks including improved surveillance and controls for prevention of high-risk IAS from entering Palau.

Intended Outcomes in Project Results Framework of July 2021 (see Appendix F)	Actual Outcomes as of June 2024
Intended Outcome 2: Integrated multi-sector land and seascape "Ridge-to-Reef" planning and management operational in Babeldaob states[1] to reduce threats to biodiversity and improve ecosystem services to benefit communities and state economies	**Actual Outcome 2**: Integrated multi-sector land and seascape "Ridge-to-Reef" planning and management is being implemented in Babeldaob states to reduce threats to biodiversity and improve ecosystem services that benefit communities
Intended Outcome 3: Integrated multi-sector planning and management operational in 264,686 ha of seascapes and coastal areas[2] in the Southern Lagoon to reduce threats to biodiversity and improve ecosystem services to benefit communities and state economies	**Actual Outcome 3**: The Rock Islands Southern Lagoon Management Plan for 264,686 ha of seascapes and coastal areas in the Southern Lagoon is operational in reducing threats to biodiversity and is implementing new measures in the management plan and the Southern Lagoon fisheries plan.
Intended Outcome 4: Knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation support, equitable gender benefits and biodiversity conservation in Palau	**Actual Outcome 4**: Knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation support equitable gender benefits and biodiversity conservation in Palau

Table B: Evaluation Ratings Table

Evaluation Criteria	Rating[3]
1. Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)	
M&E design at entry	**4**
M&E Plan Implementation	**5**
Overall Quality of M&E	**5**
2. Implementing Agency (IA) Implementation & Executing Agency (EA) Execution	
Quality of UNDP Implementation/Oversight	**5**
Quality of Implementing Partner Execution	**5**
Overall quality of Implementation/Execution	**5**
3. Assessment of Outcomes	
Relevance	**5**
Effectiveness	**6**
Efficiency	**5**
Overall Project Outcome Rating	**5**
4. Sustainability	

[1] Covering 40,900 ha of landscape and 100,000 of seascape up to limits of coral reef, making a total of 140,900 ha.

[2] This includes land area (3,100 ha) and the surrounding marine area to the state nautical limit of 12 miles making a total of 264,686 ha (area up to coral reef limits including land area is 103,100 ha) Planning beyond the reef (and up to the 12 nautical mile limit) will only address deep sea fishing issues.

[3] Evaluation rating indices: 6=*Highly Satisfactory (HS)*: The project has no shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives; 5=*Satisfactory (S)*: The project has minor shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives; 4=*Moderately Satisfactory (MS)*: The project has moderate shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives; 3=*Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU):* The project has significant shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives; 2=*Unsatisfactory (U)* The project has major shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives; 1=*Highly Unsatisfactory (HU):* Project has severe shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives.

Evaluation Criteria	Rating[3]
Financial sustainability	**3**
Socio-political sustainability	**4**
Institutional framework and governance sustainability	**4**
Environmental sustainability	**4**
Overall Likelihood of Sustainability	**3**

Summary of Findings, Conclusions, Recommendations and Lessons

E-8. The IAS Project reached nearly all of its targets, despite its slow start due to Project staff becoming familiar with relevant UNDP rules and procedures and the COVID-19 pandemic. A most significant implementation finding was the successful transfer of knowledge on 41 best practices on sustainable land, coastal and marine resources (Paras 152-154). The effectiveness of the IAS Project has been highly satisfactory, in consideration of Project's contribution towards reversing the negative impacts of unsustainable sector-led development practices on biodiversity-rich landscapes of Palau (Para 156). Efficiency of the Project was rated satisfactory due to the numerous achievements and the economical use of financial and human resources that have been strategically allocated, and the efforts to bring the Project back on schedule starting in 2021, negating the need for a no-cost extension, notwithstanding the slow start to the Project (Para 157).

E-9. Despite reaching nearly all of its targets and building momentum in managing biodiversity through actions of this Project, Palau's biodiversity is still under threat with the expansion of a domestic food supply, largely characterized by traditional and informal methods, where intensification of crops and fishing activities threatens local ecosystems with the potential loss of forest and coastal habitats and associated biodiversity. This increases vulnerability to climate change impacts, undermines ecosystem services for agriculture, imposes limitations on freshwater availability, intensifies coastal fishing and over-fishing (Paras 162).

E-10. Remaining barriers to mainstreaming biodiversity conservation in Palau include:

- shortcomings in governance, policy coherence and legal framework to enable cross-sectoral planning of natural resource management as well as a comprehensive valuation of natural resources supporting agriculture, aquaculture, and fishery food production in Palau;
- still limited capacity and experience in biodiversity-friendly solutions in agricultural and fisheries production sectors;
- still weak inter-sectoral coordination between national and state levels to ensure effective implementation and management of protected areas;
- national and state level collaboration mechanisms or platforms to promote knowledge sharing and exchange still need to be resourced (Para 167).

Rec #	Recommendation	Entity Responsible	Time Frame
A	**Recommendation 1:**		
E-11.	*GRoP needs to integrate the developed sector-based national policies in agriculture, forestry, and climate change, with the 2020 National Master Plan, and undertake a comprehensive valuation of natural resources that support agriculture,*	GRoP and UNDP	Immediate

Rec #	Recommendation	Entity Responsible	Time Frame
	aquaculture and fishery food production to trigger biodiversity-friendly investments in food systems in Palau (Para 169).		
B	**Recommendation 2**		
E-12.	*Overcome the limited capacity and experience in biodiversity-friendly solutions in agricultural and fisheries production sectors by encouraging an increase in public-private partnerships or private sector investment using best practices that would facilitate Palau investments in sustainable biodiversity-friendly food systems that have climate benefits (Para 170).*	GRoP, state entities and UNDP	Immediate
C	**Recommendation 3**		
E-13.	*Address weak inter-sectoral coordination between national and state levels to ensure effective implementation and management of protected areas (Para 171).*	GRoP and state entities	Medium term
D	**Recommendation 4**		
E-14.	*Find resources to continue with national and state level collaboration mechanisms or platforms to promote knowledge sharing and exchange on best practices for sustainable agricultural, aquaculture and fishery system (Para 172).*	GRoP, state entities and UNDP	Medium term

E-15. *Lesson #1: The proactive and open participation of relevant national stakeholders in the design process was beneficial for participating communities and government agencies by implementing a bottom-up approach that is beneficial raising awareness of the consequences of their own actions on their environment and resources and for capturing traditional knowledge (Para 173).*

E-16. *Lesson #2: Identification of leaders who could serve as 'champions' who are particularly interested in and passionate about the learning process, is extremely important (Para 174).*

E-17. *Lesson #3: Design and planning processes needs to focus upon technical aspects and integrate issues related to the operationalisation of a project whose targets can be achieved (Para 175).*

E-18. *Lesson #4: Best practices of working through a crisis are listed such as Covid related lockdowns (Para 176);*

E-19. *Lesson #5: Work that is left behind for another project such as regulations, legislations and work between Ministries has the risk of being resolved by politics rather than on the merits of the proposed regulations (Para 177).*

1. INTRODUCTION

1. The Terminal Evaluation (TE) for the ***"Integrating biodiversity safeguards and conservation into development in Palau"*** (also known as the *IAS Project* or *the Project)* is to assess the achievement of the Project objective through activities under 4 components and by "focusing on expected and achieved accomplishments, critically examining the presumed causal chains, processes, and attainment of results, as well as the contextual factors that may enhance or impede the achievement of results. Evaluations focus on determining the relevance, impact, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of UNDP work in order to make adjustments and improve contributions to development."[4] This TE will, amongst other reasons, primarily assist the Government of the Republic of Palau (GRoP) and UNDP programme managers to incorporate lessons learned that can both improve the sustainability of this Project, and provide enhancements to UNDP programming moving forward. This TE covers the implementation period of the Project from July 2016 to May 2024.

1.1 Evaluation Purpose

2. The overarching purpose of this Terminal Evaluation (TE) is *to independently assess the IAS Project to help UNDP improve performance and results of ongoing and future programmes and projects.* This TE is to have an *accountability* objective (assessing project performance and results) and a *learning* objective (improving actions):

- serve the *accountability* objective to assess the implementation of the Project towards the achievement of Project objectives and outputs specified in the Project Document and the success towards achieving the intended results. This TE serves an important accountability function, providing national stakeholders and partners in Palau with an impartial assessment of the results of Project's intervention.
- serve the *learning* objective to ascertain how beneficiaries have benefited from Project interventions. This would include what lessons could be learned that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this Project, and aid in the overall enhancement of UNDP programming moving forward. While understanding progress towards results is essential for accountability purposes, it is important that the assessment of progress is then used as a foundation for learning on what has worked well (and why) and what has not worked so well (and why). To address this objective, the TE will assess the broader IAS Project strategy and processes, exploring elements such as Project scope, planning and coordination. Such an assessment is essential if the TE is to develop an understanding of the Project's overall performance.
- assess and document Project results, and the contribution of these results towards achieving GEF strategic objectives aimed at global environmental benefits.
- gauge the extent of Project convergence with other priorities within the UNDP country and regional programmes, including poverty alleviation or SDGs such as sustainable communities, decent job and economic growth; strengthening resilience to the impacts of climate change, reducing disaster risk and vulnerability, as well as cross-cutting issues such gender equality, empowering women and supporting human rights.

[4] UNDP Evaluation Policy accessible from: http://web.undp.org/evaluation/policy.shtml

1.2 Scope and Methodology

3. The scope of the TE is the assessment of the Project within the parameters of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact and incorporation of human rights, gender, and other cross-cutting issues such the impact of climate change, against what was expected to be achieved. This TE will assess Project performance against targets set out in the Project Results Framework (PRF) in the approved ProDoc (as shown in Appendix F). Key strategic issues addressed on this TE include:

   - attributing reported results to achievement of Project targets and integrating biodiversity safeguards with conservation in Palau.
   - a focus on what percentage of households (including traditional villages, communities, fishing, and farming communities) who are directly benefiting through sustainable resource management approaches that results in increased incomes.
   - proper incorporation of issues related to gender equality and women's empowerment and other cross-cutting issues and SDGs, into Project M&E activities.

4. The methodology of this TE essentially assesses the Project's performance from July 2018 to May 2024, through evidence obtained and used to assess the results of pproject's interventions, theory of change, outputs, indicators and baseline data which is then triangulated from a variety of sources, including verifiable data on indicator achievement, existing reports, evaluations, technical papers, and stakeholder interviews, to address the capacity gaps in managing the Project's affairs, through the lens of UNDP evaluation criteria of **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability**, and **impact** for one objective and 4 expected outcomes that were achieved through a number of outputs and activities contained within the IAS Project:

   - *Relevance* – the extent to which the outcome is suited to local, state, and national development priorities and organizational policies, including changes over time. This may also include the level of coherence between Project design and implementation approach;
   - *Effectiveness* – the extent to which an objective was achieved or how likely it is to be achieved. This would include the effectiveness of the IAS Project to assist implementation and facilitate capacity building (through technical assistance of the Project), and the quality of IAS Project management (including M&E performance);
   - *Efficiency* – the extent to which results were delivered with the least costly resources possible. This would include the pace of capacity building based on the baseline capacities of the institutions and potential beneficiaries;
   - *Sustainability* - The likely ability of an intervention to continue to deliver benefits for an extended period of time after completion. This would include sustained acceptance of IAS methodologies for capacity building at the national level; and
   - *Impact* – The positive and negative, foreseen, and unforeseen changes to and effects produced by a development intervention. This may include the extent of uptake by national implementation teams to IAS Project methodologies, and their resulting ability to confidently formulate and facilitate financing solutions.

5. The TE achieves these assessments by collecting credible, useful, and evidence-based information of the Project; interviewing selected stakeholders to triangulate information; and bringing up these key issues in strengthening capacity building within the IAS Project team and its stakeholders. The evaluation of the Project is based on evaluability analysis consisting of formal (clear outputs,

indicators, baselines, data) and substantive (identification of problem addressed, PRF) inputs. Considering the information to be provided into this TE (which is mainly whether of not the technical assistance of the Project was effective from the IAS Project to GRoP and its stakeholders), the implication of the proposed methodology is that it should be effective in the TE process, and should inform stakeholders and the Project team as it transitions into another Project phase.

6. This TE also evaluates the progress and quality of implementation against the indicators of each objective and outcome in the PRF. The TE process was conducted in a spirit of collaboration with IAS Project personnel with the intention of providing constructive inputs that can inform activities of subsequent phases of the IAS Project**.**

1.3 Structure of the Evaluation

7. This TE report has been prepared as follows:

- An overview of Project activities has been provided from the commencement of operations on 16 July 2018 to 31 May 2024 of the IAS Project;
- A review of all relevant sources of information have been provided including documents prepared during the PPG phase (i.e. PIF, UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Procedure/SESP), the Project Document (ProDoc), Project progress reports, and any other materials that the team considers useful for this evidence-based evaluation.
- Information from stakeholders who have Project responsibilities (as listed in Annex 7 of the ProDoc, pgs 114-116) was collected from a participatory and consultative approach to ensure close engagement with stakeholders. The International Evaluator was able to conduct many face-to-face interviews as well as virtual interviews with the Project's stakeholders.
- An assessment of results was prepared based on Project objectives and outcomes through relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency criteria;
- An assessment of progress and sustainability of Project outcomes was conducted;
- An assessment of monitoring and evaluation systems of the Project was conducted; and
- Conclusions, recommendations, and lessons learned were provided.

8. This TE report has been designed to meet GEF's "Guidelines for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-Supported, GEF Financed Projects" of 2020[5] as well as UNDP guidelines "Evaluation during COVID-19" (updated to June 2021)[6].

1.4 Data Collection and Analysis

9. A desk review was carried out of the key documents underpinning the Project's scope of work. This includes a review of the CEO document, PIRs, the MTR as well as any other reports that were provided by the Project Management Unit (PMU) and the UNDP Fiji Multi-Country Office (MCO). Following the desk review, the International Evaluator augmented the documented evidence through an agreed sampling strategy with interviews with:

[5] Available at: http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/documents/GEF/TE_GuidanceforUNDP-supportedGEF-financedProjects.pdf
[6] Available at: http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/documents/covid19/update/June2021/UNDP%20DE%20Guidance%20Planning%20and%20Implementation%20during%20COVID19%203%20June%202021.pdf

- UNDP. The purpose of contact with UNDP were issues of implementation and Project oversight. Persons for interviews were conducted via Zoom (from the Fiji MCO).
- PMU. The purpose of contact with the PMU were issues of execution. Interviews with PMU personnel were conducted face-to-face in Palau.
- National executing partners. This involved face-to-face as well as Zoom discussions with government entities who were recipients of capacity building activities.
- Local executing partners. This involved face-to-face discussions with state or local government entities who were provided with technical assistance.
- Beneficiaries. This involved Zoom and face-to-face discussions with households who are benefiting from strengthened livelihoods through solutions for improved management of natural resources and provision of ecosystem services. Emphasis was placed on women's groups, youth groups, and people living with disabilities.

10. The sampling strategy was supplemented with field trips to four other states where more interviews with key partners and stakeholders were conducted as a part of the data and information collection. This is where the International Evaluator was able to view Project works on the ground and triangulate information conveyed from the interviews. This was all conducted in a gender disaggregated manner.

11. After the interviews and field trips, data and information collected were then analyzed and fed into the TE, primarily coming from:

    - project documentation that includes all reports related to the IAS Project;
    - an analysis of face-to-face and Zoom interviews with selected stakeholders including the PMU, to ensure the information from interviews and reviewed documents are triangulated, providing assurances that the conclusions of the evaluation are robust.

    A full list of persons interviewed is provided in Appendix B.

1.5 Ethics

12. This Terminal Evaluation has been undertaken as an independent, impartial, and rigorous process, with personal and professional integrity and was conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluations, and the UNDP GEF M&E policies, specifically the August 2020 UNDP "Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed Projects"[7].

1.6 Limitations

13. The limitation to the TE process was the time spent by the International Evaluator in Palau from 29 May to 7 June 2024. This short amount of time gave the International Evaluator limited exposure of the stakeholders, and as such, the TE to a large extent was dependent on the information gathered during the 29 May to 7 June period. There was optimism that the stakeholders interviewed, and sites visited were representative of the Project's outcomes. Regardless, the International Evaluator has made every effort to understand and present a fair and a well-balanced assessment of the Project.

[7] Ibid 5

Any gross misrepresentation of the Project has been resolved through discussions with the Project team.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

2.1 Project Start and Duration

14. The IAS Project commenced as of 16 July 2018. The Project is to be operational up to 16 July 2024.

2.2 Development Context

Environment

15. Located at the northeastern edge of the Coral Triangle, Palau is home to the greatest area of continuous native forest in Micronesia. Palau houses the most diverse terrestrial biodiversity in the Micronesia region and one of the most biologically diverse marine environments globally, providing a wide variety of habitats. Endemism in terrestrial habitats is high (>1,000 endemic species). With 82% of Palau's land area being forest (400 km^2 of continuous native forest cover throughout the islands comprising 9 forest types), Palau has:

- 860 recorded species of native plants, of which 194 (23%) are endemic including at least 50 endemic trees.
- at least 162 bird species have been recorded, including 111 migratory birds and 51 resident species (of which 10 species and 6 sub-species are endemic.
- land snails total up to 200 species, of which 95% are endemic.
- diverse fauna of insects and their kin represent 31 major groups of arthropods, comprising an estimated at 5,000 species of which over 300 are endemic.
- 40 native species of reptiles including 4 sea turtles, 7 snakes, 30 lizards and one crocodile species[8];
- two native terrestrial species of mammals are both globally endangered[9].

16. Palau's forests and mangroves provide vital ecological services that help maintain the health and integrity of all terrestrial and marine ecosystems through sediment trapping, climate stability, nurseries for reef fish, soil production and conservation, and as watersheds. Palau is renowned for its marine life: pristine reefs of approximately 822 km^2 enclose a 1,137 km^2 lagoon and comprise numerous reef types including barrier, fringing, patch, and atoll reefs. Palau has extensive mangroves, seagrass beds, deep algal beds, mud basins, current-swept lagoon bottoms, rich tidal channels, and anoxic basins.

17. These habitats are home to diverse and abundant marine life, with more than 1,500 species of shallow water fish and over 500 species of hard and soft corals reported. These include many threatened reef fishes and coral species such as the globally endangered humphead wrasse Cheilinus undulatus, vulnerable Bumphead parrotfish (Bolbometopon muricatum) and Acropora corals. Spawning aggregations of globally threatened reef fish, such as the vulnerable Squaretail Grouper (Plectropomus areolatus) are also present. The Rock Islands of Palau have the highest number and density of marine lakes in the world; and five of these are home to different endemic sub-species of jellyfish that have evolved in isolation over thousands of years. Marine life also includes threatened

[8] Endemic reptiles include the Palau blind snake (Ramphotyphlops acuticauda), Palau Bevel-nosed Boa (Candoia superciliosa) and nine endemic lizards. The endemic Palauan frog, Platymantis pelewensis, is the only amphibian.

[9] The endemic Palau sub-species of the Marianas fruit bat (Pteropus mariannus pelewensis) and the Palau sub-species of the sheath-tailed bat (Emballanura semicaudata palauensis.

megafauna, such as the world's most isolated population of endangered Dugong dugong, hawksbill turtle (Erythrochelys imbrecata) and green turtle (Chelonia mydas).

18. Palau consists of several islands:

- Babeldaob Island is the largest island, sparsely inhabited compared to Koror. Most of Palau's mature native volcanic soil forest, riverine forest, swamp forest and coastal and riverine mangroves (about 80% of the island's shoreline is mangrove forest) are located on this island. There are 39 Protected Area Network (PAN) sites (28 marine and 11 terrestrial) on Babeldaob with most forest areas located outside protected areas (PAs). Forests are threatened by conversion for development, land fragmentation, fire, climate change, and invasive species. Remaining terrestrial land includes savannah grasslands, scrub savannah, freshwater ecosystems, plantations, agricultural land and urban development;
- Koror State, specifically its 3 main Koror islands, is the most urbanized part of Palau. It is the economic center, inhabited by 11,400 people (65% of Palau's population). Koror, lying between Babeldaob and Peleliu, encompasses hundreds of islands (covering some 58 km^2 total landmass);
- Peleliu (18 km^2 total landmass) is a raised coralline island located at the southern end of Palau's southern lagoon. As well as limestone forest and mangroves, Peleliu has areas of Casuarina forest along its sandy beaches. The islands sustain a large diversity of plants, birds, and marine life.
- the Rock Islands Southern Lagoon in Koror State are a scattered collection of limestone islands between Peleliu and Koror that harbors almost all of Palau's limestone forest. The entire Rock Islands was declared a World Heritage Site in 2012 for both their natural and cultural heritage.

19. All the endangered megafauna of Palau are present, including 746 species of fish, over 385 species of coral, at least 13 species of shark and manta ray, 7 species of giant clam, and the endemic Nautilus. The forests include all of Palau's endemic birds, mammals, herpetofauna, and nearly half of its endemic plants. The unique vegetation of the Rock Islands has been characterized as a distinct subtype of limestone forest. The Rock Islands and their surrounding reef, including Peleliu, are a major tourist attraction for their natural beauty, biodiversity, and historical sites, associated with a variety of recreational sports such as diving, snorkeling, and kayaking.

Socio-economic

20. With recent rapid economic progression, pressure on land and marine resources has increased dramatically with threats to biodiversity and ecosystem services. In this context, the country's knowledge base on biodiversity, and capacity for its stewardship are weak. As a baseline in 2017, key industrial sectors, importers, tour operators and tourists, for example, were unaware of the harmful impacts of Invasive Alien Species (IAS), how IAS enter Palau and spread among its islands, and of the measures needed to prevent them.

21. Currently, the vast majority of tourism in Palau is concentrated in the Rock Islands, with most hotels located in urbanized areas of Koror. However, increasing numbers of visitors, demand and types of recreational activities have led to safety, congestion, and environmental concerns. This, together with forest encroachment, forest fires, introduction and spread of IAS, and unsustainable fishing and agricultural practices, has required urgent action to conserve biodiversity and safeguard the country's ecological and socio-economic security. The baseline pattern of unsustainable economic and tourism development was to be reversed by the IAS Project to accrue benefits to the nation and states, providing the basis for more integrated, holistic, and sustainable development.

22. An effective and comprehensive national awareness strategy on integrated land and seascape planning with respect to IAS and biosecurity is a high priority, as well as guidance on IAS prevention, detection, control and management. The long-term solution is for Palau to mainstream biodiversity conservation and safeguards across landscape and seascape planning and management, thereby enabling key economic and productive sectors to shift to more sustainable, inclusive and equitable development.

Institutional and policy

23. Although Palau has developed several sector-based national policies in agriculture, forestry, and climate change, they are not integrated or spatially linked with the 2020 National Master Plan. There is no existing system in terms of a policy, legal, regulatory and institutional framework for integrated land and seascape planning and management; and the current approach to land and seascape planning remains sectoral, despite the globally significant terrestrial and marine biodiversity and their immense productivity and economic values.

24. There is limited awareness among the key sector institutions on how to integrate planning and management of land, coastal and marine areas in ways that sustain the biodiversity and functioning of ecosystems upon which food, energy and water security are largely dependent. Despite widespread awareness among sectors of the need for integrated planning, there is no cross-sector vision at land and seascape scales. Major sector agencies, including forestry, agriculture and tourism, plan and manage the use of resources within their sectoral interests but with little cross-sector integration. Monitoring biodiversity over the long-term is fundamental to sustaining institutional capacity.

2.3 Problems that the IAS Project sought to address

25. The IAS Project sought to address threats to Palau's biodiversity and ecosystem services including:

- forest clearing and other land conversion leading to degradation of natural terrestrial and marine habitats;
- Invasive Alien Species (IAS), possibly the greatest threat to biodiversity in the Pacific Islands, that threatens Palau's economy, human health, agriculture and aquaculture. Given that nearly all of Palau's PAs include endemic or endangered animals with small populations, IAS are of particular concern to PA management on land. IAS also poses a threat of unquantified magnitude to Palau's marine biodiversity;
- uncontrolled fires being a major threat to terrestrial biodiversity on Babeldaob as well as degrading marine habitats downstream. Disturbed forest and savannah is highly susceptible to IAS invasions;
- damaging practices in tourism, coupled with rising demand. International tourism arrivals to Palau that have steadily increased and contributes roughly 50% of Palau's GDP; this is, however, driving much of the degradation of the natural beauty that tourists come to see and on which the economy largely depends;
- over-fishing with fishing pressure on inshore reefs leading to declining stocks as evidenced from regular monitoring of sites since 2002; and
- gaps in the current legal framework for fisheries; for instance, there are good regulations for gear, but inadequate rules on seasons to fish and no regulations for overharvesting.

2.4 Development Objective of IAS Project

26. The UNDP-GEF Project support to the IAS Project was designed to support the implementation of a technical assistance process starting in July 2018 for a duration of 6 years and implemented through the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Environment (MAFE). The Project objective was to "mainstream biodiversity conservation into integrated land and seascape governance, planning and management in Palau". To achieve this objective, the Project encompasses 4 outcomes to be achieved, as presented in the PRF contained in Appendix F.

2.5 Description of the Project's Theory of Change

27. A Theory of Change (ToC) was completed for this Project as depicted in Figure 1. The ToC resembles other "best practice" ToCs in the depiction of barriers (similar to baseline), the solutions to overcome the barriers through delivery of outputs, the resulting intended outcomes from delivery of outputs, mid-term impacts that result from the resulting outcomes (resembling intermediate states), and finally, long-term impacts and Global Environmental Benefits (GEBs). IAS Project efforts to mainstream biodiversity are a direct result of delivery of outputs which result in intended outcomes of the Project. The mid-term impact (or intermediate states) as well as long-term impacts (and GEBs) of the Project are intended to manifest during or after the Project. As a consequence, the ToC has been reasonably effective in achieving Project results through delivery of outputs though there were issues with indicators that were insufficiently specific and not achievable in the July 2018 PRF and in the revised September 2021 PRF (Paras 40-42).

