



United Nations Development Programme

Government of the Republic of Palau

Mid-Term Review of UNDP/GEF Project: *Strengthening the Palau National Marine Sanctuary for the Conservation and Management of Global Marine Biodiversity and Sustainable Fisheries (PNMS Project)*

(GEF Project ID: 10611; UNDP PIMS ID: 6418)

Final Report

Mission Members:

Mr. Roland Wong, International MTR Consultant

August 2024

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SYNOPSIS

Title of UNDP supported GEF financed project: Strengthening the Palau National Marine Sanctuary for the Conservation and Management of Global Marine Biodiversity and Sustainable Fisheries (PNMS Project)

UNDP Project ID: PIMS 6418

GEF Project ID: 10611

Evaluation time frame: 10 June 2021 to 31 May 2024

CEO endorsement date: 18 March 2021

Project implementations start date: 10 June 2021

Project operational closure: 10 June 2025

Date of evaluation report: 31 August 2024

Region and Countries included in the project: Palau.

GEF Focal Area Objective: GEF-7 Programming Directives through Objective 2: Reduce Direct Drivers of Biodiversity Loss; E) Reduce pressures on coral reefs and other vulnerable coastal and marine ecosystems (Expected Outcome 7), and F) Enhance the Effectiveness of Protected Area Systems (Expected Outcomes 8 and 9).

Implementing partner and other strategic partners: Palau International Coral Reef Center (PICRC)

Mid-Term Review team members: Mr. Roland Wong, International MTR Consultant

Acknowledgements:

The Mid-Term Reviewer wish to acknowledge with gratitude the time and effort expended by all Project participants and stakeholders during the PNMS Mid-Term Review. We wish to thank the UNDP Fiji MCO, the Project Management Unit of the PNMS Project, the Bangkok Regional Hub of UNDP, the Palau International Coral Reef Center, and other key Project stakeholders (both from Government agencies and the private sector) for making the efforts to recall details of their time while on the Project. All were generous with their time in providing their passionate opinions on the potential impact of this Project. We sincerely hope that this report leads to sustained conservation of marine protected areas in Palau.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

E-1. This report summarizes the findings of the Midterm Review conducted via face-to-face meetings between 28 May-7 June 2024 for the UNDP-GEF Project: “*Strengthening the Palau National Marine Sanctuary for the Conservation and Management of Global Marine Biodiversity and Sustainable Fisheries*”, (hereby referred to as the *PNMS Project* or the Project) that received a US\$1,826,484 grant from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in June 2021.

Project Information Table

Project Title: <i>Strengthening the Palau National Marine Sanctuary for the Conservation and Management of Global Marine Biodiversity and Sustainable Fisheries (PNMS Project)</i>				
GEF Project ID:	10611		<i>at endorsement</i> (Million US\$)	<i>at mid-term</i> (Million US\$)
UNDP Project ID:	6418	GEF financing:	1.826	1.232
Country:	Palau	IA/EA own:	0.000	0
Region:	PAC	Government:	10.150	6.690
Focal Area:	Biodiversity	Other:	7.100	1.546
FA Objectives, (OP/SP):	BD-1-1: Mainstream biodiversity across sectors as well as landscapes and seascapes through biodiversity mainstreaming in priority sectors. BD-2-7: Address direct drivers to protect habitats and species and improve financial sustainability, effective management, and ecosystem coverage of the global protected area estate	Total co-financing:	17.250	8.236
Implementing Partner:	Palau International Coral Reef Center (PICRC)	Total Project Cost:	19.076	9.468
Other Partners involved:	N/A	ProDoc Signature (date project began):		10 June 2021
		(Operational) Closing Date:	Proposed: 10 June 2026	Actual: 10 June 2025

Project Description

E-2. The main objective of the PNMS Project is to “*strengthen the institutional and governance structure and implement a strategic plan for the sustainable management of the Palau National Marine Sanctuary and Domestic Fishing Zone and provide a healthy and productive ecosystem for the benefit of all people of Palau.*” It was designed to do so by:

- strengthening and fully implementing the PNMS institutional, management and regulatory framework and mechanisms through enhanced national, regional, and global support.

- improved and effective management and governance of the PNMS and DFZ through strengthened capacity, skills, and knowledge of governance at the state, national and regional levels as well as NGOs.
- ensuring all regulations and laws pertaining to PNMS and DFZ are enforced effectively and sustainably in close collaboration with WCPFC, FFA and PNA.
- making the PNMS and associated administrative and management arrangements financially sustainable and secure for the long-term.
- supporting stronger and broader stakeholder backing for the PNMS and DFZ and associated benefits and fees including the state, national, and international community.

Project Progress Summary

- E-3. The PNMS ProDoc was signed on 10 June 2021 with an intended duration of 48 months (until June 2025). With the Government of the Republic of Palau (GRoP) signing into a Law a National Marine Sanctuary (PNMS) and a Domestic Fishing Zone (DFZ) in 2015, the PNMS Project was intended to strengthen and implement a Strategic Plan for sustainable management of the PNMS and DFZ. The Project is to build on existing efforts of Palau to conserve its renewable natural resources while adding significantly to the global MPA estate and providing a protected migratory route for globally important fish stocks as well as other non-commercial species and bycatch such as cetaceans, turtles, sharks, and seabirds. The existing Law is designed to be enforced as 80% of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of Palau to the PNMS where fishing is prohibited, and 20% of the EEZ to the DFZ where permits will be allowed to domestic and foreign fishing vessels.
- E-4. During late 2021, there were efforts made by the GRoP to amend the PNMS Law. On 23 March 2022, the Olbiil Era Kelulau (the Committee on Judiciary, Governmental Affairs and Human Rights, Committee on Community, Planning and Development, Committee on Maritime, Climate Change, and Protected Areas, and Committee on Natural Resources and Environment) sought changes by introducing flexibility to an overly rigid PNMS system by consideration of alternative means meet the needs of the people, the needs of the environment, and achieve the balance required under the Constitution of Palau. The Olbiil Era Kelulau allowed the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Environment (MAFE) to explore the expansion of the DFZ to 70% of the EEZ, leaving only 30% to the PNMS. This was recommended due to pressures from fishing industries and certain government agencies to “promote sustainable resource management and provide sustainable economic benefits to the national and state governments” (Paras **Error! Reference source not found.**-45).
- E-5. On 20 July 2022, the President of Palau, based on a legislation calling for a marine spatial planning initiative to inform the management of the PNMS, declared that expansion of the DFZ beyond the 20% would need to be informed by a comprehensive marine spatial planning (MSP) process that is also informed by scientific information from the Oceanic Fisheries Programme of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC). The deadline for this report is September 2024. The amended proportion of PNMS and DFZ will be subject to the findings of the comprehensive marine spatial planning process and is not known at this time. The MSP process, however, is based on historical fisheries data from 2010 to 2015 raising questions about whether or not the MSP process can determine the balance for sustainable pelagic fisheries. PICRC, the implementing partner for the PNMS Project, is also the lead agency for science and monitoring of the near-shore marine environment around Palau and has developed a science and monitoring plan for nearshore waters and coastal ecosystems. The PNMS Law that passed senate in 2019 was to allow PICRC to extend its role to support the PNMS and pelagic fish stocks (Paras 46-47).

- E-6. However, PICRC does not currently have the skill set or expertise to address the offshore PNMS ecosystem and to understand what is happening with the pelagic fish stocks in the PNMS. Notwithstanding the Project’s ongoing efforts to build capacity of the Division of Marine Security and Fish and Wildlife Protection (DMSFW) under the Ministry of Justice, the PNMS Project was designed to build PICRC’s capacity with training and long-term mentoring to manage pelagic fish stocks. However, there has been no other collaboration between the Project, PICRC, SPC or other government agencies. It is rather clear that building PICRC’s capacity to manage pelagic fish stocks will take more resources than the PNMS Project can afford. This includes special training and special seaworthy vessels needed by PICRC to manage and monitor pelagic fish stocks; these vessels have been difficult to obtain. With the recent efforts to amend the PNMS Law, PICRC’s role on this Project has come into question.
- E-7. This has placed the Project into a precarious position with possible significant changes to GEF Core Indicators. Current targets of the Core Indicators are summarized on Table E-1.

Table E-1: Core Indicators subjected to change as a result of PNMS Law amendments.

Project Core Indicators		Expected at CEO Endorsement
2	Marine protected areas created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use (Hectares)	47,507,800 (PNMS)
5	Area of marine habitat under improved practices (excluding protected areas) (Hectares)	11,757,200 (Domestic Fishing Zone)
	Total area under improved management (Hectares)	59,264,900
8	Globally over-exploited marine fisheries moved to more sustainable levels (metric tons)	21,250 tonnes per annum (2014 figures prior to establishment of PNMS) ¹
11	Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment	20,135 (Total Population) (9,014 or 45% women)

E-8. There are a few achievements of the Project, summarized as follows:

- a socio-economic study was completed in late 2023 in the state of Airai on the impacts of the PNMS and DFZ compiling data from 266 respondents (53% female, 47% male), 40% who indicated high support for the PNMS and the closure of 80% of Palau’s EEZ (Para 51);
- drafting of a PNMS strategic plan completed in late 2023 (Para 57);
- supply of equipment (such as “puma” drones, DSI drones², computer monitors, “Go-Pro” cameras) to the DMSFW under the Bureau of Public Safety that is under the Ministry of Justice, strengthening capacities of the DMSFW fleet of patrol boats and the DMSFW Operations Center (control room) that monitors fishing activities within the EEZ (Para 64);
- training 8 deep sea divers from DMSFW to provide them with capacity to inspect vessel damage

¹ This is at the lowest end of known catch statistics as provided by www.seaaroundus.org. The real figure is almost certainly significantly higher. The actual ‘reported’ pelagic fishery moving from exploited/overexploited to protected would be in excess of 100,000 tonnes per annum. This also does not allow for unreported bycatch and discards (sharks, rays, tec) which would be significant and would also then be fully protected.

² Also useful for Search & Rescue

at sea, repair of anchor pads for fishing aggregation devices and for search & rescue. This is all in an effort to expand DMSFW personnel capacities to conduct offshore work (Para 64);

- a draft of a report 10-year sustainable funding roadmap for PNMS and DFZ developed integrating ecotourism and livelihood. This work was halted in January 2023 due to the new Palau GST and introducing an unpopular additional PNMS tax measure³;
- partnership agreements established with the Palau Commercial Fishing Company (PCFC), and the Belau Offshore Fishers Inc (BOFI), who have started fishing within the DFZ; and
- sister partnership with American Samoa on how they manage their sanctuary that can be learned and applied to PNMS programme operating under NOAA.

Conclusions

E-9. There are several issues with PNMS Project implementation including:

- absence of baseline data on pelagic fisheries.
- high-level efforts to scale back the PNMS Law leading to uncertainties in the future percentage of PNMS and DFZ management.
- uncertainties in the role of PICRC on the Project, especially with regards to transforming PICRC into a pelagic fishery monitoring entity. Efforts to build such institutional capacity have been challenging due to the MSP and failed attempts to engage with SPC.
- uncertainties in the finalization of the PNMS Strategic Plan (pending the outcome of the new PNMS area), the continuation of the development of a sustainable CB&T program (due to more staff needed at the DMSFW Operations Center to enforce the PNMS and DFZ), and developing a sustainable funding roadmap for PNMS and DFZ to integrate ecotourism and livelihoods (PNMS financial scheme is not ready for promulgation due to the current economic status of Palau);
- uncertainties in the PRF targets and indicators.

E-10. A most urgent issue to address, however, is the design of the PNMS Project and who should serve as UNDP's implementing partner. With PNMS issues being led by MAFE (formerly the Ministry of Natural Resource, Environment and Tourism prior to 2022), PICRC's oversight role of "Science and Monitoring" on the PNMS Project and Strategic Plan is somewhat diminished. With remaining PNMS Project resources being insufficient to transform PICRC into an agency that can manage pelagic fisheries, PICRC is not able to achieve the intended outcomes of this Project, leaving MAFE to resolve this issue through its ability to leverage more funds to build capacities to conduct pelagic fisheries research, monitoring and surveillance (Para 99).

E-11. MAFE is going to formally submit recommendations to the National Congress on the findings of the MSP project in late September 2024 to determine the new PNMS area for Palau, 30, 50 or 80%, should be protected, based on historical fish catch data from 2010. There is also a national election scheduled for November 2024, complicating what actions the PNMS Project should take moving forward towards the EOP date of June 2025. There are several other issues with PNMS Project implementation including more staff needed at the DMSFW Operations Center to enforce the PNMS and DFZ, and to setup a comprehensive CB&T programme.

³ Consultations with MoF took place in early 2023 to try and take the lead on additional PNMS tax measures with Congress. This effort died along with efforts to repeal the PNMS Law consisting of the 80-20 PNMS-DFZ split.

MTR Ratings and Achievement Summary

E-12. Table E-2 contains the MTR ratings and achievement summary.

Table A: MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table for the PNMS Project in Palau

Measure	MTR Rating ⁴	Achievement Description
Project Formulation	Design and PRF Rating: 3	Design of many of the Project indicators and targets do not reflect the ground realities. With MAFE deliberating the size of the PNMS and DFZ, Project intended outcomes, outputs, indicators and targets need a review on which outcomes can be realized (Paras 37-39).
	Stakeholder Participation Rating: 4	Many stakeholders have temporarily suspended their participation on the Project pending resolution of the size of the PNMS and DFZ (Para 88).
Progress Towards Results	Objective Achievement Rating: 3	The institutional and governance structure for the PNMS and DFZ has not been strengthened. Implementation of a strategic plan for sustainable management of the PNMS and DFZ has not been completed towards a healthy and productive ecosystem for the benefit of all people of Palau. There is substantial risk that targets for Mandatory Indicators 1 and 2 as well as Core Indicator 8 will not be achieved (Paras 51-55)
	Outcome 1.1 Achievement Rating: 3	PNMS institutional, management and regulatory framework and mechanisms have not been strengthened with work on the Strategic Plan suspended with MAFE in early 2023 pending the outcome of the percentage of PNMS that will be enforced (Para 57).
	Outcome 1.2 Achievement Rating: 3	There has been some improvements in effective management and governance of PNMS/DFZ with 2 staff members (one male and one female), against a target of 10, having undergone training in marine law to build capacity on PNMS governance and management (Paras 59-62).
	Outcome 2.1 Achievement Rating: 5	Regulations and laws pertaining to PNMS and DFZ are working towards effective and sustainable enforcement. The Project has procured a lot of equipment for the Operations Room and enforcement surveillance operations of DMSFW. With 30% of vessels having human and electronic monitoring and reporting, the DMSFW Operations Center continues to develop its capabilities through the Project with maritime surveillance patrol reports accumulated since January 2023 (Para 64).
	Outcome 3.1 Achievement Rating: 3	Poor progress has been made on long-term mechanisms to support financial sustainability and security of PNMS. Additional PNMS tax-related policies and costs pertaining to the PNMS is not feasible at this time. Moreover, Palau cannot unilaterally place financing from multilateral negotiations into its own sustainable financing trust fund in the country, as it is a negotiation process with other countries and not under the control of the Project. This activity should be dropped from the Project (Para 66).
	Outcome 4.1 Achievement Rating: 3	Stakeholder support for the PNMS and DFZ has been weak. Some progress was made in providing opportunities to network with managers of other large scale marine protected areas, notably through establishment of a sister sanctuary agreement with

⁴ Evaluation rating indices (except sustainability – see Para 70): 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)*: The project has severe shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives.

Measure	MTR Rating ⁴	Achievement Description
		the National Marine Sanctuaries of American Samoa (Para 68).
	Outcome 4.2 Achievement Rating: 2	Effective Project management, monitoring and evaluation has not been achieved due to efforts to revise the PNMS Law. Little progress was made with ideal governance structure and project management support is still being explored (Para 70).
Project Implementation & Adaptive Management	Implementation Approach Rating: 3 ⁵	Major challenges for Project implementation include the lack of communications between the PMU (PICRC) and MAFE, the diminished role of PICRC, harvest strategies within the EEZ are determined at the regional level through SPC and not through PICRC or MAFE, transforming of PICRC into a pelagic fishery monitoring entity requires more resources than the PNMS Project can provide, and a shortage of DMSFW staff to staff the Operations Center (Para 81).
	Monitoring and Evaluation Rating: 4	The need to undertake considerable changes to the PRF has limited the effectiveness of Project-level M&E systems (Para 86)
	Stakeholder Participation Rating: 4	Many stakeholders have temporarily suspended their participation on the Project pending resolution of the size of the PNMS and DFZ (Para 88).
Sustainability	Sustainability Rating: 2	MAFE is deliberating the size of the DFZ and PNMS, holding up progress in PNMS institutional framework and governance issues, and stakeholders placing their involvement on the Project on hold (Paras 92-95).
Overall Project Achievement and impact	Rating: 3	With MAFE deliberating the size of the DFZ and PNMS, the PNMS strategic plan was placed on hold. Furthermore, the PNMS financial scheme is not ready for promulgation due to the current economic status of Palau and more staff are needed at the DMSFW Operations Center to enforce the PNMS and DFZ, and to setup a comprehensive CB&T programme. PICRC's role on the PNMS Project has been diminished with harvest strategies within the EEZ being determined at the regional level through SPC and not through PICRC or MAFE. With insufficient resources to transform PICRC into a pelagic fishery monitoring entity, MAFE needs to become the new implementing partner for the PNMS Project. This will require a review of all outputs, indicators and targets and which outcomes can be achieved.

Lessons Learned

E-13. *Lesson #1: The provision of additional equipment and training to DMSFW has been very beneficial to the activities of its Operations Center (Para 100).*

Recommendations

Rec #	Recommendation	Entity Responsible	Time Frame
A	Recommendation 1:		
E-14.	<i>Review and revise the PNMS Project PRF to ensure it aligns with GROp and UNDP-GEF priorities. This would involve a review of the PRF into which outcomes and outputs are deliverable within the Project timeframe, changes on who will be the implementing partner for the Project, and discussion of a no-cost extension to the PNMS Project of 6 to 12 months as there is</i>	GROp and UNDP	Immediate

⁵ This is Moderately Unsatisfactory. Implementation of some of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management, with some components requiring remedial action

Rec #	Recommendation	Entity Responsible	Time Frame
	<i>simply insufficient time remaining on the Project to achieve any of the intended outcomes (Para 0).</i>		
B	Recommendation 2		
E-15.	<i>Continue with the Project’s activities irrespective to what extent Congress decides to protect the PNMS (30, 50 or 80%). This would include the completion of the Strategic Plan, the development of a CB&T program by MAFE, and a continuation of the search for mechanisms to support financial sustainability roadmap of the PNMS and the DFZ (Para Error! Reference source not found.).</i>	GRoP and UNDP	Immediate

ABBREVIATIONS

Acronym	Meaning
CB&T	Capacity Building and Training
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CPAP	Country Programme Action Plan
CSO	Civil Society Organisation(s)
DFZ	Domestic Fisheries Zone
FAD	Fish Aggregating Device
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations
GEF	Global Environment Facility
HRBA	Human Rights-Based Approach
ICES	International Council for the Exploration of the Sea
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
IW: LEARN	International Waters: Learn Exchange and Resources Network of GEF
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAFE	Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Environment
MCS	Monitoring, Control and Surveillance
METT	Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool
MNRET	Ministry of Natural Resource, Environment and Tourism of Palau
MoJ	Ministry of Justice of Palau
MoU	Memorandum(a) of Understanding
MPA	Marine Protected Area(s)
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIM	National Implementation Modality
OPF	Operational Focal Point of GEF
PAN	Protected Area Network
PICRC	Palau International Coral Reef Center
PIR	Project Implementation Review
PNA	Partners to the Nauru Agreement
PNMS	Palau National Marine Sanctuary
PPEF	Pristine Paradise Environmental Fund
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RTA	Regional Technical Advisor
SBBA	Standard Basic Assistance Agreement of UNDP
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
TE	Terminal Evaluation
UNDP	United Nation Development Program
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
US\$	United States Dollar

1. INTRODUCTION

1. This report summarizes the findings of the Midterm Review (MTR) conducted during the 29 May-7 June 2024 period for the UNDP-supported GEF-financed Project entitled: ***“Strengthening the Palau National Marine Sanctuary for the Conservation and Management of Global Marine Biodiversity and Sustainable Fisheries”*** (hereby referred to as the PNMS Project or Project). In March 2021, this Project received a US\$ 1,826,484 grant from the Global Environmental Facility (GEF-7). The Project objective is to *“to strengthen the institutional and governance structure and implement a strategic plan for the sustainable management of the PNMS and DFZ and provide a healthy and productive ecosystem for the benefit of all people of Palau”*.