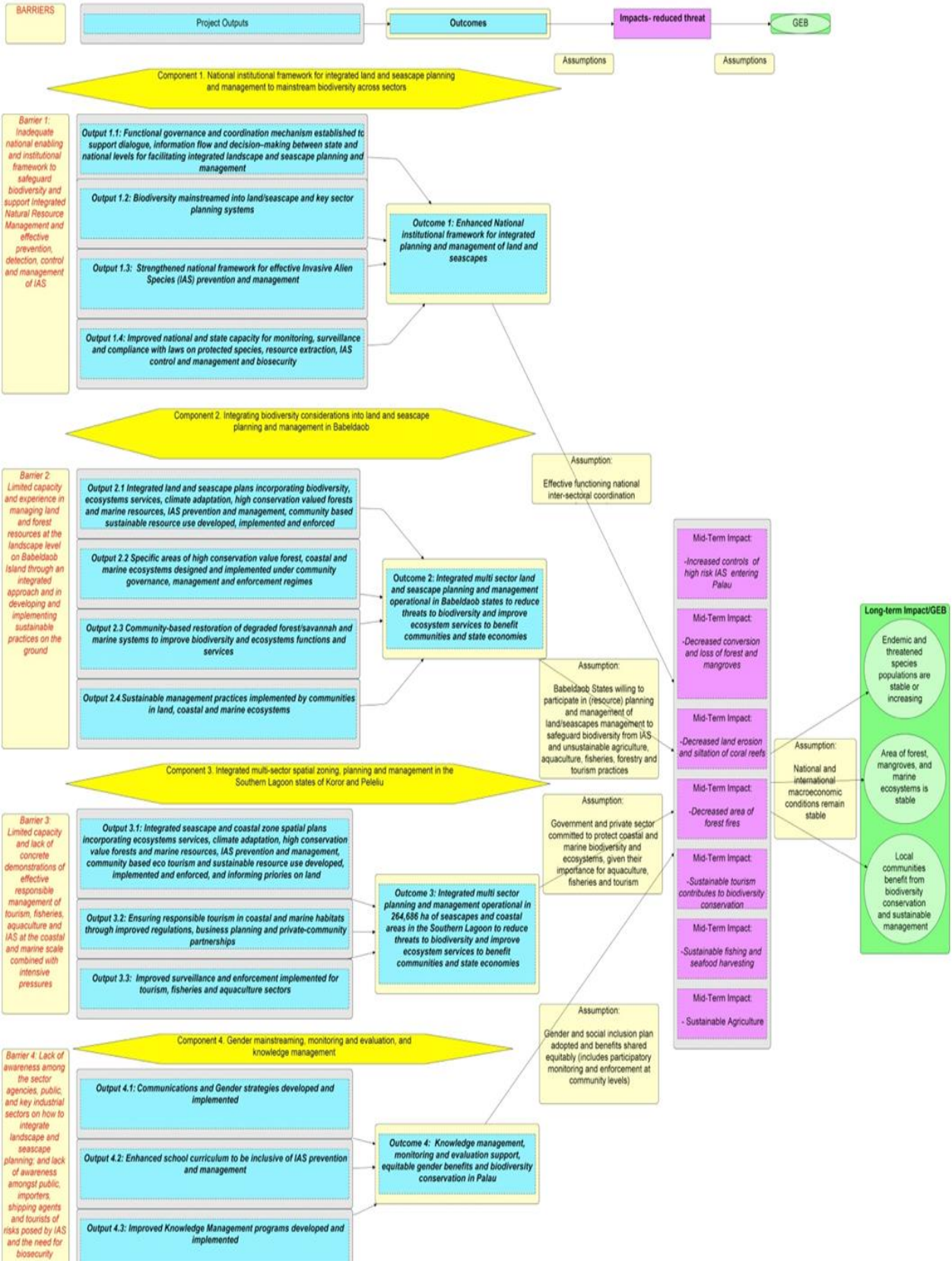
2.6 Expected Results

28. The MTR of the IAS Project made a recommendation to review indicators on the PRF for the purposes of streamlining and within a framework of a results-oriented outlook for this Project. This recommendation was adopted by the PMU with the reformulated PRF contained in Appendix F. As such, expected results of the IAS Project included:

    - Outcome 1: Enhanced national institutional framework for integrated planning and management of land and seascapes.
    - Outcome 2: Integrated multi-sector land and seascape "Ridge-to-Reef" planning and management operational in Babeldaob states to reduce threats to biodiversity and improve ecosystem services to benefit communities and state economies.
    - Outcome 3: Integrated multi-sector planning and management operational in 264,686 ha of seascapes and coastal areas in the Southern Lagoon to reduce threats to biodiversity and improve ecosystem services to benefit communities and state economies; and
    - Outcome 4: Knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation support, equitable gender benefits and biodiversity conservation in Palau.

29. Through these 4 Outcomes, the IAS Project was to address the United Nations Development Pacific Strategy 2018-2022 priority of "Climate Change, Disaster Resilience, and Environmental Protection (under Outcome 1)" where "by 2022, people and ecosystems in the Pacific are more resilient to the impacts of climate change, climate variability and disasters; and environmental protection is strengthened". Output 1.3 under this Outcome was "solutions developed at national and sub-national levels for sustainable management of natural resources, ecosystem services, chemicals and waste."

Figure 1: IAS Theory of Change



30. The Project promoted an integrated approach towards mainstreaming biodiversity conservation and safeguards across landscape and seascape planning and management, thereby enabling key economic and productive sectors to shift to more sustainable, inclusive, and equitable development. To achieve this, this Project was designed to strengthen capacity and coordination among the national and state levels in natural resources management, including the prevention and management of IAS at national and state levels.

2.7 Total Resources for the IAS Project

31. The total resources allocated to this Project at the time of ProDoc signature is provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Total Resources for the IAS Project

Component	GEF Resources (US$)	Planned Co-Financing Resources (US$)
Outcome 1	$1,442,000	$6,565,000
Outcome 2	$1,000,000	$5,020,000
Outcome 3	$960,000	$7,395,000
Outcome 4	$630,000	$2,825,000
Project Management	$201,562	$866,306
Total	**$4,233,562**	**$22,671,306**

2.8 Main Stakeholders

32. Stakeholders are numerous on this Project, are listed on pages 114-116 of the ProDoc, and are categorized as follows:

- national government agencies of GRoP including MAFE (see Para 33).
- autonomous government-supported organizations such as the Palau International Coral Reef Center (who are a key agency in researching and promoting conservation of marine ecosystems and biodiversity in Palau), the Office of the Palau Automated Land and Resources Information Systems or PALARIS (who provide valuable mapping services supporting land use planning and management and intake field survey data into their GIS database from the Bureau of Lands and Surveys), and the Belau National Museum or BNM (a key agency in researching and promoting conservation of terrestrial ecosystems and biodiversity);
- government-mandated joint committees such as the National Invasive Species Committee (NISC) who are the national coordinating body on invasives. Members includes Association of State PAN Coordinators; Attorney General's Office (EQPB Legal Counsel), MOJ; BoA; BoF; Division of Customs, Ministry of Finance; Division of Environmental Health, Ministry of Health; DSMFW under the MoJ; Environmental Quality Protection Board; PALARIS; Palau Conservation Society; and PICRC.
- local and state governments with emphasis on Peleliu, Koror, and 9 Babeldaob States, and the Koror State Department of Conservation and Law Enforcement (KSDCLE).
- foreign governments that include the Taiwan Technical Mission who play a significant role in the expansion of agriculture in Palau through technical advice and provision of equipment.
- the private sector including more than 16 commercial farms that use a mixture of traditional and organic farming including native and non-native crops; and

- non-profit organizations such as the Palau Conservation Society (PCS) who is a key implementation partner and a natural resource conservation organization with expertise in communication, project management, and policy development, Ebiil Society who serve as a partner in land and seascape planning, biosecurity activities, and implementation of best practices, and Island Conservation who are implementing rodent eradication programs in Palau.

Stakeholders are further discussed in Section 3.2.2.

2.9 Key Partners involved with the IAS Project

33. A key partner for the IAS Project is the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Environment (MAFE), formerly the Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment and Tourism (MNRET). MAFE is responsible for oversight of government initiated agricultural, forestry, fisheries and general environmental programs and activities. MAFE oversees multiple natural resource management bureaus and offices, including the Bureau of Agriculture (BoA) and the Bureau of Fisheries (BoF), which each play a key role in Project implementation. BoA is a key agency in IAS prevention and management, integrated land, watershed, and forestry management.

2.10 Context of other ongoing and previous evaluations

34. A Mid-term Review (MTR) for the IAS Project was issued in August 2021 to assess progress towards the achievement of Project objectives and outcomes as specified in the ProDoc. In addition, it also assessed “early” signs of Project successes and failures with the goal of identifying the necessary changes to streamline changes to be made to reset the Project to achieve intended results.

3. FINDINGS

3.1 Project Design and Formulation

35. Project Preparation Grant (PPG) approvals for the Palau's IAS Project were received on 19 April 2016, and final GEF CEO Endorsement approval of the full FSP was received on 25 May 2018 with the ProDoc signature on 16 July 2018, marking the IAS Project starting date. Classified as a GEF Full-sized Project (FSP), the IAS Project received GEF support of $4,233,562 with original co-financing proposed at US$22,671,306 for a total original Project budget of US$26,904,868 under a National Implementation Modality (NIM). Palau's MAFE (formerly known as the Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment and Tourism or MNRET) was designated as the key national implementing partner. The Project approval period was for 72 months with the original closing date scheduled for 16 July 2024.

36. With Palau being a small country, the IAS Project was deemed a national Project that was designed to affect all of its citizens. As such, the PPG phase of this Project included a wide range of consultations with a broad spectrum of stakeholders. Initial stakeholder analysis during the PIF stage was followed up with consultation during the PPG. Three stakeholder workshops were conducted in February 2017, May 2017, and June 2017. The May workshop included state-based discussions to prioritize sites for landscape planning based on existing capacity, while the June workshop reached general consensus on outcomes, outputs, activities, and institutional arrangements for the Project.

37. With Palau rapidly developing, the baseline saw threats to biodiversity and ecosystem services mounting from multiple pressures as mentioned in Para 25. The long-term solution sought by the Project was for Palau to mainstream biodiversity conservation and safeguards across landscape and seascape planning and management. This would enable key economic and productive sectors to shift to more sustainable, inclusive, and equitable development. Actions required by the Project were to strengthen capacity and coordination amongst national and state entities in natural resources management including the prevention and management of Invasive Alien Species (IAS) at national and state levels.

38. The ProDoc identified 4 barriers for achieving effective integrated land-sea and protected area management):

- Barrier 1: Inadequate national enabling and institutional framework including its consistent application across Palau's states, to safeguard biodiversity and underpin integrated natural resource management;
- Barrier 2: Limited capacity and experience in managing terrestrial and marine resources at land and seascape levels within an integrated multi-sector approach designed to maintain ecological connectivity from 'ridge to reef';
- Barrier 3: Limited capacity to responsibly manage tourism, fisheries, aquaculture, and IAS in coastal and marine areas in the Southern Lagoon;
- Barrier 4: Lack of awareness among the public, industrial and commercial sectors at national and state levels about the importance of integrated landscape and seascape planning, within a framework of safeguards, to address risks posed by IAS and unsustainable practices within key sectors, such as agriculture, fisheries, and tourism.

39. The IAS Project focused its efforts on capacity building and coordination of various activities that support local, State and National capacities to plan, implement, monitor the enhanced sustainability

of natural resources and conservation of biodiversity. Management effectiveness of Project activities was to be measured using GEF's Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT). While this may not be the most objective measurement of conservation, it was deemed to be the most effective means of measuring the building of capacity on what is being protected and what is needed to ensure resilience to overuse of natural resources.

3.1.1 Analysis of Project Results Framework for IAS Project

40. The IAS Project objective and outcomes are somewhat clear. There were, however, indicators that were insufficiently specific and not achievable in the July 2018 PRF and in the revised September 2021 PRF. The recommendation in the MTR to review the indicators in the PRF was linked to clarifying the indicators and targets.

41. Although the September 2021 PRF was revised, the wording of many of the indicators simply was not SMART[10], reflecting the need for additional clarity of indicators and targets that needed to be more specific. An example is Indicator 15 which read "increase in percentage of sampled community members, tour operators and sector agency staff aware of potential conservation threats and adverse impacts of IAS" without being specific about what is to be measured. The edits are contained in Appendix F in red font to reflect the changes made by the Project team in September 2021 and green font to reflect changes made by this Evaluator to improve clarity and SMART attributes to the indicators and targets.

42. In conclusion, the Project design and PRF are rated as ***moderately satisfactory*** due to all the changes made to the PRF in September 2021 and subsequently by the Evaluator. This TE is now based on the new indicators and targets of the revised PRF contained in Appendix F.

3.1.2 Assumptions and Risks

43. There are numerous assumptions under the IAS PRF. Under Objective-level indicators include:

- local communities and state governments understand livelihood benefits and ecological security from cooperation with and sustainable management of land and seascape resources. Thus, they will participate in sustainable management and ecosystem restoration work.
- National and State Governments consider it their priority to support integrated planning of its land/seascapes and implement target-oriented activities with local communities to improve conservation and sustainable use of such resources.
- States, CBOs, private sector, and communities collaborate closely for preparation of land/seascape plans.

44. Assumptions under Outcome 1 include:

- the national government will develop appropriate legislative, policy, institutional and technical measures that facilitate integrated land/ seascape planning and management in a timely manner.
- the States will take active part in developing strategies and implementation using new knowledge and skills provided by the Project.
- local communities are convinced mainstreaming biodiversity into key development sectors is in their long-term interests.

[10] Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound.

- guidelines and regulations revised to remove ambiguities in application of EAs; and capacity enhanced to monitor compliance with prescribed environmental safeguards;
- additional revenues can be developed to support inspection and quarantine services; and
- adequate laws and regulations are in place to support improved inspection and quarantine services nation-wide;

45. Assumptions under Outcome 2 include:

- development strategies and management plans will be officially approved by State governments with allocation of appropriate funding for their implementation;
- States will take active part in developing strategies and implementation using knowledge and skills from project;
- local communities are convinced that critical habitats in their vicinities will benefit livelihoods and ecological security to them and will participate in conservation and restoration work;
- local community-based institutions would establish an effective institutional mechanism to facilitate conservation outcomes;
- Division of Forestry capacity enhanced to provide adequate leadership and support to states;
- adequate technical capacity available for undertaking monitoring species populations
- current monitoring of populations continues;
- local communities have economic interest in developing sustainable and new practices because they can provide more benefits than unsustainable ones;

46. Assumptions under Outcome 3 include:

- adequate capacity and technical support available to monitor changes in species populations and ecosystem conditions;
- NGOs and other agencies will have adequate commitment and resources to implement rat eradication programs; and
- adequate biosecurity measures will be instituted by state governments to prevent potential re-establishment of rats in cleared islands;

47. Assumptions under Outcome 4 include:

- stakeholders willing to actively participate in the review process;
- Project management will be able to identify, document and disseminate the best practices; and
- best practices from GEF 5 on sustainable resource management readily available to resource users.

These assumptions appear to be reasonable.

48. There are also numerous risks under the IAS PRF. Risks under Objective-level indicators include:

- natural disasters or climate change may affect the restoration work.
- lack of capacity in government and communities to meet obligations related to project.

- livelihood benefits from sustainable management may be limited and slow for communities to give up current unsustainable practices.
- lack of involvement from private sector and resource users (including vulnerable people) with continued unsustainable practices; and
- conflicts over territorial issues between state and national entities could undermine efforts at promoting integrated planning approaches.

49. Risks under Outcome 1 include:

- priorities of state governments and local communities might shift if development benefits take long to manifest;
- plans are developed but not used, particularly by resource users;
- planning bodies that build capacity are disbanded and knowledge is lost;
- state ownership of resources can complicate as to which body, the state or EQPB, has authority over environmental management issues;
- adequate resources to implement comprehensive inspection and quarantine coverage may not be provided; and
- sufficiently trained and committed personnel unavailable to provide adequate coverage;

50. Risks under Outcome 2 include:

- administrative or political changes may undermine the implementation of the management plan strategies;
- lack of capacity in government and communities to meet obligations related to project;
- conflicts between national, state local communities regarding management and access to natural resources may undermine integrated planning approaches;
- natural disasters or climate drivers exacerbate degradation;
- natural calamities may affect the ability of local communities to respond positively to holistic approaches to sustainable management of land and sea resources;
- partner organizations and NGOs are unable to mobilize adequate manpower and technical resources to support sustainable actions.

51. Risks under Outcome 3 include:

- Project period may be too short to reflect any substantial or measurable changes to population numbers and ecosystem conditions;
- external events, beyond the control of the project (climate events or other man-made actions) may have wide ranging impacts of species and ecosystem conditions, including movement of rats on floating debris from typhoons and storms.

52. Risks under Outcome 4 include:

- government priorities may change from due to political pressure from resource users;
- actions among the assorted agencies and NGOs remain uncoordinated; and
- vulnerable groups are left out and continue using poor practices;

These risks appear to be reasonable.

53. These risks do not exactly mirror the risks in the risk log in the ProDoc though some of the risks do appear to be roughly the same risks as those in the PRF. Some of these risks are listed as follows:

- conflicts of interest, misunderstanding different priorities and sensitivities of stakeholders constrain implementation of activities;
- there could be potential restriction on the availability, quality of, and access to resources or basic services, in particular to marginalized individuals or groups;
- States, private sector, resource owners, and resource users not engaged and do not participate and follow resultant plan activities;
- land and seascape plans will likely benefit the wealthy at the disadvantage of women and vulnerable groups;
- biosecurity efforts are ineffective resulting in lack of management effort to prevent the introduction of IAS and their spread throughout the country;
- private sector is not willing to invest in biodiversity conservation partnerships or biodiversity friendly tourism services;
- insufficient funding to continue scale up integrated land and seascape planning after the Project;
- climate change may alter the threats and risks associated with land degradation and IAS.

These risks also appear to be reasonable.

3.1.3 Lessons from Other Relevant Projects Incorporated into IAS Project Design

54. The IAS Project design focuses on use of available resources to the extent possible that builds on the results of a regional UNEP GEF 4 project "PAS: The Micronesia Challenge: Sustainable Finance Systems for Island Protected Area Management - under the GEF Pacific Alliance for Sustainability" (GEF ID 3626), implemented between 2011 and 2015. This project made a valuable contribution to the achievement of capacity building efforts to improve the effectiveness of management of protected areas in Palau as well as other PICs, notably through the project's main financial contribution in the capitalization of the Micronesia Challenge Endowment Fund (MCEF), indirectly contributing to reaching the Micronesia Challenge targets since the MCEF provides significant financing for the management costs of the PANS.

55. This Project was also linked with the UNDP/GEF-5 Project: "R2R: Testing the Integration of Water, Land, Forest & Coastal Management to Preserve Ecosystem Services, Store Carbon, Improve Climate Resilience and Sustain Livelihoods in Pacific Island Countries" (GEF ID 5404), implemented from 2015 to 2020. Though attempts to mainstream a "ridge-to-reef" (R2R), climate resilient approach to integrated land, water, forest, and coastal management in 14 countries including Palau, this project did produce a few processes that have an integrated approach to resource management as well as engendered knowledge management products and capacity within the context of the South Pacific.

56. There was also a UNDP/GEF-5 Project: "Mainstreaming Global Environmental Priorities into National Policies and Programmes" (GEF ID: 5579), implemented from 2015-2020, to strengthen Palau's capacities to meet national and global environmental commitments through improved management of environmental data and information. This project was designed to improve management information systems for the global environment, strengthen technical capacities for monitoring and

evaluating the state of the environment, and improve and institutionalize decision-making mechanisms for the global environment.

57. Lastly, there was the GEF Small Grants Program for Palau implemented from 2014 to 2019. This project supported grassroot activities of communities with small projects in food security, invasive species affecting food security and taro plantations.

58. Palau has also been involved in various FAO regional and international initiatives, related to data management and analysis in agriculture and food systems. This includes FAO-financed projects, such as the integrated crop and livestock farming project to improve livelihoods, or mainstreaming climate-resilient food production systems for food and nutritional security in four states of Babeldaob (Angaur, Peleliu, Ngchesar, Ngaraard).

3.1.4 Planned Stakeholder Participation

59. The plan for stakeholder participation was for the Project PMU to engage all stakeholders. In particular, the assistance of PCS was particularly critical for the engagement of stakeholders at the local and state government level. Stakeholders are listed on Paras 32 and 33. Actual stakeholder participation arrangements are provided in Paras 71 to 75, and the actual list of stakeholders providing co-financing is found on Table 5.

3.1.5 Linkages between the IAS Project and other interventions in the sector

60. The IAS Project design is linked with the UNEP GEF 5 project "R2R: Advancing Sustainable Resources Management to Improve Livelihoods and Protect Biodiversity in Palau" (GEF ID 5208). This project supported Palau's two linked national efforts to protect biodiversity and sustainably use natural resources: the PAN and the Sustainable Land Management (SLM) Initiative. Work has been done on best practice development and use for eco-agriculture, reforestation, water management and use, watershed and erosion management, wildlife protocols, and tourism. Tourism and agriculture sectors really benefited from improved SLM and sustainable use integration into planning and practice. Land use in general was subsumed into the IAS Project, resulting in further upscaling.

61. This Project was also linked with the UNDP/GEF-5 Project: "R2R: Testing the Integration of Water, Land, Forest & Coastal Management to Preserve Ecosystem Services, Store Carbon, Improve Climate Resilience and Sustain Livelihoods in Pacific Island Countries", a regional project implemented from 2015 to 2022. Though attempts were made to mainstream a "ridge-to-reef" (R2R), climate resilient approach to integrated land, water, forest, and coastal management in 14 countries including Palau, this project did produce a few processes that provided an integrated approach to resource management and engendered knowledge management products.

3.1.6 Gender responsiveness of Project design

62. A gender analysis was completed, and a Gender Action Plan developed under this Project. Based on the gender analysis, gender and social inclusion considerations have been integrated into the Project design and the Gender Mainstreaming Action Plan (GMAP). Rather than focus only on gender, the Project adopted Palau's Gender Division approach that does not simply focus on women, but rather on overall inclusivity and multiple vulnerable populations. The landscape/seascape planning component have significant long-term impacts on both gender and social groups. As such, the GMAP included specific actions for applying a gender and socially inclusive lens to every decision, expanding representation, filling in gender and social-based research gaps, and investing in approaches to gather and share information among more groups. The intent of this Project approach for gender

was to become a model for improving gender and social mainstreaming into government and planning processes.

63. The Project investment includes support for Babeldaob's western states, which are among areas of Palau in which households, and particularly women-headed households, are most likely to be experiencing poverty. The Project was to support actions to strengthen food security through reducing risks from IAS and business development of sustainable biodiversity agricultural practices. This strategy was to consider gender aspects to ensure that women-headed households and lower income groups receive priority access to support. The Project was to ensure that both women and men are offered equal training opportunities supported through the IAS Project. To effectively monitor implementation of these strategies, gender disaggregated targets and baseline data were to have been established.

3.1.7 Social and Environmental Safeguards

64. The Environmental and Social Screening Process undertaken during the design of the Project made it clear that the IAS Project would not potentially cause adverse impacts to habitats, ecosystems, and ecosystem services. While some Project activities were likely to be undertaken within or adjacent to critical habitats and environmentally sensitive areas (including legally protected areas), these did not involve changes to the use of land and resources that may have adverse impacts on habitats, ecosystems, and livelihoods. More importantly, Project activities were not likely to pose risks to endangered species and introduce invasive alien species. Existing harvest of non-timber forest products (mushrooms, medicinal plants, and other products) was to be undertaken in an ecologically friendly and sustainable manner, including defining specific areas and harvest rates on the basis of internationally acceptable criteria, based on scientific information, and closely monitored. The screening determined that the IAS Project would:

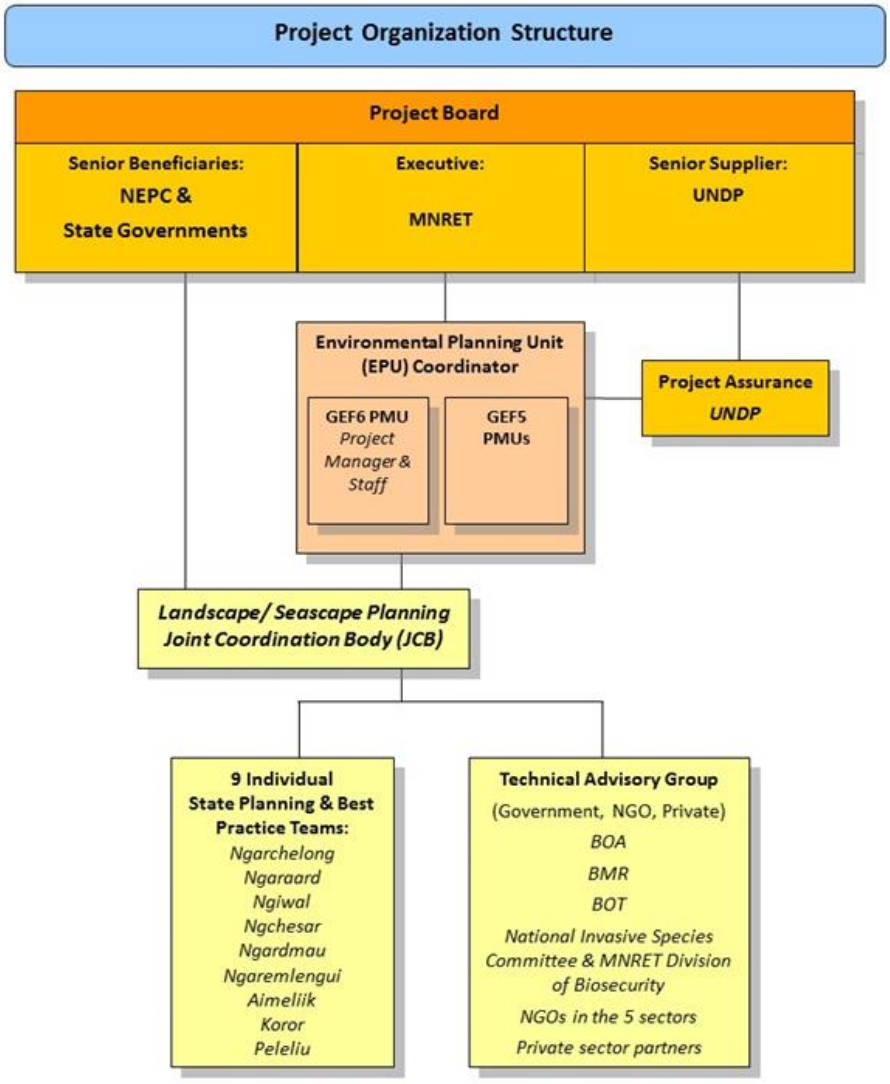
- not include the harvesting of natural forests, plantation development, or reforestation, although some assisted natural forest regeneration activities would be supported.
- not involve significant extraction, diversion or containment of surface or groundwater.
- not going to generate potential adverse trans-boundary or global environmental concerns.
- not result in secondary or consequential development activities that could lead to adverse social and environmental effects.
- not going to generate cumulative impacts with other known existing or planned activities in the area.
- not result in significant greenhouse gas emissions or climate change impacts.
- not likely to directly or indirectly increase social and environmental vulnerability to climate change now or in the future.
- to not potentially involve temporary or permanent physical displacement, nor will there be the need for land acquisition or access restrictions; and
- going to fully involve women and vulnerable groups in the landscape in decision-making on resource use, livelihood and income generation investments and conservation actions through specific institutional and administrative arrangements that encourages active participation of all households in a village.

3.2 Project Implementation

65. The Project was executed through an implementing partner, MAFE, the lead governmental agency with overall responsibility for Project implementation. MAFE was accountable for both Project and financial management including being accountable to UNDP for funding disbursements and for achieving IAS's objectives and outcomes. IAS Project organization structure is provided on Figure 2. MAFE was responsible for:

- coordinating activities to ensure the delivery of agreed outcomes.
- certifying expenditures in line with approved budgets and work-plans.
- facilitating, monitoring, and reporting on the procurement of inputs and delivery of outputs.
- coordinating interventions financed by GEF and UNDP with other parallel interventions.
- approval of Terms of Reference for consultants and tender documents for subcontracted inputs; and

Figure 2: IAS Project Organization Structure



- reporting to UNDP on project delivery and impact.

66. These functions were carried out by the Project Management Unit (PMU) housed within MAFE, comprised of a Project Manager (PM), Land Use Advisor, Financial Officer, Environment Planning Coordinator, and a Project Officer, under the overall supervision of the Project Director and Chairperson of the IAS Project Board (PB). There was a former PM who served after the commencement of IAS in July 2018, and moved onto another position as of February 2019. The current PM was recruited in April 2019 and still serves as the PM today. The PMU under the PM was responsible for implementing various components of the Project including provision of technical leadership, coordinating, and managing Project activities, contracting service providers, providing oversight on the day-to-day operations of the Project, communications, monitoring, and evaluation of Project performance, reporting, and serving as the secretariat for the PB.

67. The Project Inception workshop was held on 6-7 November 2018. The Inception report came out in December 2018 with some changes made to the PRF which are reflected in Appendix F. The first Project Board meeting was held on 9 November 2018. Subsequent Project Board meetings (15) were held in 2019 (October and December), 2020 (March, June, and September), 2021 (April, June, September, and December), 2022 (April, July, September, and December), 2023 (August) and 2024 (January). The final Project Board Meeting was held in July 2024.

3.2.1 Adaptive Management

68. Adaptive management is discussed in UNDP evaluations to gauge performance of project personnel to adapt to changing regulatory and environmental conditions and unexpected situations encountered during the course of implementation, both common occurrences that afflict the majority of UNDP projects. Without adaptive management, donor investments into UNDP projects would not be effective in achieving their intended outcomes, outputs, and targets.