1.1 Purpose of the Mid-Term Review

2. 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 an MTR at the mid-point of implementation of a project to provide a comprehensive and systematic account of the performance of an ongoing project by reviewing its design, process of implementation and achievements vis-à-vis GEF project objectives and any agreed changes during project implementation. This MTR delivers an independent and impartial assessment of the PNMS Project that is comprised mainly of technical assistance and capacity building activities. As such, the MTR for this Project serves to:
 - assess early signs of project success or failure with the goal of identifying the necessary changes to be made to set the Project on-track to achieve its intended results;
 - strengthen the adaptive management and monitoring functions of the Project;
 - enhance the likelihood of achievement of Project and GEF objectives through analyzing Project strengths and weaknesses and suggesting measures for improvement;
 - enable informed decision-making by identifying and validating proposed changes to the ProDoc to ensure achievement of all Project objectives;
 - create the basis for replication of successful Project outcomes achieved to date; and
 - assess whether it is possible to achieve the objectives in the given timeframe, taking into consideration the pace at which the Project is proceeding.
3. This MTR was prepared to:
 - be undertaken independent of Project management to ensure independent quality assurance;
 - apply UNDP-GEF norms and standards for midterm reviews;
 - assess achievements of outputs and outcomes, likelihood of the sustainability of outcomes, and if the Project met the minimum M&E requirements;
 - provide credible, useful, and evidence-based information of the Project
 - provide recommendations to increase the likelihood of the Project delivering all its intended outputs and achieving intended outcomes.
 - bring up key issues that will serve as a means of strengthening learning within the PNMS Project team and its stakeholders to support better decision-making.

1.2 Scope and Methodology

4. The scope of the MTR covers the entire UNDP-supported, GEF-financed, PNMS Project implemented by the Palau International Coral Reef Center (PICRC). This MTR assesses 35 months of Project progress, achievements and implementation taking into account the status of Project activities, outputs and the resource disbursements made up to 31 May 2024. The MTR estimates the extent of barrier removal in each Project component by reporting on the progress against objective, outcome, output, and impact indicators listed in the latest Project Results Framework (PRF) as provided in Appendix F. The MTR report concludes with recommendations, as appropriate, for the key stakeholders of the Project. The MTR was approached through criteria of *relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact*, as defined, and explained in the UNDP “Guidance for Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed Projects”⁶, and the GEF M&E policy. The MTR Team was comprised of one international MTR evaluator. The MTR process was conducted in a spirit of collaboration with the provision of constructive inputs that will inform activities of this Project.
5. The PNMS Project was reviewed in the context of:
 - *Project strategy*: This includes an analysis of the PNMS Project design (and Project Results Framework) as outlined in the ProDoc to identify if the strategy is effective in achieving the desired outcomes.
 - *Progress towards results*: This is to include information provided from, amongst others, Project work plans, Project implementation reports (PIRs), relevant Project reports and information provided from various Project stakeholders.
 - *Project implementation and adaptive management*: This is an assessment of the quality of support to the Project from UNDP as well as the Implementing Partner of the Project, PICRC. Assessment parameters include management arrangements, work planning, finance and co-finance, Project level monitoring and evaluation systems, stakeholder engagement, reporting and communications; and
 - *Sustainability*: The likely ability of an intervention to continue to deliver benefits for an extended period after the end-of-Project (EOP). The MTR sustainability assessment essentially sets the stage for the Terminal Evaluation during which sustainability will be rated under the four GEF categories of sustainability, namely financial, socioeconomic, institutional framework, and governance, and environmental.
6. In the context of methodology, an independent and impartial assessment of the Project where technical assistance and capacity building activities was employed to provide credible, useful, and evidence-based information. Through data triangulation, the strategy for data and information collection and analysis adopted for this MTR included:
 - review of Project documentation (such as PIRs, meeting minutes of Project Steering Committee) and pertinent background information;
 - interviews with key Project personnel (including the current Project Manager, Project Coordinators, technical advisors, and Project developers) as well as relevant stakeholders (including other government agencies and private sector entities); and

⁶ http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/guidance/GEF/mid-term/Guidance_Midterm%20Review%20_EN_2014.pdf

- field visits to Project sites substituted by interviews with beneficiaries.
7. After the review of Project documentation, interviews were conducted with selected stakeholders to gauge the effectiveness and efficiency of “progress towards results”. Different key groups involved in the Project to be interviewed included:
- Project team. The purpose of interviews with the UNDP Fiji MCO, UNDP NCE Asia-Pacific and the PMU are the issues of implementation and execution. Main questions asked involved utilization of GEF grant resources.
 - National Executing partners. This involved implementation personnel at the PICRC. Main questions to be asked are what to do with the GEF grant resources.
 - Project partners. This included the PICRC, Division of Maritime Security and Fish & Wildlife (DMSFW) under the Ministry of Justice, Bureau of Fisheries under the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries & Environment (MAFE), Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Education. This also involved local communities, private sector fishery companies and the PNMS Advisory Committee that support the Project by providing advice, technical support, and managing challenges and issues raised, and who work reportedly work closely with PICRC in providing training.
 - Beneficiaries. This may involve the local communities and private sector fishery companies.

All interviews with the various stakeholders were to be held face-to-face with the International Evaluator, or virtually on Zoom, Teams, or WhatsApp. A detailed itinerary of the Mission is shown in Appendix B. A full list of people interviewed, and documents reviewed are given in Appendix C and Appendix D respectively. The conclusions and recommendations of the MTR were to focus on the current setup of the PNMS Project and its suitability of completed by its scheduled date of 21 June 2025.

8. The limitation to this MTR process was the time spent by the International Evaluator in Palau from 29 May to 7 June 2024 due to time constraints placed on the MTR caused by administrative delays. This short amount of time gave limited exposure of the International Evaluator to stakeholder, and as such, the MTR to a large extent was dependent on the information gathered during the 29 May to 7 June period, and the limited documentation from progress reports and other reports. Regardless, the International Evaluator has made every effort to understand and present a fair and a well-balanced assessment of the Project. Any gross misrepresentation of the Project has been resolved through discussions with the Project team.

1.3 Structure of the MTR Report

9. This MTR report is presented as follows:
- An overview of PNMS Project activities from a development context from its commencement of operations in June 2021 to the present;
 - An assessment of Project strategy and design;
 - An assessment of Project progress towards results;
 - An assessment of Project implementation and adaptive management;
 - Assessment of sustainability of Project outcomes; and
 - Conclusions and recommendations.



2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

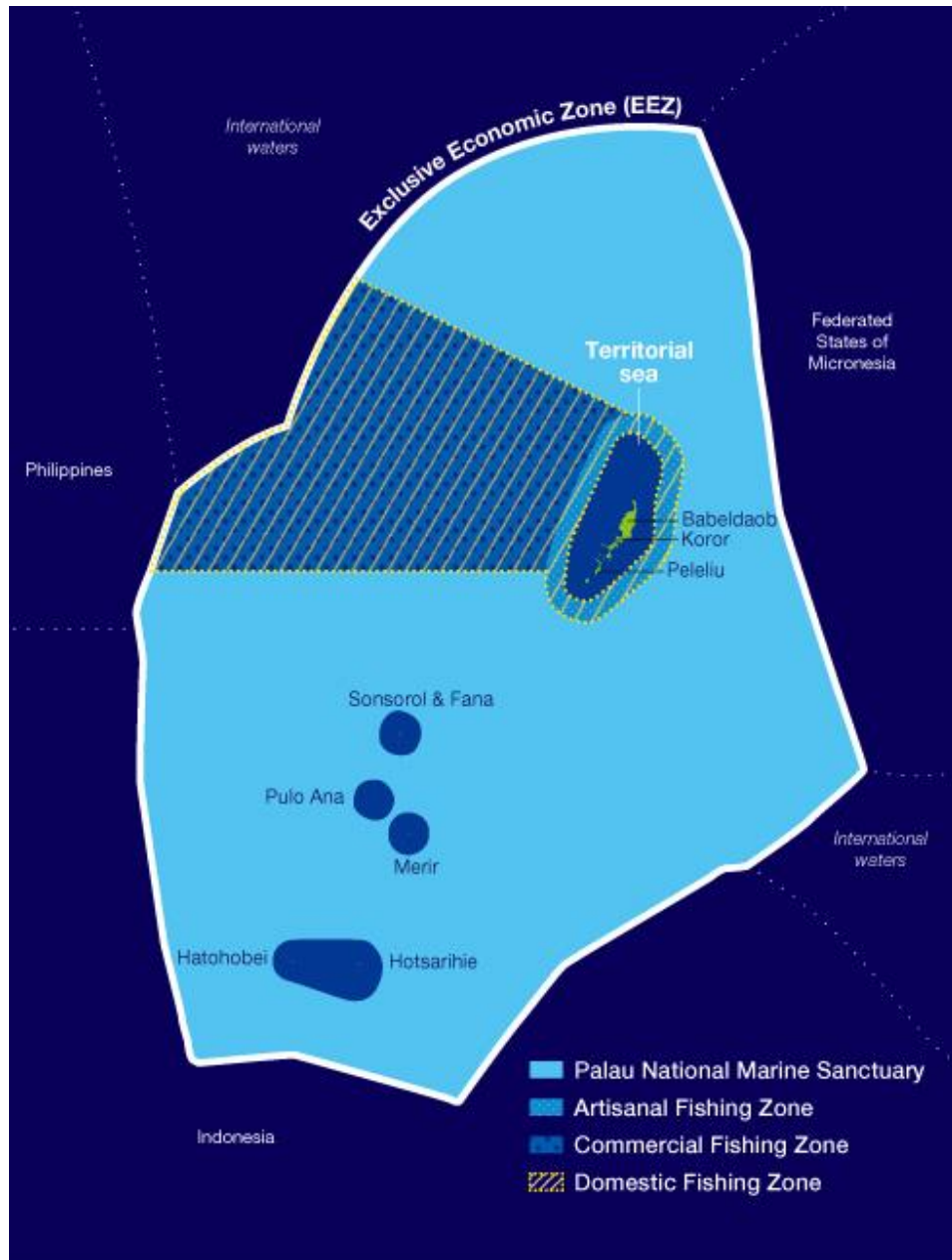
2.1 Development Context

10. Caring for the environment has long been an important part of Palau’s culture. For centuries, traditional leaders on these Pacific Ocean islands have worked to protect local waters through enactment of a “bul”, otherwise known as a moratorium on catching key species or fishing on certain reefs to protect critical habitats while also protecting community food sources. In addition, Palau’s underwater environment has commonly been referred to as one of the seven underwater wonders of the world as it boasts ecosystems of remarkable biodiversity. Fully protected marine areas are a critical tool for addressing challenges to ocean health, providing a broad range of benefits by safeguarding biodiversity, protecting top predators, and maintaining ecosystem balance.
11. There are two threats to Palau’s marine environment:
 - *Tourism*. Palau is heavily dependent on tourism, contributing an estimated 40% of Palau’s GDP in 2021 equivalent to US\$257 million, approximately US\$14,243 per capita⁷. Palau recognises the importance of high-quality ecotourism to its economy, and the global significance of its near-pristine reefs and associated biological communities and species. The value of promoting conservation throughout its exclusive economic zone (EEZ) is underpinned by the need to better understand the overall connectivity across its entire jurisdictional waters, and the importance of maintaining access to healthy nearshore and offshore fisheries for its own people; and
 - *Commercial fishing*. Though not as large a sector as tourism, commercial fisheries also occur in Palau with the majority of profits not staying in the country. The officially recognised figures for the 2022 GDP contribution of agriculture, forestry and fisheries combined in 2022 is US\$8.7 million or 3.4% of GDP⁸. There is no published data from GRoP that provides fisheries contribution to the GDP.
12. In 2015, Palau signed into law a Palau National Marine Sanctuary (PNMS) and a Domestic Fishing Zone (DFZ). The PNMS Law aims to protect renewable and sustainable living marine resources within a 47.5 million ha sanctuary (that is 80% of the EEZ) that provides direct value and revenue to Palau. The DFZ is an 11.8 million ha (20% of the EEZ) designed to provide long-term food security within Palau and protect important goods and services, increasing livelihoods and reducing pressure on reef fisheries. The PNMS and DFZ are illustrated on Figure 1. The presence of the PNMS provides a replenishment zone for pelagic fish stocks that are important to the entire region. Since its declaration, a number of constraints and challenges have hindered full implementation of the PNMS and DFZ including institutional constraints, financial and economic challenges and some general governance and legal issues.

Figure 1: The Palau National Marine Sanctuary and Domestic Fishing Zone

⁷ <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-investment-climate-statements/palau/>

⁸ <https://tradingeconomics.com/palau/agriculture-value-added-percent-of-gdp-wb-data.html#:~:text=Agriculture%2C%20forestry%2C%20and%20fishing%2C,compiled%20from%20officially%20recognized%20sources.>



13. The Sanctuary is home to an estimated 794 vertebrate species of which at least nine are endangered including the critically endangered subpopulations of hawksbill and leatherback sea turtles. It is also home to manta rays, many species of seabirds, whales, sharks, billfishes, and tunas, all of great cultural and socioeconomic importance to Palauans. Many of these species have declined in numbers under previously uncontrolled and ineffectively managed fishing practices, primarily by distant water fishing nations. Given its vast extent, the PNMS potentially encompasses entire home ranges of many of these species and protects essential habitats like seamounts and spawning aggregation sites that fulfill important ecological requirements. In addition to reducing pressure on fish stocks, the PNMS is expected to reduce mortality of seabirds, turtles, sharks, and billfishes that are currently caught as by-catch. The PNMS was also to bring benefits to neighboring Pacific ecosystems because healthy

species migrate into nearby waters. These highly protected areas have been proven to be 6 times more resilient to the effects of climate change than unprotected areas.

14. Through the designation of the PNMS, Palau is establishing its entire ocean territory as a regenerative zone for sharks, whales, tuna, and countless other precious species. Despite some notable progress particularly in the field of compliance and enforcement, the baseline since the 2015 PNMS declaration consists of a number of constraints and challenges that are still hindering the full implementation of the newly declared PNMS and the DFZ. From a 2019 external scoping report to review the constraints to effective management of the PNMS⁹, these can be identified as institutional constraints, financial and economic challenges as well as general governance challenges and legal hurdles. In the absence of an effective institutional structure and management process, the PNMS has the risks of becoming a “paper-park” while it continues to fall under political pressure from outside foreign fishing interests and internal individual interests. As such, the PNMS is in urgent need of a stable institutional and political platform from which to operate.
15. The institutional and management baseline for the PNMS was the legal framework established in 2015. This was later amended in 2019 laying out the governance structure for the PNMS and mandates three entities with management authority within an original national Executive Order¹⁰. This Executive Order defined the PNMS Office that sat under the Office of the President while maintaining a physical presence in the Bureau of Maritime Law¹¹. The Executive Order also outlines the duties and functions of the Executive Committee and further establishes Sub-Committees whose focus is to develop and implement the six components of the Strategic Plan under the supervision and direction of the Executive Committee members responsible for those six components¹². In June 2019, the President of the Republic of Palau signed into law a new Senate Bill which places the responsibility for administration of the PNMS under the PICRC. The new law further tasks the Ministry of Justice with the responsibility for surveillance of Palau’s maritime jurisdiction and the enforcement of the PNMS and the DFZ.
16. The 5-Year Strategic Plan was drafted in 2017 but has yet to be adopted by the PNMS Executive Committee and by the Government of the Republic of Palau (GRoP). In its present form, it provides a reasonable basic foundational framework, but it would benefit from expansion and further development, especially in the context of a detailed Results Framework with SMART targets and indicators¹³ that relate to a specific timeline for delivery. The Strategic Objectives also need strengthening although its management goals are basically sound.

2.2 Problems that the PNMS Project Seeks to Address

17. The main problems that the PNMS Project sought to address are:
 - constraints and challenges on staff and institutional capacity of MAFE and DMSFW.

⁹ “Palau’s National Marine Sanctuary: Managing Ocean Change and Supporting Food Security”, Report of an expert working group convened by PICRC and the Stanford Center for Ocean Solutions, December 2019.

¹⁰ Executive Order 395 ‘Restructuring the PNMS Office and the PNMS Executive Committee to Strengthen Implementation of the Palau National Marine Sanctuary’ March 2017.

¹¹ The Office runs primarily on grant money with some funding from the Pristine Paradise Environment Fund (PPEF).

¹² Executive Committee members comprise of a Director of the PNMS Office; the Minister of Community and Cultural Affairs or the Minister of Education to cover education and awareness; Minister of Justice to cover surveillance and enforcement; the Minister of Natural Resources, Environment and Fisheries to cover domestic fisheries; CEO of the Palau International Coral Reef Center to cover science and monitoring; Minister of Finance to cover sustainable fisheries; and the Managing Director of the Palau Visitors Authority to cover tourism and marketing.

¹³ Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-based

- lack of a formal institutional base for the PNMS and the DFZ.
 - inadequately defined mandates and responsibilities; and
 - absence of a formally agreed strategy and work-plan for effective management of the PNMS.
18. Despite the provisions of the Executive Order defining the functions and roles for staff within the PNMS Office, the staff quota was still incomplete with a serious shortage of trained and skilled technical staff to manage the PNMS. The PNMS Office lacks skilled technical staff with any long-term experience in ocean management and governance issues, fisheries, or protected areas management. This shortage of appropriate personnel and related technical experience represented a significant constraint to moving forward with the overall objectives and for delivering on the Strategic Plan and its targets. Up to the time of this MTR, there are no specific programmes within the PNMS Project for capacity building and training despite a PNMS draft 5-year Strategic Plan recognizing a need for such a programme.
19. Furthermore, there are institutional challenges and constraints related to:
- overall ocean management is weakened because efforts are not fully integrated nor are they sufficiently coordinated to produce optimal results in the active management of the PNMS. This is an ongoing concern in relation to the management needs and institutional arrangements and interactions within the PNMS management structure.
 - limited capabilities for the Operations Room within a new Division of Maritime Security and Fish & Wildlife (DMSFW) in the Ministry of Justice building funded by the Nippon Foundation for surveillance and enforcement. The Operations Room and associated equipment and satellite linkages needs to be made fully functional and manned on a 24-hour basis and partnerships for monitoring, control, and surveillance (MCS) need to be strengthened and agreements for cooperation extended.
 - absence of roadmap or workplan for the development of the domestic fishery (both onshore and pelagic fisheries) and how this will benefit the people of Palau in the long-term.
 - the need for capacity building and training with long-term mentoring for PICRC as the Lead Agency for Science and Monitoring of the on-shore and off-shore marine environment around Palau.
 - the need for proper funding of PNMS. There is a special financial arrangement for supporting the Protected Areas Network generally in Palau called the Green Fee, and Palau’s endowment under the Micronesia Conservation Trust goes directly to support related efforts.

2.3 PNMS Project Description and Strategy

20. This GEF-7 Project was designed with the objective to “strengthen the institutional and governance structure and implement a strategic plan for the sustainable management of the PNMS and DFZ and provide a healthy and productive ecosystem for the benefit of all people of Palau”. This included:
- provision of appropriate support to PICRC (the agency mandated with scientific studies and monitoring of the PNMS) in the necessary oceanic data collection.
 - a country focus on the future needs of its general population and communities which ultimately depend on healthy and vibrant ecosystems for their well-being, food security and livelihoods.