69. In 2021, the MTR was somewhat critical of the Project's adaptive management with the Project emerging out of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the Project did start to adaptively manage its activities in 2022 due to delays in start-up and delivery of certain projects. Adaptive management did take place later throughout the Project:

- there were difficulties in the costing, design and constructing the Bureau of Agriculture biosecurity building during the first 3 years of the Project due to the COVID-19 pandemic and changing prices of materials and labour;
- a re-assessment of PRF indicators was conducted in September 2021 with adjustments made to compensate for the over-ambitiousness of the Project, and other targets that were not achievable. Thus, adaptive management was used to restructure the Project to better achieve targets and outputs and outcomes;
- local consultants were recruited on the Project after the COVID-19 pandemic restricted travel to Palau[11]. This practice continued until the EoP which did not affect the performance of the Project;

[11] This included:
- marine invasives training conducted through a partnership with the Coral Reef Research Foundation, a national organization.
- invasive species materials developed by a national research and scientist, the late Dr. Joel Miles, whose extensive knowledge and background in Biosecurity and IAS help contribute to the learning and outreach materials for IAS.
- developing the Early Detection Rapid Response Framework and Inter- Island Biosecurity Framework through a consultancy with The Island Conservation, which has a national office in Palau and made coordination and communication easier. The consultancy, however, was considered international recruited through UNDP Direct Services through an international process per UNDP policy.

- many other partnerships coordinated with many activities that allowed the Project to continue without coming to a full halt due to the travel restrictions from the COVID-19 pandemic. This included meetings with Project partners and stakeholders through the use of online platforms, such as Zoom, and in more open spaces or large rooms where there was a need for social distancing;
- intense coordination of all Project activities with the lifting of COVID-19 travel restrictions to catch up on all lost time. Considering that the Project was for 6 years, an extension was not considered necessary.

70. In conclusion, the Project's efforts to adaptively manage this Project were ***satisfactory***.

3.2.2 Actual Stakeholder Participation Partnership Arrangements

71. Throughout its implementation, the PMU maintained strategic partnerships with all States and relevant stakeholders in those states who are implementing initiatives supporting the biodiversity. This was done through NGOs who played a significant role in delivering implementation assistance to communities on behalf of the Project, notably the Palau Conservation Society (PCS) in all 16 states. PCS have a deep understanding and special relationship with communities. As such, PCS were able serve as a facilitator and to be involved with most of the consultations between MAFE, planning commissions and the communities. More information of their activities is on Para 91, 99 and 115.

72. Due to the outstanding work of PCS and the Project, State government stakeholders completed 14 state master plans and 12 state laws, and contributed to 21 national strategies, plans, and policies (Paras 89-90). Many state projects included a Technical Advisory Committees (TACs) consisting of a wide range of implementation partners and stakeholders involved in the Project implementation including the PAN Coordinators and Technical Officers.

73. There were also several efforts and initiatives to engage stakeholders in several states from planning to training to awareness in biodiversity, agriculture, and aquaculture with a focus on gender equity, raising equity from a pre-project baseline of 77% men and 23% women to 48% men and 52% women. The Project, PCS and its partners have engaged many stakeholders with a purpose of targeting in community income generation activities where 64% of all participants were women and 70% of community income generation activities in rural communities.

74. These efforts-built partnerships with the many experts and agencies, organizations in the environment sector and other sectors as well as the private business sector, Palau Housing, and others. The many partnerships and coordination of several Project-related work allowed for the Project to continue without coming to a full halt because of the travel restrictions due to COVID-19. Meetings with Project partners and stakeholders continued with the use of online meetings, such as Zoom, and in more open spaces or large rooms where social distancing was practiced.

75. Overall efforts by the IAS Project team to forge effective partnership arrangements with various stakeholders have been ***highly satisfactory***.

3.2.3 Project Finance

76. The total GEF budget for the IAS Project was US$4,223,562 that was to be disbursed over a 72-month period, managed by a UNDP-PMU under the direction of the Project Board. The Project managed to achieve all outcomes with a surplus of US$387,190 after disbursing only US$3,846,372 up to 30 June 2024, 0.5 months prior to the actual terminal date of the Project of 16 July 2024, revealing the following:

- Table 2 depicts the disbursement of all outcomes. Outcomes 1, 3 and 4 were underspent by 11%, 22% and 19% respectively. The healthy amount of co-financing probably influenced the underspent allocations of these outcomes.
- the Project started slowly with some large activities being delayed due to mainly to the COVID-19 pandemic. Early GEF investments were made on X-Ray installation, trainer for the use of X-Ray and the construction of the Biosecurity Building. Delays can be attributed to BoE and EDRR undergoing a full administration change.
- Project expenditures started to reach 100% of the planned annual disbursements in 2021 at the tail end of the pandemic. To make up for the shortfall in 201-2020 expenditures, Project activities intensified after 2022.
- Table 3 depicts ATLAS codes of where the majority of GEF funds were spent on local consultants and contractual services both international and national. A significant amount was also spent on training and workshops with lesser amounts spent on travel, equipment and furniture, audio-visual products, and supplies.
- the Project was still able to achieve all of its outcomes and outputs by the EoP with the surplus of US$387,190 of GEF funds left over.

77. The Project has also demonstrated appropriate but strict financial controls in place, notably through:

- Combined Delivery Reports (CDRs) and Project Budget Balance Report which shows the expenditure and commitments in the current year up to date (both as generated by ATLAS and Quantum).
- manual monitoring of Project expenditures against budget lines to attain an in-depth understanding of the financial progress and the pending commitments.
- quarterly tranche of GEF funds only available from UNDP when a minimum of 80% of the funds from previous tranche have been spent.

78. There were also issues in receiving payments from UNDP for Project activities. Examples include:

- the PMU and project partners learning and becoming familiar with UNDP systems at the beginning of the Project.
- disbursements for Q4 and Q1 of each year experiencing issues that caused delays as PMU had to rework workplans and budgets into new templates that required more information and details compared to previous processes which only had minimal inputs. This was exacerbated by the changes from the ATLAS systems to Quantum in January 2023.
- a $1,000 contract that can take up to 6 weeks to round out and receive approvals. When the work gets completed on time and the contractor submits his reports, it takes 6 to 8 weeks to approve: the state has it encumbered on their system while on the UNDP side, creating difficulties, and several months delay with future activities; they do not consider it encumbered adding to the approval time[12];
- the consultancy for the Early Detection Rapid Response Framework and Inter- Island Biosecurity Framework with The Island Conservation through UNDP took half a year to complete considering

[12] The financial control of spending 80% of the quarterly tranche before requesting the next drawdown is also impacted by this. If a contract is completed in a quarter but not yet paid out, the Palau system shows that the funds obligated for the contract are not available, but for UNDP they are. The approval time for the next tranche then is impacted.

all the processes undertaken including advertising, proposal, evaluation, and contract signing. This process started in early 2022, drafting ToRs for the consultancy in February 2022 with the contract finally signed in October 2022. Work began and was completed by July 2023 with final payments made to Island Conservation in December 2023.

- the Coral Reef Research Foundation consultancy needed PMU follow-up with the MCO during work duration from May to December 2023. Payment was received before the end of contract in December 2023.
- quarterly tranche of GEF funds only made available from UNDP when a minimum of 80% of the funds from previous tranche have been spent, necessitating the time-consuming activity of liquidating GEF funds by the PMU. The UNDP 80/20 policy[13] affected alignment with National Procurement Policies, notably with the BoA building.

79. Project co-financing was estimated to be more than US$28.167 million, above the expected co-financing of US$21.381 million. Co-financing summary and details can be found on Tables 4 and 5 respectively. The Evaluator team notes the majority of co-financing was monitored by work done in partnership with several NGOs, state agencies and communities, much of it in-kind and not tracked. Majority of co-financing comes from recurrent annual budgets of state, SLM and NGO staff time. Co-financed activities include establishing nurseries, tree planting, terrestrial and aquaculture farms, nature trails, exhibits as well as marine and environmental protection agency activities and awareness raising. For example, a coastal cleanup may involve State agencies contributing their vehicles, boats, and fuel, contributions of lunches and other meals, and maintenance of these vehicles.

80. Overall, the cost effectiveness of the IAS Project has been **satisfactory** in consideration of the positive results achieved in physical progress, capacity building of the stakeholders involved, and the high amounts of co-financing leveraged.

3.2.4 M&E Design at Entry and Implementation

81. The ProDoc does provide for an M&E design on pages 53-57. The design is presented in a fairly generic manner, similar to other M&E designs from other GEF projects, and with preparations for a detailed M&E plan left to the implementation phase of the Project. For the budgeting of M&E activities, US$232,500 was the total M&E budget from GEF and US$140,000 from co-financing (as broken down on pages 56-57 of the ProDoc). The issue for the M&E design was the quality of the PRF where many of the indicators were not SMART, necessitating additional clarity on the specificity of indicators and targets (Para 41). This made the M&E design marginally effective in conducting M&E by the PMU. As such, the M&E design is rated as ***moderately satisfactory***.

82. In terms of M&E plan implementation, the Evaluator had access to progress reports from 2019 to 2023 which were informative in terms of the progress made on various activities taken by the Project, and extra activities in collaboration with other donors. The progress reports from 2019 to 2021, however, were based on the old PRF indicators whereas the 2022 and 2023 PIRs monitored new EOP indicators and targets recommended by the MTR, and further adjusted by this Evaluator. Other activities with M&E include:

- the monitoring of meetings on land use planning, public hearings on master plans, and zoning field verifications was adequate. This included photo evidence of meetings, and sign-in sheets for attendance to meetings.

[13] Expenditures have to be more than 80% to release a maximum of 20% funds.

Table 2: GEF Project Budget and Expenditures for IAS Project (in USD as of 30 June 2024)

Outcomes	Approved Budget (as per ProDoc)	2018[26]	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024[27]	Total Disbursed	Total to be expended in June-July 2024
Outcome 1: Enhanced national institutional framework for integrated planning and management of land and seascapes	1,442,000	323	100,720	179,554	435,912	256,087	270,290	41,315	1,284,200	157,800
Outcome 2: Integrated multi-sector land and seascape "Ridge-to-Reef" planning and management operational in Babeldaob states to reduce threats to biodiversity and improve ecosystem services to benefit communities and state economies	1,000,000	0	43,356	140,453	230,512	322,176	168,667	99,016	1,004,181	-4,181
Outcome 3: Integrated multi-sector planning and management operational in 264,686 ha of seascapes and coastal areas in the Southern Lagoon to reduce threats to biodiversity and improve ecosystem services to benefit communities and state economies	960,000	0	14,043	99,418	142,124	166,122	173,652	151,249	746,609	213,392
Outcome 4: Knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation support, equitable gender benefits and biodiversity conservation in Palau	630,000	0	50,044	69,916	144,548	101,942	109,830	31,354	507,634	122,366
Project Management	201,562	48,829	216,302	10,152	15	6,066	14,819	7,565	303,748	-102,186
Total (Actual)	4,233,562	49,152	424,465	499,493	953,110	852,393	737,259	330,498	3,846,372	387,190
Total (Cumulative Actual)		49,152	473,618	973,111	1,926,221	2,778,614	3,515,873	3,846,372		
Annual Planned Disbursement (from ProDoc)		396,797	899,344	1,045,844	875,094	534,844	342,343	139,296		
% Expended of Planned Disbursement		12%	47%	48%	109%	159%	215%	237%		

[26] Includes expenditures from 16 July 2018
[27] Up to 30 June 2024

Table 3: IAS Expenditures by ATLAS Code

ATLAS Code	Expenditure Description	Spent to 30 June 2024 (US$)
71300	Local Consultants	457,428
71800	Contractual Services - Individuals	0
71600	Travel	109,262
72200	Equipment and Furniture	242,245
72300	Materials & Goods	16,492
74200	Audio Visual & Print Prod Costs	27,823
74500	Miscellaneous Expenses	8,557
76100	Realized loss	30
75700	Training, Workshops and Conference	319,987
72100a	Contractual Services - Companies / Nat	1,430,577
72100b	Contractual Services - Companies / Int	1,079,712
72800	Information Technology Equipment	16,787
64397	Services to projects -CO staff	587
74596	Services to projects	136
72500	Supplies	67,715
73100	Rental & Maintenance-Premises	23,799
74100b	Professional Services - International	45,236
Totals:		**US$3,846,372**

Table 4: Co-Financing for IAS Project (as of 30 June 2024)

Co-financing (type/source)	UNDP own financing (million USD)		Government (million USD)		Partner Agency (million USD)		Private Sector (million USD)		Total (million USD)	
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual
Grants			0.000	14.847		4.562			0.000	19.409
Loans/Concessions									0.000	0.000
• In-kind support			18.616	5.395	3.905	2.773		0.200	22.521	8.368
• Other		0.390							0.000	0.390
Totals	0.000	0.390	18.616	20.243	3.905	7.334	0.000	0.200	22.521	28.167

Table 5: Actual IAS Co-Financing (as of 30 June 2024)

Type of partner	Co-Financing Partner	Type of Co-Finance	Planned (US$)	Actual (US$)
National Government	MAFE-BOA	Grants	3,066,000	1,200,000
National Government	Biosecurity	In-Kind		300,000
National Government	MAFE-BOA	Grants	2,000,000	2,004,000
National Government	BOT	Grants	1,000,000	414,400
National Government	MoJ - Division of Fire and Public Safety	Grants	360,000	58,100
National Government	MoJ - DFWP	Grants	1,000,000	383,500
National Government	MoJ - Division of Marine Law Enforcement	Grants	1,290,000	6,500,000
National Government	PALARIS	In-Kind	750,000	1,149,719
National Government	EQPB	In-Kind	360,000	420,400
National Government	BNM	In-Kind	175,000	257,000
National Government	NEPC Secretariat	In-Kind		71,600
National Government	Gender Office	In-Kind		**169,000**
National Government	MAFE EPCU	In-Kind		80,000
National Government	BOE	In-Kind		500,000
National Government	Office of Climate Change	In-Kind		300,000
National Government	Bureau of Culture and Historic Preservation	In-Kind		90,000
National Government	House of Delegates (legal counsel)	In-Kind		75,000
National Government	PAN Fund	Grant	0	1,026,720
National Government	PCC-CRE	In-Kind	3,000,000	1,030,000
Local State Government	Aimeliik	In-Kind	50,000	62,350
Local State Government	Koror	Grants	3,000,000	2,406,000
Local State Government	Ngaraard	Grants	300,000	232,160
Local State Government	Ngarchelong	Grants	256,826	165,500
Local State Government	Ngatpang	Grants	315,000	106,000
Local State Government	Ngchesar	Grants	50,000	170,000
Local State Government	Ngeremlengui	In-Kind	213,480	271,950
Local State Government	Ngiwal	In-Kind	30,000	289,000
Local State Government	Peleliu	Grants	1,400,000	181,000
Local State Government	Governors Association	In-Kind		70,000
Local State Government	Airai	In-Kind		31,000
Local State Government	Melekeok	In-Kind		86,000
Local State Government	Ngardmau	In-Kind		52,200
Local State Government	Kayangel	In-Kind		30,000
Local State Government	Sonsorol	In-Kind		30,000
Local State Government	Hatohobei	In-Kind		30,000
NGO	Ebiil Society	Grants	150,000	304,400
NGO	Institute of Pacific Islands Forestry	Grants	480,000	475,000
NGO	Island Conservation	Grants	275,000	1,154,400
NGO	PCAA	In-Kind	150,000	228,000
NGO	PCS	Grants	500,000	1,070,000
NGO	PICRC	Grants	1,500,000	758,000
NGO	TNC	Grants	1,000,000	800,000
NGO	CRRF	In-Kind		105,000
NGO	PVA	In-Kind		520,800
NGO	Sasakawa Peace Foundation	In-Kind		300,000
NGO	Chamber of Commerce	Grant and In-Kind		150,000
NGO	Friends of PNMS	In-Kind		240,000
NGO	Palau Organic Growers Association	In-Kind		290,000
NGO	Maibrel	In-Kind		40,000

Type of partner	Co-Financing Partner	Type of Co-Finance	Planned (US$)	Actual (US$)
Other	RISC - Regional Invasive Species Committee	In-Kind		42,800
Private Company	LJC Consultting (Dr. Miles)	In-Kind		100,000
Private Company	BOFI	In-Kind		100,000
GEF Partner Agency	ADB	In-Kind		770,970
GEF Partner Agency	FAO / UN / and Ministry of State	In-Kind		45,000
GEF Partner Agency	SPREP	In-Kind		40,000
GEF Partner Agency	UNDP	Grant and In-Kind		390,000
Total Co-financing			**22,671,306**	**28,166,969**

- monitoring of progress to legislation and master plan. This included photo evidence of signed laws and biodiversity strategies, and samplings of master plans;
- monitoring of SESP risks where the Project risk profile was low with no outstanding risks.
- many reports to back up progress. Examples include EQPB and EDRR performance reports, National Environmental Management Capacity Scorecard and National Biosecurity Capacity Scorecards that measure capacities built during implementation, IAS tracking tools, presentations on master plan and land use planning workshops, fish stock assessments, BirdLife International report on the Micronesian Imperial-pigeon Ducula oceanica in Palau[16];
- photographic evidence of field activities. Examples include the Peleliu Milkfish Pond Restoration, the Ngaraard Ngebuked-Ngaruau project, the Elauesachel Trail At Nekken, and outreach efforts by MAFE and PICRC;
- monitoring and evaluation of the PMU appeared to be highly satisfactory. The M&E competencies and capabilities of the PMU with engaging stakeholders was highly satisfactory for the Project especially with PCS (Paras 71 to 73), and considering the outcomes of improvements in institutional capacities for planning, implementation and monitoring integrated land/seascape management plans and improved surveillance and controls for prevention of high risk IAS from entering Palau (Paras 93-96), and best practices of sustainable land, coastal and marine resource use up-scaled to all 16 states (Paras 114-119);
- there were 15 Project Board meetings where the PB provided detailed oversight of the Project. Each of the meetings had detailed discussions on each outcome, partnership reports, the achievements, level of progress, risk mitigation, gender mainstreaming updates, what actions should be taken on setbacks and challenges, and recommendations on future actions.

83. As such, *M&E plan implementation is rated as* ***satisfactory***. Ratings according to the GEF Monitoring and Evaluation system[17] are as follows:

[16] http://datazone.birdlife.org/species/factsheet/micronesian-imperial-pigeon-ducula-oceanica/text

[17] 6 = HS or Highly Satisfactory: There were no shortcomings.
5 = S or Satisfactory: There were minor shortcomings,
4 = MS or Moderately Satisfactory: There were moderate shortcomings.
3 = MU or Moderately Unsatisfactory: There were significant shortcomings.
2 = U or Unsatisfactory: There were major shortcomings.
1 = HU or Highly Unsatisfactory
U/A = Unable to assess
N/A = Not applicable.

- *M&E design at entry – 4;*
- *M&E plan implementation – 5;*
- *Overall quality of M&E – 5.*

3.2.5 Performance of Implementing and Executing Agencies

84. The performance of MAFE (the Executing Agency) can be characterized as follows:

- the Project started slowly due to MAFE familiarization with relevant UNDP rules and procedures;
- MAFE effectively managed and administered the Project despite funding and administrative delays from UNDP. This included an appropriate focus on results and timelines, appropriate use of available government funds for procurement and contracting of goods and services.
- MAFE prepared PIRs through the PMU that provided adequate monitoring of changing PRF indicators, implementation progress, SESP risks, gender, knowledge management and communications, and stakeholder engagement.
- during the latter stages of the IAS Project, Project activities were intensified to make up for lost time from the COVID-19 pandemic;
- overall performance of MAFE on the IAS Project can be assessed as being **satisfactory** despite the difficulties of managing and administering the Project.

85. The performance of UNDP (the Implementing Agency) can be characterized as follows:

- UNDP supported MAFE with administrative assistance and training throughout Project implementation to maintain the NIM, with the bulk of administrative work being performed by the PMU and MAFE.
- UNDP facilitated the involvement of PCS and other NGOs to serve as the link between the national government, state governments and their constituent communities. This was a strong aspect of the Project.
- UNDP had difficult fund administrative policies to follow as explained in Para 78;
- the constant change of RTAs limited the attention the Project received. This resulted in sporadic meetings and responses with little follow-up regarding technical oversight of the Project; and
- overall performance of UNDP on the Project can be assessed as being **satisfactory**.

3.3 Project Results and Impacts

86. This section provides an overview of the overall results of the IAS Project and an assessment of the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency, country ownership, mainstreaming, sustainability, and impact of the IAS Project. For Table 7, the "status of target achieved" is color-coded according to the following color-coding scheme:

Green: Completed, indicator shows successful achievements	Yellow: Indicator shows expected completion by the EOP	Red: Indicator shows poor achievement – unlikely to be completed by Project closure

3.3.1 Progress towards objective

87. With the overall objective of this Project being to "mainstream biodiversity conservation into integrated land and seascape governance, planning and management in Palau", a summary of intended achievements of the IAS Project at the objective level is provided with evaluation ratings on Table 6. The GEF Tracking Tool for the IAS Project is contained in Appendix E.

88. With regards to the Mandatory Indicator 1.3.1, the target area of 240,000 ha of sustainable management solutions at the sub-national level for conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services that benefit from integrated landscape and seascape planning and management approaches, has been achieved. Progress on this indicator comes from investment into zoning, land use planning, and nearshore marine spatial planning with all 10 states on Babeldoab, the 2 states in the southern lagoon, and 3 new outer island states who were engaged into the Project in the past year so as to achieve equitable benefits nationwide. This resulted in 15 of Palau's 16 states participating in sustainable use planning. Growth in the indicator came from zoning by State governments, as well as through national commitments and laws related to marine spatial planning:

- by 2023, 282,994 hectares of landscape and nearshore seascape had been zoned or protected through community-based participatory approaches that included zoning, sustainable use planning, new conservation areas, and community-managed areas. Out of this, 150,137 hectares (53%) was confirmed through legally binding laws or commitments. The remaining 132,857 hectares (47%) received executive endorsement;
- Airai State reconfirmed that its master plan had been adopted in 2012 and began enforcing it as it went through the revision and update process. With NGOs assisting the planning process, 340 hectares was confirmed in 2022 that included Airai's legislated conservation areas and registered historical sites;
- 30,155 hectares was added in 2021-2022 to include lands proposed to be zoned for conservation, historical preservation, watershed protection, recreation, and other non-extractive uses on land in Ngiwal and Ngeremlengui. These 2 (out of the 11) states conducted land use planning that progressed to zoning in 2022.
- Ngaraard state completed its master plan, land use plan, and zoning code, had them endorsed by the elected governor, and sent to the legislature for adoption;
- in 2022, 8 out of 10 States on Babeldaob began identifying zones for nearshore marine low-impact uses such as gleaning, tourism, clam aquaculture, shoreline protection by mangroves, and community-based fishing as part of marine spatial planning.
- an additional 2,433,600 hectares of offshore water belonging to state/municipal "territorial" governments has also been committed to 100% sustainable ocean management through participatory means between the national government, state governors, and state elected representatives to the national congress;
- approaches to master and land use planning were participatory, with an estimated 206 people (52% men, 48% women) directly participating (representing 1.2% of the entire country's population) in over 395 meetings and 2,182 man-hours.

89. With regards to Mandatory Indicator 1.3.2, the target number of individuals and percent of population benefitting from strengthened livelihoods through solutions for improved management of natural resources and provision of ecosystem services, has been achieved:

Table 6: IAS Objective-level achievements

Project Strategy	Performance Indicator	Baseline	Target	Status of Target Achieved	Evaluation Comments	Rating[18]
Project objective: *To mainstream biodiversity conservation into integrated land and seascape governance, planning and management in Palau.*	Mandatory Indicator 1.3.1 Area of sustainable management solutions at sub-national level for conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services that benefit from integrated landscape and seascape planning and management approaches	*Approximately 115,000 hectares (managed effectively)[19]*	*At least a total of 240,000[20] hectares of seascapes and landscapes effectively managed through participatory approaches*	284,994 ha	See Para 88	6
	Mandatory Indicator 1.3.2: Number of individuals and percent of population benefitting from strengthened livelihoods through solutions for improved management of natural resources and provision of ecosystem services, disaggregated by gender and age: 1) Total percentage of rural population participating, by gender, 2) Number of individuals benefitting financially from project livelihood projects, 3) Gender percentage benefitting from livelihood benefits. 4) Distribution of livelihood benefits by gender-age group	*Number of households currently participating in sustainable resource management and best practice approaches – 39% of HHs (in 7 Babeldaob states and Peleliu) in 2016 (300 HHs[21])[22]. (baseline to be validated in Year 1)*	*1) At least 55% of the rural population participates or benefits in the project.* *2) At least 600 individuals benefit financially from project livelihood projects.* *3) Equitable distribution of livelihood benefits by gender group (50% men and 50% women).* *4) More equitable distribution of livelihood benefits among age groups, aligned with population demographics (target of 37% Youth; 40% Adult; 23% Senior).*	51% 4,018 51% female and 49% male Not measured	See Para 89	5
	Mandatory indicator 2.5.1: Extent to which Institutional frameworks are in place for integration of conservation, sustainable natural resource use, control and management of IAS, biodiversity and ecosystems and improved livelihoods into integrated land/ seascape planning and management	*No states have comprehensive landscape and seascape planning and management approaches; 4 of 16 states have partial plans or zones (Koror, Airai, Melekeok, Ngardmau)*	*Multiple use and sustainable landscape and seascape approaches institutionalized by national legislative, policy, and institutional arrangements and planning and practice effected in 9 states*	Achieved through influencing 14 state master plans, 12 state laws, and 21 national strategies, plans, and policies	See Para 90	5

[18] Ibid 12

[19] The represent PAN sites and other protected areas

[20] Based on the assumption that (i) institutional arrangements in place enabling integrated planning and management; (ii) land/seascapes zoned based on biological principles; (iii) land/seascape planning basis for budgetary allocations; (iv) sector regulations integrate biological considerations; (v) best practice activities implemented and (v) monitoring systems validate outcomes. Includes areas up to coral reef limits covered under Outcomes 2 and 3.

[21] In 2015 there were 763 households in those 8 states (7 on Babeldaob and 1 Peleliu) plus another 3070 households in Koror.

[22] This number was derived from surveys during the PPG (May 2017)

- sign-in sheets indicated that at least 4,018 people benefitted from the Project in some sort, through planning, training, or awareness activities where 51% of participants were female and 49% were male, representing gender equity.
- 51% of these beneficiaries were rural with 1,040 of these rural participants were female.
- 526 rural residents participated in income-generating opportunities organized by MAFE, the States and the Palau Conservation Society (PCS), and out of which 72% were women. Collectively, rural participants earned an estimated collective US$201,080 per year in new income, more than double the amount earned by urban households.
- rural participants were increasingly compensated for their time, reducing the expectation of volunteer labor that was particularly impacting women unfairly early in the Project.
- after the Project's first Gender Mainstreaming Workshop uncovered disparity in stipends (with men receiving more stipend money than women and with many more women volunteering their time), the Project undertook steps to increase gender parity in financial benefits paid to each gender.