- Palau getting its tourism policies and management right and ensuring that it is sustainable as well as good for the country (environmentally, culturally, and economically) or the risk will be that some elements of Palau society will want to revert to exploiting the valuable natural resources for livelihoods and revenue.
21. For Component 1, there is Outcome 1.1: PNMS institutional, management and regulatory framework and mechanisms strengthened and under implementation through enhanced national, regional, and global support. The following outputs were expected to be delivered:
- Output 1.1.1: A 5-Year Strategic Plan and Roadmap (with monitoring targets and indicators) implemented for effective institutionalization of the PNMS within the agreed management, monitoring, and enforcement agencies.
 - Output 1.1.2: A Platform for Partnerships alongside the PNMS to support the activities in the Strategic Plan with an agreed process for delivery of said support.
 - Output 1.1.3: MCS role implemented through closer interaction and linkages with Ministry responsible for enforcement and compliance.
 - Output 1.1.4: A roadmap and work-plan for sustainable management within the domestic fishery zone, including the adoption of ecosystem-based harvest strategies; and
 - Output 1.1.5: Compliance of PNMS and DFZ with international treaties and conventions and other due processes for consolidating the international status and recognition of the PNMS.
22. There is also an Outcome 1.2: Improved and effective management and governance of PNMS/DFZ through strengthened capacity, skills, and knowledge (including at the State, National, regional level as well as NGOs), where Output 1.2.1: Implementation and Delivery of a Capacity Building and Training Programme, was expected to be delivered.
23. Under Component 2, there is an Outcome 2.1: All regulations and laws pertaining to PNMS and DFZ enforced effectively and sustainably in further close collaboration with WCPFC, FFA and PNAs, where the following outputs were expected to be delivered:
- Output 2.1.1: Full activation and implementation of the MSC Operations Room, staff and equipment with international linkages for better MCS.
 - Output 2.1.2: Implementation of interactive monitoring of EEZ/PNMS through combining satellite information on vessel movements with aerial reconnaissance (drones and patrol aircraft) leading to more effective deployment of patrol vessels; and
 - Output 2.1.3: Adoption of innovative technology for monitoring fisheries within Domestic Fishing Zone, including use of E-Monitoring and E-Reporting as appropriate.
24. Under Component 3, there is Outcome 3.1: Long-term mechanisms to support financial sustainability and security PNMS and its associated administrative and management arrangements are negotiated and identified, where the following outputs were expected to be delivered:
- Output 3.1.1: Detailed assessment of the economic value of the market and non-market marine ecosystem services within the oceanic jurisdiction of Palau; and
 - Output 3.1.2: A sustainable funding roadmap negotiated that identifies and confirms cost recovery and financing mechanisms (e.g. from tourism, levies, and taxation on fisheries products).

25. For Component 4, there is Outcome 4.1: Strong stakeholder support for the PNMS and DFZ and associated benefits and fees at the broad stakeholder level including the state, national, and international community, where the following outputs were expected to be delivered:
- Output 4.1.1: Lessons and practices from other similar projects and initiatives both within and outside the GEF 'stable' incorporated into project activities and deliverables, along with sharing of information and close cooperation on complementary activities.
 - Output 4.1.2: Capture and appropriate distribution of Best Lessons and Practices from the Project in a user-friendly format to support further capacity building and training and to encourage replication and/or scaling up as and where appropriate. This process should link into the Stakeholder Engagement Plan to ensure stakeholder input as well as sharing/ learning. This process will also advise and provide feedback/documentation to IW: LEARN; and
 - Output 4.1.3: A communications and awareness outreach programme established and delivered that explains the function and benefits derived from the PNMS and DFZ.
26. There is also Outcome 4.2: Effective Project management, monitoring, and evaluation, where the following outputs were expected to be delivered:
- Output 4.2.1: Project management structure in place, functional and under appropriate monitoring for delivery of the GEF Project Objectives including full use of a formal M&E process; and
 - Output 4.2.2: Updated stakeholder and partner engagement process/strategy in the project in support of its long-term objectives.
27. A Theory of Change (ToC) for the PNMS Project is shown on Figure 1.

2.4 PNMS Project Implementation Arrangements

28. The implementing partner for the PNMS Project is PICRC responsible and accountable for managing the PNMS Project, monitoring and evaluation of Project interventions, achieving Project outcomes, and for the effective use of UNDP resources and matching funds. PICRC is responsible for overall implementation of the Project, including the central coordination of Project activities through a Project Management Unit (PCU). The Project is being managed by a full-time Project Manager, Finance/Admin Officer, a Marine Law and Technical Coordinator, Technical Consultants, and Institutional Experts
29. The Implementing Partner reports to the Project Steering Committee (PSC) to ensure Project planning, review, monitoring, evaluation, and all other reports are completed in a timely manner, that coordination among the various partners is effective and Project activities are completed in a timely manner.

2.5 PNMS Project Timing and Milestones

30. The PNMS Project was designed as a 4-year project that commenced on 1 October 2019 scheduled to end on 30 September 2023. Progress up to 31 December 2022 has been unsatisfactory as further detailed in Section 3.2. A summary of significant events for the first 36 months of the PNMS Project include:
- GRoP signing the PNMS ProDoc on 10 June 2021;
 - the Inception Workshop was conducted 10 June 2021.

- first disbursement of GEF funds to PICRC on 26 August 2021;
31. Though the CEO Endorsement document was signed on 18 March 2021, the ProDoc was not signed until 10 June 2021. With the date of the Inception workshop of 10 June 2021, the Project did effectively commence in Q3 of 2021, a time when most of the PMU positions were staffed, and effective outreach to all stakeholders was established (with COVID-19 restrictions not being relaxed until 3Q 2022). At the time of writing this MTR report, there is just under 11 months of time remaining to complete all PNMS activities. Details of the challenges that remain to achieve all PNMS targets and other progress-related issues are provided in Section 3.2 of this report.

2.6 Main Stakeholders

32. To achieve the specific PNMS Project objective of “strengthen the institutional and governance structure and implement a strategic plan for the sustainable management of the PNMS and DFZ and provide a healthy and productive ecosystem for the benefit of all people of Palau”, the PNMS Project needed to engage a range of stakeholders in Palau (as specified in the ProDoc), that included:
- PICRC.
 - Ministry of Justice (specifically the Department of Marine Law Enforcement).
 - Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and the Environment.
 - Ministry of Finance.
 - Ministry of Education.
 - State Government.
 - Local Communities.
 - Industrial fishing companies; and
 - the Palau Conservation Society.

3. FINDINGS

3.1 Project Strategy

33. The PNMS Project is a GEF-7 project that was supposed to build on ongoing stakeholder efforts to establish a Palau National Marine Sanctuary in Para 20. Project preparations for the PNMS Project were conducted in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. During the virtual workshops held in late 2020 for the preparation of the PNMS Project, barriers hindering the achievement of a PNMS were identified and discussed by Palauan stakeholders in a virtual PRF workshop held in December 2020. Project preparations were conducted by an international consultant working virtually during the PPG phase. This led to some issues with respect to the quality of the Project design and the PRF that are discussed in Paras 37-39.
34. The PNMS Project's objective is to "strengthen the institutional and governance structure and implement a strategic plan for the sustainable management of the Palau National Marine Sanctuary and Domestic Fishing Zone and provide a healthy and productive ecosystem for the benefit of all people of Palau" on the basis of the Law of PNMS signed in October 2015 by the president of Palau. A more recent 2019 senate bill made some amendments to the areas and regulations as well as the administrative and institutional arrangements. This is further elaborated in Paras 44-51.

3.1.1. Original Project Design

35. The ProDoc was signed on 10 June 2021 with an intended duration of 48 months (until June 2025) and with an Inception Workshop taking place on 10 June 2021. The strategy is illustrated in the Theory of Change (ToC) diagram on Figure 2. The ToC diagram shows the immediate causes that hinder GROP's efforts to strengthen the institutional and governance structure and implement a strategic plan for the sustainable management of the PNMS and DFZ and the consequences of not removing them. Implementation of PNMS activities were designed to remove perceived barriers to enable the realization of achievement of the Project objective and the following outcomes:
- Outcome 1.1: PNMS institutional, management and regulatory framework and mechanisms strengthened and under implementation through enhanced national, regional and global support;
 - Outcome 1.2: Improved and effective management and governance of PNMS/DFZ through strengthened capacity, skills, and knowledge (including at the State, National, regional level as well as NGOs).
 - Outcome 3.1: Long-term mechanisms to support financial sustainability and security PNMS and its associated administrative and management arrangements are negotiated and identified;
 - Outcome 4.1: Strong stakeholder support for the PNMS and DFZ and associated benefits and fees at the broad stakeholder level including the state, national, and international community.
 - Outcome 4.2: Effective Project management, monitoring, and evaluation.
36. The design of activities of these Outcomes address the identified barriers. A barrier removal approach was deemed the best available strategy because of its sustainability; by removing the root, intermediate and immediate causes of the core problems of weak governance of the PNMS, the Project would be able to strengthen the GROP's ability to protect their pelagic fishery for future generations.

Figure 2: Theory of Change

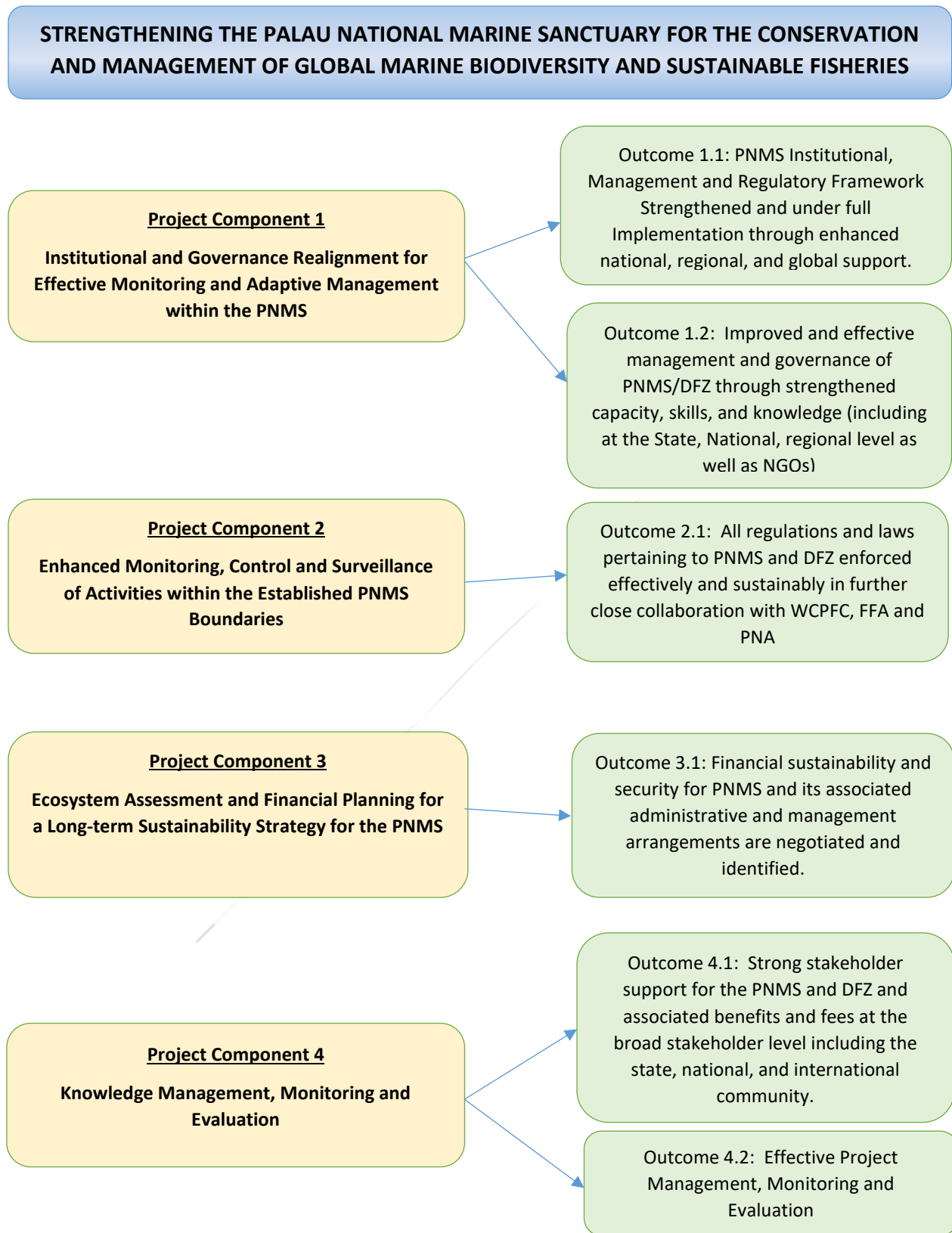


Figure 2: Theory of Change (con'd)

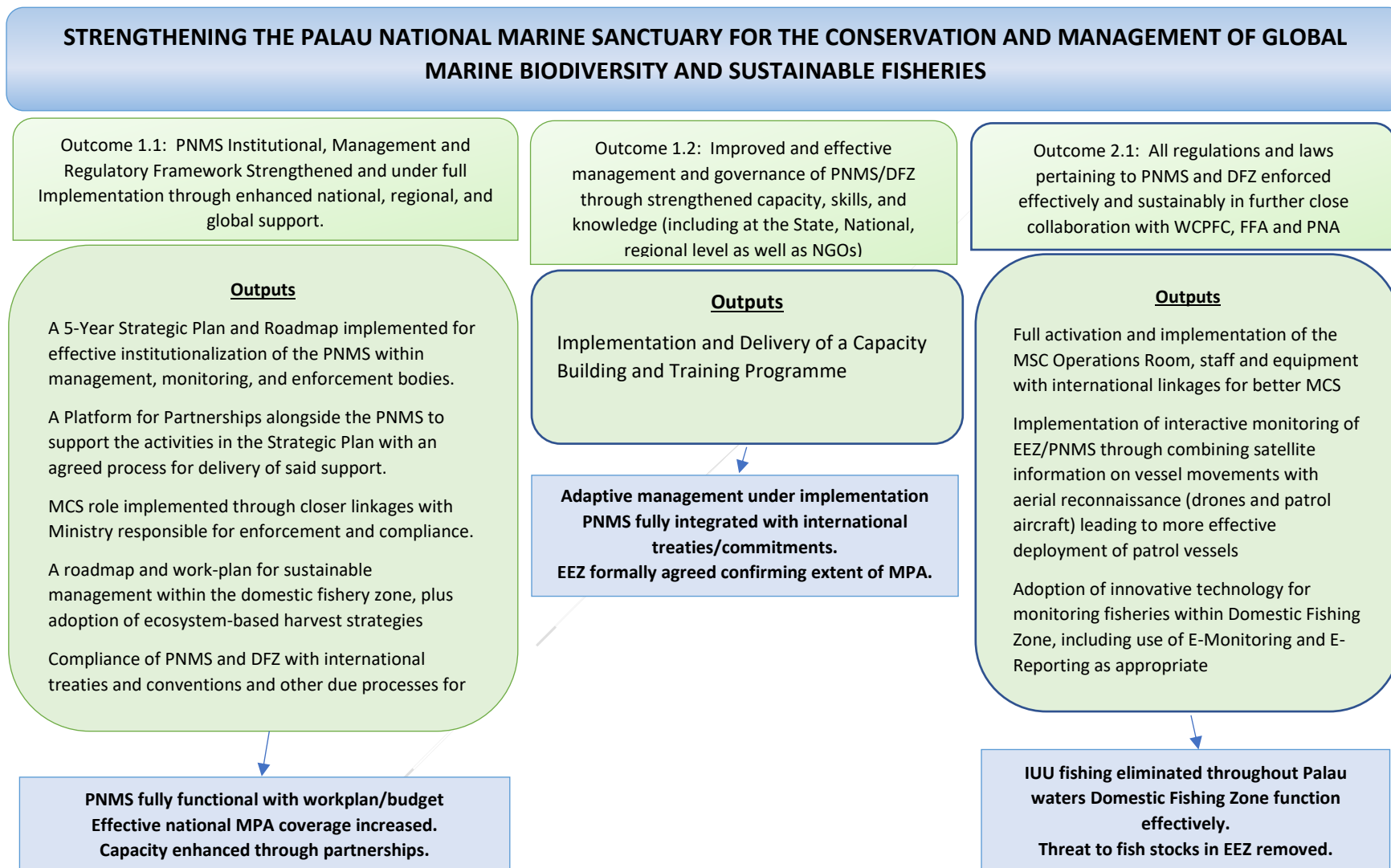
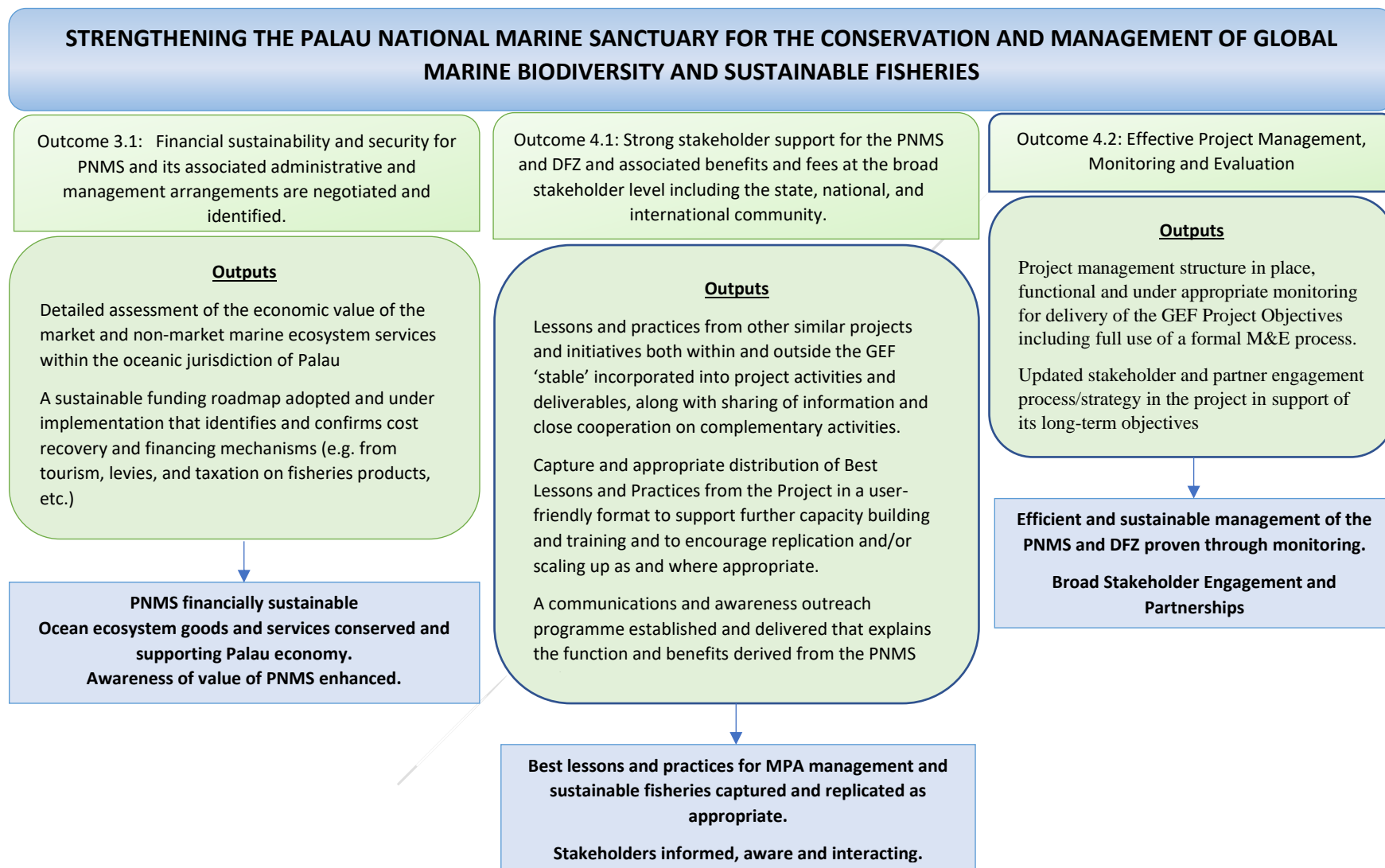


Figure 2: Theory of Change (con'd)



37. However, due to the PPG preparations being undertaken in a virtual manner, many of the indicators and targets do not reflect the ground realities. For example:
- Indicator 7 implies no management and enforcement was being conducted in the DFZ when in fact, they have been enforcing DFZ restrictions for close to 10 years.
 - pelagic fishery harvest strategies of the EEZ are determined at the regional level through SPC that do not closely inform any actions involving MAFE at the national level.
 - transforming PICRC into an entity that conducts pelagic fisheries research, monitoring and surveillance will require more resources than the PNMS Project can provide; and
 - MAFE is attempting to decrease the size of the PNMS and increase the DFZ area.
38. There were no underlying assumptions of each baseline activity towards their contribution to achieving the overall Project results; this was not covered in the PRF. However, there were 9 Project risks in the ProDoc (too many risks for the PMU to monitor), which should have listed less than 6 risks in the UNDP risk log.
39. Considering the poor progress of the PNMS Project, the primary issue for the MTR in the context of the PNMS Project design are high-level efforts to scale back the PNMS Law, and the implications on the Project design and institutional arrangements. This MTR was obligated to review the Project design to see if it makes sense to continue with the current design or to revise it. With current efforts to scale back the PNMS Law, the issue with this MTR is whether there is sufficient time remaining on the PNMS Project to expend all the PNMS Project funds to achieve all intended objective and outcomes. This is further discussed in Paras 45 to 50.
40. A review of the PNMS ProDoc also reveals that gender issues were considered in this Project. In Palau, women have a strong voice and a role in decision-making processes from the community all the way to the National government. GROp’s Gender Division has adopted an approach that does not simply focus on women, but rather the need for inclusivity and whether a person or group are vulnerable. Palau’s Gender Mainstreaming Policy requires that a “Gender and Socially Inclusive” and balanced lens be applied to every project and does not advocate simply for “gender equality.” Gender roles in Palau are rapidly changing for every age and socioeconomic age bracket. Under the constitution of Palau, women are afforded equality of opportunity with men; recommendations by the association of women’s chiefs (Mechesil a Belau) are said to be given high consideration in legislative matters.