90. With regards to the *Mandatory indicator 2.5.1*, the extent to which Institutional frameworks are in place for integration of conservation, sustainable natural resource use, control and management of IAS, biodiversity and ecosystems and improved livelihoods into integrated land/ seascape planning and management, has been achieved:

- the National Environmental Management Strategy (NEMS) was finished and endorsed, and has been incorporated into monitoring and evaluation regimes at the Ministry of Finance (MoF);
- the Babeldaob-Koror Regional Urban Development Strategic Plan was adopted by the MoF in 2021 as one of the country's National Environmental Management Strategies. Implementation is under way, starting with transportation and housing strategies being implemented across Ministries. Several agencies updated their strategic plans to include environmental sections, including MAFE, the Environmental Quality Protection Board (EQPB); and PALARIS (Palau's GIS and key partner in land use planning);
- GRoP began a country-wide effort to link terrestrial, nearshore, and offshore marine habitats through marine spatial planning (MSP). The MSP was mandated by national law and an executive order and institutionalized in MAFE. While National government partners focused on offshore environments, this Project helped community and State partners define marine zones and develop nearshore marine spatial plans with 11 of out of Palau's 16 states having drafted nearshore marine spatial plans;
- 14 out of 16 states completed master plans that institutionalize cross-sector planning where 13 of the States have land use plans. PCS were instrumental in this achievement, organizing numerous meetings with communities to discuss how to conserve biodiversity, better utilize their lands and access markets for their products. This positioned communities to prepare their own master plans which were completed for 14 out of 16 states. ADB took an interest in States that had planning commissions to provide them with funding for climate change adaptation projects;
- in 2023, Ngaraard, Aimeliik, and Peleliu states passed state laws to create Planning Commissions and mandate master planning for all 10 states on Babeldaob and Peleliu targeted by the Project to have laws in place. Cumulatively, 11 states have passed, updated, or implemented planning commission laws (Ngarchelong, Ngaraard, Ngiwal, Melekeok, Ngchesar, Ngardmau,

Ngeremlengui, Ngatpang, Aimeliik, Airai, and Peleliu). Sonsorol also introduced legislation. Koror already had a legislated planning mechanism and began working with PALARIS to update its zoning map, an activity not funded by the Project but certainly influenced by it;

- the Project contributed to a new Palau National Development Plan (PDP) that covered 17 sectors in the country. The Project mainstreamed biodiversity and state master plan priorities throughout the PDP;
- in 2023, the Project mainstreamed biodiversity into strategies for the Palau Housing Authority and the Foreign Investment Board;
- in 2023, the Project contributed input to an update to the Palau National Marine Sanctuary (PNMS) Strategy, a PNMS Science Strategy with MAFE leading the MSP process;
- in 2022, PALARIS kickstarted an initiative to name streets throughout the country through its partnership with the GEF-6 project, working with planning teams and commissions and holding joint community meetings. By 2023, 5 states have officially named their streets with traditional names, including some of native species;

91. Cumulatively, the Project has influenced 14 state master plans and 12 state laws mainly due to the outstanding work of PCS. Their work also contributed to 21 national strategies, plans, and policies (such as NEMS, Climate Change Policy, Climate Change Adaptation Plan, Australia-Palau Gender Policy, Agriculture Strategy, Southern Lagoon Management Plan, PDP, PHA, Food Systems Pathway, MSP offshore, MSP nearshore, PNMS Strategy, PNMS Science Strategy, EQPB strategy, PALARIS strategy, Update to Title 31 Land Planning Act, Presidential and Ministerial Proclamations and Mandates on food security, Biodiversity-Friendly labeling criteria, Our Ocean Conference Commitment). These have also been incorporated into new workplans for the NEPC Secretariat which is also addressing SDG implementation. Evidence of all these master plans and State laws can be found on the MAFE Palau Biodiversity Project website[35].

92. Overall, the achievement of objective level targets is rated as **satisfactory.**

3.3.1 Progress towards Outcome 1: Enhanced national institutional framework for integrated planning and management of land and seascapes

93. To achieve Outcome 1, a summary of achievements of the Outcome is provided with evaluation ratings on Table 7. For Indicator 5, targeted average increase of institutional capacity has been achieved through a scoring system where capacity was measured by a 25% increase in a UNDP Landscape and Seascape Capacity Development Scorecard (national and state levels), a National Environmental Management Capacity Scorecard and a National Biosecurity Capacity Scorecard. Project resources were expended to:

- monitor increases in national capacity particularly through national planning processes that looked at every sector and tied them to budgets and performance reporting, resulting in the development of the PDP, NEMS, SDG update, MSP, NEPC funding, increased gender mainstreaming, and growth in monitoring and evaluation tied to results-based planning and performance-based indicators. At the very highest levels, the President encouraged congress to follow these national plans in its budgeting process;

[35] https://sites.google.com/view/gef6palau/gef6-key-sectors/master-land-use-planning and https://sites.google.com/view/gef6palau/palau-national-policies-plans

Table 7: Progress on Outcome 1-level achievements

Project Strategy	Performance Indicator	Baseline	Target	Status of Target Achieved	Evaluation Comments	Rating[36]
Outcome 1: Enhanced national institutional framework for integrated planning and management of land and seascapes	Indicator 5: Level of institutional capacities for planning, implementation and monitoring integrated land/seascape management plans as measured by UNDP land/seascape management scorecard	*Limited institutional capacities for planning, implementation and monitoring of multiple use landscape and seascapes as measured by UNDP Land/ Seascape Capacity Development Scorecard baseline:* *(i) National level landscape/seascape capacity score 16/63* *(ii) State level average score landscape/seascape capacity 15/60* *(iii) National Environmental Management score 22/45* *(iv) National biosecurity capacity score 15/45*	Average Increase of institutional capacity as measured by a 50% increase in UNDP Landscape and Seascape Capacity Development Scorecard (national and state levels), National Environmental Management Capacity Scorecard and National Biosecurity Capacity Scorecard	Cumulative increases are: (i) National policymakers: 34 points – a 112% increase; (ii) State: 37 points – 146% increase (iii) National managers: 16 points – 72% increase (iv) National biosecurity: 21 points – 140% increase	See Para 93	5
	Indicator 6a: Percentage increase in new *commercial and government* earthmoving projects requiring *environmental assessment (EA)*	6a: 7.5% of new earthmoving projects require EA (2016)	6a and 6b. *20% of commercial and government/NGO projects triggering an EA; and a sample of EAs/EISs shows that 100% of EAs/EIS/ address the newly added significance criteria (e.g. biodiversity criteria) or cumulative impact criteria*	Up to 34%	See Para 943.3.1**Error! Reference source not found.**	5
	Indicator 6b: Percentage compliance with environmental safeguards for all permitted earthmoving projects that are exempt from EAs	*6b: 85% of all permitted earthmoving projects that are exempt from EAs comply with prescribed environmental safeguards (2016)*[37]		In 2022, 10 violations out of 256 earthmoving permits, for a compliance rate of 96%.	See Para 95	5
	Indicator 7: Comprehensiveness of national level IAS management framework and ability to prevent IAS of high risk to biodiversity from entering Palau, as measured by IAS Tracking Tool	*IAS Tracking Tool Score of 9 (out of total of 27) due to lack of national coordinating mechanism; no national IAS strategy; detection surveys non-existent; priority pathways not actively managed, etc.*	*50% increased score in the GEF IAS Tracking Tool (from baseline 9 to 15) of improved surveillance and controls for prevention of high-risk IAS from entering Palau*	As of 2023, Palau's IAS controls score 19 out of 27, an increase of 100% from the baseline of 9.	See Para 96	5

[36] Ibid 12

[37] Violations of environmental safeguard measures in 2016 amounted to 15% of the total number of permitted projects exempt from EAs, which equates to 85% compliance. Full compliance is 95%. Mid-Term and End of Project targets are tentative and will be revised, as appropriate, in Year 1 in line with findings from the above review (Footnote 25).

- work with the Planning and Zoning Department in Hilo, Hawaii to craft a learning syllabus and conduct training seminars for States on a functioning zoning system. This involved 9 State representatives traveling to Hawaii to learn skills for implementing their master and land use plans and zoning codes. State capacity was significantly raised by the development and participation in a Palau-Hawaii Zoning Exchange, establishment of authorized planning commissions and conducting training and mentoring.
- increase the organization of spatial data at PALARIS, water aquifer data, and a new PNMS Science and Monitoring Strategy that collated many existing marine science studies. This improved National environmental management scores that have been helped by access to new data and climate projection information.
- signed an MOU to address marine invasives and improving national biosecurity through completion of "Early Detection and Rapid Response Plans" and the "Inter-Island Biosecurity Plans" through training and capacity building.

94. For Indicator 6a, the target has been achieved with the percentage increase in new commercial and government earthmoving projects requiring environmental assessment up to 34%. This is a result of strengthened EA/EIS regulations and continued outreach on EA/EIS regulations.

95. For Indicator 6b, the target has been achieved with full compliance of all permitted earthmoving projects that are exempt from EAs that comply with prescribed environmental safeguards. In 2023, 242 were exempt from an EA out of 256 permits. In 2022, 1 violation was due to lack of compliance with permit conditions out of a total of 14 violations, indicating nearly full compliance with permit conditions.

96. For Indicator 7, the targets have been achieved. There is improved surveillance and controls for prevention of high-risk IAS from entering Palau as measured by a GEF IAS Tracking Tool which increased from a baseline score of 9 to 19 in 2023, an increase of over 100%, more than the target of 50%:

- the Invasive Alien Species Program was institutionalized by MAFE, making a formal division within the Government. In 2022, the MAFE IAS Program operated in parallel with the Biosecurity Division now. MAFE operates in country, and Biosecurity operates at the border. The two agencies worked together to identify and implement priorities.
- the IAS Program has also undertaken systematic monitoring and research to delimit key species to the food systems (fruit flies and coconut rhinoceros beetles) and implementing best practices with partners and farmers to slow their spread or create invasive-free islands.
- there was a building constructed in 2022 as the Biosecurity and Quarantine Facility complete with installed X-ray machines at the airport to inspect incoming luggage for live organic materials and plans to improve incoming passenger biosecurity awareness. This facility is now under the Bureau of Environment (BoE) and is unused at present due to the Division of Biosecurity operations moving to MoF. There is a draft MoU draft between MAFE and MoF to coordinate and streamline the different Bureaus that are lead in work in Biosecurity with:
    - the Division of Biosecurity securing the border.
    - BoE with oversight of national and state policies; and
    - BoA with oversight of pests in farming and livestock, and review and approve process work on import permit applications and implementing the Biosecurity Importation Risk Assessment.

- the Project completed Early Detection and Rapid Response Plan and Inter-Island Biosecurity Plan and identified coordinating authorities through a draft MoU which is being negotiated by lawyers. Various community members and partners have been trained in surveillance techniques for certain high-risk species and new technical resources developed and made available to identify priority species. A new partnership is needed to address a key gap, marine invasive species.
- there are several other biosecurity activities including:
  - ongoing invasive vine removal.
  - CRRF continues its monitoring of marine invasive species and is creating a marine invasive species training program.
  - EQPB enforces development and pesticide permits to limit the spread of invasive species.
  - the Belau National Museum opened an exhibit about marine invasives.
  - MAFE Legal Counsel continues to advance the new Biosecurity Regulations.
  - Rotary Palau removing invasive plants and replace them with native ones; and
  - Palau strengthening relationships with regional and global partners that assist with invasive species management, from SPREP to PII to USDOD to New Zealand and Australian governments.

97. Overall, the achievement of Outcome 1 level targets is rated as **satisfactory** due to most targets being achieved notwithstanding delays in payments.

3.3.2 Progress towards Outcome 2: Integrated multi-sector land and seascape "Ridge-to-Reef" planning and management operational in Babeldaob states to reduce threats to biodiversity and improve ecosystem services to benefit communities and state economies

98. To achieve Outcome 2, a summary of achievements of the Outcome is provided with evaluation ratings on Table 8. For Indicator 8, the target has been achieved with 113,865 ha allocated for high conservation value ecosystems, against a target of 15,000 ha. This includes new lands zoned for conservation, future reserve, historic preservation, or watershed plus marine areas zoned for conservation, restorative aquaculture, or historic preservation. It also includes mangroves that have stronger protections due to revised water quality regulations creating buffer zones around all mangroves and labeling mangroves as Class A waters. This also includes 16,661 ha of upland, limestone, atoll, and mangrove forest set aside for non-exhaustive use (11,335 Babeldaob Forest, 205 Peleliu Limestone Forest, 128 Outer Island Atoll Forest, and nationwide 4,992 ha of mangrove for non-exhaustive use). These allocations resulted in 3,291,389 tCO_2 avoided (1,626,993 from mangrove protection and 1,644,396 from forest protection) over the course of the Project, or 10,971,297 tCO_{2eq} over 20 years (against a target of 435,492 tCO_2 avoided). Much of this work has benefited from the involvement of PCS and the IAS Project to get the communities to prepare and comply with their master plans and implement high conservation value ecosystems.

99. For Indicator 9, the target cannot be achieved. The MTR identified this indicator as too ambitious, and the post-MTR management finding was to continue with incremental and sustained progress, knowing that field conditions were very difficult. Post-MTR guidance was to continue to make incremental progress and use the indicator for learning. This is being achieved, and the total number and diversity of efforts continues to increase. The reason for the inability to meet the indicator is that restoration and rehabilitation is extremely labor-intensive and even with dedicated investment,

Table 8: Progress on Outcome 2-level achievements

Project Strategy	Performance Indicator	Baseline	Target	Status of Target Achieved	Evaluation Comments	Rating[38]
Outcome 2: Integrated multi-sector land and seascape "Ridge-to-Reef" planning and management operational in Babeldaob states to reduce threats to biodiversity and improve ecosystem services to benefit communities and state economies	*Indicator 8:* Number of hectares of high conservation value ecosystems, including forests, mangroves and marine areas zoned/allocated for non-exhaustive use	*High Conservation Value Forests (dispersal corridors, biodiversity rich areas and buffer areas) outside protected area network lack appropriate management regimes*	*15,500 ha, resulting in total avoided 435,492 tCO_2 over 20 years of High conservation value forests, (including mangroves and marine areas) allocated for non-exhaustive use ~~of at least~~*	113,865 ha resulting in 10,971,297 tCO_{2eq} reduced over 20 years	Para 98	6
	Indicator 9: Number of hectares of degraded forests and grasslands and coastal and marine areas outside PAN network rehabilitated	*Over 12,500 hectares of forests, grasslands, and coastal and marine ecosystems under continued degradation through overuse*	*1,000 ha of degraded forests, grasslands and marine ecosystems restored through community actions resulting in total sequestration of 562,133 $tCO_{2\ over}$ 20-year period.*	379 ha	Para 99	3
	Indicator 10: Number of government planning policies or products that mainstream bird and forestry monitoring data into adaptive decision-making processes leading to improved status of endemic species, specifically Micronesian Imperial Pigeon and Palauan Fruit Dove	*Declining populations of Micronesian Imperial Pigeon and Palauan Fruit Dove with baseline of 3,000 and 1,600 individuals respectively (2014)*	*13* *1)* 3 NGO and Government Partners (BNM, KSG, Forestry) improve their biodiversity monitoring products (including annual reports) to include analysis of biodiversity monitoring data and include recommendations for adaptive management. *2)* All 10 State Master Plans on Babeldaob include a specific Monitoring & Evaluation and Adaptive Management feedback system that pulls and uses terrestrial biodiversity monitoring data	A number of actions do provide protections to endemic species	See Paras 100-103	4
	Indicator 11: Extent of community-based land, forest, coastal and marine management regimes applied, including resultant changes in community incomes from current levels	*Current extent of area under community land, forest, coastal and marine management regimes in target project states (to be determined in Year 1)*	*1,000 ha of areas resulting in sequestration of 460,681 tCO_2eq over 20-year period and in 25% increase in community incomes from current levels, of community-based land, forest, coastal and marine management regimes applied where at least 50% of beneficiaries are women*	1,569 ha resulting in 161,276 tCO_{2eq} reduced over 20 years. Estimated new income generated per year through these community-income opportunities is US$292,680 per year, more than 25% increase, with 69% going to rural communities.	See Para 104	5

[38] Ibid 12

impact is only at a range of 1-2 hectares per initiative. To 2023, only 624 hectares of degraded land and marine areas have been rehabilitated or restored through community actions sequestering 350,946 tCO_{2eq} over 20 years (against a target of 562,133 tCO_{2eq}). This included tree planting, restoration of wetlands, conversion of degraded land to agro-forest or agriculture, stream and shoreline restoration, clam planting, mangrove channel restoration, and three critical invasive species removal efforts in important bird areas (Ngeriungs for vines, and Ngerkeklau and Ulong for rodents).

100. For Indicator 10, efforts to "mainstream bird and forestry monitoring data into adaptive decision-making processes that would lead to improved status of endemic species (specifically Micronesian Imperial Pigeon and Palauan Fruit Dove)" are underway through Government policies and products. The baseline is that the population of Micronesian imperial pigeons increased from 13,718 in 1991 to an estimated 18,344 in 2005. The population of fruit doves rose from 46,980 in 1991 to 70,322 in 2005. Although the data was collected in 2005, it was not analyzed for population sizes or shared until 2022. Palau's bird data is shared on eBird. Comparing number of observations from 2022 to 2023 also indicates a continued increase based on crowdsourced data. From 2022 to 2023, the number of pigeons observed increased from 1,529 to 1,700 and the number of fruit doves observed increased from 3,878 to 4,247. Palau offers a bright spot in conservation efforts of the Micronesian pigeon, which has unfortunately declined in global status from NT to VU (Vulnerable) in 2020. Both Palau and Pohnpei show signs of recovery, but other islands have had drastic population reductions and continuing downward trends.

101. MAFE's new Strategic Plan for 2021-2024[39] includes an indicator about "Population Trends of Indicator Species" among its performance indicators. Birds had already been adopted as the indicator species for forest health and coastal health. The Project has mainstreamed protection of terrestrial biodiversity into its outputs, including protection or avoidance of upland forests in the Babeldaob land use guidance maps and improved IAS frameworks including monitoring for brown tree snakes at the border through EDRR. Awareness of biodiversity has increased through review of laws protecting native birds by Project partners and PCS including in its Strategy the goal of updating the Protected Land Life Act to better protect birds. Partnerships with the PAN are in place to improve monitoring of IAS in protected areas and thus avoid new threats to birds.

102. Enforcement partners also started a species review during the Project. Out of that review, DFWP identified the need for and then began working with the Attorney General's office to be able to issue citations (though DFWP has to elevate every enforcement action to a criminal case, which is difficult and thus many infractions are not pursued). Project partners have also mapped terrestrial tourism locations, most of which included some forest. The JCB agreed to zone tourism areas for non-exhaustive use, further protecting the habitats of birds.

103. Beyond birds, the enforcement partnership has led to improved enforcement of a Hawksbill Sea Turtle law, thereby better protected an endangered species that uses land and sea. While this does not exactly respond to Indicator 10 with a target of 13 "government planning policies or products that mainstream bird and forestry monitoring data into adaptive decision-making processes leading to improved status of endemic species", these actions do provide protections to endemic species.

104. For Indicator 11, 1,569 ha of area (against a target of 500 ha) has been designated and is under use for community-based sustainable use and income-generation purposes under community land, forest, coastal and marine management regimes in target project states. This sequesters or 161,276 tCO_{2eq} over 20 years (against a target of 461,681 tCO_{2eq}). Cumulatively, the Project has influenced

[39] https://www.palaugov.pw/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/MAFE_Strategic_Plan.pdf

the creation of at least 21 community-based income generation opportunities, benefiting at least 754 people (4% of Palau's total population) of which 64% were women. Income-generation opportunities reached 10% of the rural population with an estimated new income generated of US$292,680 per year, with 69% going to rural communities, mainly through the work of PCS and other NGOs. These opportunities helped generate some income to the State and individual communities, where many of these sites supported by the Project (such as Ngaraard eco-tour sites of Ngarchokl and Obakelderau or Peleliu State MPV Forest of Hope Biodiversity Trail) were marketed by women though the Project has not been able to quantify the income.

105. Overall, the achievement of Outcome 2 level targets is rated as ***s*atisfactory** with most targets being achieved except for Indicator 9.

3.3.3 Progress towards Outcome 3: Integrated multi-sector planning and management operational in 264,686 ha of seascapes and coastal areas[40] in the Southern Lagoon to reduce threats to biodiversity and improve ecosystem services to benefit communities and state economies

106. To achieve Outcome 3, a summary of achievements of the Outcome is provided with evaluation ratings on Table 9. For Indicator 12, the number of "policy instruments adopted in the Southern Lagoon that mainstream biodiversity information to facilitate better management leading to maintained or improved fish stocks and coral cover in designated areas" was unquantified. However, some of the targets were completed. The Southern Lagoon advanced a new fisheries law in 2023 in Koror, complete with climate resilience and fisheries planning. Koror produced its 3rd iteration of its Rock Islands Southern Lagoon (RISL) Management Plan, and incorporated climate resilience into its plans, and assisted the Project with workshops and training sessions to raise capacity among its rangers to implement new measures in the management plan and the Southern Lagoon fisheries plan.

107. A 2023 PICRC report using data through 2021 indicates that fish stocks continue to increase. Mean fish biomass significantly increased from 2017 (10.05 ± 0.79 g/m^2) to 2019 (12.11 ± 0.98 g/m^2) to 2021 (14.77 ± 1.38 g/m^2). A shift from smaller to larger size classes was observed for 10 commercially important fish species with only one species shifting to a smaller size class, and 3 species were stable. Mean length significantly increased over time for 10 species and only decreased for one species. Two species saw big increases in size, the S. rubroviolaceus (mean 260 mm in 2017 to 324 mm in 2021) and the K. vaigiensis (mean 265 mm in 2017 to 375 mm in 2021). These increases are an indicator of the success of size restrictions and best practices.

108. Further to Indicator 12, 10 species were surveyed between 2017 and 2021 for Spawning Potential Ratio with every species being increased. However, an estimated 80-87% of sites were overexploited in 2021. Even though results of the study indicate that reef fish stocks may be starting to recover with an increase in fish biomass, reef fish biomass in the fished waters of Palau is still generally low when compared to local MPAs and theoretical estimates of productivity. Furthermore, PICRC has changed its monitoring method from previous years; biomass values cannot be compared directly.

[40] This includes land area (3,100 ha) and the surrounding marine area to the state nautical limit of 12 miles making a total of 264,686 ha (area up to coral reef limits including land area is 103,100 ha). Planning beyond the reef (and up to the 12 nautical mile limit) will only address deep sea fishing issues.

Table 9: Progress on Outcome 3-level achievements

Project Strategy	Performance Indicator	Baseline	Target	Status of Target Achieved	Evaluation Comments	Rating[41]
Outcome 3: Integrated multi-sector planning and management operational in 264,686 ha of seascapes and coastal areas[42] in the Southern Lagoon to reduce threats to biodiversity and improve ecosystem services to benefit communities and state economies	*Indicator 12:* Number of policy instruments adopted in the Southern Lagoon that mainstream biodiversity information to facilitate better management leading to maintained or improved fish stocks and coral cover in designated areas	*Protected exposed reefs (outer reefs and channels) of 714kg/ha (with unprotected exposed reefs having 63% of this figure compared with MPAs) and 258kg/ha in protected inner reefs (black reefs and patch reefs/reef flats) with unprotected reefs having 57% of this figure compared with MPAs*	*5* 1) Adoption of a Marine Spatial Plan by KSG/DCLE and Peleliu. 2) Lagoon-wide Marine Spatial plan includes sustainable marine recommendations for fisheries, coral, and endangered animals as well as priority action sites for protection and/or restoration and rehabilitation; and 3) State policies and plans in Koror and Peleliu incorporate a specific Monitoring & Evaluation and Adaptive Management feedback system that pulls and uses marine biodiversity monitoring data	Unquantified, though there is the Southern Lagoon advancing a new fisheries law in 2023 in Koror, and Koror producing an updated Rock Islands Southern Lagoon (RISL) Management Plan that mainstreams biodiversity information to facilitate better management of fish stocks and coral cover.	Paras 106-110	5

[41] Ibid 12

[42] This includes land area (3,100 ha) and the surrounding marine area to the state nautical limit of 12 miles making a total of 264,686 ha (area up to coral reef limits including land area is 103,100 ha). Planning beyond the reef (and up to the 12 nautical mile limit) will only address deep sea fishing issues.

110. Achieving these operational management support systems in Koror and Peleliu reduces biodiversity threats, improves community incomes from improved land, forest, coastal and marine management regimes through IAS eradication and management in the Southern Lagoon (Ulong, Ngerkeklau rodent eradications; Rock Island Biosecurity; Biosecurity and IAS plant removal on Ngeriungs). Master planning and land use in Peleliu, and implementation of new measures in the Southern Lagoon Fisheries management plan and RISL management plan, integrates best practices in tourism and biosecurity actions. Other work in the Southern Lagoon includes the rehabilitation of the Peleliu Milk Fish Farm and the Biodiversity Trail, work that has also been integrated into their master plans for sustainability of these important sites.

111. Surveyed fishermen and women on their opinions of the RISL showed their strong support for MPAs, size limits and temporary closure to manage and help improve fish stocks. Surveys also provided insights to other locations for higher number of fish or fish species, spawning areas, and ideal or better areas for MPAs. Fishermen and women also suggested other measures for management and control measures for fishing such as tourist fishing permits, aquaculture, education and awareness, coral reef restoration, enforcement of regulations, gear regulations, improved size limits, spatial management, and catch limits.

112. As such, this achievement of Outcome 3 level targets is rated as **satisfactory** due to mainstreamed biodiversity information leading to improved management of fish stocks and coral cover.

3.3.4 Progress towards Outcome 4: Knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation support, equitable gender benefits and biodiversity conservation in Palau

113. To achieve Outcome 4, a summary of achievements of the Outcome is provided with evaluation ratings on Table 10. For Indicator 15, targets have been achieved with 87.3% of community members saying they know what "IAS" are (up from 76% at the start of the Project), with 86% correctly listing conservation threats caused by IAS (up from 74%). In addition, 27% also listed socioeconomic threats in addition to conservation threats. In 2023, the average number of correct Invasive Alien Species listed by respondents was 2.9, up from 1.5 at the start of the Project. Notwithstanding, 58% listed native "pest" species as Invasive Alien Species, down from 65% at the start of the Project. However, none of the rare species that had been listed as invasive in the past were listed as invasive now (such as the Purple Swamphen). Only 2 species were listed as IAS (crown-of-thorns and Kebeas vines), both of which are invasive under human conditions and are the subjective of invasive species control (just not invasive Alien species control). Project respondents incorrectly listed an average of 0.6 native species as IAS, down from 1.2 at the start of the project. Only 25% of men and 30% of women either answered incorrectly or stated they did not know what to do about IAS, indicating gender parity in knowledge.

114. For Indicator 16, the targets were achieved, but revised to indicate how many institutionalized invasive species programs have been established:

- in 2022, PICRC opened a permanent exhibit on marine invasive species;
- in 2023, the Belau National Museum opened an exhibit on endangered terrestrial species and invasive species threats targeting youth;
- the Project partnered with the CRRF to develop a training program on marine invasive species detection, filling a key gap;
- BoE continued its regular outreach on invasive species, including youth outreach at events, and adult outreach at trainings such as the Early Detection and Rapid Response frameworks;

Table 10: Progress on Outcome 4-level achievements

Project Strategy	Performance Indicator	Baseline	Target	Status of Target Achieved	Evaluation Comments	Rating[43]
Outcome 4: Knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation support, equitable gender benefits and biodiversity conservation in Palau	*Indicator 15:* 1) % of survey respondents who answer YES to knowing how to minimize impact by EOP. 2) Average number of IAS listed by respondents. 3) % incorrectly identifying native species as IAS	*Coordinated outreach on conservation threats and biosecurity lacking. Limited awareness of impact IAS among the general public. Baseline survey established in Year 1*	1) 75%. 2) 5 out of 20 priority IAS plants and 20 priority IAS animals. 3) less than 25%	1) 87% 2) 2.9 out of 20 priority IAS plants *3) 25% of men and 30% of women either answered incorrectly or stated they did not know what to do about IAS, indicating gender parity in knowledge*	Para 113	5
	Indicator 16: Number of governments, semi-government, and NGO partner programs institutionalizing IAS outreach programs; Number of groups targeted by institutionalized IAS programs	*Fifth-grade curriculum lacks emphasis on integrated landscape and seascape planning and threats of IAS*	5 specific targets: *1)* BNM Terrestrial IAS program for the public. *2)* PICRC Marine IAS program for youth. *3)* CRRF Marine Invasive Program for Resource Managers. *4)* MAFE BOE Outreach Program for Policymakers, Schools, and Businesses (through PAN, Forestry, and NISC). *5)* PCS IAS Programs for Schools.	5 1) Belau National Museum opened an exhibit on endangered terrestrial species and invasive species threats. 2) PICRC Marine IAS program for youth 3) Coral Reef Research Foundation to develop a training program on marine invasive species detection. 4) MAFE Bureau of Environment continued its regular outreach on invasive species. 5) Palau Conservation Society continued ongoing education and outreach for adults and resource- managers	Para 114	5
	Indicator 17: Number of best practices of sustainable land, coastal and marine resource use up scaled by communities/ households	*Best practice and lessons from GEF 5 available, but currently resources do not exist for their implementation*	*18 best practices of sustainable land, coastal and marine resource use up scaled by 9 communities*	*41 best practices upscaled to all 16 states*	See Paras 115-120	6

[43] Ibid 12

- the Palau Conservation Society continued ongoing education and outreach for adults and resource- managers with technical trainings on removal, and with general outreach for youth. Koror State, through its partner Island Conservation, launched biosecurity awareness targeting adults and particularly the tourism industry to secure the success of the Ulong Island Rodent Eradication. PICRC reached approximately 510 elementary students in the first half of 2023 after developing its IAS display and outreach program. This represented 28% of the nation's total elementary school enrolment.