3.1.2 Analysis of Project Results Framework

41. In light of many of the PNMS Project indicators and targets not reflecting ground realities, PNMS Project design and formulation is rated as **moderately unsatisfactory** with the PRF meeting some “SMART” criteria¹⁴ that was effective in monitoring the Project. With a virtual Inception Workshop held in December 2020, there was not more in-depth analysis of the indicators in light of efforts to scale back the PNMS Law (rationalized in Sections 3.2-3.4 with recommendations provided Paras 0-**Error! Reference source not found.**). Though the Inception workshop produced some revisions of the PNMS PRF in June 2021, the changes were not properly analyzed, prompting the PMU to warn UNDP of the need for more analysis of these indicators after the Inception Workshop in light of the PNMS Law repeal efforts. Some efforts to revise the PRF indicators, targets and outputs were made

¹⁴ Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound

by the RTA and PMU into revising the PNMS PRF in November 2022. However, amendments to the PNMS Project PRF were never completed. Furthermore, there were issues with some of the indicators and some of their baseline values:

- Indicator 5: Core Indicator 8: Globally over-exploited marine fisheries moved to more sustainable levels: The measurability of 21,250 metric tonnes per annum of fishery moved to more sustainable levels is questionable and not very specific.
 - Indicator 7: Scale of effectiveness in fisheries management and enforcement within the Commercial Fishing Zone and the Artisanal Fishing Zone (11.8 million Ha) - Baseline score: No enforcement and monitoring for compliance. There has been 50 to 100% enforcement and monitoring for compliance in the DFZ since 2015. The 50% comes from the Operations Center of DMSFW having to operate with less tools and equipment that were made available to the after PNMS interventions; this has since improved to 70-80% by 2020 with the Operations Center being receiving equipment from various donors¹⁵. The indicator’s measurability is subjective with few alternatives to make this indicator more measurable.
 - Indicator 13: Extent of Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA) vessel day scheme and sustainable funding programme established with a target of “specific revenue allocations from benefits of PNMS and DFZ (including VDS) at the state and community level”. Since this is a regional activity, there is doubt that the PNMS Project could address this target, also casting doubt of its measurability.
42. In consideration of effort to scale back the PNMS Law, the PNMS Project PRF will need to undergo considerable changes to address new targets, possibly both at the objective level as well as the outcome level and based on progress on the indicators as provided in Paras **Error! Reference source not found.**-71. Core indicator targets will change considerably under a scaled back version of the PNMS Law which is due to be discussed in Congress in September 2024. A no-cost extension of the Project is a likely outcome.

3.2 Progress towards Results

43. Progress towards results is provided on Table 1 against the EOP targets in the PNMS Project PRF. Comments on some of the ratings are provided in the following paragraphs. For Table 1, the “achievement rating” is color-coded according to the following 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
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Project goal and objective level targets:

44. During Project implementation in late 2021, there were efforts made by the GRoP to amend the PNMS Law. On 23 March 2022, the Olbiil Era Kelulau (the Committee on Judiciary, Governmental Affairs and Human Rights, Committee on Community, Planning and Development, Committee on Maritime, Climate Change, and Protected Areas, and Committee on Natural Resources and Environment) sought changes by introducing flexibility to an overly rigid PNMS system by consideration of alternative means meet the needs of the people, the needs of the environment, and achieve the balance required under the Constitution of Palau.

¹⁵ Donors such as the Governments of Japan, Australia, U.S., and organizations such as OceanMind, Vulcan and Global Fish Watch.

Table 1: Progress Towards the PNMS Project PRF (from the April 2021 ProDoc)

Project Strategy	Indicator	Baseline Level	Mid-Term Target	End-of-Project Target	Midterm Level and Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating
Project Objective: Strengthen the Institutional and Governance Structure and Implement a Strategic Plan for the Sustainable Management of the Palau National Marine Sanctuary and Domestic Fishing Zone and provide a healthy and productive ecosystem for the benefit of all people of Palau	INDICATOR 1 Mandatory Indicator 1: Direct Project beneficiaries	Less than 1%. Population of Palau is not yet realising the benefits of the MPA/PNMS or the DFZ as a result of lack of knowledge and awareness and inadequate human resources	Demographics survey showing strong improvement in understanding and benefit (livelihoods and food security) particularly for women and poorer communities. Indicator 1 and 2 improved by 20%	Approx 2,000 persons (600 women) from tourism sector, fisheries sector,	Results of an island-wide socioeconomic assessment indicates 50% of 266 respondents support PNMS being 80% of the EEZ.		See Para 51
	INDICATOR 2 Mandatory Indicator 2: Indirect Project beneficiaries	Less than 1% - As above	-	100% - Confirmation of overall beneficiaries from GEF investment in this Project = 20,135 (overall population) with 45% women (9,014)	No surveys conducted to monitor number of beneficiaries		See Para 52
	INDICATOR 3 Core Indicator 2: Marine protected areas created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use	Less than 2% (950,000 Ha) of area effectively managed. MPA currently having limited to zero effect on improving management and conservation for sustainable use.	80% under improved management. PNMS management and administrative processes fully functional within PICRC (Palau International Coral Reef Center)	80% (47.5 million Hectares) of EEZ under fully effective management as a marine sanctuary and no-take zone	47.5 million hectares (80% of the EEZ) under improved management.		See Para 53
	INDICATOR 4 Core Indicator 5: Area of marine habitat under improved practices to benefit biodiversity	Zero % of Domestic Fishing Zone – no management as yet.	20% of Domestic Fishing Zone under formal management and administrative via	20% (11.8 million Hectares) of EEZ and territorial waters under strict	11.8 million hectares (20% of the EEZ) under strict management as a		See Para 54

Project Strategy	Indicator	Baseline Level	Mid-Term Target	End-of-Project Target	Midterm Level and Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating
				management as a domestic fishery with limited and controlled commercial fishing and exportation	domestic fishery. However, a monitoring program for pelagic fisheries has not yet been established.		
	INDICATOR 5 Core Indicator 8: Globally over-exploited marine fisheries moved to more sustainable levels	Approx 2% as above equivalent to 225 tonnes sustainable	Improved by 50% (10,625 tonnes)	21,250 metric tonnes per annum of fishery moved to more sustainable levels	0%		See Para 55
Outcome 1.1: PNMS Institutional, Management and Regulatory Framework and mechanisms strengthened and under Implementation through enhanced national, regional, and global support	INDICATOR 6: Extent of effectiveness of PNMS institutional, management and regulatory framework Score: 1. No improvement on the PNMS institutional, management and regulatory framework 2. 50% improvement on the PNMS institutional, management and regulatory framework 3. Fully functional and effective PNMS institutional, management and regulatory framework	Baseline Score: 1 ¹⁶	Mid Term Score Target: 2 ¹⁷	End of Project Target Score: 3 ¹⁸	1		See Para 57

¹⁶ Limited control over illegal activities with only 5-6 interdictions per annum. Lack of a current formal institutional base, inadequately defined mandates and responsibilities, and absence of a formally agreed strategy and work-plan for effective management of the PNMS. Inability to currently fully and effectively control harmful or illegal activities within the PNMS with limited control over illegal activities with only 5-6 interdictions per annum.

¹⁷ PNMS Institutional /Administrative base/headquarters established and functional. Mandates and responsibilities of various government bodies clearly defined in adopted Strategic Plan. A Strategic Plan finalised and adopted along with an Operations Manual and Terms of Reference. Long-term Partnerships identified and formally adopted through a ‘Partnership Platform’ to provide support for scientific monitoring and MCS (including innovative technologies as per below). MCS Action Plan reviewed, and draft revision distributed for stakeholder input (including with regional partners). New fisheries management strategies and regulations are under implementation and actively enforced.

¹⁸ Strategic Plan adopted and record of illegal activities within PNMS shows significant reduction by at least 50%. TE identifies an effective Partnership Platform supporting ecosystem monitoring as well as enforcement and compliance procedures. MCS Action Plan updated, adopted, and fully implemented. Record of illegal activities within PNMS shows significant reduction by at least 50%. Ecosystem-based harvest strategies for at least 3 major commercial species are adopted and implemented within the DFZ and being assessed and acted on as part of an adaptive management approach

Project Strategy	Indicator	Baseline Level	Mid-Term Target	End-of-Project Target	Midterm Level and Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating
	<p>INDICATOR 7: Scale of effectiveness in fisheries management and enforcement within the Commercial Fishing Zone and the Artisanal Fishing Zone (11.8 million Ha) Scores: 1. No enforcement and monitoring for compliance 2. 50% enforcement and monitoring for compliance 3. Full enforcement and monitoring for compliance</p>	Baseline Score: 1 ¹⁹	Mid-Term Target Score: 2 ²⁰	End of Project Target Score: 3 ²¹	2-3		See Para 57
<p>Outcome 1.2: Improved and effective management and governance of PNMS/DFZ through strengthened capacity, skills, and knowledge (including at the State,</p>	<p>INDICATOR 8: Number of staff (disaggregated by males and females) that have undergone training and built capacity on PNMS governance and management</p>	Baseline: 2 ²²	Mid-term Target: 6 males; 4 females ²³	End of Project Target: 14 Male; 10 Female ²⁴	2		See Para 59
	<p>INDICATOR 9: Extent of capacity building programme established in country on PNMS management & monitoring.</p>	Baseline Score: 1 ²⁵	Mid-Term Target Score: 2 ²⁶	End of Project Target Score: 3 ²⁷	2		See Paras 60-62

¹⁹ New regulations that now apply to the Domestic Fishing Zone need enforcement and effective monitoring for compliance. No current harvesting strategies within DFZ

²⁰ New fisheries management strategies and regulations adopted for the DFZ, under implementation and actively enforced. These management plans will clearly define the purpose of the DFZ as a domestic fishery for the benefit of Palauans with due consideration given to subsistence fisheries versus commercial foreign licensed fisheries and strict control and regulation of the latter. A food security assessment made relating to the long-term management of the DFZ with an emphasis on state benefits as well as national community benefits.

²¹ Ecosystem-based harvest strategies for at least 3 major commercial species are adopted and implemented within the DFZ and being assessed and acted on as part of an adaptive management and food security approach. Enforcement partnerships between state level and national level (MoJ, MNRET) established and implemented

²² Only 2 technical staff in PNMS with any offshore skills. General shortage of trained and skilled technical and managerial staff to manage the PNMS (no specific programme within the PNMS for capacity building and training).

²³ At least two Partnership Agreements in place with associated training and capacity building components

²⁴ Minimum of 20 additional trained staff and government/state/community representatives (40% female) and 4 international mentors identified and directly involved in training and long-term support to PNMS and staff

²⁵ No current in-country focused modular training courses supporting capacity-building, training.

²⁶ Best Lessons and Practices captured through modular training courses and offered to in-country technical and managerial personnel and candidates

²⁷ At least 4 focused training courses/modules on various elements of PNMS management and monitoring (governance, management and/or technical aspects). These delivered at state as well as national government level

Project Strategy	Indicator	Baseline Level	Mid-Term Target	End-of-Project Target	Midterm Level and Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating
National, regional level as well as NGOs)	Scores: 1. No capacity building programme established in country on PNMS management & monitoring. 2. 50% capacity building programme implemented in country on PNMS management and monitoring. 3. Capacity building programme under full implementation in country on PNMS management and monitoring						
Outcome 2.1: All regulations and laws pertaining to PNMS and DFZ enforced effectively and sustainably in further close collaboration with WCPFC, FFA and PNA	INDICATOR 10: Extent at which Palau’s Operations Centre for Monitoring, Control and Surveillance is manned, equipped and coordinating active MCS patrols, interdiction, and prosecution. 1. Non-functional Palau operational centre 2. Partial functional Palau operational centre 3. Full functional Palau operational centre 4. Full functional Palau operational centre supporting 100% increase in offshore patrol and enforcement	0	1	2	0		See Para 64
	INDICATOR 11: Extent of effective human electronic monitoring, reporting within the DFZ. Scores: 1. No electronic monitoring and reporting 2. 30% of vessels have human and electronic monitoring and are reporting on findings 3. 50% of vessels have human and electronic monitoring and are reporting on findings	0	2	3	2		
Outcome 3.1: Long-term mechanisms to support financial sustainability and	INDICATOR 12: Extent of 10 years sustainable funding roadmap for PNMS and DFZ formally adopted integrating ecotourism and livelihoods.	1	2	3	2		See Para 66

Project Strategy	Indicator	Baseline Level	Mid-Term Target	End-of-Project Target	Midterm Level and Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating
security PNMS and its associated administrative and management arrangements are negotiated and identified	1. No adoption by Government on the 10 years sustainable funding roadmap for PNMS and DFZ 2. Draft 10 years sustainable funding roadmap for PNMS and DFZ developed integrating ecotourism and livelihood 3. Finalized and adopted 10 years sustainable funding roadmap for PNMS and DFZ established						
	INDICATOR 13: Extent of PNA ²⁸ vessel day scheme and sustainable funding programme established. Scores: 1. No PNA vessels day scheme and sustainable funding programme established 2. Negotiations and drafting of PNA vessel day scheme and sustainable funding programme reviewed and adopted 3. Specific revenue allocations from benefits of PNMS and DFZ (including VDS) at the state and community level & maintenance of at least 75% of the previous VDS income to Palau					Recommending that this indicator be deleted due to the multi-lateral negotiations of the PNA that are not under the control of the Project	
Outcome 4.1: Strong stakeholder support for the PNMS and DFZ and associated benefits and fees at the broad stakeholder level including the state, national, and international community	INDICATOR 14: Appropriate Lessons and Best Practices (L&BP) (from other similar GEF projects and other relevant initiatives captured and incorporated into this project as appropriate	Absence of experience nationally with managing such a large 'no-take' protected area or domestic fisheries management zone and no information on L&BP to fall back on	Report to PNMS Management on lessons and best practices from other initiatives, SIDS, and regions (e.g. LMEs) and appropriate BL&P captured through project activities	L&BP captured in 'Operational Guidelines' for PNMS and for DFZ (two documents). TE can clearly identify use of L&BP where appropriate, from other examples	Some progress		See Para 68

²⁸ Parties to the Nauru Agreement which is based on the protection of regional biomass and spawning migration zones for commercial fisheries. The Parties agree to fishing efforts (fishing days) of previous years in their respective jurisdictions. The number of fishing days is then sold by the government to fishing companies as a means of revenue.

Project Strategy	Indicator	Baseline Level	Mid-Term Target	End-of-Project Target	Midterm Level and Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating
				within the PNMS project			
	INDICATOR 15: Lessons and Best Practices from the project identified and documented and distributed to support a) an effective long-term Communications and Awareness strategy, and b) replication of the project results and achievements in other SIDS/PICTs	Few examples for other Pacific or global SIDS to follow or learn from in the context of managing similar areas within their vast EEZs	Best lessons and practices captured at Mid Term for consideration in MTR. A Communications and Awareness Outreach Programme under delivery from early stages of Project Implementation with clear assessment and reporting on its effectiveness	Final best lessons and practices captured in Experience Notes (at least 3) for IW: LEARN and other appropriate bodies (IUCN, WWF, etc.) for distribution. Two or more twinning exercises / BL&P workshops within the South Pacific region/SIDS At least one global twinning exercise (possibly virtual)	Some progress		
Outcome 4.2: Effective Project Management, Monitoring and Evaluation	INDICATOR 16: Project Coordination Unit and Project Management supported by the host organisation(s) with appropriate staffing levels and Monitoring and Evaluation as defined in the Project Document	No current project management base or staffing in support of PNMS institutionalisation. No associated M&E Plan	Quarterly and annual (PIR) reporting support effective management and capturing improvements in METT targets	Overall Project Management receives minimum 'Satisfactory' at TE PCU physical structure and staff rolled over into permanent PNMS establishment by end of project	No progress		See Para 70

Project Strategy	Indicator	Baseline Level	Mid-Term Target	End-of-Project Target	Midterm Level and Assessment	Achievement Rating	Justification for Rating
	<p>INDICATOR 17: Stakeholder and Partner Engagement Plan functional within the project</p>	<p>No stakeholder engagement strategy or process for supporting PNMS</p>	<p>Stakeholder Engagement Plan and Roadmap (with budget) finalised as a document and under implementation. Partnership Platform engaging directly with Stakeholders</p>	<p>Stakeholder Engagement receives minimum 'Satisfactory' at TE Partnership Platform includes linkage to Stakeholders as a long-term formal agreement</p>	<p>No progress</p>		

45. In other words, the Olbiil Era Kelulau allowed the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Environment (MAFE) to explore the expansion of the DFZ to 70% of the EEZ, leaving only 30% to the PNMS. This was recommended due to pressures from fishing industries and certain government agencies to “promote sustainable resource management and provide sustainable economic benefits to the national and state governments”. This initial draft bill also proposed:
- removal of the administrative mandate from the Palau International Coral Reef Center (PICRC);
 - limit PICRC's role in recommending sustainable harvest strategies to MAFE;
 - increase the fish export tax from \$0.50 to \$0.75 to increase fishing revenues;
 - reallocate the \$5 visitor fee from the Pristine Paradise Environment Fund (PPEF) and PICRC into the national treasury;
 - permit fishing zone to long-line and purse seine fishing;
 - enable petroleum operations within Palau's waters;
46. On 20 July 2022, the President of Palau, based on a legislation calling for a marine spatial planning initiative to inform the management of the PNMS, declared that expansion of the DFZ beyond the 20% would need to be informed by a US State Department project “Marine Spatial Planning” (MSP) that is analyzing EEZ historical fishing data to come up with a state of pelagic fisheries for Palau that is informed by scientific information from the Oceanic Fisheries Programme of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC). The report would also make recommendations on the areas of fishing that would benefit local fisherfolk and locate the PNMS in a manner that would have the greatest impact on conservation objectives while allowing for sustainable domestic fisheries production. This report was to inform future legislation through its recommendations for amendments to the PNMS Law. Mandates and responsibilities of the government bodies cannot be clearly defined ahead of the MSP exercise. The deadline for the report is September 2024. The amended proportion of PNMS and DFZ will be subject to the findings of the comprehensive marine spatial planning process and is not known at this time.
47. The MSP process, however, is based on historical fisheries data from 2010 to 2015 raising questions about whether or not the MSP process can determine the balance for sustainable pelagic fisheries. PICRC, the implementing partner for the PNMS Project, is also the lead agency for science and monitoring of the near-shore marine environment around Palau and has developed a science and monitoring plan for nearshore waters and coastal ecosystems. The PNMS Law that passed senate in 2019 was to allow PICRC to extend its role to support the PNMS and pelagic fish stocks.
48. The MSP process is proceeding at a slower pace but in line with and parallel to Project efforts to ensure marine spatial planning process aligns itself with the desired outcomes of the PNMS Project. MSP is informed by 7 different assessments of which the Project Steering Committee examined the “Fisheries Assessment” based on historical catch data that was modelled. This is not the best practice to monitor pelagic fisheries as it does not address current status of fish stocks. Efforts by the PMU to have GEF Project support for the MSP project did not get any feedback from MAFE.
49. All this affects the mid-term targets of the Project where the Project has made little progress due to the issue of efforts to scale back the PNMS Law. Efforts to scale back the Law began in November 2021, shortly after the Inception Workshop. The PMU had informed UNDP in early 2022 of this development and its implications on the PNMS design and institutional arrangements. The drive behind the PNMS scale back efforts has been the decreasing revenues of industrial fishing companies, complicated by COVID-19 associated with significant loss of national revenue. At the time

of writing of this MTR, the Project has experienced delays in advancing strengthened protections for the PNMS:

- there have been efforts to update the 59,264,900 ha of EEZ from its current legislation of 47,507,800 ha of PNMS (80%) and 11,757,200 ha of DFZ (20%). A bill was proposed on 23 March 2022 to increase the DFZ to 70% with the PNMS decreased to 30%. Current thinking of MAFE is for a 50-50 split between the PNMS and DFZ.
 - the 11th Olbil Era Kellau made the 2022 decision that a 2-year period of information gathering on the state of the pelagic fisheries stock would be necessary before amending the level of PNMS protection.
 - PICRC’s position on the PNMS and DFZ is to collect current fisheries data, not historical data as in the MSP. However, PICRC have only been focused on near shore or coastal fisheries monitoring and are not equipped for pelagic fishery surveys. PICRC efforts to monitor pelagic fish stocks are mostly pilot activities opportunistically using DMSFW vessels (see next bullet). Developing a pelagic fishery monitoring role for PICRC will take significantly more funds and time that is likely to be longer than this Project’s terminal date of June 2025.
 - in attempts to undertake pelagic fisheries surveys, PICRC and the Project have had to be opportunistic in sourcing the suitable vessels to do offshore pelagic fisheries research, monitoring, and enforcement. There are currently two vessels that can be deployed in Palau for such purposes with more vessels needed.
50. With regards to the Project’s objective to “strengthen the institutional and governance structure and implement a strategic plan for the sustainable management of the PNMS and DFZ and provide a healthy and productive ecosystem for the benefit of all people of Palau”, little has been achieved on this Project to meet this objective. The most important question emerging from these issues is how much time is required to understand pelagic fish scientific research around Palau. This has delayed progress on all Project fronts to the extent that Project communications between PICRC, MAFE and the Secretariat of SPC have been hampered. MAFE is stating that September 2024 is the cut-off date for this research.
51. For Mandatory Indicator 1, an island-wide socioeconomic assessment was undertaken and completed by late 2023 in the state of Airai on the impacts of the PNMS and DFZ. The Airai study surveyed 266 individuals (53% female, 47% male). Many respondents (40%) indicated high support for the PNMS and the closure of 80% of Palau’s EEZ. The main finding of the Airai study showed:
- preference for pelagic fish consumption may potentially increase with an increase in consistent availability of affordable pelagic fish; and
 - there is a strong need for outreach, raised awareness and education to all levels of the community focused on addressing misperceptions.
- A demographics survey showed strong improvement in understanding of the benefits (livelihoods and food security), particularly for women and poorer communities. Though Indicator 1 improved by 20%, there were insufficient surveys done to indicate the increased effectiveness of the PNMS institutional, management and regulatory framework.
52. For Mandatory Indicator 2, the aforementioned socioeconomic study was to inform on the status of this indicator of 100%. However, no surveys have yet to be completed to monitor the overall beneficiaries from the GEF investment in this Project (20,135 overall population with 45% women).