115. For Indicator 17, the target has been achieved with 41 Best Practices (against a target of 18) that have been promoted through the Project or via co-financed partnerships. This includes 4 multi-sector best practices, 10 in agriculture/livestock, 8 in fisheries, 4 in aquaculture, 7 in forestry, and 7 in sustainable tourism. When the Project started, these best practices were only being targeted to 8 partner states; they are now in use by all 16 states and by private businesses, indicating effective scaling up of many of the best practices. In particular, best practices that were scaled up to multiple communities (more than 9) included land use planning, participatory planning, and use of Special Management Zones for climate risks. The involvement of the Project along with PCS and other NGOs was crucial to the transfer of knowledge on Best Practices.

116. Best Practices included taro wetland restoration, upland taro migration, reforestation using native species and with composting or ground cover, increased recycling, and use of biodiversity-friendly labeling and packaging in sales. Partners working in Koror took an inclusive approach to developing best practices for fisheries, by first surveying community members and traditional leaders and then working with scientists to create best practices. Best practices were generated for both male (for vertebrate fish) and female (for invertebrates) audiences[44].

117. One of the best practice assessments was of the Aimaliik State Ngerchebal MPA featuring a State Clam Farm Program that was to replicate the Ngeremelngui Clam Farm program. With strong partnerships, MoUs, benefitting community and state for revenue and sustainable maintenance, the assessment resulted in locating the proposed aquaculture site, and what species to plant for aquaculture. The site was a potential site for giant clams because of depth and other species of clams that are usually cultured (kism and duadeu). The program aims to support 20 clam farms, owned, and managed by community members in partnership with the State and with support of agencies such as BoF in maintenance, management, monitoring, and surveillance, similar to Ngeremlengui State program

118. Best practices are used by both men and women relatively equally (men used 90% of best practices, women used 78%). Multiple social groups are using best practices, including youth, working age adults, elderly, communities in the Southwest Islands, foreigners, and disabled persons. The Project made efforts to advance best practices in participatory planning and local product promotion that would engage persons with disabilities.

119. Best Practices for agriculture were mainstreamed into a new Agriculture Policy, which seeks to triple agricultural production while staying nature- and culture-positive. BoA worked with farmers and bilateral partners to expand livestock farming through dry litter piggeries, a pig breeding facility, chicken farming, production of eggs, and construction of meat processing facilities. The #KeledANgercheled (Food Security) campaign expanded to include a Youth Forum and continued promoting a cross-sector approach to food security. MAFE continued leading the #KeledANgercheled Task Force. Staff from the Project represented Palau at a regional FAO meeting to share best

[44] This refers to the types of fishing for male audiences and women audiences (who would be catching sea cucumbers or clams.

practices in cross-sector planning. Some of the State's Best Practice Projects are shown on the MAFE Palau Biodiversity website[45].

120. Cumulatively, Project partners launched 5 nature trails with interpretive signs that raise the awareness of biodiversity and create an alternative non-coral-reef tourist product. BoE created the Elausachel Trail as an educational tool to learn about native riparian forest at their Nekken demonstration center. This was incorporated into education programming geared towards students in rural areas.

121. Overall, the achievement of Outcome 4 level targets is rated as ***satisfactory*** with all targets achieved.

3.3.5 Relevance

122. The IAS Project is **relevant** to several plans and actions of the GRoP, both nationally and at the state levels, and to activities for beneficiaries at the community level. It is aligned with the strategic priorities of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) of 2015-2025, including direct support for:

- Goal 3: Protect Palau's biological diversity from negative impacts of invasive species and Living Modified Organisms (LMOs) through prevention, mitigation, and management;
- Goal 4: Integrate biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services into Palau's sustainable development goals;
- Goal 5: Establishing an enabling framework to support sustainable biodiversity use and Biodiversity based livelihoods; and
- Goal 7: Biodiversity conservation and sustainable resource use is integrated into all aspects of Government and community planning, development, and operations

123. The IAS Project is also aligned with the goals of the National Invasive Species Strategy (NISS) of 2014, including:

- Goal 1: To provide the framework and the capacity for ongoing management of invasive species in the Republic of Palau.
- Goal 2: To prevent the development of new problems with invasive species in the Republic of Palau
- Goal 3: To reduce the impact of existing invasive species in the Republic of Palau; and
- Goal 4: To strengthen cooperation with regional and international efforts and initiatives for invasive species prevention and management.

124. The IAS Project is aligned with the Responsible Tourism Policy Framework of 2017-2021, in particular with:

- Objective 1.1 National and state governments are united on the central priority of engaging responsible tourism policy toward the fulfilment of Palau's social, economic, environment.
- Objective 1.1 National and state governments are united on the central priority of engaging responsible tourism policy toward the fulfilment of Palau's social, economic, environment, and cultural goals.
- Objective 1.4 A strategy for tourism asset management is developed and is available for

[45] https://sites.google.com/view/gef6palau/partners-and-subprojects

integration into state land use and zoning plans.

- Objective 2.1 Sustainable carrying capacity ranges are established, determining acceptable levels of environmental, cultural, and community impacts.
- Objective 4.4 Green fee revenues and use are transparent and promoted. The fee supports a "Conservation Nation;" and
- Objective 6.2 Public-private partnerships to catalyze tourism opportunities outside of Koror focus on cultural and terrestrial nature-based tourism.

125. Within respect to global conventions, the IAS Project is aligned to achieving the CBD Aichi Biodiversity Targets:

- *Strategic Goal B* - Reduce the direct pressures on biodiversity and promote sustainable use:
  - *Target 5:* By 2020 the rate of loss of all natural habitats, including forests, is at least halved and where feasible brought close to zero, and degradation and fragmentation is significantly reduced.
  - *Target 7:* By 2020 areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry are managed sustainably, ensuring conservation of biodiversity.
  - *Target 9:* By 2020, invasive alien species and pathways are identified and prioritized, priority species are controlled or eradicated, and measures are in place to manage pathways to prevent introduction and establishment.
  - *Target 10:* By 2015, the multiple anthropogenic pressures on coral reefs, and other vulnerable ecosystems impacted by climate change or ocean acidification are minimized, so as to maintain their integrity and functioning.
- *Strategic Goal C* - To improve the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species, and genetic diversity: *Target 12* By 2020, the extinction of known threatened species has been prevented and their conservation status, particularly of those most in decline, has improved and sustained.
- *Strategic Goal D* - Enhance the benefits to all from biodiversity and ecosystem services: *Target 15* By 2020, ecosystem resilience and the contribution of biodiversity to carbon stocks has been enhanced, through conservation and restoration, including restoration of at least 15 per cent of degraded ecosystems, thereby contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation and to combating desertification.

126. The IAS Project also contributes to SDGs of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 including:

- *SDG 2 End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture*.
- *SDG 14 Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development*; and
- *SDG 15 Protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss*, by supporting conservation and sustainable management of forests in Palau to reduce land degradation.

127. The IAS Project is also relevant to:

- GEF strategic programming priorities for several Biodiversity programs, specifically:
  - BD-1: Improve sustainability, Program 2: Nature's Last Stand: Expanding the Reach of the Global Protected Area Estate of protected area systems;
  - BD 2: Reduce threats to globally significant biodiversity, Program 4: Prevention, Control and Management of Invasive Alien Species and Program 5: Implementing the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (CPB);
  - BD-3: Sustainably use biodiversity, Program 6: Ridge to Reef+: Maintaining Integrity and Function of Coral Reef Ecosystems; and
  - BD-4: Mainstream biodiversity conservation and sustainable use into production landscapes and seascapes and production sectors, Program 9: Managing the Human Biodiversity Interface;
- UNDP Multi-Country Programme Document for the Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu (2023-2027). Specifically for Palau's IAS Project, the following is relevant: Indicator 1.1. Number of countries with increased forest area as a proportion of total land area, Indicator 1.1.3. Number of people directly benefiting from initiatives to protect nature and promote sustainable use of resources, where "by 2027, people, communities and institutions are more empowered and resilient to face diverse shocks and stresses, especially related to climate variability impacts, and ecosystems and biodiversity are better protected, managed, and restored".

3.3.6 Effectiveness

128. Over the course of IAS Project implementation between 2018 and 2024, the extent to which outcomes have been achieved is reflected in Project activities working towards reversing negative impacts including:

- the formulation of NEMS to the Babeldaob-Koror Regional Urban Development Strategic Plan that was adopted by MoF. This started a country-wide effort to link terrestrial, nearshore, and offshore marine habitats through MSP to help define marine zones and develop nearshore marine spatial plans with 11 of out of Palau's 16 states having drafted nearshore marine spatial plans. This also catalyzed 14 out of 16 states completing master plans that institutionalize cross-sector planning where 13 of the States have land use plans;
- the Project mainstreaming biodiversity and state master plan priorities throughout the new Palau National Development Plan (PDP);
- in 2022, the Invasive Alien Species Program that was institutionalized by MAFE, was made into a formal division under BoE with a budget, authority, and performance measures. This was subsequently taken over by MoF in 2023 who inspects all incoming sea and aircraft as described in Para 96, 3rd bullet.

129. The contribution of other organizations (other national and state entities and NGOs) to the outcomes has been crucial to the effectiveness of programme partnerships that contributed to achieving the outcomes:

- PICRC opened a permanent exhibit on marine invasive species;

- the Belau National Museum opened an exhibit on endangered terrestrial species and invasive species threats in 2023;
- the Coral Reef Research Foundation partnered with the Project to develop a training program on marine invasive species detection;
- MAFE's BoE continued its regular outreach on invasive species, including youth outreach at events and activities, and adult outreach at trainings such as the Early Detection and Rapid Response frameworks;
- PCS continued ongoing education and outreach for adults and resource managers with technical trainings on removal of invasive species, and with general outreach for youth;
- Koror State, through its partner Island Conservation, launched biosecurity awareness targeting adults and particularly the tourism industry to secure the success of the Ulong Island Rodent Eradication;
- EQPB enforces development and pesticide permits to limit the spread of invasive species;
- Rotary Palau removing invasive plants and replace them with native ones;
- the Project supporting strengthened relationships with regional and global partners that assist with invasive species management, from SPREP to PII to USDOD to New Zealand and Australian governments; and
- communities across Palau embracing community-based income generation opportunities for 21 communities benefiting at least 754 people (4% of Palau's total population), out of which 64% were women. More details on women's empowerment are provided on Paras 139-144.

130. In conclusion, the effectiveness of the IAS Project has been **highly satisfactory**, in consideration of Project's contribution towards reversing the negative impacts of unsustainable sector-led development practices on biodiversity-rich landscapes of Palau, including its productive coastal and marine ecosystems. There were no negative or unintended consequences brought about during Project implementation.

3.3.7 Efficiency

131. The Project had a slow start between 2018 and 2021 that included:

- delays in meeting staffing requirements and meetings with the management. The lack of sufficient staff to manage the Project, unclear role definition between the different staff duties and the overlap of work duties, and deficiencies in bringing in technical expertise (due to COVID-19) slowed the implementation process during this period.
- difficulties in preparing national biosecurity guidelines, notably during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- difficulties in constructing the Bureau of Agriculture Biosecurity and Quarantine Facility during the first 3 years of the Project, also due to the COVID-19 pandemic and changing prices of materials and labour.
- delays for new Project staff and 20 Project partners in Palau in learning new administrative UNDP processes in implementing Project activities, including review and approvals of FACE forms, AWPs, or costed budgets, codings, aligning to the ATLAS budget, and expense reporting, all complicated by the 80/20 rule; and
- delayed funding flows as detailed in Para 78.

132. Notwithstanding, there were early Project achievements that included seascapes and landscapes effectively managed through participatory approaches, and individual and institutional capacities being built. However, most achievements came after mid-2021 when COVID-19 restrictions were lifted. There are numerous achievements including:

- the State Master Planning completed in several states after mid-2022;
- biodiversity mainstreamed into Land Use Guides and lagoon maps for Babeldaob, Koror, and Peleliu, with updates provided to data layers and increased spatial mapping capacity at PALARIS. Many more people were starting to use spatial data which triggered Palau to prepare a document on "Pathways to Sustainable Food Systems in Palau".
- the Biosecurity building changed in November 2021 from the BoA to the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection with the Ministry of Finance. An MoU between the new Bureaus has been drafted and is awaiting review and approval by ministers and directors of MAFE and MoF to arrange use and roles of building and biosecurity officers that were previously with BoA. It is highly likely that this work will have to be picked up in a subsequent GEF-8 project or by both Ministries after the EoP.
- all states and communities being very active with mapping in preparation for land use planning by late 2022;
- by late 2022, under Output 2.2, the Babeldaob JCB agreeing to guide states towards protecting water sources including buffer zones around tourism sites, the Ngeremlengui giant clam aquaculture project that is inside an MPA/PAN site to demonstrate how economic uses can align with conservation, and several states working on aligned eco-tour plans and IAS Project-created tools and maps;
- by late 2021, under Output 2.3, many activities rehabilitating degraded lands including Ngarchelong trail clearing (after agreements with landowners), Ngiwal on food security projects, and Ngchesar with an eco-hut constructed;
- by late 2022, under Output 2.4, many Best Practices learned and communicated during the Gender Workshop. This included:
    - Aimeliik community restored sections of its Ngerderar trail and built benches out of plastic wood to improve the site as a tourist product;
    - Ngchesar building a Cheuall tourist site structure and kayak launch point;
    - Ngarchelong landowners and the State reached a compromise solution for the Mesei Access Trail to pass through their lands;
    - Ngaraard completing a community-run tourism center built using traditional methods and best practices;
    - Melekeok is rapidly progressing through Master Planning;
    - Koror and PCS PALARIS completing a comprehensive fisheries plan for the entire Koror lagoon area;
    - Ngiwal's men's and women's clubs conducting quarterly river maintenance;
    - the Taro Project (a partnership between the State Government and mesei (taro farm) owners used crop rotation best practices;

  - in fulfilling a community request to establish a clam aquaculture farm, Ngeremlenui in collaboration with the Bkullengriil Conservation Area (CA), Ngeremlengui State Planning Committee, MAFE and Belau Marine Resources (BMR) worked together on planting clam seedlings and building the clam farms;

- by late 2021, under Output 3.1, Koror State oversight for a #OneCommunity Sustainable Fisheries Management Plan, on proposed measures including size limits, gear restrictions, zoning, temporary closures, and MPAs, led by KSG DCLE and PCS in partnership with BMR, PALARIS, PICRC, TNC, MAFE GEF6, and MCT;
- by late 2023, also under Output 3.1, the Peleliu State Planning Team had an update on their Vision, starting on goals and objectives, and updating their maps;
- by late 2021, under Output 3.2:
  - Koror State developed a native plant medicinal garden;
  - Koror had a giant clam restoration project with students;
  - Peleliu started rehabilitating the trail in the Forest of Hope;
- by early-2022, under Output 3.3, the Bureau of Fisheries started to implement a near-shore fisheries strategy that was developed into an annual action plan;
- by 2022, Peleliu implemented a Best Practice project to rehabilitate a milkfish pond, involving the removal of logs, debris, invasive vines, and trash from the mangrove, and fixing holes in the inlet. Amidst improvements in the catch, the farm is used to supply fish to local residents;
- by early 2023, clam cages in Ngaremlengui were installed with BoF securing all the necessary supplies for the construction of 5 clam cages in collaboration with Ngaremlengui State;
- by early 2023, a survey of clam farms was completed intended for replication of the Ngaremlengui clam farm (Para 117);
- BoF discussed with The Nature Conservancy around future assistance in implementing recommendations of a report (commissioned by the President) that reviews aquaculture in Palau and makes recommendations on strengthening capacity to manage hatcheries.

133. In conclusion, the efficiency of the IAS Project is rated as **satisfactory** due to the numerous achievements and the economical use of financial and human resources that have been strategically allocated, and the efforts to bring the Project back on schedule negating the need for a no-cost extension, notwithstanding the slow start to the Project.

3.3.8 Overall Project Outcome

134. The intended Project outcomes are as follows:

- the Project has been mostly successful at achieving its objective to "*mainstream biodiversity conservation into integrated land and seascape governance, planning and management in Palau*" meeting all targets for Mandatory Indicators 1.3.1, 1.3.2, and 2.5.1. Most importantly, the Project influenced 14 state master plans (out of 16 states), 12 state laws, and 21 national strategies, plans, and policies;
- *Outcome 1: "Enhanced national institutional framework for integrated planning and management of land and seascapes"* has been successfully in achieving increased institutional capacities for planning, implementation and monitoring integrated land and seascape

management plans by over 100%. This includes improved surveillance and controls for land development and prevention of high-risk IAS from entering Palau.

- *Outcome 2: "Integrated multi-sector land and seascape "Ridge-to-Reef" planning and management operational in Babeldaob states to reduce threats to biodiversity and improve ecosystem services to benefit communities and state economies"* has been mostly successfully in achieving operational management support systems in all Babeldaob reducing biodiversity threats, and improving community incomes from improved land, forest, coastal and marine management regimes. The only target not achieved was the 1,000 ha of rehabilitated degraded forests and grasslands and coastal and marine areas outside PAN network, which only achieved 379 ha.
- *Outcome 3: "Integrated multi-sector planning and management operational in 264,686 ha of seascapes and coastal areas in the Southern Lagoon to reduce threats to biodiversity and improve ecosystem services to benefit communities and state economies"* has been successful in achieving policies, strategic plans and operational management support systems in Koror & Peleliu in reducing biodiversity threats, and improving community incomes from improved land, forest, coastal and marine management regimes (Paras 106-110);
- *Outcome 4: "Knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation support, equitable gender benefits and biodiversity conservation in Palau"* has been successful in transferring knowledge to all stakeholders (government and communities) on the impact of IAS on conservation and biosecurity and best practices for maintaining sustainable land, coastal and marine resources.

135. The intended Project outcomes have been ***satisfactory.***

3.3.9 Sustainability of Project Outcomes

136. In assessing sustainability of the IAS Project, the Evaluators asked, "how likely will the Project outcomes be sustained beyond Project termination?" Sustainability of the IAS Project's outcomes was evaluated in the dimensions of financial resources, socio-political risks, institutional framework and governance, and environmental factors, using a simple ranking scheme:

- *4 = Likely (L):* negligible risks to sustainability;
- *3 = Moderately Likely (ML):* moderate risks to sustainability;
- *2 = Moderately Unlikely (MU):* significant risks to sustainability; and
- *1 = Unlikely (U):* severe risks to sustainability; and
- *U/A = unable to assess*.

Overall rating is equivalent to the lowest sustainability ranking score of the 4 dimensions. Details of sustainability ratings for IAS Project are provided on Table 9.

137. *The overall IAS Project sustainability rating is moderately likely (ML).* This is primarily due to:

- the GRoP has access to funds from Compact Association, USFS and other donors. However, the volume of funds is dependent on the capacities of the recipients to utilize the funds;
- the national and state stakeholders are actively taking part in environmental management, monitoring and surveillance aided by access to new PALARIS spatial data and climate projections as well as strategies to combat IAS.

Table 9: Assessment of Sustainability of Outcomes

Actual Outcomes (as of June 2024)	Assessment of Sustainability	Dimensions of Sustainability[34]
Actual Outcome 1: National and state institutional frameworks for integrated planning and management of land and seascapes has been enhanced along with increased national and state capacities to formulate and manage these frameworks including improved surveillance and controls for prevention of high-risk IAS from entering Palau.	• *Financial Resources:* GRoP has access to funds from Compact Association, USFS and other donors. Volume of funds is dependent on the capacities of the recipients. • *Socio-Political Risks*: Many of the national and state stakeholders are sustainably and actively taking part in environmental management, monitoring and surveillance aided by access to new PALARIS spatial data and climate projections as well as strategies to combat IAS; • *Institutional Framework and Governance:* National and state stakeholders are actively implementing frameworks for integrated planning and management of land and seascapes; • *Environmental Factors:* No environmental risks. ***Overall Rating***	3 4 4 4 **3**
Actual Outcome 2: Integrated multi-sector land and seascape "Ridge-to-Reef" planning and management is being implemented in Babeldaob states to reduce threats to biodiversity and improve ecosystem services that benefit communities	• *Financial Resources:* GRoP has access to funds from Compact Association, USFS and other donors. Volume of funds is dependent on the capacities of the recipients. • *Socio-Political Risks*: Communities have embraced income-generating opportunities involving 754 people, 4% of Palau's population, of which 64% were women, that will lead to replication of these opportunities. Care, however, needs to be taken to ensure communities preserve their biodiversity amidst intensification of land uses for income generating opportunities; • *Institutional Framework and Governance:* 3 GRoP partners improve their biodiversity monitoring to include analysis of biodiversity monitoring data and include recommendations for adaptive management. All 10 State Master Plans on Babeldaob include a specific Monitoring & Evaluation and Adaptive Management feedback system that leads to sustained management. • *Environmental Factors:* Some environmental risks from intensified land use from income generating activities, mainly in agriculture. This can potentially lead to biodiversity losses if not properly monitored or checked. ***Overall Rating***	3 4 4 3 **3**
Actual Outcome 3: The Rock Islands Southern Lagoon Management Plan for 264,686 ha of seascapes and coastal areas in the Southern Lagoon is operational in reducing threats to biodiversity and is implementing new measures in the management plan and the Southern Lagoon fisheries plan.	• *Financial Resources:* GRoP has access to funds from Compact Association, USFS and other donors. Volume of funds is dependent on the capacities of the recipients. • *Socio-Political Risks*: Though studies indicate that reef fish stocks may be starting to recover, reef fish biomass in the fished waters of Palau is still generally low when compared to local MPAs and theoretical estimates of productivity. Surveyed fishermen and women on their opinions of the RISL showed their strong support for MPAs, size limits and temporary closure to manage and help improve fish stocks. • *Institutional Framework and Governance:* State policies and plans in Koror and Peleliu incorporate a specific Monitoring & Evaluation and Adaptive Management feedback system that pulls and uses marine biodiversity monitoring data. Lagoon-wide Marine Spatial plan includes sustainable marine	3 4 4

[34] Ibid 3. Overall rating based on lowest score

Table 9: Assessment of Sustainability of Outcomes

Actual Outcomes (as of June 2024)	Assessment of Sustainability	Dimensions of Sustainability[34]
	recommendations for fisheries, coral, and endangered animals. This all leads to sustained operations of the Management Plans; • *Environmental Factors:* Some environmental risks if reef fishing is allowed before stocks have recovered. ***Overall Rating***	4 **3**
Actual Outcome 4: Knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation support equitable gender benefits and biodiversity conservation in Palau	• *Financial Resources:* GRoP has access to funds from Compact Association, USFS and other donors. Volume of funds is dependent on the capacities of the recipients. • *Socio-Political Risks*: Increases in awareness of biosecurity issues in Palau decreases social risks to sustainability. This is complemented by outreach, exhibit and training programs on invasive species threats and detection by various Palauan institutes; • *Institutional Framework and Governance:* There are outreach, exhibit and training programs on invasive species threats and detection by various Palauan institutes. • *Environmental Factors:* No environmental risks. ***Overall Rating***	3 4 4 4 **3**
	Overall Rating of Project Sustainability:	**3**

- notwithstanding that communities are embracing best practices for income-generating opportunities, biodiversity is potentially under threat from intensified land use from income generating activities, mainly in agriculture and aquaculture, if not properly monitored or checked;
- the Project has a post-project sustainability exit strategy through the drafting of a GEF-8 project proposal with IUCN on biodiversity and food security.

3.3.10 Country Ownership

138. Palau's strong ownership of the IAS Project is demonstrated with GRoP's investment into zoning, land use planning, and nearshore marine spatial planning within 15 of Palau's 16 states participating in sustainable use planning. Ownership of the Project came from zoning by State governments, as well as through national commitments and laws related to marine spatial planning. Ownership was also demonstrated through GRoP's ability to facilitate influence over 14 state master plans, 12 state laws, and 21 national strategies, plans, and policies.

3.3.11 Gender equality and women's empowerment

139. To integrate gender equality and women's empowerment into the Evaluation, interviews with all stakeholders were approached with questions concerning the welfare of women, girls, and other disadvantaged groups in the Project interventions. This included in testimonial evidence and feedback from training participants, and information from PMU personnel report. The time available for the IAS Project Evaluation forced the International Evaluator to stay with the interview approach as the primary methodology to incorporate gender-responsive aspects.

140. The launching of the Palau Gender and Natural Resources 2020 National Report and the 2020 KAP Survey Report (Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices) built an understanding on how stakeholders were to implement Palau's Gender Mainstreaming Policy and to increase awareness of gender and social inclusion in natural resource use, biodiversity management, and land use planning. Participants were to include ministries, tourism private sector, local farmers, community members, and NGOs. The website was updated to create a central repository for Gender Tools and several gender mainstreaming tools were updated. The KAP survey showed strong support for zoning, with 70-96% of respondents believing that zoning is important for sustainable development. This strong support benefits from the involvement of women and the participatory and inclusive nature of the IAS Project.

141. The Project with the Ebiil partnership held a Gender Mainstreaming Workshop in September 2021 with the purpose of integrating gender perspectives in policies and programs, and monitoring, evaluation, learning, and accountability. Other annual Gender Mainstreaming workshops were conducted in 2022 and 2023 on equitable and sustainable agricultural growth and gender assessment of the rural sector. The Project also contributed to bilateral gender priorities with the Government of Australia and contributed to a national "Consultation on Key Gender Priorities" (related to Climate Justice) in 2021 that were used in the update to Palau's climate change policy.

142. With these reports, the Project has been able to reformulate its safeguards and approaches to achieve more gender equity with results being more apparent in 2023. The PMU reports that gender participation on IAS Project activities is currently nearly equal amongst men and women, with particular emphasis on planning teams and legislated planning commissions that have authority over

land use and control over permitting decisions at the state level (with 52% of planning team members being men and 48% are women from a baseline of 77% men and 23% women).

143. The Project and its partners have targeted growth of economic benefits for women. To date, the PMU reports that community-based income-generating activities have been created to engage 500 women (64% of all participants) with an estimated 70% of participants in community income generation activities from rural communities. The Project also worked to mainstream gender considerations into other agency strategies, such as the Palau Housing Authority, which now has a vision, mission, and objectives about equity and families.

144. Finally, the PMU reports that the Project was able to provide outreach to more states than originally planned because of the influence of women who sought assistance from the Project. Thus, the total area of land designated for sustainable use is greater than planned in more states. Indicator 17 made more than incremental progress because of the emphasis on women's taro patches in the past year, leading to biodiversity and climate resilience benefits in these wetland food production landscapes, as well as reduced sedimentation into adjacent marine areas. The Project employed more best practices, for instance sea cucumber propagation, because it emphasized the needs of women. Certain species of sea cucumber in Palau are endangered leading to environmental benefits in addition to economic and food security benefits.

145. In conclusion, efforts by the Project to ensure gender equality and empowerment were **highly satisfactory**.

3.3.12 Cross cutting issues

146. Cross-cutting issues of the IAS Project were defined in the Project's Social, Biodiversity, and Biosecurity Safeguards document which is the Project's SESP. This document provides safeguards for the IAS Project to ensure that safeguards for biodiversity are mainstreamed into conservation, management, and planning throughout Palau. The document provides:

- overarching safeguards including all Project activities must comply with National and State laws and regulations;
- social safeguards that include inter-alia committees or groups to always include an equitable and fair mix of genders, and rapid assessments of Project impact on women, men, the elderly, youth, disabled populations, foreign nationals, and vulnerable peoples;
- other safeguards for biodiversity and the general environment, biosecurity, climate, and finance.

147. Information from the PMU and field visits to various sites by the International Evaluator indicates high compliance with these safeguards:

- many of the workshops and meetings have attendance disaggregated by gender;
- Palau's National Gender Mainstreaming Policy passed by Congress in 2020 commits the GRoP to create all necessary conditions to ensure that the Government's policies and services benefit all women and men equitably, and to take additional measures to remove barriers to gender quality

and safeguard human rights to achieve the goal of sustainable development. A result of this policy is that gender balance is approaching 50% for government and Project staff;

- many community-based income generating activities involved women, as detailed in Paras 140-144
- land and marine use plans in place to safeguard against net loss of mangroves, a water source or downstream marine area (Para 88);
- improved surveillance and controls for prevention of high-risk IAS from entering Palau (Para 96).
- 41 best practices for agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries were scaled up to 16 states to benefit communities that include populations with disabilities and vulnerable groups that included participatory land use planning, and use of Special Management Zones for climate risks. (Paras 115-119).

3.3.13 GEF Additionality

148. The issue of GEF additionality is quite clear on the IAS Project. Without the Project, there would be no support for:

- preparation of the national institutional framework for integrated planning and management of land and seascapes including improved surveillance and controls for prevention of high-risk IAS.
- the overall process of implementing integrated ecosystem-based management through a "ridge to reef" approach on islands of Babeldaob and the Southern Lagoon. This includes Project-supported surveys, assessments, training, legislative work, and rehabilitation and management work, all designed to enhance Ridge to Reef connectivity, and to enhance management effectiveness within these states; and
- transfer of knowledge to communities on best practices of sustainable land, coastal and marine resource use.

3.3.14 Catalytic/Replication Effect

149. Catalytic and replication effects can be found in:

- State master plans that were started by Airai State that catalyzed similar master planning activities starting in Ngaraard state and further catalyzing master planning for 14 out of 16 states in the country. Master planning was also catalyzed by the availability of augmented spatial planning data of PALARIS;
- training and capacity building to address IAS and improving national biosecurity through completion of "Early Detection and Rapid Response Plans" and the "Inter-Island Biosecurity Plans" was catalytic in getting several initiatives started to tackle IAS issues throughout Palau;
- 41 Best Practices against a target of 18 were promoted by the Project or via co-financed partnerships. Clearly, these best practices that included land use planning and participatory planning were originally replicated to 8 partner states, and now to all 16 states, more than 9 communities, and private businesses, indicating effective replication of many of the best practices.

3.3.15 Progress to impact

150. Progress towards the biodiversity mainstreaming impacts of the IAS Project have been:

- 240,000 ha of seascapes and landscapes that have been effectively managed through participatory approaches, far above the target of 115,000 ha.
- 55% of households that have benefitted from the Project in sustainable resource management and best practice approaches.
- 4% of the population that have benefited from income-generating opportunities organized by MAFE, the States and NGOs, and out of which 64% were women.
- 14 out of 16 states that have completed master plans that institutionalize cross-sector planning for comprehensive landscape and seascape planning and management approaches. There are 13 of the States which have land use plans and where planning and zoning laws have been setup within Babeldaob State and Koror state laws, all of which can be found on the MAFE Palau Biodiversity Project website.
- a new Palau National Development Plan (PDP) that covered 17 sectors in the country, mainstreaming biodiversity and state master plan priorities.
- programmes that address IAS on several fronts complete with improved surveillance and controls for prevention of high-risk IAS from entering Palau; and
- higher level of awareness amongst the public of invasive alien species and best practices in agriculture, livestock rearing, fisheries, aquaculture, forestry, and sustainable tourism.

151. While the Project has succeeded in mainstreaming biodiversity as an impact, one worrisome issue is the intensification of land uses for income-generating activities, potentially posing a threat to biodiversity. There are land use plans in place to safeguard against net loss of mangroves, productive lands, downstream marine areas, and improved monitoring and surveillance systems to prevent of high-risk IAS from entering Palau. However, as demands increase on land use and reef fisheries to feed a growing population and more tourists, there needs to be higher level of compliance to these land use plans and monitoring systems. This may possibly involve the private sector who can catalyze innovation in sustainable agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries while working with the GRoP in compliance with biodiversity laws. With an emphasis on promoting women-led and youth-led businesses, there should also be augmented capacity building for community farmers on best practices for sustainable biodiversity-friendly agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries that improves availability and access to knowledge and technical expertise. The Project only had 4% of Palauans benefitting from income-generating opportunities.

4. MAIN FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LESSONS

4.1 Main Findings

Project Design and Implementation

152. The Project design was conducted with a wide range of consultations and a broad spectrum of stakeholders and took into consideration learnings from past projects both within the country and other countries during the PPG phase. However, some of the indicators in the July 2018 PRF were insufficiently specific and not achievable resulting in a revised PRF in September 2021. This necessitated a few PRF changes that were provided in Appendix F with red font to reflect the changes made by the Project team in September 2021 and green font to reflect changes made by this Evaluator; all this was done to improve clarity and SMART attributes of the indicators and targets, and to improve the Project team's ability to monitor Project progress.

153. Notwithstanding, the IAS Project reached nearly all of its targets, despite its slow start due to Project staff becoming familiar with relevant UNDP rules and procedures and the COVID-19 pandemic. The Project achieved outcomes and most targets from an efficient Project management structure that promoted proactive and open participation of all relevant national stakeholders (national and local governments, communities, NGOs and the private sector) as a bottom-up approach. This was beneficial to raising awareness of the consequences of stakeholder actions on their environment and resources and for capturing traditional knowledge. As a result, the Project has managed, inter-alia, to:

- secure 284,994 ha of seascapes and landscapes effectively managed through participatory approaches.
- support 4,018 individuals to benefit financially from Project livelihood subprojects with 51% being females.
- achieve numerous legislative and strategic directives for natural resources management including 14 state master plans and 21 national strategies, plans, and policies;
- substantially build institutional capacities on landscape and seascape environmental management and biosecurity issues;
- started "Ridge-to-Reef" planning and operational management (including income-generating opportunities) in Babeldaob states as well as islands in the Southern Lagoon that reduces threats to biodiversity and improves ecosystem services to communities.

154. A most significant implementation finding, however, was the successful transfer of knowledge on 41 best practices on sustainable land, coastal and marine resources. Examples of the 41 best practices includes best practices for scaling up of taro production; the planting of native grasses to minimize short-term erosion; the planting of native and fruit trees approved non-native trees, and lemongrass on degraded lands; river restoration; and removal of invasive vines. These best practices have been upscaled in all 16 states.

Relevance

155. The Project is relevant to several government plans, policies and actions of the GRoP including the NBSAP, the NISS, the Responsible Tourism Policy Framework of 2017-2021 (Paras 122 to 124), and

global conventions such as the CBD Aichi Biodiversity and the SDGs of The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Paras 125-126).

Effectiveness

156. The effectiveness of the IAS Project has been highly satisfactory, in consideration of Project's contribution towards reversing the negative impacts of unsustainable sector-led development practices on biodiversity-rich landscapes of Palau, including its productive coastal and marine ecosystems. There were no negative or unintended consequences brought about during Project implementation (Paras 128 to 130).

Efficiency

157. The efficiency of the IAS Project is rated as satisfactory due to the numerous achievements and the economical use of financial and human resources that have been strategically allocated, and the efforts to bring the Project back on schedule starting in 2021, negating the need for a no-cost extension, notwithstanding the slow start to the Project (Paras 131-133).

Sustainability

158. IAS Project sustainability is rated as moderately likely. Notwithstanding that national and state stakeholders are actively taking part in environmental management, monitoring and surveillance, and communities are embracing best practices for income-generating opportunities, biodiversity is potentially under threat from intensified land use from income generating activities, mainly in agriculture and aquaculture (Para 137, Table 9).

Gender and Cross Cutting Issues

159. The Project's efforts to promote gender equality and women's empowerment were highly satisfactory. The Project has been able to reformulate its safeguards and approaches to achieve more gender equity with results being more apparent in 2023, based on the discussions during the September 2021 Gender Mainstreaming Workshop and the contents of the Palau Gender and Natural Resources 2020 National Report. Gender participation on IAS Project activities was nearly equal amongst men and women, with particular emphasis on planning teams and legislated planning commissions that have authority over land use and control over permitting decisions at the state level with 52% of planning team members being men and 48% are women from a baseline of 77% men and 23% women (Paras 140 to 142). With 70% of participants in community income generation activities being from rural communities, the Project's community-based income-generating activities have engaged 500 women (comprising 64% of all participants of 4% of Palau's entire population). The Project has also been able to provide outreach to more states than originally planned because of the influence of women who sought assistance from the Project.

160. There was also high compliance to the cross-cutting issues contained in the Project's SESP entitled "Social, Biodiversity, and Biosecurity Safeguards". This includes inter-alia Palau's National Gender Mainstreaming Policy passed by Congress in 2020 committing the GRoP to create all necessary conditions to ensure that the Government's policies and services benefit all women and men equitably, many community-based income generating activities involving women, and 41 best practices that were scaled up to 16 states for agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries to benefit communities (Paras 146-147).

Progress to Impact

161. Progress has been made towards the impacts of mainstreaming biodiversity of the IAS Project including inter-alia, 240,000 ha of seascapes and landscapes that have been effectively managed through participatory approaches, 55% of households that have benefitted from the Project in sustainable resource management and best practice approaches, 14 out of 16 states that have completed master plans for comprehensive landscape and seascape planning and management approaches, and higher level of awareness amongst the public of invasive alien species and best practices in agriculture, livestock rearing, fisheries, aquaculture, forestry, and sustainable tourism (Para 150).

4.2 Conclusions

162. While the Project has succeeded in mainstreaming biodiversity, demands are and will be increased on intensified land use and reef fisheries to feed a growing population. Agriculture in Palau is largely characterized by traditional and informal methods. While traditional agricultural practices are finely tuned to Palau's unique environment (once thriving in harmonious balance with local biodiversity), these practices have the potential to be rapidly eroded and overshadowed by unsustainable practices unless regulated. If there is weak compliance to the master plans of the 14 states to coherent landscape and spatial planning, there will be unregulated pesticide use, coupled with poor locations of agricultural and aquacultural sites. This shift not only deviates from historically sustainable practices but also contributes to the erosion of biodiversity and ecological resilience. The expansion of a domestic food supply in Palau possibly threatens local ecosystems through intensification of crops, and land clearing and deforestation that could lead to cattle farming. This could lead to a loss of forest and coastal habitats and associated biodiversity, increasing vulnerability to climate change impacts, undermining ecosystem services for agriculture, imposing limitations on freshwater availability, and intensifying coastal fishing and over-fishing. All this directly impacts the near shore-coastal environment (key source of marine food systems) with the use of pesticides, nutrient runoff, chemical pollution, erosion, siltation, encroachment of destructive invasive alien species, and production of solid waste[35].

163. Hence, the larger issue for the IAS Project is the intensification of land uses for income-generating activities potentially posing threats to biodiversity, though the scaling up of agricultural and aquaculture production and reef fisheries helps Palau to gradually become less reliant on food imports. This reduces GHG emissions linked to food imports to comply with UNFCCC convention's obligations.

164. While the IAS Project has built some momentum on best practices on sustainable land, coastal and marine resources and in managing biodiversity, there is a need for biodiversity, climate change and food security policies to be more closely aligned. Currently, compliance to Palau's several relevant plans and strategies related to biodiversity becomes more challenging with:

- the NBSAP, notably Goals 4, 5 and 7;
- CBD Aichi Biodiversity Targets, notable Strategic Goal B, Target 7; and
- SDGs notably SDGs 2 and 14.

[35] Local communities in Babeldaob are well aware of the threat posed by the runoff of sediments and chemical pollutants from land downstream to the estuaries, lagoons, and reefs. This ultimately leads to a loss of mangroves for coastal protection and fish spawning grounds as key ecosystems services. Over-harvesting and over-fishing complement the range of threats to the nearshore marine habitats.

165. With an emphasis on promoting women-led and youth-led businesses, there need to be augmented capacity building for community farmers on best practices for sustainable biodiversity-friendly agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries that improves availability and access to knowledge and technical expertise. There also needs to be involvement by the private sector who can catalyze innovation in sustainable agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries while partnering with the GRoP in complying with biodiversity laws (Para 151).

166. In addition, there are still wide gaps in capacity and experience on inter-sectoral zoning practice, and effective management and compliance enforcement to maintaining the sustainability of near-shore and pelagic fisheries. The biodiversity of the fishery is threatened by overexploitation of living marine resources and weak systems for fisheries monitoring control and surveillance at the national level.

167. As such, remaining barriers to mainstreaming biodiversity conservation in Palau include:

- shortcomings in governance, policy coherence and legal framework to enable cross-sectoral planning of natural resource management as well as a comprehensive valuation of natural resources supporting agriculture, aquaculture, and fishery food production in Palau;
- despite the institutional capacity building on the IAS Project on biodiversity, there is still limited capacity and experience in biodiversity-friendly solutions in agricultural and fisheries production sectors;
- still weak inter-sectoral coordination between national and state levels to ensure effective implementation and management of protected areas, even though the Project showed this is growing in strength. Although Palau has developed management regulations, monitoring and enforcement capabilities are still weak in enforcing these regulations and prosecuting violations. Capacity for protected area management is also limited and needs to be strengthened[36];
- national and state level collaboration mechanisms or platforms to promote knowledge sharing and exchange still need to be resourced. For now, there is limited exchange with private sector entities and other regional countries on sustainable production of crops, aquaculture, and fisheries.

4.3 Recommendations

168. The recommendations made in this Evaluation are made in the spirit of addressing threats to biodiversity based on the work of the IAS Project and the transitioning of Palau to nature-based solutions towards sustainable agriculture and aquaculture.

Rec #	Recommendation	Entity Responsible	Time Frame
169.	**Recommendation 1:**		
	GRoP needs to integrate the developed sector-based national policies in agriculture, forestry, and climate change, with the 2020 National Master Plan, and undertake a comprehensive valuation of natural resources that support agriculture, aquaculture, and fishery food production to trigger biodiversity-	GRoP and UNDP	Immediate

[36] PAN was established in Palau in the early 2000s to provide financial, technical, and other support to communities for the management of protected areas. Despite PAN advances of recent years, sites in the PAN are managed at the local level, via individual and community-based management plans, and at the national level by a PAN strategic plan. PAN sites are monitored regularly for biophysical and socioeconomic impact, and there is an established and working reporting system for both local PAN sites and the national PAN system.

Rec #	Recommendation	Entity Responsible	Time Frame
	friendly investments in food systems in Palau. This should include: • integrating and spatially linking the developed sector-based national policies in agriculture, forestry, and climate change, with the 2020 National Master Plan and the Pathways to Food Systems in Palau (September 2021). While there is a high-level commitment to the transformation of "food systems towards that are modernized and efficient, support sustainable livelihoods, drive nutritional hunger to zero, and are environmentally and cultural sustainable and resilient sustainable agriculture", this has yet to be fully translated into national and sub-national level policies and implementable action plans with clear objectives and sufficient fiscal support and implementable action plans with clear objectives and sufficient fiscal support; • providing a quantifiable valuation of natural resources supporting agriculture, aquaculture, and fishery food production in Palau to generate policy decisions on biodiversity-friendly sustainable transformation of priority food systems. A valuation should be undertaken with a focus on cross-sectoral policies for ecosystem services that support sustainable food systems. This would address the urgent need for policies to support sustainable agricultural and aquacultural practices that mitigates further environmental deterioration and conserves biodiversity.		
170.	**Recommendation 2**		
	Overcome the limited capacity and experience in biodiversity-friendly solutions in agricultural and fisheries production sectors by encouraging an increase in public-private partnerships or private sector investment using best practices that would facilitate Palau investments in sustainable biodiversity-friendly food systems that have climate benefits. This will involve investigation and implementing models of public-private partnerships or private sector investment proposals in the agriculture, aquaculture, and fishery sectors. GRoP and the financial sector can be involved in loans, incentives, and financial mechanisms all in place to stimulate small-scale and local community nature-positive biodiversity-friendly businesses including women- and youth-owned businesses, thus increasing investment in the agriculture, aquaculture, and fishery sectors. This can catalyse and sustainably accelerate the use of best practices for agriculture and aquaculture which should include participatory planning within land use planning; nature-based biodiversity-friendly solutions with restrictions and regulated	GRoP, state entities and UNDP	Immediate

Rec #	Recommendation	Entity Responsible	Time Frame
	use of fertilizers and chemicals in the agriculture, aquaculture, and fishery sectors; and use of special management zones to account for climate risks. Best practices (10 in agriculture/ livestock, 8 in fisheries, 4 in aquaculture) are now in use by all 16 states and with some private businesses, indicating these sectors are primed for scaling up of best practices. An assessment of the relevance, accessibility and impact of the tools and guidelines should be made prior to upscaling. Strengthened state level laws, regulations, ordinances, and standards would contribute towards strengthening enforcement mechanisms to combat threats to biodiversity).		
171.	**Recommendation 3**		
	Address weak inter-sectoral coordination between national and state levels to ensure effective implementation and management of protected areas. This Evaluation acknowledges to the challenges in recruiting monitoring and enforcement personnel for Palau's protected areas. Notwithstanding, continued efforts need to be made by GRoP to recruit monitoring and enforcement personnel to safeguard Palau's unique biodiversity and management of protected areas.	GRoP and state entities	Medium term
172.	**Recommendation 4**		
	Find resources to continue with national and state level collaboration mechanisms or platforms to promote knowledge sharing and exchange on best practices for sustainable agricultural, aquaculture and fishery system. With just 4% of Palau's population benefitting from natural resourced based income generating activities, national and state government entities in Palau have limited capacity to collect and assess information that would enable them to provide targeted support. A more formal information and knowledge exchange mechanism would improve public and private actors to harness additional investments to build capacity to scale up priority actions in sustainable biodiversity-friendly agriculture, aquaculture, and fisheries. In addition, national and state governments should provide augmented capacity building for community farmers (with an emphasis on women- and youth-led businesses) to improve their access to knowledge and technical expertise on nature-based biodiversity-friendly sustainable agriculture, aquaculture, and fisheries activities. This augmented capacity building should involve best practices tested and ready for replication and upscaling to larger communities with men and women participating in project-led consultations, workshops, and committee meetings. Further efforts can be made to showcase	GRoP, state entities and UNDP	Medium term

Rec #	Recommendation	Entity Responsible	Time Frame
	nature-based solutions and successes at national, regional, and international events.		

4.4 Lessons learned

173. *Lesson #1: The proactive and open participation of relevant national stakeholders in the design process was beneficial for participating communities and government agencies by implementing a bottom-up approach that was beneficial raising awareness of the consequences of their own actions on their environment and resources and for capturing traditional knowledge*. With weak capacities at the community and government levels having a significant impact on effective marine, terrestrial and protected areas management, there are key steps to ensure buy-in, engagement, and successful communication with relevant stakeholders:

- with face-to-face learning being the preferred mode of information exchange, information on sustainable terrestrial and aquatic management should be easily understood and accessible, delivered in a culturally sensitive participatory manner, mindful of stakeholder time constraints, and adaptable as new information becomes available;
- through engagement of local elders, traditional knowledge becomes available to the process;
- contracting a local NGO or consultant familiar with the state to coordinate and lead data collection process is also a key step in successful communication with relevant stakeholders.
- when activities are being carried out by international consultants, national stakeholders need to have strong involvement.

Failure to involve stakeholders at these levels will often result in adjustments to designs if the project is to be properly implemented.

174. *Lesson #2: Identification of leaders who could serve as 'champions' who are particularly interested in and passionate about the learning process, is extremely important*. This would involve identification of community members who can build partnerships between communities, local government, and government agencies, improving communication and collaboration among state partners and communities. For establishing and ensuring management effectiveness, selecting a champion through a participatory process represents the best approach although it is very time consuming and highly dependent on community members' time, their priorities, the geographic make-up of sites, weather conditions, cultural issues, and other external factors, with some PAs and their communities being remote and difficult to access. Most importantly, community social events (such as funerals, celebrations) are deeply embedded in community social fabric, and are prioritised over other activities. An example of a champion is the head of Ngaremlengui who has managed to secure all necessary supplies for the construction of 5 clam cages and who actively worked on drafting agreements outlining the roles of the state, BOF and the individual farmers on management of the clam farms. This was a trial concept that has replication potential for aquaculture.

175. *Lesson #3: Design and planning processes needs to focus upon technical aspects and integrate issues related to the operationalization of a project whose targets can be achieved*. Over ambitious targets have indelible impacts when implemented, and often hinder the obtaining of results. When indicators are not SMART, there is a tendency for implementation to not be as focused on achieving

the outcomes or objectives. For complex interventions, SMART indicators, most importantly, need to be specific in terms of what actions are to be undertaken. Then the level of staffing should reflect the reality of implementing an initiative within a particular national context; the project management unit needs to be strong, well-funded, trained and adequately staffed.

176. *Lesson #4: Best practices of working through a crisis are listed such as Covid related lockdowns*. With the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, borders were closed making it impossible to hire off-island experts and consultants. This resulted in low financial delivery and delayed outputs such as installation of X-ray machines, and creation of an Early Detection and Rapid Response system. Best practices of working through such as crisis and catching up includes:

- many stakeholder meetings including key project personnel were held by Zoom notwithstanding that these meetings were difficult to schedule. Despite having a critical on-island national consultant, some rural stakeholders may have been missed. Additional difficulties were also experienced in that the local labor pool is very small and difficult to source. This was partially mitigated by accessing local expertise in person and via Zoom;
- tourism activities were refocused on "pandemic safety" as an enabling condition;
- having a skilled and committed project team who continue to work hard to deliver project results. This included the PMU individually working with Koror and Peleliu to achieve objectives, requiring dedicated time and effort. The PMU reaching out to Peleliu required traveling there to work with them individually to implement actions; and
- implementing a bottom-up approach that is beneficial raising awareness of the consequences of their own actions on their environment and resources and for capturing traditional knowledge (see Recommendation #1 – Para 173).

177. *Lesson #5: Work that is left behind for another project such as regulations, legislations and work between Ministries has the risk of being resolved by politics rather than on the merits of the proposed regulations*. An example of this is the sudden switching of biosecurity from the BoA to the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection with the Ministry of Finance in November 2021. Currently, an MoU between the new Bureaus is being drafted and awaiting review and approval by ministers and directors of MAFE and MoF to arrange use and roles of building and biosecurity officers that were previously with BoA as detailed in Para 132, 3rd bullet. Though this work is to be resumed under a proposed GEF-8, there is no reliable way to predict what will be the final roles and responsibilities of all government stakeholders on biosecurity.

APPENDIX A - MISSION TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR IAS PROJECT TERMINAL EVALUATION

Integrating Biodiversity Safeguards and Conservation into Development in Palau Project

1. INTRODUCTION

In accordance with UNDP and GEF M&E policies and procedures, all full- and medium-sized UNDP-supported GEF-financed projects are required to undergo a Terminal Evaluation (TE) at the end of the project. This Terms of Reference (ToR) sets out the expectations for the TE of the *full -sized* project titled *Integrating Biodiversity Safeguards and Conservation into Development in Palau (PIMS # 5645)* implemented through the Government of Palau's *Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and the Environment* (formerly the *Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment and Tourism*) in its 6 years of implementation. The TE process must follow the guidance outlined in the document 'Guidance For Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects'(here)

2. PROJECT BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT`

This project aims to address the negative impacts of unsustainable sector-led development practices on biodiversity-rich landscapes of Palau, including its productive coastal and marine ecosystems, while taking into account climate change adaptation needs and inclusive and equitable social and economic development for dependent communities, as well as safeguarding against threats to biodiversity and the introduction and spread of Invasive Alien Species through the tourism and related sectors. The objective of the project is to mainstream biodiversity conservation into integrated land and seascape governance, planning and management in Palau.

The project recognizes the fact that these land and seascapes underpin the lives and livelihoods of a large number of local communities and that implementation of a coherent strategy to promote sustainable, biodiversity-friendly livelihood options is an integral part of the solution. The project objective is to be achieved through the implementation of four inter-related and mutually complementary Components (Project Outcomes) that are focussed on addressing existing barriers. The four outcomes of the project are:

1. Enhanced national institutional framework for integrated planning and management of land and seascapes.
2. Integrated multi-sector land and seascape planning and management operational in Babeldaob states to reduce threats to biodiversity and improve ecosystem services to benefit communities and state economies.
3. Integrated multi-sector planning and management operational in 264,686 ha of seascapes and coastal areas in the Southern Lagoon to reduce threats to biodiversity and improve ecosystem services to benefit communities and state economies; and
4. Knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation support, equitable gender benefits and biodiversity conservation in Palau.

During the period of 2020-2022, the COVID-19 pandemic brought unforeseen challenges that triggered a cascading effect at the level of project execution in Palau. As a result, the Project experienced some delays, especially in its tourism-related aspects because of the downturn. The Project also experienced a shortfall in technical knowledge due to the travel restriction that prevented the international consultants traveling

into Palau. At these COVID-19 challenges, the project pivoted towards the local expertise to fill in for the international specialists. In the broader national context on the fight against COVID-19, in August 2021, Palau became one of the highest COVID-19 vaccination rates in the world with approximately 84% of its population fully vaccinated. This assisted the project to return to normal implementation. Hence towards the end of the project despite the delay in implementation during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the project has managed to achieve all its end of project targets still.

3. TE PURPOSE

The TE report will assess the achievement of project results against what was expected to be achieved and draw lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project, and aid in the overall enhancement of UNDP programming. The TE report promotes accountability and transparency and assesses the extent of project accomplishments.

Further to this, the objectives of the evaluation will be to:

- assess the achievement of project results supported by evidence (i.e. progress of project's outcome targets),
- assess the contribution and alignment of the project to relevant national development plan or environmental policies;
- assess the contribution of the project results towards the relevant outcome and output of the Multi Country Project Document (MCPD) & United Nation Pacific Strategy (UNPS/UNDAF)
- assess any cross cutting and gender issues
- examination on the use of funds and value for money
- Document lessons learnt and best practices from the implementation of the project
- assess the impact of COVID-19 on project's implementation
- and to draw lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project, and aid in the overall enhancement of UNDP programming.

The TE will be conducted according to the guidance, rules and procedures established by UNDP and GEF as reflected in the UNDP Evaluation Guidance for GEF Financed Projects.

4. TE APPROACH & METHODOLOGY

The TE report must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable, and useful. The TE team will review all relevant sources of information including documents prepared during the preparation phase (i.e. PIF, UNDP Initiation Plan, UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Procedure/SESP) the Project Document, project reports including annual PIRs, project budget revisions, lesson learned reports, national strategic and legal documents, and any other materials that the team considers useful for this evidence-based evaluation. The TE team will review the baseline and midterm GEF focal area Core Indicators/Tracking Tools submitted to the GEF at the CEO endorsement and midterm stages and the terminal Core Indicators/Tracking Tools that must be completed before the TE field mission begins.

The TE team is expected to follow a participatory and consultative approach ensuring close engagement with the Project Team, government counterparts (the GEF Operational Focal Point), Implementing Partners, the UNDP Country Office(s), the Regional Technical Advisor, direct beneficiaries, and other stakeholders.

Engagement of stakeholders is vital to a successful TE. Stakeholder involvement should include interviews with stakeholders who have project responsibilities, including but not limited to executing agencies, senior officials and task team/component leaders, key experts and consultants in the subject area, Project Board, project beneficiaries, academia, local government and CSOs, etc.

Additionally, the TE team is expected to conduct field missions to at least Koror State, and two States on Babeldaob. These will include canvassing the project sites' traditional villages/communities, fishing and/or farming communities to gauge the percentage of households that are directly benefiting through sustainable resource management approaches and incomes.

The specific design and methodology for the TE should emerge from consultations between the TE team and the above-mentioned parties regarding what is appropriate and feasible for meeting the TE purpose and objectives and answering the evaluation questions, given limitations of budget, time and data. The TE team must, however, use gender-responsive methodologies and tools and ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment, as well as other cross-cutting issues and SDGs are incorporated into the TE report.