Data analysis was to begin after the completion of data collection; however, data collection has not yet started with no preliminary results available.

53. For Core Indicator 2, 47.5 million hectares, equivalent to 80% of the EEZ, is currently under improved management for conservation and sustainable use, not on the creation of MPAs. The development of the PNMS strategic plan has been underway since the beginning of 2022 and the draft was completed by late 2023. Effective management of the 80% can be sustained if there is formal and regular collaboration of management authorities for fisheries, enforcement & surveillance and research & education and outreach. The PNMS strategic plan was expected to enable a framework for such collaboration; however, work on the Strategic Plan has been suspended pending the outcome of efforts PNMS by September 2024 to scale-back the percentage of the PNMS that will be enforced.
54. For Core Indicator 5, the target for the area of marine habitat under improved practices to benefit biodiversity is 11.8 million hectares, equivalent to 20% of the EEZ. The current management of the EEZ is managing the 20% territorial waters under a DFZ that is under strict management as a domestic fishery with limited and controlled commercial fishing and exportation. The 20% fishing zone is established by law but is being deliberated through the ongoing marine spatial planning exercise under the MSP. A new locally established longline fishing company, the Palau Commercial Fishing Company (PCFC), and the Belau Offshore Fishers Inc (BOFI), have started fishing within the DFZ along with a fleet from Okinawa. Through the Project, partnership agreements with both PCFC and BOFI have been established. These agreements allow the Project to begin collecting catch data that will inform appropriate management measures. However, establishing a monitoring program and standard measurements cannot be determined at this stage given a lack of understanding of local and regional level data management systems and analysis for tracking. This is a nationally mandated process led by MAFE, not the PMU.
55. For Core Indicator 8, the MTR target for globally over-exploited marine fisheries moved to more sustainable levels is improvement by 50% (10,625 tonnes). Progress on this target, however, is zero. Determination of appropriate levels of efforts for sustainable fishing determined at the regional level will require long-term engagements with regional fisheries management organizations and multilateral negotiations to be effectively addressed. At the national level, efforts towards the completion of a first PNMS science and monitoring strategy are ongoing to enable actions towards monitoring this indicator; however, this will take more resources than the PNMS Project can provide. To date, the measurement of the tonnage of fish to serve as an indicator of progress, the numbers provided are historical data prior to a scaling down of fishing efforts in 2015 which led to full implementation of the PNMS in 2020 where 80% of the EEZ was closed and 20% was designated as the fishing zone. This effectively means there is no baseline of catch data and therefore any attempts to provide estimates would be arbitrary. A quick review of 2021 data which has not been formally analyzed show a rough estimate of 9.5 tons of tuna caught by BOFI, noting that this is a very rough estimate that should merely indicate the beginnings of efforts to manage such data. PCFC is relatively new with no sufficient data collected for this indicator. The Okinawan fleet also operates within the domestic fishing zone and efforts are ongoing to access this portion of catch data.
56. With the June 2025 EOP date of the PNMS Project, there is a substantial risk that targets for Mandatory Indicators 1 and 2 as well as Core Indicator 8 will not be achieved. The rating for objective achievements is ***moderately unsatisfactory***.

Outcome 1.1: PNMS institutional, management and regulatory framework and mechanisms strengthened and under implementation through enhanced national, regional, and global support.

57. For Indicators 6 and 7, the following has been achieved:

- Indicator 6 score is at 1 (against a mid-term target of 2) indicating no improvement on the PNMS institutional, management and regulatory framework. Work on these improvements has stalled pending the efforts to scale back the PNMS Law.
- Indicator 7 baseline score was incorrectly estimated in the ProDoc. It was actually 2 with roughly 50% enforcement as a baseline, improving to somewhere between 2 and 3, roughly a 65% score at the mid-term for management and enforcement of the DFZ. The DMSFW have had an established operations room to monitor and enforce DFZ and PNMS activities for close to 10 years, operating with a small number of staff with a need to recruit more staff to provide monitoring for 24 hours per day.
- the aforementioned draft PNMS strategic plan identifies the strengthening of the institutional, management and regulatory framework and mechanisms and under implementation through enhanced national, regional, and global support as the key objective to address. Development of the PNMS strategic plan and collaboration with the respective PNMS management authorities along with Project implementation led to the awarding of a contract to a consultant to establish Capacity Building and Training (CB&T) agreements that enable the development of a sustainable CB&T program. However, work on the Strategic Plan was suspended with MAFE in early 2023 pending the outcome of the percentage of PNMS that will be enforced.
- the MSP project, initiated via national legislation and presidential executive order, is currently be implemented in parallel to PNMS Project. The MSP work is expected to provide recommendations informing policies regarding the designated 80% PNMS and 20% DFZ zones and the governance structure and procedures for management to operate. The mandates and responsibilities of GRoP bodies cannot be clearly defined ahead of the MSP exercise. Key Project deliverables cannot supersede the outcomes of the MSP process. Once again, efforts by the PMU to provide GEF Project support for the MSP project did not get any feedback from MAFE.

58. Overall, Outcome 1.1 is rated ***moderately unsatisfactory***.

Outcome 1.2: Improved and effective management and governance of PNMS/DFZ through strengthened capacity, skills, and knowledge (including at the State, National, regional level as well as NGOs)

59. For Indicator 8, only 2 staff members (one male and one female) have undergone training and built capacity on PNMS governance and management (mainly in marine law). With the baseline score of 2, there has been no progress on increasing the number of males and female recruits for DMSFW. Key aspects of enforcement and surveillance are a feature of regular trainings. However, there is a shortage of recruits to setup a systematic program that incorporates fisheries management and monitoring.

60. For Indicator 9, the extent of capacity building established on PNMS management and monitoring from a baseline score of 1, was a score of 2, indicating 50% capacity building programme implemented in country on PNMS management and monitoring. In place of a formal CB&T program, comprehensive training involving marine law and fisheries research has been implemented opportunistically with MAFE and through existing partners such as SPC and SPREP. This resulted in Project consultations between MAFE, PICRC and MoJ up to early 2023 to identify training needs, establish training modules, and draft training agreements that are templated for MAFE to establish

agreements with SPC and others to regularize training for DMSFW staff. This is the extent of Project involvement to date.

61. MAFE will now have to finalize these draft agreements to formalize CB&T. However, work on these agreements was suspended in early 2023 due to MAFE efforts to scale back the PNMS Law and a growing rift between MAFE administration and the PNMS Project PMU.
62. The Project has also equipped and provided needed capacity for the Maritime Operations Center. The placement of a Surveillance & Enforcement Officer and a Planning & Development Officer provided for a strategic approach to maximizing the use of the Maritime Operations Center and the Ministry of Justice. This provides steps for establishing regular training programmes.
63. Overall, Outcome 1.2 is rated ***moderately unsatisfactory***.

[Outcome 2.1: All regulations and laws pertaining to PNMS and DFZ enforced effectively and sustainably in further close collaboration with WCPFC, FFA and PNA](#)

64. For Outcome 2.1 indicators, the following has been achieved:
 - For Indicator 10: Extent at which Palau’s Operations Centre for monitoring, control and surveillance is manned, equipped and coordinating active MCS patrols, interdiction, and prosecution. The Project procured a lot of equipment for the Operations Room and enforcement surveillance operations of DMSFW. This includes “puma” drones, DSI drones, computer monitors, and “Go-Pro” cameras, enabling DMSFW to better conduct MCS activities with patrol boats and drones. There was also training for 8 deep sea divers from DMSFW to provide them with capacity to inspect vessel damage at sea, repair of anchor pads for fishing aggregation devices and for search & rescue. This is all in an effort to expand DMSFW personnel capacities to conduct offshore work.
 - Though the Project seemed designed to allow more flexibility to purchase equipment and supplies to enhance their capacities for monitoring and surveillance, adaptive management efforts by the PMU to provide additional equipment to DMSFW (such as a crane truck and forklift to ease loading of equipment onto patrol boats for enforcement and surveillance efforts) were with administrative resistance from UNDP. Though these items were approved by the PSC and by the AWP, these items were not on the original list of procurement items. As such, there were problems with UNDP to procure these items with questions being asked as to what the justification of the equipment and whether or not the equipment is co-financed²⁹;
 - Progress of Indicator 11 is at 2 or 30% of vessels have human and electronic monitoring and are reporting on findings. The DMSFW Operations Center has continued to develop its capabilities through the Project with maritime surveillance patrol reports accumulated from January through June 2023 and to the present. However, e-monitoring and reporting are not standard requirements for licensing fishing vessels and therefore cannot be viable targets to track given the multilateral negotiations that are required to formally incorporate e-monitoring and reporting into the current monitoring programs.
65. Overall, Outcome 2.1 is rated ***satisfactory***.

²⁹ The use of GEF funds to purchase vehicles is actually strongly discouraged. Such costs are normally expected to be borne by the co-financed portion by external parties. Any request to use GEF funding to purchase project vehicles must be justified by the exceptional specific circumstances of the project. GEF Secretariat assesses such requests and decides whether to approve them, based on following criteria: type of project, operating environment, contribution to achievement of project results, and share of costs covered by co-financing, amongst other criteria.

Outcome 3.1: Long-term mechanisms to support financial sustainability and security PNMS and its associated administrative and management arrangements are negotiated and identified

66. For Outcome 3.1 indicators:

- For Indicator 12, progress is at “2” with a draft of 10 years sustainable funding roadmap for PNMS and DFZ developed integrating ecotourism and livelihood. While key recommendations were provided in the sustainable financing consultations in 2022, the next steps of collaborating with Ministry of Finance as the appropriate lead was unclear given the recent enactment of a Palau Goods and Services Tax in January 2023, coupled with increased inflation rates and ongoing economic recovery due to the COVID19 pandemic. Due to these factors, it was determined that it simply was not the right time to propose additional tax-related policies and costs pertaining to the PNMS;
- For Indicator 13, this indicator is subject to the multi-lateral negotiations of the PNA that involve MAFE. Palau cannot unilaterally place financing from multilateral negotiations into its own sustainable financing trust fund in the country. It is a negotiation process with other countries and not under the control of the Project. Furthermore, this action would be very difficult to measure. Though the Project funds MAFE attendance at PNA meetings, it does not fund regional level capacity. As such, it is recommended that this indicator be deleted.

67. Overall, Outcome 3.1 is rated ***moderately unsatisfactory***.

Outcome 4.1: Strong stakeholder support for the PNMS and DFZ and associated benefits and fees at the broad stakeholder level including the state, national, and international community

68. For Outcome 4.1, there was progress on Indicators 14 and 15:

- the establishment of a sister sanctuary agreement with the National Marine Sanctuaries of American Samoa has led to valuable exchanges. Joint outreach products have been developed due to the learning exchanges and efforts are underway to incorporate an American Samoa exhibit in the aquarium at the Palau International Coral Reef Center.
- partnership with the Ocean Foundation was established in providing opportunities to network with managers of other large scale marine protected areas.
- a press release from a recent visit of the PNMS outreach team to American Samoa and a link to a video that was produced during a manager’s exchange in Hawaii.
- a technical advisory committee was formed consisting of public and private sector members as a means of maximizing stakeholder involvement on the Project.

69. Overall, Outcome 4.1 is rated ***moderately unsatisfactory***.

Outcome 4.2: Effective Project management, monitoring, and evaluation

70. For Outcome 4.2, Indicators 16 and 17, there has been no progress:

- For Indicator 16, very little progress was made with ideal governance structure and project management support still being explored. The PNMS Department under PICRC has been changed into a program while discussions are underway with UNDP to recruit a technical advisor to serve the role of a secretariat. The MSP exercise will likely inform the structure of the PNMS management including the monitoring and evaluation aspects.

- For Indicator 17, there has been no progress since all stakeholders have paused their activities on the PNMS Project until September 2024 when MAFE determines the size of the PNMS and DFZ.

71. Overall, Outcome 4.2 is rated **unsatisfactory**.

72. The achievement of all the Outcome level targets is rated as **moderately unsatisfactory** primarily due to MAFE's pending position on the size of the PNMS and DFZ.

3.2.1 Remaining Barriers to Achieving Project Objective

73. The remaining barriers to the full achievement of targets of the PNMS Project include:

- absence of baseline data on pelagic fisheries.
- high-level efforts to scale back the PNMS Law leading to uncertainties in the future percentage of PNMS and DFZ management.
- shortages of staff to manage DMSFW's Operations Center.
- uncertainties in the role of PICRC on the Project, especially with regards to transforming PICRC into a pelagic fishery monitoring entity. Efforts to build such institutional capacity have been challenging due to the MSP and failed attempts to engage with SPC.
- uncertainties in the PRF targets and indicators.

74. This general lack of clarity over the entire Project casts uncertainty on:

- the finalization of the PNMS Strategic Plan.
- the continuation of the development of a sustainable CB&T program.
- a sustainable funding roadmap for PNMS and DFZ that would be developed to integrate ecotourism and livelihoods.

75. Without an extension of 6-12 months to implement the PNMS Project, many of these barriers would remain. With the granting of such a Project extension to implement remaining aspects of the Project strategy with remaining PNMS Project resources, there should be sufficient time to lower the barriers listed in Para 73 and to accomplish some of the proposed work including completion of a Strategic Plan and the formation of a comprehensive CB&T programme. However, this will be heavily influenced by the outcome of a potentially revised PNMS Law by September 2024. Details of a new PNMS Project approach is provided in recommendations in Paras 0 to **Error! Reference source not found.**

3.2.2 Implementation of Gender Mainstreaming

76. As mentioned in Para 40, Palauan women have a strong voice and a role in decision-making processes through all levels of society with GRoP's Gender Division has adopting an approach that does not simply focus on women, but rather the need for inclusivity and whether a person or group are vulnerable. Palau is a matrilineal society where women possess unique strength and influence in all communities. There are no barriers to cultural practices or legal system that precludes women from taking up any position in government or management. They also have associations that organize an

- annual women's conference that continues to be an influential body in holding government officials accountable and influencing national policies.
77. Notwithstanding, the Project was designed to enhance women's involvement in the implementation of the PNMS Project. Efforts to promote gender equality includes:
- a woman who serves the chair of the PSC but is also the Minister of Justice.
 - women being well represented in the PNMS Advisory Committee with a woman serving as co-chair.
 - women playing a significant role in the overall governance of the fishing sector and an important role in PNMS Project support including the Planning & Development Officer, the Director of the Bureau of Fisheries, the Director of Research, and the Director of Administration at PICRC.
 - one naval officer is a woman out of the 3 surveillance officers at the DMSFW Operations Center (all of whom graduated from the Taiwan Naval Academy through support from other resources), all of whom serve as full time staff in the Control Room.
78. Gender is well documented with attendance sheets in meetings pertaining to the PNMS Project and women are proactively engaged at levels in Project implementation and more importantly, strong roles in decision-making processes from the community to national government. Interventions under the Project could provide more opportunities for women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and marine production systems such as fisheries and ecotourism under a strengthened PNMS and DFZ legal and institutional framework.

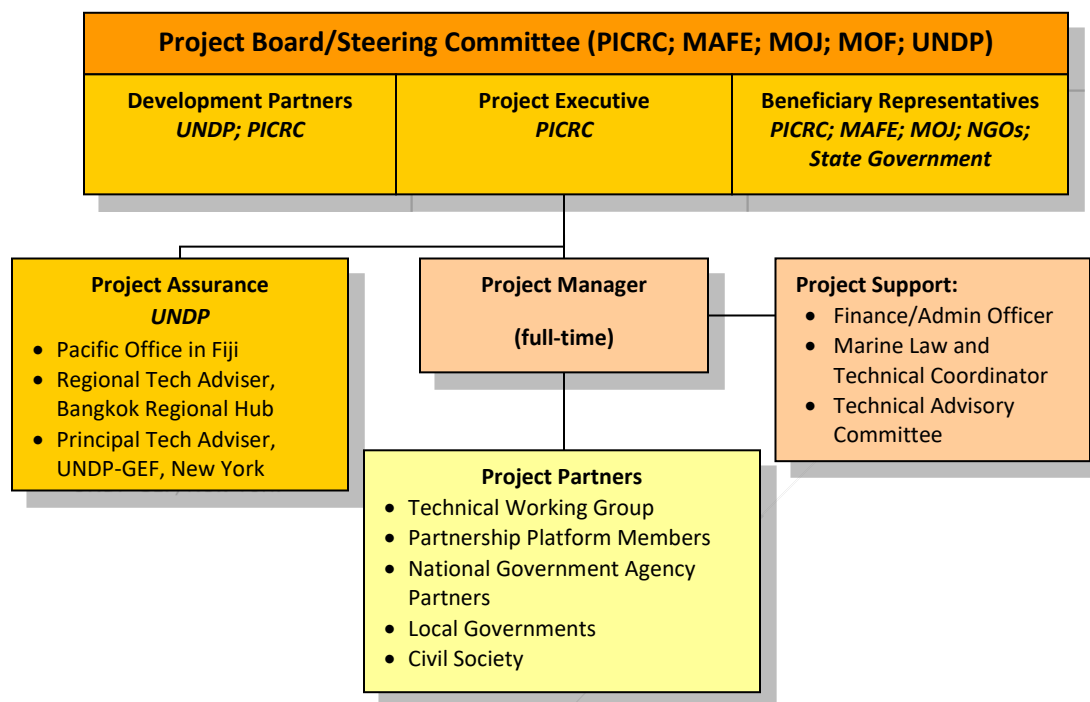
3.3 Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

3.3.1 Management Arrangements

79. The PNMS Project is under the National Implementation Modality (NIM) under an intended arrangement as depicted on Figure 3. Under NIM, UNDP has an oversight role, but Project management and implementation is the responsibility of the Implementing Partner, PICRC. There is the possibility for UNDP to provide support services to NIM such as support to procurement or payments, which are specified, quantified, and costed via a Letter of Agreement (LoA) signed between UNDP and the Implementing Partner. An LoA for limited UNDP support services to the Project was put in place for the PNMS Project. The Implementing Partner, PICRC, has worked closely with other relevant stakeholders, especially the PMU, to provide centralized project management services, coordinate project activities, and facilitate stakeholder relationships. PICRC have established a Project Management Unit (PMU) for the overall coordination and resource management of the PNMS Project. The PMU was organized to include a Project Manager (PM), Project Technical Officer (PTO), Project Finance and Administrative Officer (PFAO), and Project Communication Officer.
80. A technical advisory committee was formed consisting of public and private sector members as a means of maximizing stakeholder involvement on the Project consisting of BOFI, Marine Law, Bureau of Budget and Planning, Friends of the PNMS Coral Research. However, TAC started to meet less frequently shortly after January 2020 when revision efforts of the PNMS Law started.
81. Adaptive management for major challenges in Project implementation has been:
- the lack of communications between the PMU (PICRC) and MAFE. Most of this is due to the proposed changes to the PNMS that coming from the administration of MAFE. All forms of

communication have been halted or suspended pending the September 2024 resolution of the PNMS percentage.