The final methodological approach including interview schedule, field visits and data to be used in the evaluation must be clearly outlined in the TE Inception Report and be fully discussed and agreed between UNDP, stakeholders, and the TE team.

The final report must describe the full TE approach taken and the rationale for the approach making explicit the underlying assumptions, challenges, strengths and weaknesses about the methods and approach of the evaluation.

5. DETAILED SCOPE OF THE TE

The TE will assess project performance against expectations set out in the project's Logical Framework/Results Framework (see ToR Annex A). The TE will assess results according to the criteria outlined in the Guidance for TEs of UNDP-supported GEF-financed Projects (here)

The Findings section of the TE report will cover the topics listed below.
A full outline of the TE report's content is provided in ToR Annex C.
The asterisk "(*)" indicates criteria for which a rating is required.

Findings

i. Project Design/Formulation

- National priorities and country driven ness
- Theory of Change
- Gender equality and women's empowerment
- Social and Environmental Safeguards
- Analysis of Results Framework: project logic and strategy, indicators
- Assumptions and Risks
- Lessons from other relevant projects (e.g. same focal area) incorporated into project design
- Planned stakeholder participation
- Linkages between project and other interventions within the sector
- Management arrangements

ii. Project Implementation

Adaptive management (changes to the project design and project outputs during implementation)

- Actual stakeholder participation and partnership arrangements
- Project Finance and Co-finance
- Monitoring & Evaluation: design at entry (*), implementation (*), and overall assessment of M&E (*)

- Implementing Agency (UNDP) (*) and Executing Agency (*), overall project oversight/implementation and execution (*)
- Risk Management, including Social and Environmental Standards

iii. Project Results

Assess the achievement of outcomes against indicators by reporting on the level of progress for each objective and outcome indicator at the time of the TE and noting final achievements

- Relevance (*), Effectiveness (*), Efficiency (*) and overall project outcome (*)
- Sustainability: financial (*) , socio-political (*), institutional framework and governance (*), environmental (*), overall likelihood of sustainability (*)
- Country ownership
- Gender equality and women's empowerment
- Cross-cutting issues (poverty alleviation, improved governance, climate change mitigation and adaptation, disaster prevention and recovery, human rights, capacity development, South-South cooperation, knowledge management, volunteerism, etc., as relevant)
- GEF Additionality
- Catalytic Role / Replication Effect
- Progress to impact

iv. Main Findings, Conclusions, Recommendations and Lessons Learned

- The TE team will include a summary of the main findings of the TE report. Findings should be presented as statements of fact that are based on analysis of the data.
- The section on conclusions will be written in light of the findings. Conclusions should be comprehensive and balanced statements that are well substantiated by evidence and logically connected to the TE findings. They should highlight the strengths, weaknesses, and results of the project, respond to key evaluation questions, and provide insights into the identification of and/or solutions to important problems or issues pertinent to project beneficiaries, UNDP and the GEF, including issues in relation to gender equality and women's empowerment.
- Recommendations should provide concrete, practical, feasible and targeted recommendations directed to the intended users of the evaluation about what actions to take and decisions to make. The recommendations should be specifically supported by the evidence and linked to the findings and conclusions around key questions addressed by the evaluation.
- The TE report should also include lessons that can be taken from the evaluation, including best and worst practices in addressing issues relating to relevance, performance and success that can provide knowledge gained from the particular circumstance (programmatic and evaluation methods used, partnerships, financial leveraging, etc.) that are applicable to other GEF and UNDP interventions. When possible, the TE team should include examples of good practices in project design and implementation.
- It is important for the conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned of the TE report to include results related to gender equality and empowerment of women.

The TE report will include an Evaluation Ratings Table, as shown below:

ToR Table 2: Evaluation Ratings Table for Integrating Biodiversity Safeguards and Conservation into Planning and Development in Palau Project

Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)	Rating[1]
M&E design at entry	
M&E Plan Implementation	
Overall Quality of M&E	
	Rating
Quality of UNDP Implementation/Oversight	
Quality of Implementing Partner Execution	
Overall quality of Implementation/Execution	
Assessment of Outcomes	Rating
Relevance	
Effectiveness	
Efficiency	
Overall Project Outcome Rating	
Sustainability	Rating
Financial resources	
Socio-political/economic	
Institutional framework and governance	
Environmental	
Overall Likelihood of Sustainability	

6. TIMEFRAME

The total duration of the TE will be approximately *(average 25-35 working days)* over a time period of *(12 weeks)* starting on *(19 February 2024)* The tentative TE timeframe is as follows:

Timeframe	Activity
5 February 2024	Selection of TE team (GPN express roster for IC while procurement process for NC will be used)
16 February 2024	Preparation period for TE team (handover of documentation)
19 February 2024	Document review and preparation of TE Inception Report
21 February 2024	Finalization and Validation of TE Inception Report
4 March 2024	Latest start of TE mission, TE mission: stakeholder meetings, interviews, field visits, etc.
18 March 2024	Mission wrap-up meeting & presentation of initial findings; earliest end of TE mission
19 March 2024	Preparation of draft TE report
29 March 2024	Circulation of draft TE report for comments
5 April 2024	Incorporation of comments on draft TE report into Audit Trail & finalization of TE report
12 April 2024	Preparation and Issuance of Management Response
26 April 2024	Expected date of full TE completion

Options for site visits should be provided in the TE Inception Report.

7. TE DELIVERABLES

#	Deliverable	Description	Timing	Responsibilities
1	TE Inception Report	TE team clarifies objectives, methodology and timing of the TE	No later than 2 weeks before the TE mission: *(4 March 2024)*	TE team submits Inception Report to Commissioning Unit and project management
2	Presentation	Initial Findings	End of TE mission: *(18 March 2024)*	TE team presents to Commissioning Unit and project management
3	Draft TE Report	Full draft report *(using guidelines on report content in ToR Annex C)* with annexes	Within 3 weeks of end of TE mission: (*29 March 2024)*	TE team submits to Commissioning Unit; reviewed by BPPS-GEF RTA, Project Coordinating Unit, GEF OFP
5	Final TE Report* + Audit Trail	Revised final report and TE Audit trail in which the TE details how all received comments have (and have not) been addressed in the final TE report *(See template in ToR Annex H)*	Within 1 week of receiving comments on draft report: (26 *April 2024)*	TE team submits both documents to the Commissioning Unit

*All final TE reports will be quality assessed by the UNDP Independent Evaluation Office (IEO). Details of the IEO's quality assessment of decentralized evaluations can be found in Section 6 of the UNDP Evaluation Guidelines.[2]

8. TE ARRANGEMENTS

The principal responsibility for managing the TE resides with the Commissioning Unit. The Commissioning Unit for this project's TE is *the UNDP Pacific Office.*

The Commissioning Unit will contract the evaluators and ensure the timely provision of per diems and travel arrangements within the country for the TE team. The Project Team will be responsible for liaising with the TE team to provide all relevant documents, set up stakeholder interviews, and arrange field visits.

9. TE TEAM COMPOSITION

A team of *two independent evaluators* will conduct the TE – *one team leader (with experience and exposure to projects and evaluations in other regions) and one team expert, usually from the country of the project*. The team leader will *be responsible for the overall design and writing of the TE report.* The national consultant will support field and in country validation of results through the agreed methodology.

The evaluator(s) cannot have participated in the project preparation, formulation and/or implementation (including the writing of the project document), must not have conducted this project's Mid-Term Review and should not have a conflict of interest with the project's related activities.

The selection of evaluators will be aimed at maximizing the overall "team" qualities in the following areas:

Education

- Master's degree in *environmental studies, Ecosystem-based Management Studies, Conservation and Biodiversity Studies* or other closely related field;

Experience

- Relevant experience with results-based management evaluation methodologies;
- At least 10 years of experience in evaluating international cooperation projects promoting climate change adaptation, food security, ecosystems-based adaptation, coastal protection, fisheries and agricultural adaptation, natural resources governance or similar programs and projects.
- Experience applying SMART indicators and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios;
- Competence in adaptive management, as applied to Ecosystem Based Management, Conservation and Biodiversity*;*
- Experience in evaluating projects;
- Experience working in the Pacific, especially in the Northern Pacific Island countries;
- Experience in relevant technical areas for at least *10 years;*
- Demonstrated understanding of issues related to gender and Ecosystem Based Management, Conservation and Biodiversity experience in gender responsive evaluation and analysis;
- Excellent communication skills;
- Demonstrable analytical skills;
- Project evaluation/review experience within United Nations system will be considered an asset;

Language

- Fluency in written and spoken English.

10. EVALUATOR ETHICS

The TE team will be held to the highest ethical standards and is required to sign a code of conduct upon acceptance of the assignment. This evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation'. The evaluator must safeguard the rights and confidentiality of information providers, interviewees, and stakeholders through measures to ensure compliance with legal and other relevant codes governing collection of data and reporting on data. The evaluator must also ensure security of collected information before and after the evaluation and protocols to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of sources of information where that is expected. The information knowledge and data gathered in the evaluation process must also be solely used for the evaluation and not for other uses without the express authorization of UNDP and partners.

11. PAYMENT SCHEDULE

- 20% payment upon satisfactory delivery of the final TE Inception Report and approval by the Commissioning Unit
- 40% payment upon satisfactory delivery of the draft TE report to the Commissioning Unit

- 40% payment upon satisfactory delivery of the final TE report and approval by the Commissioning Unit and RTA (via signatures on the TE Report Clearance Form) and delivery of completed TE Audit Trail. Criteria for issuing the final payment of 40%:
- The final TE report includes all requirements outlined in the TE TOR and is in accordance with the TE guidance.
- The final TE report is clearly written, logically organized, and is specific for this project (i.e. text has not been cut & pasted from other TE reports).
- The Audit Trail includes responses to and justification for each comment listed.

APPENDIX B - MISSION ITINERARY (FOR MAY-JUNE 2024)

#	Activity	Stakeholder involved	Place
***28 May 2024** (Tuesday)*			
1	IAS Kick-off meeting	UNDP	Virtual via Zoom meeting
***29 May 2024** (Wednesday)*			
	Arrival in Koror	UNDP	
2	Meeting with IAS Project Manager	PMU	Koror
30 May 2024 (Thursday)			
3	Meeting with Steven Victor, Minister	MAFE	Koror
4	Meeting with Ilima Kloulchad Director, Bureau of Environment	MAFE	Koror
5	Meeting with Kashgar Rengulbai, Acting Director, Bureau of Agriculture Terebkul Tellei, Chief, Division of Horticulture	MAFE	Bureau of Agriculture, Ngchesar State Compound
31 May 2024 (Friday)			
	Working on TE Report		
1 June 2024 (Saturday)			
6	Meeting with Ms. Lei Rengubai, BoE, Chief of Division of Forest, Land and Water Management	MAFE	Virtual via Zoom meeting
7	Field trip to Peleliu Site visit to MVP Forest of Hope Biodiversity Trail	MAFE & Peleliu State (needed approval from State to visit for evaluation – Dolmii called ahead to get approval and give notice of date and time of visit)	Peleliu
2 June 2024 (Sunday)			
	Working on TE report		
3 June 2024 (Monday)			
8	Meeting with Ms. Ophelia Johannes, GIS Analyst	PALARIS	Koror
9	Meeting with Ms. Zina Ringang, Program Coordinator, Policy & Planning Program, PCS	Palau Conservation Society	Koror
10	Meeting with Mr. Keith Mesebluu, Bureau of Fisheries, Chief, Division of Oceanic Fisheries	MAFE	Koror
11	Meeting with Sholeh Hanser, Herbarium Manager	Belau National Museum	Koror
4 June 2024 (Tuesday)			

#	Activity	Stakeholder involved	Place
12	Field trip to Ngaraard State Meeting with Naito Soaladaob, Ngaraard State Planning Team Ngaraard State Office: Kedengel Douglas, Lavander Humio, and Christopher Suzuki	MAFE & Ngaraard State	Ngaraard State
5 June 2024 (Wednesday)			
13	Field Trip to Ngeremlengui State Meeting with Siles Kesolei, State Planning Team & State Planning Commission Morei Secharmidal, Chief Ranger, Ngeremlengui State Government	Ngeremlengui State & MAFE	Ngeremelengui State
7 June 2024 (Friday)			
14	Meeting with Ms. Doralee Benhart, Coastal Management Officer	Koror State Department of Conservation and Law Enforcement	Koror
	Departure from Koror		

Total number of meetings conducted: 14.

APPENDIX C - LIST OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED

This is a listing of persons contacted in the IAS Team (unless otherwise noted) during the Terminal Evaluation Period only. The Evaluators regrets any omissions to this list.

1. Ms. Merewalesi Laveti, Monitoring, Evaluation and Country Coordination, Pacific Office in Fiji, UNDP.
2. Mr. Rusiate Ratuniata, IAS Project Manager.
3. Ms. Tharuka Dissanaike, UNDP RTA.
4. Ms. Dolmii Remeliik, IAS Project Manager.
5. Ms. Ilima Kloulchad Director, Bureau of Environment, MAFE.
6. Mr. Kashgar Rengulbai, Acting Director, Bureau of Agriculture, MAFE.
7. Mr. Terebkul Tellei, Chief, Division of Horticulture, MAFE.
8. Mr. Keith Mesebluu, Bureau of Fisheries MAFE.
9. Ms. Lei Rengubai, BoE, Chief of Division of Forest, Land and Water Management, MAFE.
10. Ms. Ophelia Johannes, GIS Analyst, PALARIS.
11. Ms. Zina Ringang, Program Coordinator, Policy & Planning Program, PCS.
12. Ms. Sholeh Hanser, Herbarium Manager, Belau National Museum.
13. Mr. Naito Soaladaob, Ngaraard State Planning Team.
14. Mr. Kedengel Douglas, Ngaraard State Office.
15. Ms. Lavander Humio, Ngaraard State Office.
16. Mr. Christopher Suzuki, Ngaraard State Office.
17. Mr. Siles Kesolei, State Planning Team & State Planning Commission, Ngeremlengui State Government.
18. Ms. Morei Secharmidal, Chief Ranger, Ngeremlengui State Government.
19. Ms. Doralee Benhart, Coastal Management Officer, Koror State Department of Conservation and Law Enforcement.

APPENDIX D - LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

1. UNDP-GEF Project Document for "Integrating Biodiversity Safeguards and Conservation into Development in Palau" (IAS Project);

2. CEO Endorsement Document for "Integrating Biodiversity Safeguards and Conservation into Development in Palau" (IAS Project);

3. 2019 to 2023 PIRs;

4. Project Board meetings from 2018 to 2024;

5. MTR Report on "Integrating biodiversity safeguards and conservation into development in Palau" (IAS Project), September 2021;

6. United Nations Pacific Strategy 2018-2022;

7. MAFE Strategic Plan 2021-2024;

8. Palau's Northern Reef Fisheries Management Plan 2016;

9. Government of Palau, "Pathways to Sustainable Food Systems in Palau", September 2021;

10. "Palau Gender and Natural Resources 2020 National Report" by GEF, UNDP, Ministry of Natural Resource, Environment, and Tourism, and Ministry of Community and Cultural Affairs, Bureau of Aging, Gender, and Disability;

11. "Palau KAP 2020 Survey: Baseline Knowledge, Attitudes, & Practices regarding Invasive Alien Species & Land Use Planning" by Jodean D.O. Remengesau, Production Sector Support Specialist, National GEF6 Project;

12. "Palau National Inter-island Biosecurity (IIB) framework", IAS Project report;

13. "Palau National Early Detection and Rapid Response (EDRR) framework", IAS Project report;

14. "Marine Invasive Species Training Program", IAS Project report.

APPENDIX E - COMPLETED TRACKING TOOL

Figure E-1: Screenshot of Tracking Tool for GEF 6 IAS Project for SFM projects

Section A. General Data			
Project Title	Integrating biodiversity safeguards and conservation into planning and development in Palau		
GEF ID	9208		
GEF Agency	UNDP		
Agency Project ID	5645		
Country	Palau		
Region	EAP		
Date of Council/CEO Approval			Month DD, YYYY (e.g., May 13, 2014)
GEF Grant (US$)	4,233,562		
Date of submission of the tracking tool	July 21, 2024		
Section B. Quantitative Data (targets at CEO Endorsement, Actual values at MTR & TE)			
SFM Objectives and Outcomes	**Indicators and Measures**		
SFM-1: Maintained Forest Resources: Reduce the pressures on high conservation value forests by addressing the drivers of deforestation.			
Outcome 1: Cross-sector policy and planning approaches at appropriate governance scales, avoid loss of high conservation value forests.	Indicator 1: Area of high conservation value forest identified and maintained.	15000	Hectare
Outcome 2: Innovative mechanisms avoid the loss of high conservation value forest.	Indicator 2: Number of incentive mechanisms to avoid the loss of high conservation value forests implemented.	6	Number of mechanisms
SFM-2: Enhanced Forest Management: Maintain flows of forest ecosystem services and improve resilience to climate change through SFM.			
Outcome 3: Increased application of good management practices in all forests by relevant government, local community (both women and men) and private sector actors.	Indicator 3: Area of sustainably managed forest, stratified by forest management actors.		
Outcome 4: Increased contribution of sustained forest ecosystem services to national economies and local livelihoods of both women and men.	Indicator 4: The number of forest policies that include valuation and accounting of economic, social and environmental benefits and services.		
SFM-3: Restored Forest Ecosystems: Reverse the loss of ecosystem services within degraded forest landscapes.			
Outcome 5: Integrated landscape restoration plans to maintain forest ecosystem services are implemented at appropriate scales by government, private sector and local community actors, both women and men.	Indicator 5: Area of forest resources restored in the landscape, stratified by forest management actors.	1000	hectare
SFM-4: Increased Regional and Global Cooperation: Enhanced regional and global coordination on efforts to maintain forest resources, enhance for			
Outcome 6: Improved collaboration between countries and across sectors on the implementation of SFM.	Indicator 6: Development and strengthening of networks to promote regional and global cooperation.	N/A	Number of networks
Reporting on lifetime emissions avoided **Lifetime direct GHG emissions avoided:** Lifetime direct GHG emissions avoided are the emissions reductions attributable to the investments made **during the project's supervised implementation period**, totaled over the respective lifetime of the investments. **Lifetime indirect GHG emissions avoided (top-down and bottom-up):** indirect emissions reductions are those attributable to the long-term outcomes of the GEF activities that remove barriers, such as capacity building, innovation, catalytic action for replication. For LULUCF projects, lifetime length is defined to be 20 years, unless a different number of years is deemed appropriate. For emission or removal factors (tonnes of CO2eq per hectare per year), use IPCC defaults or country specific factors.			
Total Lifetime Direct and Indirect GHG Emissions Avoided overBaseline (target at CEO Endorsement, Actual values at MTR & TE)			Identify source (conservation, avoided deforestation, reforestation), type of low GHG Management Practice and describe estimation methodology used
Lifetime direct GHG emissions avoided	1,458,306 over 20-year period	tons CO_2 eq	•15,000 ha HCVF (14,000 forest, 1,000 mangrove) set aside (conserved) •1000 ha restored to forest • 500 ha land protected from fire •500 ha degraded land sustainably managed for agro-forestry
Lifetime indirect GHG emissions avoided			Improved land and marine use planning nationwide.
Area under low GHG Management Practices	240,000	hectares	Total area under land/seascape plans

APPENDIX F - PROJECT RESULTS FRAMEWORK FOR IAS PROJECT (EDITS IN RED AND GREEN FONT AFTER JULY 2021 MTR)[49]

This project will contribute to the following Sustainable Development Goal (s): Strategic Goal C (To improve the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species, and genetic diversity), and Target 12 (By 2020, the extinction of known threatened species has been prevented and their conservation status, particularly of those most in decline, has been improved and sustained).
This project will contribute to the following country outcome included in the UNDAF/Country Program Document: Outcome 1.1 Improved resilience, with particular focus on communities, through integrated implementation of sustainable environmental management, climate change adaptation/mitigation and disaster risk management
This project will be linked to the following output of the UNDP Strategic Plan: Output 1.3: Solutions developed at national and sub-national levels for sustainable management of natural resources, ecosystem services, chemicals, and waste.

	Objective and Outcome Indicators[50]	Baseline[51]	Mid-term Target[52]	End of Project Target	Assumptions[53]
Project Objective: To mainstream biodiversity conservation into integrated land and seascape governance, planning and management in Palau.	Mandatory Indicator 1.3.1 Area of sustainable management solutions at sub-national level for conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services that benefit from integrated landscape and seascape planning and management approaches	*Approximately 115,000 hectares (managed effectively)[54]*	*At least 130,000 hectares of seascapes and landscapes effectively managed through participatory approaches*	*At least a total of 240,000[55] hectares of seascapes and landscapes effectively managed through participatory approaches*	*Assumptions:* *-Local communities and state governments understand livelihood benefits and ecological security from cooperation with and sustainable management of land and seascape resources. Thus, they will participate in sustainable management and ecosystem restoration work.* *-The National and State Governments consider it their priority to support integrated planning of its land/seascapes and implement target-oriented activities with local communities to improve conservation and sustainable use of such resources.* *-States, CBOs, private sector, and communities collaborate closely for preparation of land/seascape plans.*
	Mandatory Indicator 1.3.2 ~~Number of households benefiting from strengthened livelihoods through solutions for improved management of natural resources and provision of ecosystem services~~ Number	*Number of households currently participating in sustainable resource management and best practice approaches – 39% of HHs (in 7 Babeldaob states and*	~~*At least 45% of HHs in Babeldaob states and Peleliu (at least 340HHs) directly benefit through sustainable resource management approaches and incomes (At least 50% of the*~~	~~*At least 55% of HHs in Babeldaob states and Peleliu (at least 425HHs) directly benefit through sustainable resource management approaches and incomes (At least 50% of the beneficiaries*~~	

[49] Red font was changes made to PRF by the Project after the July 2021 MTR. Green font were changes made by the Evaluator for this TE.

[50] Additional information in terms of baselines and monitoring indicators is provided in Annex 16

[51] Baseline, mid-term, and end of project target levels must be expressed in the same neutral unit of analysis as the corresponding indicator. Baseline is the current/original status or condition and need to be quantified. The baseline must be established before the project document is submitted to the GEF for final approval. The baseline values will be used to measure the success of the project through implementation monitoring and evaluation.

[52] Target is the change in the baseline value that will be achieved by the mid-term review and then again by the terminal evaluation.

[53] Risks must be outlined in the Feasibility section of this project document.

[54] The represent PAN sites and other protected areas

[55] Based on the assumption that (i) institutional arrangements in place enabling integrated planning and management; (ii) land/seascapes zoned based on biological principles; (iii) land/seascape planning basis for budgetary allocations; (iv) sector regulations integrate biological considerations; (v) best practice activities implemented and (v) monitoring systems validate outcomes. Includes areas up to coral reef limits covered under Outcomes 2 and 3.

	Objective and Outcome Indicators[50]	Baseline[51]	Mid-term Target[52]	End of Project Target	Assumptions[53]
	of individuals and percent of population benefitting from strengthened livelihoods through solutions for improved management of natural resources and provision of ecosystem services, disaggregated by gender and age: 1) Total percentage of rural population participating, by gender. 2) Number of individuals benefitting financially from project livelihood projects. 3) Gender percentage benefitting from livelihood benefits. 4) Distribution of livelihood benefits by gender-age group.	*Peleliu) in 2016 (300 HHs[56])[57]. (baseline to be validated in Year 1)*	*~~beneficiaries would be women inclusive HHs)~~ Rural population is approximately 3,200 people. 1) 27% of rural population participating (874 people); 67% women, 33% men. 2) At mid-term, approximately 300 people benefitted financially from livelihood projects; 3) It appears that of those people who received financial benefits, men were 73% and women were 27%. 4) Among 8 rural Project States, 20% Youth; 61% Adults; 19% Senior received livelihood benefits (disproportionately benefitting adults).*	*~~would be women inclusive HHs)~~ 1) At least 55% of the rural population participates or benefits in the project. 2) At least 600 individuals benefit financially from project livelihood projects. 3) Equitable distribution of livelihood benefits by gender group (50% men and 50% women). 4) More equitable distribution of livelihood benefits among age groups, aligned with population demographics (target of 37% Youth; 40% Adult; 23% Senior).*	<u>Risks:</u> *-Natural disaster/climate change may affect the restoration work.* *-Lack of capacity in government and communities to meet obligations related to project.* *-Political transitions leave plans unused.* *-Livelihood benefits from sustainable management may be limited and slow for communities to give up current unsustainable practices* *- Lack of involvement from private sector and/or resource users (including vulnerable people) with continued unsustainable practices* *-Conflicts over territorial issues between state and national entities could undermine efforts at promoting integrated planning approaches.*
	Mandatory indicator 2.5.1: Extent to which Institutional frameworks are in place for integration of conservation, sustainable natural resource use, control and management of IAS, biodiversity and ecosystems and improved livelihoods into integrated land/ seascape planning and management	*No states have comprehensive landscape and seascape planning and management approaches; 4 of 16 states have partial plans or zones (Koror, Airai, Melekeok, Ngardmau)*	*Integrated Landscape/seascape management "strategy" for Babeldaob Island and ILSMPs developed for at least 3 states*	*Multiple use and sustainable landscape and seascape approaches institutionalized by national legislative, policy, and institutional arrangements and planning and practice effected in 9 states*	
Outcome 1:[58] Enhanced national institutional framework for	Indicator 5: Level of institutional capacities for planning, implementation and monitoring integrated	*Limited institutional capacities for planning, implementation and monitoring of multiple*	*Increase of institutional capacity as measured by a 10% increase in UNDP Landscape and Seascape*	*Average Increase of institutional capacity as measured by a 50 % increase in UNDP Landscape and Seascape*	<u>Assumption:</u> *-The national government will develop appropriate legislative, policy, institutional and technical measures that facilitate integrated*

[56] In 2015 there were 763 households in those 8 states (7 on Babeldaob and 1 Peleliu) plus another 3070 households in Koror.
[57] This number was derived from surveys during the PPG (May 2017)
[58]Outcomes are short to medium term results that the project contributes towards, and that are designed to help achieve the longer-term objective. Achievement of outcomes will be influenced both by project outputs and additional factors that may be outside the direct control of the project.

	Objective and Outcome Indicators[50]	**Baseline**[51]	**Mid-term Target**[52]	**End of Project Target**	**Assumptions**[53]
integrated planning and management of land and seascapes	land/seascape management plans as measured by UNDP land/seascape management scorecard	*use landscape and seascapes as measured by UNDP Land/ Seascape Capacity Development Scorecard baseline:* *(i) National level landscape/seascape capacity score 16/63* *(ii) State level average score landscape/seascape capacity 15/60* *(iii) National Environmental Management score 22/45* *(iv) National biosecurity capacity score 15/45*	*Capacity Development Scorecard (national and state levels), National Environmental Management Capacity Scorecard and National Biosecurity Capacity Scorecard*	*Capacity Development Scorecard (national and state levels), National Environmental Management Capacity Scorecard and National Biosecurity Capacity Scorecard* *~~(Original: Increase of institutional capacity by 50% - changes was agreed during inception)~~*	*land/ seascape planning and management in a timely manner.* *-Development strategies and management plans will be officially approved by State governments with allocation of appropriate staff and funding for implementation* *-The States will take active part in developing strategies and implementation using new knowledge and skills provided by the project* *-Local communities are convinced mainstreaming biodiversity into key development sectors is in their long-term interests* *<u>Risks:</u>* *-Priorities of state governments and local communities might shift if development benefits take long to manifest* *- Plans are developed but not used, particularly by resource users (e.g. private sector)* *- Planning bodies that build capacity are disbanded and knowledge is lost*
	Indicator 6a: Percentage increase in new *commercial and government* earthmoving projects requiring *environmental assessment (EA)* *Indicator 6b: P*ercentage compliance with environmental safeguards for all permitted	*6a: 7.5% of new earthmoving projects require EA (2016)*[59] *6b: 85% of all permitted earthmoving projects that are exempt from EAs comply with prescribed*	*6a. ~~At least 10%~~[61] ~~of new earthmoving projects require EA.~~* *~~6b: At least 90% of all permitted earthmoving projects that are exempt from EAs comply with~~*	*6a. ~~At least 15% of new earthmoving projects require EA.~~* *~~6b: Full compliance of all permitted earthmoving projects that are exempt from EAs comply with prescribed environmental safeguards.~~*	*<u>Assumptions:</u>* *-EQPB capacity effectively enhanced to develop, monitor, and enforce regulations* *-National policies are in place that provide specific direction to management priorities granting EQPB sufficient authority to manage environmental consequences of development* *- Guidelines and regulations revised to remove ambiguities in application of EAs; and capacity*

[59] Environmental safeguard regulations and guidelines for triggering EA for earthmoving projects are ambiguous, resulting in a large number of projects being exempted. While specific EA exemptions are for single or family homes, "small" developments (including farms and buildings with 4 rooms or less) and for upgrades to existing facilities, those that are determined at the discretion of the Board and inconsistencies in the application of regulations and guidelines result in fewer projects being subject to EA than is environmentally desirable. By addressing the above and other ambiguities, along with provision of clear guidelines, and clarifying the roles and responsibilities of EQPB, MNRET and other government agencies, the project interventions will result in an increased number of earthmoving projects subject to EA and increased compliance with environmental prescriptions among those permitted projects that are exempt from EAs.

[61] The targets of 10% (at mid-term) and 15% increase (end-of-project) in the number of new earthmoving developments subject to environmental assessment, from the current baseline of 7.5%, are tentative estimates. In Year 1, criteria that trigger EA will be revised, and the 2016 and 2017 earthmoving project applications will be reviewed to determine how many of these applications should have been subjected to EAs. This review will generate more realistic mid-term and end-of-project targets. These changes will be reflected in Year 1 Progress Report.

	Objective and Outcome Indicators[50]	Baseline[51]	Mid-term Target[52]	End of Project Target	Assumptions[53]
	earthmoving projects that are exempt from EAs	*environmental safeguards (2016)[60]*	~~*prescribed environmental safeguards.*~~ ~~*Of Commercial and Government/NGO permits, in 2019 EQPB required 11% of applicants to produce an EA; and in 2020 EQPB required*~~ *18% of applicants to produce an EA of Commercial and Government/NGO permits.* ~~*This is the expected, desirable trend.*~~	~~*The higher rate of EA/EIS requirements originating as a result of this project is maintained, with at least*~~ *20% of commercial and government/NGO projects triggering an EA; and a sample of EAs/EISs shows that 100% of EAs/EIS/ address the newly added significance criteria (e.g. biodiversity criteria) or cumulative impact criteria*	*enhanced to monitor compliance with prescribed environmental safeguards* *Risks:* *- The state ownership of resources can complicate as to which body, the state or EQPB, has authority over environmental management issues.* *- Political pressure limits number of projects requiring EAs*
	Indicator 7: Comprehensiveness of national level IAS management framework and ability to prevent IAS of high risk to biodiversity from entering Palau, as measured by IAS Tracking Tool	*IAS Tracking Tool Score of 9 (out of total of 27) due to lack of national coordinating mechanism; no national IAS strategy; detection surveys non-existent; priority pathways not actively managed, etc.*	*20% increased score in the GEF IAS Tracking Tool (from baseline 9 to 11) of improved policies and legislation for prevention of high-risk IAS from entering Palau* ~~*as measured by*~~	*50% increased score in the GEF IAS Tracking Tool (from baseline 9 to 15) of improved surveillance and controls for prevention of high-risk IAS from entering Palau* ~~*as measured by*~~	*Assumptions:* *-Additional revenues can be developed to support inspection and quarantine services* *-Adequate laws and regulations are in place to support improved inspection and quarantine services nation-wide* *- Local actors understand the role of IAS management in reducing social vulnerability* *-Buy-in at all levels of society, including timely reporting of novel species encounters* *Risk:* *-Adequate resources to implement comprehensive inspection and quarantine coverage may not be provided* *-Sufficient trained and committed personnel unavailable to provide adequate coverage*
Outcome 2: Integrated multi-sector land and seascape "Ridge-to-Reef" planning and management operational in	*Indicator 8:* Number of hectares of high conservation value ecosystems, including forests, mangroves and marine areas zoned/allocated for non-exhaustive use	*High Conservation Value Forests (dispersal corridors, biodiversity rich areas and buffer areas) outside protected area network*	*2,500 ha, allocated for non-exhaustive use and High Conservation forests including mangroves and marine areas* ~~*for non-exhaustive use mapped and at least*~~	*15,500 ha, resulting in total avoided 435,492 tCO_2 over 20 years of High conservation value forests, (including mangroves and marine areas) allocated for non-exhaustive use* ~~*of at least*~~	*Assumption:* *-Development strategies and management plans will be officially approved by State governments with allocation of appropriate funding for their implementation*

[60] Violations of environmental safeguard measures in 2016 amounted to 15% of the total number of permitted projects exempt from EAs, which equates to 85% compliance. Full compliance is 95%. Mid-Term and End of Project targets are tentative and will be revised, as appropriate, in Year 1 in line with findings from the above review (Footnote 25).

	Objective and Outcome Indicators[50]	**Baseline**[51]	**Mid-term Target**[52]	**End of Project Target**	**Assumptions**[53]
Babeldaob states[62] to reduce threats to biodiversity and improve ecosystem services to benefit communities and state economies		*lack appropriate management regimes*			*-States will take active part in developing strategies and implementation using knowledge and skills from project.* *-Local communities are convinced that critical habitats in their vicinities will benefit livelihoods and ecological security to them and will participate in conservation and restoration work.* *-Local community-based institutions would establish an effective institutional mechanism to facilitate conservation outcomes* *- Division of Forestry capacity enhanced to provide adequate leadership and support to states* *Risk:* *-Administrative/political changes may undermine the implementation of the management plan strategies* *-Lack of capacity in government and communities to meet obligations related to project* *-Conflicts between national, state local communities regarding management and access to natural resources may undermine integrated planning approaches* *- Natural disasters/climate drivers exacerbate degradation*
	Indicator 9: Number of hectares of degraded forests and grasslands and coastal and marine areas outside PAN network rehabilitated	*Over 12,500 hectares of forests, grasslands, and coastal and marine ecosystems under continued degradation through overuse*	*~~At least~~ 100 ha of degraded forests, grasslands, and marine ecosystems under restoration through community actions*	*~~At least~~ 1,000 ha of degraded forests, grasslands and marine ecosystems restored through community actions resulting in total sequestration of 562,133 $tCO_{2\ over}$ 20-year period.*	
	Indicator 10: ~~Change in status of populations of Micronesian Imperial Pigeon and Palauan Fruit Dove~~ Number of government planning policies or products that mainstream bird and forestry monitoring data into adaptive decision-making processes leading to improved status of endemic species, specifically Micronesian Imperial Pigeon and Palauan Fruit Dove	*Declining populations of Micronesian Imperial Pigeon and Palauan Fruit Dove with baseline of 3,000 and 1,600 individuals respectively (2014)*	*~~Maintained populations of Micronesian Imperial Pigeon and Palauan Fruit Dove from current baselines~~* 0: Although every state participates in bird monitoring, there are no feedback mechanisms to use that monitoring data for adapative management. ~~Data is collected and uploaded online ("away") but not analyzed regularly. If~~	*~~Maintained or improved populations of Micronesian Imperial Pigeon and Palaaun Fruit Dove from current baselines~~ 13* *1)* 3 NGO and Government Partners (BNM, KSG, Forestry) improve their biodiversity monitoring products (including annual reports) to include analysis of biodiversity monitoring data and	*Assumption:* *-Adequate technical capacity available for undertaking monitoring species populations* *-Pigeons are declining because of hunting, and improved enforcement will increase population* *-Fruit doves are declining due to habitat loss, and use of set-asides and best practices will increase numbers* *- Current monitoring of populations continues* *Risk:* *-External factors beyond the control of the project (e.g. climate change) might affect bird populations negatively*

[62] Covering 40,900 ha of landscape and 100,000 of seascape up to limits of coral reef, making a total of 140,900 ha.

	Objective and Outcome Indicators[50]	Baseline[51]	Mid-term Target[52]	End of Project Target	Assumptions[53]
			~~it is analyzed, it is on an ad hoc basis and usually at the request of a donor; not at the request of a policymaker and thus does not impact policies. Bird data is collected but not analyzed as part of BNM, KSG, or PAN annual reports; their annual reports indicate the status of monitoring (e.g. number of trips taken) but don't analyze the data for trends and don't include recommendations based on the findings of the monitoring projects. Thus, there is no real adaptive management on land based on bird monitoring. Recommendations from monitoring are not incorporated into regular adaptive management processes.~~	include recommendations for adaptive management. *2)* All 10 State Master Plans on Babeldaob include a specific Monitoring & Evaluation and Adaptive Management feedback system that pulls and uses terrestrial biodiversity monitoring data.	
	Indicator 11: Extent of community-based land, forest, coastal and marine management regimes applied, including resultant changes in community incomes from current levels	*Current extent of area under community land, forest, coastal and marine management regimes in target project states (to be determined in Year 1)*	*500 ha identified and agreed through a consensus building process as areas for community-based management ~~totaling at least,~~ as part of the community-based planning process.*	*1,000 ha of areas resulting in sequestration of 460,681 tCO_2eq over 20-year period and in 25% increase in community incomes from current levels, of community-based land, forest, coastal and marine management regimes applied ~~in at least.~~ where at least 50% of beneficiaries are women*	*Assumption:* *-Capacities of the CSOs on planning and developing sustainable practices will be sufficient after training provided by the project.* *-Local communities have economic interest in developing sustainable and new practices because they can provide more benefits than unsustainable ones.* *Risks: Priorities of the relevant state agencies in implementing plans may be inconsistent with objectives of conservation and livelihood development creating conflicts in terms of sustainable natural resources use.* *-Any policy change (such as promotion of uncontrolled developments in tourism and*

	Objective and Outcome Indicators[50]	Baseline[51]	Mid-term Target[52]	End of Project Target	Assumptions[53]
					infrastructure) that is not consistent with sustainable development may reduce impacts of project interventions *-Natural calamities may affect the ability of local communities to respond positively to holistic approaches to sustainable management of land and sea resources.* *-Partner Organizations (NGOs) are unable to mobilize adequate manpower and technical resources to support sustainable actions*
Outcome 3: Integrated multi-sector planning and management operational in 264,686 ha of seascapes and coastal areas[63] in the Southern Lagoon to reduce threats to biodiversity and improve ecosystem services to benefit communities and state economies	*Indicator 12:* ~~Change in status of fish stocks in designated reef and sea grass areas based on biomass indices~~ Number of policy instruments adopted in the Southern Lagoon that mainstream biodiversity information to facilitate better management leading to maintained or improved fish stocks and coral cover in designated areas	*Protected exposed reefs (outer reefs and channels) of 714kg/ha (with unprotected exposed reefs having 63% of this figure compared with MPAs) and 258kg/ha in protected inner reefs (black reefs and patch reefs/reef flats) with unprotected reefs having 57% of this figure compared with MPAs*	~~*Maintained fish stocks in designated zones from existing baselines in unprotected exposed outer and inner reefs*~~ 2: 1) Proposed Fisheries Management Spatial Plan that incorporates sustainable spatial harvesting of fisheries. 2) an update to Fisheries regulations in Koror State based on new data on Fish size (e.g. SPR)	~~*Maintained or improved fish stocks in designated zones from existing baselines in unprotected exposed outer and inner reefs*~~ 5 1) Adoption of a Marine Spatial Plan by KSG/DCLE and Peleliu. 2) Lagoon-wide Marine Spatial plan includes sustainable marine recommendations for fisheries, coral, and endangered animals as well as priority action sites for protection and/or restoration and rehabilitation, and 3) State policies and plans in Koror and Peleliu incorporate a specific Monitoring & Evaluation and Adaptive Management feedback system that pulls and uses marine biodiversity monitoring data	*Assumptions:* *-Adequate capacity and technical support available to monitor changes in species populations and ecosystem conditions* *-NGOs and other agencies will have adequate commitment and resources to implement rat eradication programs* *-Adequate biosecurity measures will be instituted by state governments to prevent potential re-establishment of rats in cleared islands* *- Current fish stock monitoring continues* *Risks:* *- Project period may be too short to reflect any substantial or measurable changes to population numbers and ecosystem conditions* *-External events, beyond the control of the project (climate events or other man-made actions) may have wide ranging impacts of species and ecosystem conditions, including movement of rats on floating debris from typhoons and storms*

[63] This includes land area (3,100 ha) and the surrounding marine area to the state nautical limit of 12 miles making a total of 264,686 ha (area up to coral reef limits including land area is 103,100 ha) Planning beyond the reef (and up to the 12 nautical mile limit) will only address deep sea fishing issues.

	Objective and Outcome Indicators[50]	Baseline[51]	Mid-term Target[52]	End of Project Target	Assumptions[53]
	~~*Indicator 13:* now embedded with Indicator 12~~	~~*27% of reefs have "medium" coral cover (25-50% cover), while 13% of reefs have "low" coral cover (<10% cover)*~~	~~*Maintained percentage coral cover at designated sites from existing baseline*~~	~~*Maintained or increased percentage coral cover at designated sites from existing baseline*~~	
	~~*Indicator 14:* Change in nesting success rates (number of nests, number of eggs, hatchlings, and survival rates) for Micronesian megapodes in selected sites previously occupied by rats~~	~~*Current status of Micronesian megapodes nesting success in selected islands established in Year 1*~~	~~*Maintained population of Micronesian megapodes from selected sites previously occupied by rats from current baseline values*~~	~~*Increased nesting success rates of Micronesian megapodes from selected sites previously occupied by rats from current baseline values*~~	
Outcome 4 Knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation support, equitable gender benefits and biodiversity conservation in Palau	*Indicator 15:* ~~Increase in percentage of sampled community members, tour operators and sector agency staff aware of potential conservation threats and adverse impacts of IAS.~~ 1) % of survey respondents who answer YES to knowing how to minimize impact by EOP. 2) Average number of IAS listed by respondents. 3) % incorrectly identifying native species as IAS	*Coordinated outreach on conservation threats and biosecurity lacking. Limited awareness of impact IAS among the general public. Baseline survey established in Year 1*	~~*At least 5% of sampled community members and 20% of, tour operators and sector agency staff aware of potential conservation threats and adverse impacts of IAS*~~ *1)* 34% ~~of survey respondents who report "knowing how to minimize the impact of IAS" a. Baseline would be 34% YES, 37% NO, 29% NO ANSWER.~~ *2)* ~~Average number of Invasive Alien Species (IAS) listed by respondents. a. Baseline would be~~ 1.5. *3)* 65% ~~of respondents incorrectly identifying native species as Invasive Alien Species. a. Baseline would be 65%.~~	~~*At least 25% of sampled community members and 75% of tour operators and sector agency staff aware of potential conservation threats and adverse impacts of IAS with equitable knowledge among genders and social groups of which at least 50% are women.*~~ 1) ~~1) % of survey respondents who answer YES to knowing how to minimize impact by EOP increases to~~ 75%. 2) ~~Average number of IAS listed by respondents increases to~~ 5 out of 20 priority IAS plants and 20 priority IAS animals. 3) ~~% incorrectly identifying native species as IAS declines to~~ less than 25%.	*Assumption:* *- Gender and Social Inclusion Mainstreaming Plan followed and benefits distributed equitably.* *-Stakeholders willing to actively participate in the review process.* *-Project management will be able to identify, document and disseminate the best practices* *-Mid Term Review and End of Project Evaluation of the project will also contribute to identifying the best practices* *-Best practices from GEF 5 on sustainable resource management readily available to resource users* *-Coordination arrangements between GEF 5 and GEF 6 effective* *Risks:* *-Government priorities may change from due to political pressure from resource users* *-Actions among the assorted agencies and NGOs remain uncoordinated* *-Community diversity will not be a hindrance to outreach activities* *- Vulnerable groups are left out and continue using poor practices*
	Indicator 16: ~~Percentage of fifth-grade students received updated "ridge to reef"~~	*Fifth-grade curriculum lacks emphasis on integrated landscape*	~~*Curriculum updated to include biosecurity and IAS 1 and 1*~~	~~*At least 90% of fifth-grade students received updated "ridge to reef" curriculum,*~~	

	Objective and Outcome Indicators[50]	Baseline[51]	Mid-term Target[52]	End of Project Target	Assumptions[53]
	~~curriculum, including IAS~~ Number of government, semi-government, and NGO partner programs institutionalizing IAS outreach programs; Number of groups targeted by institutionalized IAS programs	*and seascape planning and threats of IAS*	2 1) The Palau Conservation Society has institutionalized Terrestrial IAS into outreach programs. 2) Outreach programs for 1~~:~~ Youth at schools	~~*including IAS of which 50% are females* At least 3~~ 5 *1)* Specifically targeting: BNM Terrestrial IAS program for the public. *2)* PICRC Marine IAS program for youth. *3)* CRRF Marine Invasive Program for Resource Managers. *4)* MAFE BOE Outreach Program for Policymakers, Schools, and Businesses (through PAN, Forestry, and NISC). *5)* PCS IAS Programs for Schools.	
	Indicator 17: Number of best practices of sustainable land, coastal and marine resource use up scaled by communities/households	*Best practice and lessons from GEF 5 available, but currently resources do not exist for their implementation*	~~*At least* 5~~ *Best Practice*~~*s per sector being implemented (total of 5:*~~ *for agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries, forestry, sustainable tourism*	~~*At least* 18~~ *best practices of sustainable land, coastal and marine resource use up scaled by 9 communities* ~~*and used by both genders and multiple social groups.*~~	

APPENDIX G - EVALUATION FRAMEWORK MATRIX

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
Project Design and Strategy: To what extent is the project strategy relevant to country priorities, country ownership, and the best route towards expected results?			
How well has the project aligned with government and agency priorities?	Number of stakeholders participating in project sponsored training sessions and meetings	PPG stakeholder meeting minutes Project designers PIRs	Desk review of PIRs and interviews with project designers, PMU, stakeholders
To what extent has the IAS Project's selected method of delivery been appropriate to the development context?	Quality of outcomes and indicators on log frame	Project document	Desk review
Has the IAS Project been influential in influencing national policies on integrated planning and management of land and seascapes for all Palauan states?	Number of stakeholders participating in PPG Number of stakeholders participating in project sponsored training sessions and meetings	PPG stakeholder meeting minutes Project designers PIRs	Desk review of PIRs and interviews with project designers, PMU, stakeholders
To what extent was the theory of change presented in the outcome model a relevant and appropriate vision on which to base the initiatives?	Quality of outcomes and indicators on log frame	Project document	Desk review
To what extent was the project in line with the UNDP Strategic Plan, CPD, UNDAF, United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), SDGs, and donor strategic programming?	Effectiveness and efficiency ratings of the project by the evaluation	PIRs Stakeholders (mainly government personnel)	Desk review, interviews with PMU and stakeholders
Effectiveness:			
What evidence is there that the Project has contributed towards reversing the negative impacts of unsustainable sector-led development practices on biodiversity-rich landscapes of Palau, including its productive coastal and marine ecosystems?	Effectiveness ratings of the project by the evaluation	PIRs	Desk review, interviews with PMU personnel
Has the IAS Project been effective in reversing the negative impacts of unsustainable sector-led development practices on biodiversity-rich landscapes of Palau, including its productive coastal and marine ecosystems, while taking into account climate change adaptation needs and inclusive and equitable social and economic development for dependent communities?	Effectiveness ratings of the project by the evaluation	PIRs and information from PMU personnel	Desk review, interviews with PMU personnel

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
To what extent have outcomes been achieved or has progress been made towards their achievement.	Adoption of strategies and policies Evidence of knowledge base and tools used to inform policy and developmental planning and decision-making (or commitment to do so) Evidence of improved awareness levels in ministries & professionals Training feedback;	Progress reports, PIRs, and information from PMU personnel	Desk review, interviews with PMU personnel
What has been the contribution of partners and other organizations to the outcomes, and how effective have the programme partnerships been in contributing to achieving the objective and outcomes?	Adoption of strategies and policies Evidence of knowledge base and tools used to inform policy and developmental planning and decision-making (or commitment to do so) Evidence of improved awareness levels in ministries & professionals Training feedback	Survey of feedback of training sessions, testimonial evidence from training participants, and information from PMU personnel	Desk review, interviews with training participants, PMU personnel
What were the positive or negative, intended, or unintended, changes brought about during project implementation?	Indicator targets of government and stakeholder strengthening	Survey of feedback of training sessions, testimonial evidence from training participants, and information from PMU personnel	Desk review, interviews with training participants, PMU personnel
What were the contributing factors and impediments that enhance or impede the project performance?	Indicator targets of government and stakeholder strengthening	Survey of feedback of training sessions, testimonial evidence from training participants, and information from PMU personnel	Desk review, interviews with training participants, PMU personnel
To what extent did the project contribute to gender equality, the empowerment of women, and/or a human-rights based approach?	Indicator targets of government and stakeholder strengthening	Survey of feedback of training sessions, testimonial evidence from training participants, and information from PMU personnel	Desk review, interviews with training participants, PMU personnel
Efficiency:			
To what extent are the approaches, resources, models, conceptual framework relevant to achieve the planned outcomes?	Efficiency ratings of the project by the evaluation	PPG stakeholder meeting minutes Project designers PPIRs	Desk review of PIRs and interviews with project designers, PMU, stakeholders

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
To what extent were quality outputs delivered on time?	Efficiency ratings of the project by the evaluation	PIRs Stakeholders (mainly government personnel)	Desk review of PIRs and interviews with project designers, PMU, stakeholders
Has there been an economical use of financial and human resources and strategic allocation of resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc.)?	Efficiency ratings of the project by the evaluation	PIRs Stakeholders (mainly government personnel)	Desk review of PIRs and interviews with project designers, PMU, stakeholders
Did the monitoring and evaluation systems that the Project has in place help to ensure that activities and outputs were managed efficiently and effectively?	Efficiency ratings of the project by the evaluation	PIRs Stakeholders (mainly government personnel)	Desk review of PIRs and interviews with project designers, PMU, stakeholders
Were alternative approaches considered in designing the programme?	Efficiency ratings of the project by the evaluation	PIRs Stakeholders (mainly government personnel)	Desk review of PIRs and interviews with project designers, PMU, stakeholders
Sustainability: To what extent are there financial, institutional, socio-economic, and/or environmental risks to sustaining long-term project results?			
What is the likelihood that the Project interventions are sustainable?	Sustainability ratings of the project by the evaluation	PIRs Stakeholders (mainly government personnel)	Desk review of PIRs and interviews with project designers, PMU, stakeholders
What mechanisms have been set in place by the project to support the Government of Palau to sustain the results made through these interventions?	Evidence of government adopting policies sand strategies plans Quality / evidence of commitment (i.e. level and resource allocation)	PIRs Stakeholders (mainly government personnel)	Desk review of PIRs and interviews with project designers, PMU, stakeholders
To what extent has a sustainability strategy, including capacity development of key beneficiaries or national stakeholders, been developed, or implemented?	Evidence of government adopting policies sand strategies into plans Quality / evidence of commitment (i.e. level and resource allocation)	PIRs Stakeholders (mainly government personnel)	Desk review of PIRs and interviews with project designers, PMU, stakeholders
To what extent have partners committed to providing continuing support?	Sustainability ratings of the project by the evaluation	PIRs Stakeholders (mainly government personnel)	Desk review of PIRs and interviews with project designers, PMU, stakeholders
What indications are there that the outcomes will be sustained, e.g., through requisite capacities (systems, structures, staff, etc.)?	Sustainability ratings of the project by the evaluation	PIRs Stakeholders (mainly government personnel)	Desk review of PIRs and interviews with project designers, PMU, stakeholders
What opportunities for financial sustainability exist?	Evidence of any innovative financial measures or incentives introduced	PIRs Stakeholders (mainly government personnel)	Desk review of PIRs and interviews with project designers, PMU, stakeholders

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
How has the project developed appropriate institutional capacity (systems, structures, staff, expertise, etc.) that will be self-sufficient after the project closure date?	Sustainability ratings of the project by the evaluation	PIRs Stakeholders (mainly government personnel)	Desk review of PIRs and interviews with project designers, PMU, stakeholders
Impact			
What has happened because of the project?	Effectiveness ratings of the project by the evaluation	PIRs	Desk review of PIRs and interviews with project designers, PMU, stakeholders
What real difference has the activity made to the beneficiaries?	Content of risk management in PIRs	PIRs and information from PMU personnel	Desk review of PIRs and interviews with project designers, PMU, stakeholders
How many people have benefited?	Content of risk management in PIRs	PIRs and information from PMU personnel	Desk review of PIRs and interviews with project designers, PMU, stakeholders
Were there 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.)?	Adaptive management reporting in PIRs	PIRs and information from PMU personnel	Desk review of PIRs and interviews with project designers, PMU, stakeholders
Discuss any unintended impacts of the project (both positive and negative) and assess their overall scope and implications.	Annual financial disbursements against each component	PIRs, CDRs and information from PMU personnel	Desk review of PIRs and interviews with project designers, PMU, stakeholders
Identify barriers and risks that may prevent further progress towards long term impact;	Institutional arrangements of the Project	PIRs and information from PMU personnel	Desk review of PIRs and interviews with project designers, PMU, stakeholders
Assess any real change in gender equality, e.g. access to and control of resources, decision- making power, division of labor, etc.	Institutional arrangements of the Project	PIRs and information from PMU personnel	Desk review of PIRs and interviews with project designers, PMU, stakeholders

APPENDIX H – AUDIT TRAIL

Provided as a separate file.

APPENDIX I – INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

These questions are designed for all stakeholders:

1. Has the IAS Project been influential in influencing national policies on integrated planning and management of land and seascapes for all Palauan states?
2. Were you involved in revising the changes in the plans for the Project?
3. What were some of the positive or negative, intended or unintended, changes brought about during project implementation? Were there delays in the delivery of some of the outputs?
4. What were the challenges that enhanced or impeded Project performance? Were alternative approaches considered in overcoming these challenges? Were the issues procurement related, COVID-related, on-the-ground related?
5. Have monitoring and evaluation systems of the Project rehabilitation activities helped to ensure that activities and outputs were managed efficiently and effectively? Has the METT tool helped to ensure the activities and outputs of the Project were managed effectively and in line with Project objectives?
6. With respect to awareness raising, have newsletters, t-shirts and other media informed the general public of Project activities?
7. What activities does your organization focus on? Does it empower women, or does it ensure everyone is brought into Project activities considering the number of disabled people in the population?
8. What impact has the IAS Project had? Has it been effective in reversing the negative impacts of unsustainable sector-led development practices on biodiversity-rich landscapes of Palau, including its productive coastal and marine ecosystems, while taking into account climate change adaptation needs and inclusive and equitable social and economic development for dependent communities?
9. After the Project, what are the next steps to providing continuing support to sustainable sector-led development practices on biodiversity-rich landscapes of Palau including its productive coastal and marine ecosystems? Does this include appropriate institutional capacities (systems, structures, staff, expertise, etc.) to be in place after the Project's closure date?
10. What impact has the Project had on? What has been the impact on fisheries, mangroves (tree planting and upland groves), water supply, agro forestry (gardens), and livestock?
11. What has been the impact of the Project on the beneficiaries? How has the Project made a difference in your life?
12. Do you see any barriers and risks that may prevent further progress to the long-term impact of sustainable sector-led development practices on biodiversity-rich landscapes of Palau?
13. Do you see any real change in gender equality in the context of decision-making power, and division of labor?
14. What are the most urgent actions to be taken in view that the Project is ending?

APPENDIX J - EVALUATION CONSULTANT AGREEMENT FORM

Evaluators:

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

Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form[64]

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

Name of Consultant: __Roland Wong_____

Name of Consultancy Organization (where relevant)**:** _____

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

Signed at *Surrey, BC, Canada* on *28 August 2024*

[64]www.unevaluation.org/unegcodeofconduct