Figure 2: Intended management arrangements for the UNDP-GEF Project “Strengthening the Palau National Marine Sanctuary for the Conservation and Management of Global Marine Biodiversity and Sustainable Fisheries” (PNMS Project)



- MAFE is the lead on PNMS issues but does not have the capacity to fully implement the current mandate of the 80% PNMS. Nevertheless, PICRC’s role on the PNMS Project is somewhat diminished, and the Project will need to respond to this potential change.
- fishery harvest strategies within the EEZ are determined at the regional level through SPC, not through PICRC or MAFE, and as a result, these strategies do not as yet inform any actions at the national level for PNMS and the DFZ.
- the transforming of PICRC into a pelagic fishery monitoring entity requires more resources than the PNMS Project can provide. Efforts to build such institutional capacity have been challenging due to the MSP and failed attempts to engage with SPC (Para 73). This translates into PICRC not being able to achieve the intended outcomes of this Project, leaving MAFE to resolve this issue alone through its potential ability to leverage more funds to build capacities to conduct pelagic fisheries research, monitoring, and surveillance.
- a shortage of DMSFW staff to staff the Operations Center. Regular comprehensive CB&T session cannot be held unless there are more staff.

3.3.2 Work Planning

82. Work plans for 2022 and 2023 have been provided to the MTR team that details the 37 activities planned. As such, work planning for the PNMS Project appears to be appropriate.

3.3.3 Finance and Co-Finance

83. After 36 months of Project disbursements, US\$1,231,951 or 67% of the PNMS Project grant of US\$1.826 million, has been expended as of 30 June 2024. The expenditure of the GEF PNMS Project budget up to 30 June 2024 can be characterized as follows:
- Disbursements for Outcomes 1.1 and 1.2 have been delayed due to MAFE’s efforts to revise the PNMS area. This includes the PNMS Strategic Plan which has been drafted but remains on the sidelines with the proposed PNMS changes. In addition, there are still funds remaining to conduct CB7T activities for enforcement and surveillance training for DMSFW personnel.
 - Disbursements for Outcome 2.1 are within schedule with the DMSFW Operations Center continuing to develop its capacities for human and electronic monitoring of EEZ fisheries activities.
 - Disbursements for Outcome 3.1 have been placed on hold with the Ministry of Finance as tries to resolve issues with the recent enactment of a Palau Goods and Services Tax in January 2023 against key recommendations provided by the Project in 2022 on sustainable financing mechanisms coupled with the country’s increased inflation rates and ongoing economic recovery from the pandemic.
 - Disbursements for Outcomes 4.1 and 4.2 are overspent by US\$32,886.
 - US\$594,533 remains in the PNMS Project budget to achieve intended outcomes.
84. In conclusion, however, the cost effectiveness of the use of the PNMS Project budget to date has been **unsatisfactory**, due to amounts spent while there are delays in the decision on the PNMS area, and the uncertainties and insufficiencies of remaining PNMS Project resources to transform PICRC into an agency that can manage pelagic fisheries. Disbursement of the GEF resources of the PNMS Project is provided in Table 2. Disbursement of the PNMS Project GEF resources to date according to ATLAS codes is provided on Table 3.
85. Co-financing commitments for the PNMS Project was in the order of US\$8.236 million against a target of US\$17.250 million. To date, Project co-financing has been **satisfactory** in consideration of parallel activities being undertaken with MoJ (and to certain extent PICRC) in building their capacities in surveillance and monitoring EEZ pelagic fisheries. Co-financing with Global Oceans, however, has not materialized. Co-financing details to date are summarized on Table 4, with detailed co-financing of the Project is provided on Table 5.

3.3.4 Project Level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems

86. The PNMS Project had few activities to monitor. The results and progress of baseline activities of the PNMS Project was reported for all Outcomes by the PMU in the 2022 and 2023 PIRs. Progress was rather limited for Outcome 4. The PRF issues raised in Paras 41-42 and the need to undertake considerable changes to the PRF have limited the effectiveness of Project-level M&E systems. Overall, the M&E systems of the PNMS Project are rated as **moderately satisfactory** considering the reporting of the progress against a poor quality PNMS Project PRF.

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

Component	Budget (from ProDoc)	2021 ⁴²	2022	2023	2024 ⁴³	Total Disbursed	Total remaining
Component 1: Institutional & Governance realignment for effective monitoring and adaptive management in the PNMS	724,350	23,000	116,054	211,997	207,226	558,277	166,073
Component 2: Enhanced monitoring, control, and surveillance of activities within the established PNMS boundaries	398,750	28,918	64,498	110,963	-	204,380	194,370
Component 3: Ecosystem assessment and sustainability planning for a long-term blue economy strategy	271,500	-	3,700	22,050	-	25,750	245,750
Component 4: Knowledge management, Project monitoring and evaluation	266,750	121,688	51,763	126,185	-	299,636	-32,886
Project Management	165,134		32,446	63,245	45,719	141,409	23,725
Total (Actual)	1,826,484	173,606	268,460	534,440	252,945	1,229,451	597,033
Total (Cumulative Actual)		173,606	442,066	976,506	1,229,451		
Annual Planned Disbursement (from ProDoc)	1,622,884	191,417	468,923	518,225	444,319		
% Expended of Planned Disbursement		91%	57%	103%	57%		

⁴² From 10 June 2021⁴³ Up to 31 May 2024

Table 3: GEF Project Expenditures for Palau PNMS Project against ATLAS codes (in USD as of 30 June 2024)

ATLAS Code	Expenditure Description	US\$
71200	International Consultants	44,094
71300	Local Consultants	50,850
71400	Contractual Services - Individuals	127,328
71600	Travel	75,792
71800	Contractual Services-Individual Impl.Partner	355,323
72200	Equipment and Furniture	22,595
72300	Materials & Goods	39,703
72400	Communications and Audio-Visual Equipment	5,543
74200	Audio Visual & Print Prod Costs	11,784
75700	Training, Workshops and Conference	43,351
72100a	Contractual Services - Companies / Nat	326,717
72800	Information Technology Equipment	65,515
72500	Supplies	45,940
74100	Professional Services	17,415
Total:		1,231,951

Table 4: Actual Co-Financing for PNMS 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 ⁴⁴			9.350	6.575	5.000	-			14.350	6.575
Loans/Concessions									0.000	0.000
• In-kind support			0.800	0.115	2.100	1.546			2.900	1.661
• Other									0.000	0.000
Totals	0.000	0.000	10.150	6.690	7.100	1.546	0.000	0.000	17.250	8.236

⁴⁴ Includes all cash contributions.

Table 5: Details of Co-Financing

Classification	Name of Co-financier (source)	Type	Financing Committed	Actual committed	% of actual committed
Partner agency	UNDP	In-kind	0		0%
Partner agency	UNDP	Cash	0		0%
Government	MAFE	Grant	150,000	75,000	50%
Government	MoJ	Grant	9,200,000	6,500,000	71%
Government	MoJ	In-kind	800,000	115,000	14%
CSO	PICRC	In-kind	2,000,000	1,500,000	75%
CSO	PCS	In-kind	100,000	46,000	46%
CSO	Global Oceans/Global Seamount Project	Grant	5,000,000	-	0%
Totals:			17,250,000	8,236,000	

3.3.5 Stakeholder Engagement

87. The main stakeholder engagements by the PNMS Project have been with the national government agencies including MoJ and its agencies involved with enforcement of the PNMS and DFZ, MAFE and its agencies, including PICRC who are the implementing partner for the PNMS Project, and the PMU (housed within PICRC) who are providing project management services, coordinating project management activities, and facilitating stakeholder relationships.
88. Other stakeholder engagements included the PNMS advisory committee which was formed consisting of public and private sector members as a means of maximizing stakeholder involvement on the Project. It was established through a signed agreement by all members that includes BOFI, Marine Law, Bureau of Budget and Planning, Friends of the PNMS Coral Research. The committee meets regularly but the push to repeal the PNMS Law has reduced the frequency of these engagements. As such, the Project has made **moderately satisfactory** efforts to facilitate partnerships.

3.3.6 Reporting

89. There were 2 progress reports from the PNMS Project. There were also reports produced on a Palau Fisheries Road Map (December 2022), a Palau National Marine Sanctuary 2023-2029 Strategic Plan (Volumes 1 and 2), and Sustainable financing mechanisms in Palau (July 2022). Overall, reporting has been rated as **moderately satisfactory** considering the small volume of reports.

3.3.7 Communications

90. There is no approach or strategy on the PNMS Project to knowledge management or communications. However, there are established partnerships with managers, organizations and institutes doing work with large scale marine protected areas that has provided opportunities to collaborate regularly for knowledge management to support communications including the Blue Nature Alliance, Stanford University's Center for Ocean Solutions, Ocean Exploration Trust, Big Ocean, and others. As a result, communication has been rated as **moderately satisfactory**.

3.4 Sustainability

91. In assessing sustainability of the PNMS Project, the mid-term reviewers asked, "how likely will the Project outcomes be sustained beyond Project termination?" UNDP-supported GEF-financed

projects are intended to be environmentally as well as institutionally, financially, politically, culturally, and socially sustainable. Sustainability of these dimensions was rated 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*.

92. Financial risks to sustainability: Current financial risks to the sustainability of the PNMS Project are related to the limited availability of financing from the GROp and donors, notwithstanding that the Project has attempted to at least minimize financial barriers with sustainable financing mechanisms for the PNMS. In addition, the recent enactment of a Palau Goods and Services Tax in January 2023 coupled with increased inflation rates and ongoing economic recovery due to the COVID-19 pandemic make proposed additional PNMS tax-related policies not practical at this time. For this reason, the rating for financial risks to sustainability is moderately unlikely (MU).
93. Socioeconomic risks to sustainability: With MAFE deliberating the size of the PNMS, stakeholders who were engaged on the Project have placed their involvement on the Project on hold. This includes all stakeholders raising some socio-economic risks to sustainability. Socioeconomic risks to sustainability are rated as moderately unlikely (MU).
94. Institutional framework and governance risks: MAFE is deliberating the size of the DFZ and PNMS and holding up progress in PNMS institutional framework and governance issues, stalling progress on the PNMS Strategic Plan and the sustainable funding roadmap for PNMS and DFZ. As such, institutional framework and governance risks to sustainability is rated as moderately unlikely (MU).
95. Environmental risks to sustainability: The potential expansion of the DFZ is an environmental risk to sustainability. As there is no certainty of what MAFE is going to recommend for a DFZ area, the rating of environmental risks to sustainability is moderately unlikely (MU).
96. Overall sustainability of the PNMS Project is ***moderately unlikely*** due to MAFE deliberating the size of the PNMS and the DFZ.

4. FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Findings and Conclusions

97. Table 6 reflects the findings of this MTR. In summary, MAFE is going to formally submit recommendations to the National Congress on the findings of the MSP project in late September 2024 to determine the new PNMS area for Palau. This potentially circumvents ongoing surveys for Palauan pelagic fisheries with the Minister stating to this Evaluator that there is sufficient data to determine to what extent the PNMS, 30, 50 or 80%, should be protected; the data being used to determine the extent of PNMS protection is, however, based on historical data from 2010. There is also a national election scheduled for November 2024, complicating what actions the PNMS Project should take moving forward towards the EOP date of June 2025.

Table 6: MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table for PNMS Project in Palau

Measure	MTR Rating ⁴⁵	Achievement Description
Project Formulation	Design and PRF Rating: 3	Design of many of the Project indicators and targets do not reflect the ground realities. With MAFE deliberating the size of the PNMS and DFZ, Project intended outcomes, outputs, indicators and targets need a review on which outcomes can be realized (Paras 37-39).
	Stakeholder Participation Rating: 4	Many stakeholders have temporarily suspended their participation on the Project pending resolution of the size of the PNMS and DFZ (Para 88).
Progress Towards Results	Objective Achievement Rating: 3	The institutional and governance structure for the PNMS and DFZ has not been strengthened. Implementation of a strategic plan for sustainable management of the PNMS and DFZ has not been completed towards a healthy and productive ecosystem for the benefit of all people of Palau. There is substantial risk that targets for Mandatory Indicators 1 and 2 as well as Core Indicator 8 will not be achieved (Paras 51-55)
	Outcome 1.1 Achievement Rating: 3	PNMS institutional, management and regulatory framework and mechanisms have not been strengthened with work on the Strategic Plan suspended with MAFE in early 2023 pending the outcome of the percentage of PNMS that will be enforced (Para 57).
	Outcome 1.2 Achievement Rating: 3	There has been some improvements in effective management and governance of PNMS/DFZ with 2 staff members (one male and one female), against a target of 10, having undergone training in marine law to build capacity on PNMS governance and management (Paras 59-62).
	Outcome 2.1 Achievement Rating: 5	Regulations and laws pertaining to PNMS and DFZ are working towards effective and sustainable enforcement. The Project has procured a lot of equipment for the Operations Room and enforcement surveillance operations of DMSFW. With 30% of vessels having human and electronic monitoring and reporting, the DMSFW Operations Center continues to develop its capabilities through the Project with maritime surveillance patrol reports accumulated since January 2023 (Para 64).

⁴⁵ Evaluation rating indices (except sustainability – see Para 70): 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)*: The project has severe shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives.

Measure	MTR Rating ⁴⁵	Achievement Description
	Outcome 3.1 Achievement Rating: 3	Poor progress has been made on long-term mechanisms to support financial sustainability and security of PNMS. Additional PNMS tax-related policies and costs pertaining to the PNMS is not feasible at this time. Moreover, Palau cannot unilaterally place financing from multilateral negotiations into its own sustainable financing trust fund in the country, as it is a negotiation process with other countries and not under the control of the Project. This activity should be dropped from the Project (Para 66).
	Outcome 4.1 Achievement Rating: 3	Stakeholder support for the PNMS and DFZ has been weak. Some progress was made in providing opportunities to network with managers of other large scale marine protected areas, notably through establishment of a sister sanctuary agreement with the National Marine Sanctuaries of American Samoa (Para 68).
	Outcome 4.2 Achievement Rating: 2	Effective Project management, monitoring and evaluation has not been achieved due to efforts to revise the PNMS Law. Little progress was made with ideal governance structure and project management support is still being explored (Para 70).
Project Implementation & Adaptive Management	Implementation Approach Rating: 3	Major challenges for Project implementation include the lack of communications between the PMU (PICRC) and MAFE, the diminished role of PICRC, harvest strategies within the EEZ are determined at the regional level through SPC and not through PICRC or MAFE, transforming of PICRC into a pelagic fishery monitoring entity requires more resources than the PNMS Project can provide, and a shortage of DMSFW staff to staff the Operations Center (Para 81).
	Monitoring and Evaluation Rating: 4	The need to undertake considerable changes to the PRF has limited the effectiveness of Project-level M&E systems (Para 86).
	Stakeholder Participation Rating: 4	Many stakeholders have temporarily suspended their participation on the Project pending resolution of the size of the PNMS and DFZ (Para 88).
Sustainability	Sustainability Rating: 2	MAFE is deliberating the size of the DFZ and PNMS, holding up progress in PNMS institutional framework and governance issues, and stakeholders placing their involvement on the Project on hold (Paras 92-95).
Overall Project Achievement and impact	Rating: 3	With MAFE deliberating the size of the DFZ and PNMS, the PNMS strategic plan was placed on hold. Furthermore, the PNMS financial scheme is not ready for promulgation due to the current economic status of Palau and more staff are needed at the DMSFW Operations Center to enforce the PNMS and DFZ, and to setup a comprehensive CB&T programme. PICRC's role on the PNMS Project has been diminished with harvest strategies within the EEZ being determined at the regional level through SPC and not through PICRC or MAFE. With insufficient resources to transform PICRC into a pelagic fishery monitoring entity, MAFE needs to become the new implementing partner for the PNMS Project. This will require a review of all outputs, indicators and targets and which outcomes can be achieved.

98. There are several other issues with PNMS Project implementation including:

- absence of baseline data on pelagic fisheries.
- high-level efforts to scale back the PNMS Law leading to uncertainties in the future percentage of PNMS and DFZ management.
- uncertainties in the role of PICRC on the Project, especially with regards to transforming PICRC into a pelagic fishery monitoring entity. Efforts to build such institutional capacity have been challenging due to the MSP and failed attempts to engage with SPC.

- uncertainties in the finalization of the PNMS Strategic Plan (pending the outcome of the new PNMS area), the continuation of the development of a sustainable CB&T program (due to more staff needed at the DMSFW Operations Center to enforce the PNMS and DFZ), and developing a sustainable funding roadmap for PNMS and DFZ to integrate ecotourism and livelihoods (PNMS financial scheme is not ready for promulgation due to the current economic status of Palau);
 - uncertainties in the PRF targets and indicators.
99. A most urgent issue to address, however, is the design of the PNMS Project and who should serve as UNDP’s implementing partner. The institutional and management baseline for the PNMS has changed in late 2022 with MAFE, not MNRET, providing oversight on domestic fisheries on the PNMS Strategic Plan on the Executive Committee. PICRC’s oversight role of “Science and Monitoring” on the PNMS Project and Strategic Plan has become somewhat diminished. With remaining PNMS Project resources being insufficient to transform PICRC into an agency that can manage pelagic fisheries, PICRC is not able to achieve the intended outcomes of this Project, leaving MAFE to resolve this issue through its ability to leverage more funds to build capacities to conduct pelagic fisheries research, monitoring, and surveillance.

4.2 Lessons Learned

100. Lesson #1: The provision of additional equipment and training to DMSFW has been very beneficial to the activities of its Operations Center. This procurement of additional computer equipment including additional monitors that has enhanced the Center’s capacity to monitor fishing activities within the EEZ. Drones also provide additional surveillance capacity. Training of DMSFW staff also provided them with enhanced capacity to inspect vessel damage at sea, repair of anchor pads for fishing aggregation devices and for search & rescue, all in efforts to expand DMSFW personnel capacities to conduct offshore work.

4.3 Recommendations

Rec #	Recommendation	Entity Responsible	Time Frame
A	Recommendation 1:		
101.	<p><u>Review and revise the PNMS Project PRF to ensure it aligns with GROp and UNDP-GEF priorities.</u> This is a top priority after September 2024, the approximate date when GROp decides on what percentage will the PNMS be protected (30, 50 or 80%). This would involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a review of the PRF into which outcomes and outputs are deliverable within the Project timeframe. There is a strong likelihood that many of the outputs and indicators may not be achievable or relevant to the PNMS Project; however, some of these changes to Core and Mandatory Indicators will need to be reported to GEF as this potentially changes indicators (number of Project beneficiaries and marine areas protected). The review should also ensure alignment with new priorities of MAFE and the GROp with the potential 	GROp and UNDP	Immediate


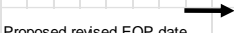
Rec #	Recommendation	Entity Responsible	Time Frame
	<p>changes in percentage of PNMS protection. Potential changes to the PRF are provided in red font in Appendix F.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> changes on who will be the implementing partner for the Project. PICRC can no longer be effective as the IP for the Project given that resources to transform PICRC to a pelagic fishery research entity are not available⁴⁶. MAFE, on the other hand, has more potential to leverage funds for pelagic fisheries research, monitoring, and surveillance on behalf of PICRC or another entity of its choice. There is a strong likelihood of MAFE becoming the IP for the PNMS Project. a no-cost extension to the PNMS Project of 6 to 12 months. With just under 10 months to the EOP of June 2025, there is insufficient time remaining on the Project to achieve any intended outcomes. The extension length will be dependent on the outcome of the percentage of protection for the PNMS but would be beneficial for achieving all outcomes. 		
B	Recommendation 2		
102.	<p><u><i>Continue with the Project's activities irrespective to what extent Congress decides to protect the PNMS (30, 50 or 80%).</i></u> This would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the completion of the Strategic Plan to leverage other funds (donor or Government funds) for a scientific monitoring programme for PNMS, and the capacity needs for need to develop such a programme and other endeavours. the development of a CB&T program by MAFE, SPC and others to regularize training for DMSFW staff for PNMS management and monitoring. a continuation of support to DMSFW to provide adequate staffing and equipment for the active monitoring, control, and surveillance patrols for PNMS and DFZ, and coordination of these patrols for interdiction and prosecution. This should also include possible procurement of items such as a Zodiac; a continuation of the search for mechanisms to support financial sustainability roadmap of the PNMS, DFZ and its associated administrative and management arrangements. This should also include integrating ecotourism and livelihoods into the mechanism. 	GRoP and UNDP	Immediate

⁴⁶ The needs for a functional PICRC pelagic fisheries programme and undertaking research to inform the MSP process, would require special seaworthy vessels and equipment which PICRC does not possess. Current efforts for PICRC pelagic fisheries surveys are occasional and opportunistic use of DMSFW patrol boats, actions that are fragmented and simply not sustainable. Instead, the decisions for a pelagic fishery monitoring programme should be left to MAFE in collaboration with the MSP project.


Table 7: Suggested Re-Allocation of PNMS Project Resources

Outcome	Budget (from ProDoc)	Total Disbursed	Total remaining	Re-Allocated Budget
Component 1: Institutional & Governance realignment for effective monitoring and adaptive management in the PNMS	724,350	558,277	166,073	133,187
Component 2: Enhanced monitoring, control, and surveillance of activities within the established PNMS boundaries	398,750	204,380	194,370	194,370
Component 3: Ecosystem assessment and sustainability planning for a long-term blue economy strategy	271,500	25,750	245,750	245,750
Component 4: Knowledge management, Project monitoring and evaluation	266,750	299,636	-32,886	0
Project Management	165,134	143,909	21,225	21,225
Total (Actual)	1,826,484	1,231,951	594,533	594,533

Figure 3: Suggested PNMS Activities (assuming a suggested 12-month extension)⁴⁷

Outcomes	Quantum Code	Estimated Cost	2024	2025				2026				Remarks
			Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Outcome 1.1: PNMS Institutional, Management and Regulatory Framework and mechanisms strengthened and under Implementation through enhanced national, regional and global support, and Outcome 1.2: Improved and effective management and governance of PNMS/DFZ through strengthened capacity, skills and knowledge	71200 and 71300	\$133,187	Intense Activity	Intense Activity	Intense Activity	Intense Activity	Intermittent Activity	Intermittent Activity	Intermittent Activity	Intermittent Activity		
Outcome 2.1: All regulations and laws pertaining to PNMS and DFZ enforced effectively and sustainably In further close collaboration with WCPFC, FFA and PNA	71200 and 72100	\$194,370	Intermittent Activity	Intermittent Activity	Intermittent Activity	Intense Activity	Intense Activity	Intense Activity	Intense Activity			
Outcome 3.1: Long-term mechanisms to support financial sustainability and security PNMS and its associated administrative and management arrangements are negotiated and identified	72100	\$245,750		Intermittent Activity	Intermittent Activity	Intermittent Activity	Intermittent Activity	Intermittent Activity	Intermittent Activity			
Outcome 4.1: Strong stakeholder support for the PNMS and DFZ and associated benefits and fees at the broad stakeholder level including the state, national, and international community, and Outcome 4.2: Effective Project Management, Monitoring and Evaluation		\$0				Intermittent Activity	Intermittent Activity					
Project Management		\$21,225	Intermittent Activity	Intermittent Activity	Intermittent Activity	Intermittent Activity	Intermittent Activity	Intermittent Activity	Intermittent Activity			
Total:		\$594,532										
			 Current EOP				 Proposed revised EOP date					

Intense Activity 

Intermittent Activity 

⁴⁷ Quantum Codes: 71200=International Consultants, 72100=Contractual Services-Companies, 72200=Equipment and Furniture, 72400=Communication and Audio-Visual Equipment.

APPENDIX A – TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR PNMS PROJECT MTR

Title: Strengthening the Palau National Marine Sanctuary for the Conservation and Management of Global Marine Biodiversity and Sustainable Fisheries Project

Type of Contract: International Consultant

Start and End date: 14 April - 26 June 2024

Location: Home based with mandatory Field mission to Palau

Duration of the Contract: 30 working days spread over 14 April - 26 June 2024

1. INTRODUCTION

This is the Terms of Reference (ToR) for – the Midterm Review (MTR) of the **medium**-sized UNDP-supported GEF-financed project titled “*Strengthening the Palau National Marine Sanctuary for the Conservation and Management of Global Marine Biodiversity and Sustainable Fisheries*” Project (PIMS# 6418) implemented through the Palau International Coral Reef Center, which is to be undertaken in 2024. The project started on the 10 June 2021 and is in its third year of implementation. This ToR sets out the expectations for this MTR. The MTR process must follow the guidance outlined in the document [Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects](#).

2. PROJECT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In 2015, Palau signed into law a National Marine Sanctuary (PNMS) and a Domestic Fishing Zone (DFZ). The PNMS aims to protect renewable and sustainable living marine resources which provide direct value and revenue to Palau while representing important global biodiversity. The DFZ will provide long-term food security within Palau and protect important goods and services, increasing livelihoods and reducing pressure on reef fisheries. Furthermore, the presence of a 500,000 sq. km. sanctuary provides a replenishment zone for pelagic fish stocks and bycatch species that are important to the entire region both as goods and services as well as contributing significantly to the functioning of the entire marine ecosystem. Since its declaration, a number of constraints and challenges hinder the full implementation of the PNMS and DFZ including institutional constraints, financial and economic challenges and some general governance and legal issues. The objective of the Project would be to strengthen and implement a Strategic Plan for sustainable management of the PNMS and DFZ. The project will build on the existing efforts of Palau to conserve its renewable natural resources while adding significantly to the global MPA estate and providing a protected migratory route for globally important fish stocks as well as other non-commercial species and bycatch (e.g. cetaceans, turtles, sharks, seabirds, etc.). Globally, the PNMS will make a valuable contribution to the SDG 14 targets. The recently emerging constraints arising from the COVID 19 global pandemic have been recognised and considered through the description of project activities and in the context of the impacts this may have on the Project both short-term and long-term.

3. MTR PURPOSE

The MTR will assess progress towards the achievement of the project objectives and outcomes as specified in the Project Document and assess early signs of project success or failure with the goal of identifying the necessary changes to be made in order to set the project on-track to achieve its intended results. The MTR will also review the project’s strategy and its risks to sustainability.

The specific objective of the MTR is the following;

- Assess the progress towards the achievements of project objectives and outcomes as specified in the Project Document with updates of the GEF tracking tool.

- Assess early signs of project success or failure.
- Assess the co-financing contributions and status.
- Assess the progress towards advancing gender equality and women’s empowerment.
- On this basis, identify and propose the necessary changes to set the project on-track to achieve its intended results.
- Review the project’s strategy and its risks to sustainability.
- Establish an acceleration plan if needed.

4. MTR APPROACH & METHODOLOGY

The MTR report must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable, and useful.

The MTR 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, national strategic and legal documents, and any other materials that the team considers useful for this evidence-based review. The MTR team will review the baseline GEF focal area Core Indicators/Tracking Tools submitted to the GEF at CEO endorsement, and the midterm GEF focal area Core Indicators/Tracking Tools that must be completed before the MTR field mission begins.

The MTR team is expected to follow a collaborative and participatory approach⁴⁸ ensuring close engagement with the Project Team, government counterparts (the GEF Operational Focal Point), the UNDP Country Office(s), the Nature, Climate and Energy (NCE) Regional Technical Advisor, direct beneficiaries, and other key stakeholders.

Engagement of stakeholders is vital to a successful MTR. Stakeholder involvement should include interviews with stakeholders who have project responsibilities, including but not limited to;

1. Project Board
2. Palau International Coral Reef Research Center (PICRC)
3. Ministry of Justice – Division of Marine Law Enforcement (DMLE)
4. Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and the Environment
5. Ministry of Finance
6. Ministry of Education
7. State Government representatives.
8. Local Communities and Indigenous people
9. Palau Conservation society
10. PAN Fund
11. Other project stakeholders

Additionally, the MTR team is expected to conduct field missions to Palau, to selected project sites.

⁴⁸ For ideas on innovative and participatory Monitoring and Evaluation strategies and techniques, see [UNDP Discussion Paper: Innovations in Monitoring & Evaluating Results](#), 05 Nov 2013.

The specific design and methodology for the MTR should emerge from consultations between the MTR team and the above-mentioned parties regarding what is appropriate and feasible for meeting the MTR purpose and objectives and answering the evaluation questions, given limitations of budget, time and data. The MTR team must 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 MTR report.

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

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

5. DETAILED SCOPE OF THE MTR

The MTR team will assess the following four categories of project progress. See the *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* for extended descriptions.

i. Project Strategy

Project design:

- Review the problem addressed by the project and the underlying assumptions. Review the effect of any incorrect assumptions or changes to the context to achieving the project results as outlined in the Project Document.
- Review the relevance of the project strategy and assess whether it provides the most effective route towards expected/intended results. Were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated into the project design?
- Review how the project addresses country priorities. Review country ownership. Was the project concept in line with the national sector development priorities and plans of the country (or of participating countries in the case of multi-country projects)?
- Review decision-making processes: were perspectives of those who would be affected by project decisions, those who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the process, taken into account during project design processes?
- Review the extent to which relevant gender issues were raised in the project design. See Annex 9 of *Guidance for Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* for further guidelines.
 - Were relevant gender issues (e.g. the impact of the project on gender equality in the programme country, involvement of women’s groups, engaging women in project activities) raised in the Project Document?
- If there are major areas of concern, recommend areas for improvement.

Results Framework/Log frame:

- Undertake a critical analysis of the project’s log frame indicators and targets, assess how “SMART” the midterm and end-of-project targets are (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound), and suggest specific amendments/revisions to the targets and indicators as necessary.

- Are the project’s objectives and outcomes or components clear, practical, and feasible within its time frame?
- Examine if progress so far has led to or could in the future catalyse beneficial development effects (i.e. income generation, gender equality and women’s empowerment, improved governance etc...) that should be included in the project results framework and monitored on an annual basis.
- Ensure broader development and gender aspects of the project are being monitored effectively. Develop and recommend SMART ‘development’ indicators, including sex-disaggregated indicators and indicators that capture development benefits.

ii. Progress Towards Results

Progress Towards Outcomes Analysis:

- Review the log frame indicators against progress made towards the end-of-project targets using the Progress Towards Results Matrix and following the *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects*; colour code progress in a “traffic light system” based on the level of progress achieved; assign a rating on progress for each outcome; make recommendations from the areas marked as “Not on target to be achieved” (red).

Table. Progress Towards Results Matrix (Achievement of outcomes against End-of-project Targets)

Project Strategy	Indicator ⁴⁹	Baseline Level ⁵⁰	Level in 1 st PIR (self-reported)	Midterm Target ⁵¹	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment ⁵²	Achievement Rating ⁵³	Justification for Rating
Objective:	Indicator (if applicable):							
Outcome 1:	Indicator 1:							
	Indicator 2:							
Outcome 2:	Indicator 3:							
	Indicator 4:							
	Etc.							
Etc.								

Indicator Assessment Key

Green= Achieved	Yellow= On target to be achieved	Red= Not on target to be achieved
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⁴⁹ Populate with data from the Logframe and scorecards

⁵⁰ Populate with data from the Project Document

⁵¹ If available

⁵² Color code this column only

⁵³ Use the 6-point Progress Towards Results Rating Scale: HS, S, MS, MU, U, HU

In addition to the progress towards outcomes analysis:

- Compare and analyse the GEF Tracking Tool/Core Indicators at the Baseline with the one completed right before the Midterm Review.
- Identify remaining barriers to achieving the project objective in the remainder of the project.
- By reviewing the aspects of the project that have already been successful, identify ways in which the project can further expand these benefits.

iii. Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

Management Arrangements:

- Review overall effectiveness of project management as outlined in the Project Document. Have changes been made and are they effective? Are responsibilities and reporting lines clear? Is decision-making transparent and undertaken in a timely manner? Recommend areas for improvement.
- Review the quality of execution of the Executing Agency/Implementing Partner(s) and recommend areas for improvement.
- Review the quality of support provided by the GEF Partner Agency (UNDP) and recommend areas for improvement.
- Do the Executing Agency/Implementing Partner and/or UNDP and other partners have the capacity to deliver benefits to or involve women? If yes, how?
- What is the gender balance of project staff? What steps have been taken to ensure gender balance in project staff?
- What is the gender balance of the Project Board? What steps have been taken to ensure gender balance in the Project Board?

Work Planning:

- Review any delays in project start-up and implementation, identify the causes and examine if they have been resolved.
- Are work-planning processes results-based? If not, suggest ways to re-orientate work planning to focus on results?
- Examine the use of the project's results framework/ log frame as a management tool and review any changes made to it since project start.

Finance and co-finance:

- Consider the financial management of the project, with specific reference to the cost-effectiveness of interventions.
- Review the changes to fund allocations as a result of budget revisions and assess the appropriateness and relevance of such revisions.
- Does the project have the appropriate financial controls, including reporting and planning, that allow management to make informed decisions regarding the budget and allow for timely flow of funds?
- Informed by the co-financing monitoring table to be filled out by the Commissioning Unit and project team, provide commentary on co-financing: is co-financing being used strategically to help the

objectives of the project? Is the Project Team meeting with all co-financing partners regularly in order to align financing priorities and annual work plans?

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financer	Type of Co-financing	Co-financing amount confirmed at CEO Endorsement (US\$)	Actual Amount Contributed at stage of Midterm Review (US\$)	Actual % of Expected Amount
		TOTAL			

- Include the separate GEF Co-Financing template (filled out by the Commissioning Unit and project team) which categorizes each co-financing amount as ‘investment mobilized’ or ‘recurrent expenditures. (This template will be annexed as a separate file.)

Project-level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems:

- Review the monitoring tools currently being used: Do they provide the necessary information? Do they involve key partners? Are they aligned or mainstreamed with national systems? Do they use existing information? Are they efficient? Are they cost-effective? Are additional tools required? How could they be made more participatory and inclusive?
- Examine the financial management of the project monitoring and evaluation budget. Are sufficient resources being allocated to monitoring and evaluation? Are these resources being allocated effectively?
- Review the extent to which relevant gender issues were incorporated in monitoring systems. See Annex 9 of *Guidance for Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* for further guidelines.

Stakeholder Engagement:

- Project management: Has the project developed and leveraged the necessary and appropriate partnerships with direct and tangential stakeholders?
- Participation and country-driven processes: Do local and national government stakeholders support the objectives of the project? Do they continue to have an active role in project decision-making that supports efficient and effective project implementation?
- Participation and public awareness: To what extent has stakeholder involvement and public awareness contributed to the progress towards achievement of project objectives?
- How does the project engage women and girls? Is the project likely to have the same positive and/or negative effects on women and men, girls, and boys? Identify, if possible, legal, cultural, or religious constraints on women’s participation in the project. What can the project do to enhance its gender benefits?

Social and Environmental Standards (Safeguards)

- Validate the risks identified in the project’s most current SESP, and those risks’ ratings; are any revisions needed?
- Summarize and assess the revisions made since CEO Endorsement/Approval (if any) to:
 - The project’s overall safeguards risk categorization.
 - The identified types of risks⁵⁴ (in the SESP).
 - The individual risk ratings (in the SESP).
- Describe and assess progress made in the implementation of the project’s social and environmental management measures as outlined in the SESP submitted at CEO Endorsement/Approval (and prepared during implementation, if any), including any revisions to those measures. Such management measures might include Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMPs) or other management plans, though can also include aspects of a project’s design; refer to Question 6 in the SESP template for a summary of the identified management measures.

A given project should be assessed against the version of UNDP’s safeguards policy that was in effect at the time of the project’s approval.

Reporting:

- Assess how adaptive management changes have been reported by the project management and shared with the Project Board.
- Assess how well the Project Team and partners undertake and fulfil GEF reporting requirements (i.e. how have they addressed poorly rated PIRs, if applicable?)
- Assess how lessons derived from the adaptive management process have been documented, shared with key partners, and internalized by partners.

Communications & Knowledge Management:

- Review internal project communication with stakeholders: Is communication regular and effective? Are there key stakeholders left out of communication? Are there feedback mechanisms when communication is received? Does this communication with stakeholders contribute to their awareness of project outcomes and activities and investment in the sustainability of project results?
- Review external project communication: Are proper means of communication established or being established to express the project progress and intended impact to the public (is there a web presence, for example? Or did the project implement appropriate outreach and public awareness campaigns?)
- For reporting purposes, write one half-page paragraph that summarizes the project’s progress towards results in terms of contribution to sustainable development benefits, as well as global environmental benefits.

⁵⁴ Risks are to be labeled with both the UNDP SES Principles and Standards, and the GEF’s “types of risks and potential impacts”: Climate Change and Disaster; Disadvantaged or Vulnerable Individuals or Groups; Disability Inclusion; Adverse Gender-Related impact, including Gender-based Violence and Sexual Exploitation; Biodiversity Conservation and the Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources; Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement; Indigenous Peoples; Cultural Heritage; Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention; Labor and Working Conditions; Community Health, Safety and Security.

- List knowledge activities/products developed (based on knowledge management approach approved at CEO Endorsement/Approval).

iv. Sustainability

- Validate whether the risks identified in the Project Document, Annual Project Review/PIRs and the ATLAS Risk Register are the most important and whether the risk ratings applied are appropriate and up to date. If not, explain why.
- In addition, assess the following risks to sustainability:

Financial risks to sustainability:

- What is the likelihood of financial and economic resources not being available once the GEF assistance ends (consider potential resources can be from multiple sources, such as the public and private sectors, income generating activities, and other funding that will be adequate financial resources for sustaining project's outcomes)?

Socio-economic risks to sustainability:

- Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outcomes? What is the risk that the level of stakeholder ownership (including ownership by governments and other key stakeholders) will be insufficient to allow for the project outcomes/benefits to be sustained? Do the various key stakeholders see that it is in their interest that the project benefits continue to flow? Is there sufficient public / stakeholder awareness in support of the long-term objectives of the project? Are lessons learned being documented by the Project Team on a continual basis and shared/ transferred to appropriate parties who could learn from the project and potentially replicate and/or scale it in the future?

Institutional Framework and Governance risks to sustainability:

- Do the legal frameworks, policies, governance structures and processes pose risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project benefits? While assessing this parameter, also consider if the required systems/ mechanisms for accountability, transparency, and technical knowledge transfer are in place.

Environmental risks to sustainability:

- Are there any environmental risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project outcomes?

Conclusions & Recommendations

The MTR team will include a section in the MTR report for evidence-based conclusions, in light of the findings.

Additionally, the MTR consultant/team is expected to make recommendations to the Project Team. Recommendations should be succinct suggestions for critical intervention that are specific, measurable, achievable, and relevant. A recommendation table should be put in the report's executive summary. See the *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* for guidance on a recommendation table.

The MTR team should make no more than 15 recommendations total.

Ratings

The MTR team will include its ratings of the project's results and brief descriptions of the associated achievements in an *MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table* in the Executive Summary of the MTR

report. See Annex E for ratings scales. No rating on Project Strategy and no overall project rating is required.

Table. MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table for (Strengthening the Palau National Marine Sanctuary for the Conservation and Management of Global Marine Biodiversity and Sustainable Fisheries Project)

Measure	MTR Rating	Achievement Description
Project Strategy	N/A	
Progress Towards Results	Objective Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale)	
	Outcome 1 Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale)	
	Outcome 2 Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale)	
	Outcome 3 Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale)	
	Etc.	
Project Implementation & Adaptive Management	(rate 6 pt. scale)	
Sustainability	(rate 4 pt. scale)	

6. TIMEFRAME

The total duration of the MTR will be approximately **30** working days over a time period of **11** weeks and shall not exceed five months from when the consultant(s) are hired. The tentative MTR timeframe is as follows:

ACTIVITY	NUMBER OF WORKING DAYS	COMPLETION DATE
Document review and preparing MTR Inception Report (MTR Inception Report due no later than 2 weeks before the MTR mission)	4 days (14-17/4)	18 April 2024
MTR mission: stakeholder meetings, interviews, field visits	10 days (22/4-3/5)	4 May 2024
Presentation of initial findings- last day of the MTR mission	1 day	5 May 2024
Preparing draft report (due within 3 weeks of the MTR mission)	14 days (6 -23 May)	24 May 2024
Circulation of draft TE report for comments	7 days (27 May -4 June)	4 June 2024
Incorporation of comments on draft TE report into Audit Trail & finalization of TE report	2 days (5-7 June)	7 June 2024
Finalization of MTR report/ Incorporating audit trail from feedback on draft report (due within 1 week of receiving UNDP comments on the draft) (<i>note: accommodate time delay in dates for circulation and review of the draft report</i>)	10 days (10 – 21 June 2024)	24 June 2024

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

7. MIDTERM REVIEW DELIVERABLES

#	Deliverable	Description	Timing	Responsibilities
1	MTR Inception Report	MTR team clarifies objectives and methods of Midterm Review	No later than 2 weeks before the MTR mission	MTR team submits to the Commissioning Unit and project management
2	Presentation	Initial Findings	End of MTR mission	MTR Team presents to project management and the Commissioning Unit
3	Draft MTR Report	Full draft report (using guidelines on content outlined in Annex B) with annexes	Within 3 weeks of the MTR mission	Sent to the Commissioning Unit, reviewed by RTA, Project Coordinating Unit, GEF OFF
4	Final Report*	Revised report with audit trail detailing how all received comments have (and have not) been addressed in the final MTR report	Within 1 week of receiving UNDP comments on draft	Sent to the Commissioning Unit

The final MTR report must be in English. If applicable, the Commissioning Unit may choose to arrange for a translation of the report into a language more widely shared by national stakeholders.

8. MTR ARRANGEMENTS

The principal responsibility for managing this MTR resides with the Commissioning Unit. The Commissioning Unit for this project's MTR is the UNDP Multi Country Office in Fiji.

The Commissioning Unit will contract the consultants and ensure the timely provision of per diems and travel arrangements **within the country** for the MTR team and will provide an updated stakeholder list with contact details (phone and email). The Project Team will be responsible for liaising with the MTR team to provide all relevant documents, set up stakeholder interviews, and arrange field visits.

9. TEAM COMPOSITION

A team of two independent consultants will conduct the MTR - one team leader (with experience and exposure to projects and evaluations in other regions globally) and one team expert, usually from the country of the project if available. The team leader/international consultant will be responsible for the overall design and writing of the TE report. The national team expert will conduct stakeholder meetings and interviews in country, work with the Project Team in developing the MTR itinerary and collate required data locally to inform MTR. In case of unavailability of the national expert, the international consultant should conduct the evaluation with the logistic support from the project team.

The consultants cannot have participated in the project preparation, formulation, and/or implementation (including the writing of the Project Document) and should not have a conflict of interest with project's related activities.

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

Education

- A master's degree in social sciences, Environment, Conservation, or other closely related field

Experience

- Relevant experience with result-based management evaluation methodologies.
- Experience applying SMART indicators and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios.
- Competence in adaptive management, as applied to Biodiversity, International Waters and Climate Change;
- Experience in evaluating projects.
- Experience working in Pacific Region.
- Experience in relevant technical areas for at least **10 years**.
- Demonstrated understanding of issues related to gender and Biodiversity, International Waters and Climate Change, experience in gender sensitive evaluation and analysis.
- Excellent communication skills.
- Demonstrable analytical skills.
- Project evaluation/review experiences within United Nations system will be considered an asset.

Language

- Fluency in written and spoken English.

10. ETHICS

The MTR team will be held to the highest ethical standards and is required to sign a code of conduct upon acceptance of the assignment. This MTR will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation'. The MTR team 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 MTR team must also ensure security of collected information before and after the MTR and protocols to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of sources of information where that is expected. The information, knowledge and data gathered in the MTR process must also be solely used for the MTR and not for other uses without the express authorization of UNDP and partners.

11. PAYMENT SCHEDULE

- 20% payment upon satisfactory delivery of the final MTR Inception Report and approval by the Commissioning Unit
- 40% payment upon satisfactory delivery of the draft MTR report to the Commissioning Unit
- 40% payment upon satisfactory delivery of the final MTR 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%⁵⁵:

- The final MTR report includes all requirements outlined in the MTR TOR and is in accordance with the MTR guidance.
- The final MTR report is clearly written, logically organized, and is specific for this project (i.e. text has not been cut & pasted from other MTR reports).
- The Audit Trail includes responses to and justification for each comment listed.

⁵⁵ The Commissioning Unit is obligated to issue payments to the MTR team as soon as the terms under the ToR are fulfilled. If there is an ongoing discussion regarding the quality and completeness of the final deliverables that cannot be resolved between the Commissioning Unit and the MTR team, the Regional M&E Advisor and Vertical Fund Directorate will be consulted. If needed, the Commissioning Unit's senior management, Procurement Services Unit and Legal Support Office will be notified as well so that a decision can be made about whether or not to withhold payment of any amounts that may be due to the evaluator(s), suspend or terminate the contract and/or remove the individual contractor from any applicable rosters. See the UNDP Individual Contract Policy for further details:

https://popp.undp.org/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/UNDP_POPP_DOCUMENT_LIBRARY/Public/PSU_Individual%20Contract_Individual%20Contract%20Policy.docx&action=default

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

#	Activity	Stakeholder involved	Place
29 May 2024 (Wednesday)			
	Arrival in Koror	UNDP	Virtual via Zoom meeting
1	Meeting with Director PICRC and Project Manager	PICRC/PMU	Koror
30 May 2024 (Thursday)			
2	Meeting with Minister	MAFE	Koror
4 June 2024 (Tuesday)			
3	Meeting with Bureau of Fisheries and MSP Project	Bureau of Fisheries, MSP Project	Koror
4	Meeting with BOFI	BOFI	Koror
5 June 2024 (Wednesday)			
5	Meeting at the DMSFW Control Room	DMSFW	Koror
6 June 2024 (Thursday)			
6	Meeting with Project Manager	PICRC/PMU	Koror
7	Meeting with PICRC Communications Officer	PICRC	Koror
7 June 2024 (Friday)			
8	Meeting with Project Manager	PICRC/PMU	Koror
	Departure from Koror		

Total number of meetings conducted: 8.

APPENDIX C – LIST OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED

This is a listing of persons contacted in Palau (unless otherwise noted) during the Mid-Term Review Period only. The Evaluation Team regrets any omissions to this list.

1. Mr. King Sam, Project Manager, PNMS Project;
2. Ms. Caryn Koshiba, Administration Director, and Interim CEO, PICRC;
3. Ms. Persis Omelau, Acting Director, Bureau of Fisheries, MAFE;
4. Ms. Lukes Isechal, Project Manager/Coordinator, MSP Project;
5. Ms. Reeva Sakuma, Planning & Development Officer, Division of Maritime Security and Fish & Wildlife Protection;
6. A lieutenant and Patrol Officer of DMSFW;
7. Mr. Jeremiah Ngiratreged, Surveillance & Enforcement Coordinator;
8. Mr. Okada Techitong, BOFI.

APPENDIX D – LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

1. UNDP “Strengthening the Palau National Marine Sanctuary for the Conservation and Management of Global Marine Biodiversity and Sustainable Fisheries”, PNMS Project Document.
2. 2022 and 2023 PIR for PNMS Project.
3. 23 March letter from House of Delegates (11th Olbiil Era Keluau) to Honorable Speaker on House Bill No. 11-30-28 entitled “A Bill for an Act to temporarily allow long-line fishing and purse seining activities for commercial export in the EEZ and for other related purposes”.
4. Inter-Agency Partnership Agreement with Multisectoral Entities to Support Management of the PNMS, 14 September 2021.
5. Palau Fisheries Roadmap, December 2022, by PICRC and The Nature Conservancy.
6. PNMS 2023-2028 Strategic Plan, Volumes 1 and 2.
7. 20 July 2022 letter from the Office of the President to President of the Senate and Speaker of the House of Delegates on “Signing Statement for RPPL 11-23, the FY22 Supplemental Budget Act”.
8. Sustainable Financing Mechanisms in Palau – Preliminary Discussion Document, September 2022.
9. Revised Inception Report for “Strengthening the Palau National Marine Sanctuary for the Conservation and Management of Global Marine Biodiversity and Sustainable Fisheries (GEF/UNDP PNMS Project)”, September 2021.

APPENDIX E – GEF-7 CORE INDICATOR WORKSHEET

[PIMS Number: 6418] [Country: Palau]

Annexed as a separate file.



APPENDIX F – PROJECT RESULTS FRAMEWORK FOR PNMS PROJECT FROM APRIL 2021 (WITH SUGGESTED EDITS IN RED FONT)

No changes were made in this PRF with the assumption of a Project extension of 24 months to enable to the PMU to work towards closer achievement of the objective level targets.

This project will contribute to the following Sustainable Development Goal (s): SDGs 2, 8, 14

This project will contribute to the following country outcome (UNDAF/CPD, RPD, GPD): UNDAF/Country Program Outcome: Environmental Sustainability.

UNDP Strategic Plan Output: Output 1.3 Solutions developed at national and sub-national levels for sustainable management of natural resources, ecosystem services, chemicals, and waste

Objective, Components and Outcome	Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline	Mid-Term Targets (confirmed by Mid Term Review)	End of Project Targets (confirmed by Terminal Evaluation)
Overall Objective: Strengthen the Institutional and Governance Structure and Implement a Strategic Plan for the Sustainable Management of the Palau National Marine Sanctuary and Domestic Fishing Zone and provide a healthy and productive ecosystem for the benefit of all people of Palau	INDICATOR 1 Mandatory Indicator 1: Direct Project beneficiaries	Less than 1%. Population of Palau is not yet realising the benefits of the MPA/PNMS or the DFZ as a result of lack of knowledge and awareness and inadequate human resources	Demographics survey showing strong improvement in understanding and benefit (livelihoods and food security) particularly for women and poorer communities. Indicator 1 and 2 improved by 20%.	Approx 2,000 persons (600 women) from tourism sector, fisheries sector – possibility exists that the number of beneficiaries changes with changes in PNMS area
	INDICATOR 2 Mandatory Indicator 2: Indirect Project beneficiaries	Less than 1% As above		100% - Confirmation of overall beneficiaries from the GEF investment in this Project = 20,135 (overall population) with 45% women (9,014) – possibility exists that the number of beneficiaries changes with changes in PNMS area
	INDICATOR 3 Core Indicator 2: Marine protected areas created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use	Less than 2% (950,000 Ha) of area effectively managed. MPA currently having limited to zero effect on improving management and conservation for sustainable use.	80% under improved management. PNMS management and administrative processes fully functional within PICRC (Palau International Coral Reef Center)	80% (47.5 million Hectares) of EEZ under fully effective management as a marine sanctuary and no-take zone – possibility exists that the PNMS area changes by September 2024
	INDICATOR 4 Core Indicator 5: Area of marine habitat under improved practices to benefit biodiversity.	Zero % of Domestic Fishing Zone – no management as yet.	20% of Domestic Fishing Zone under formal management and administrative via	20% (11.8 million Hectares) of EEZ and territorial waters under strict management as a domestic fishery with limited and controlled commercial fishing and exportation

Objective, Components and Outcome	Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline	Mid-Term Targets (confirmed by Mid Term Review)	End of Project Targets (confirmed by Terminal Evaluation)
	<p>INDICATOR 5 Core Indicator 8: Globally over-exploited marine fisheries moved to more sustainable levels.</p>	<p>Approx 2% as above equivalent to 225 tonnes sustainable</p>	<p>Improved by 50% (10,625 tonnes)</p>	<p>– possibility exists there will be changes in DFZ area 21,250 metric tonnes per annum of fishery moved to more sustainable levels – suggest changes to this indicator to “2024 baseline catch data” to capture actual catch data after the PNMS declaration in 2015</p>
Component 1	Institutional and Governance Realignment for Effective Monitoring and Adaptive Management within the PNMS and adjacent Domestic Fishing Zone			
<p>Outcome 1.1 PNMS Institutional, Management and Regulatory Framework and mechanisms strengthened and under Implementation through enhanced national, regional, and global support</p>	<p>INDICATOR 6: Extent of effectiveness of PNMS institutional, management and regulatory framework Score: 1. No improvement on the PNMS institutional, management and regulatory framework 2. 50% improvement on the PNMS institutional, management and regulatory framework 3. Fully functional and effective PNMS institutional, management and regulatory framework</p>	<p>Limited control over illegal activities. Only 5-6 interdictions per annum Lack of a current formal institutional base, inadequately defined mandates and responsibilities, and absence of a formally agreed strategy and work-plan for effective management of the PNMS. Inability to currently fully and effectively control harmful or illegal activities within the PNMS with limited control over illegal activities. Only 5-6 interdictions per annum Baseline Score: 1</p>	<p>PNMS Institutional /Administrative base/headquarters established and functional. Mandates and responsibilities of various government bodies clearly defined in adopted Strategic Plan A Strategic Plan finalised and adopted along with an Operations Manual and Terms of Reference Long-term Partnerships identified and formally adopted through a ‘Partnership Platform’ to provide support for scientific monitoring and MCS (including innovative technologies as per below) MCS Action Plan reviewed, and draft revision distributed for stakeholder input (including with regional partners) New fisheries management strategies and regulations are under implementation and actively enforced.</p>	<p>Strategic Plan adopted and record of illegal activities within PNMS shows significant reduction by at least 50% - Strategic plan should move forward taking into account the new PNMS area to be protected. TE identifies an effective Partnership Platform supporting ecosystem monitoring as well as enforcement and compliance procedures. MCS Action Plan updated, adopted, and fully implemented. Record of illegal activities within PNMS shows significant reduction by at least 50%. Ecosystem-based harvest strategies for at least 3 major commercial species are adopted and implemented within the DFZ and being assessed and acted on as part of an adaptive management approach.</p>

Objective, Components and Outcome	Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline	Mid-Term Targets (confirmed by Mid Term Review)	End of Project Targets (confirmed by Terminal Evaluation)
	<p>INDICATOR 7: Scale of effectiveness in fisheries management and enforcement within the Commercial Fishing Zone and the Artisanal Fishing Zone (11.8 million Ha) Scores: 1. No enforcement and monitoring for compliance 2. 50% enforcement and monitoring for compliance 3. Full enforcement and monitoring for compliance</p>	<p>New regulations that now apply to the Domestic Fishing Zone need enforcement and effective monitoring for compliance.</p> <p>No current harvesting strategies within DFZ</p> <p>Baseline Score: 1</p> <p>The baseline score is actually 3. Scale of effectiveness needs a different measurement.</p>	<p>Mid Term Score Target: 2</p> <p>New fisheries management strategies and regulations adopted for the DFZ, under implementation and actively enforced. These management plans will clearly define the purpose of the DFZ as a domestic fishery for the benefit of Palauans with due consideration given to subsistence fisheries versus commercial foreign licensed fisheries and strict control and regulation of the latter.</p> <p>A food security assessment made relating to the long-term management of the DFZ with an emphasis on state benefits as well as national community benefits.</p> <p>Mid-Term Target Score: 2</p>	<p>End of Project Target Score: 3</p> <p>Ecosystem-based harvest strategies for at least 3 major commercial species are adopted and implemented within the DFZ and being assessed and acted on as part of an adaptive management and food security approach.</p> <p>Enforcement partnerships between state level and national level (MoJ, MAFE) established and implemented.</p> <p>End of Project Target Score: 3</p>
<p>Outputs to achieve Outcome</p>	<p>1.1.1 A 5-Year Strategic Plan and Roadmap (with monitoring targets and indicators) implemented for effective institutionalization of the PNMS within the agreed management, monitoring, and enforcement agencies.</p> <p>1.1.2 A Platform for Partnerships alongside the PNMS to support the activities in the Strategic Plan with an agreed process for delivery of said support.</p> <p>1.1.3 MCS role implemented through closer interaction and linkages with Ministry responsible for enforcement and compliance.</p> <p>1.1.4 A roadmap and work-plan for sustainable management within the domestic fishery zone, including the adoption of ecosystem-based harvest strategies.</p> <p>1.1.5 Compliance of PNMS and DFZ with international treaties and conventions and other due processes for consolidating the international status and recognition of the PNMS</p>			
<p>Outcome 1.2 Improved and effective management and governance of PNMS/DFZ through strengthened capacity, skills, and knowledge (including at the State, National, regional level as well as NGOs)</p>	<p>INDICATOR 8: Number of staff (disaggregated by males and females) that have undergone training and built capacity on PNMS governance and management</p>	<p>Only 2 technical staff in PNMS with any offshore skills. General shortage of trained and skilled technical and managerial staff to manage the PNMS (no specific programme within the PNMS for capacity building and training)</p> <p>Baseline: 2</p>	<p>At least two Partnership Agreements in place with associated training and capacity building components</p> <p>Mid-term Target: 6 males; 4 females</p>	<p>Minimum of 20 additional trained staff and government/state/ community representatives (40% female) and 4 international mentors identified and directly - involved in training and long-term support to PNMS and staff – target could be lowered due to target</p>

Objective, Components and Outcome	Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline	Mid-Term Targets (confirmed by Mid Term Review)	End of Project Targets (confirmed by Terminal Evaluation)
	<p>INDICATOR 9: Extent of capacity building programme established in country on PNMS management & monitoring. Scores: 1. No capacity building programme established in country on PNMS management & monitoring 2. 50% capacity building programme implemented in country on PNMS management and monitoring 3. Capacity building programme under full implementation in country on PNMS management & monitoring</p>	<p>No current in-country focused modular training courses supporting capacity-building, training. Baseline Score: 1</p>	<p>Best Lessons and Practices captured through modular training courses and offered to in-country technical and managerial personnel and candidates. Mid-Term Target Score: 2</p>	<p>staffing levels that may not be realistic. End of Project Target: 14 Male; 10 Female At least 4 focused training courses/modules on various elements of PNMS management and monitoring (governance, management and/or technical aspects). These delivered at state as well as national government level. End of Project Target Score:3</p>
Outputs to achieve Outcome	1.2.1 Implementation and Delivery of a Capacity Building and Training Programme			
Component 2	Enhanced Management through improved Monitoring, Control and Surveillance of Activities within the Established PNMS and DFZ Boundaries			
<p>Outcome 2.1 All regulations and laws pertaining to PNMS and DFZ enforced effectively and sustainably in further close collaboration with WCPFC, FFA and PNA</p>	<p>INDICATOR 10: Extent at which Palau’s Operations Centre for Monitoring, Control and Surveillance is manned, equipped and coordinating active MCS patrols, interdiction, and prosecution. 1. Non-functional Palau operational centre 2. Partial functional Palau operational centre</p>	<p>Operations Room and associated equipment and satellite linkages currently not fully functional nor manned on a regular and 24-hour basis. No permanent staff currently available to provide 24-hour manning of Operations Centre or support for patrol vessels. Baseline Score: 2</p>	<p>A fully functional Operations Centre linked into WCPFC/FFA Surveillance Centre in Honiara as well as the Vulcan Operation Center in Seattle which is providing real time information on potential IUU in the PNMS and DFZ Mid-Term Target Score: 3</p>	<p>Six permanent staff associated with the running of the Operations Room supporting 100% increase in offshore patrols (airborne and sea-going) – target could be lowered due to target staffing levels that may not be realistic. FFA Review of Palau Operational Centre as a demonstration of national-regional MCS interaction and IUU interdiction</p>

Objective, Components and Outcome	Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline	Mid-Term Targets (confirmed by Mid Term Review)	End of Project Targets (confirmed by Terminal Evaluation)
	3. Full functional Palau operational centre 4. Full functional Palau operational centre supporting 100% increase in offshore patrol and enforcement			End-of-Project Target Score: 4
	INDICATOR 11: Extent of effective human electronic monitoring, reporting within the DFZ Scores: 1. No electronic monitoring and reporting 2. 30% of vessels have human and electronic monitoring and are reporting on findings 3. 50% of vessels have human and electronic monitoring and are reporting on findings	No electronic monitoring or reporting requirements. Inadequate current understanding and usage of modern technologies to assist with MCS despite their regional availability. Baseline Score: 1	E-Reporting and E-Monitoring introduced as a requirement on commercial fishing vessels in DFZ as well as FAD monitoring and tracking technologies. Mid-Term Target Score: 2	E-reporting and E-monitoring as permanent fixtures on at least 75% of vessels operating in the DFZ – may need to change to E-reporting and E-monitoring introduced as a requirement in DFZ. 100% of FADs in DFZ with tracking devices End of Project Target Score: 3
Outputs to achieve the Outcome	2.1.1 Full activation and implementation of the MSC Operations Room, staff and equipment with international linkages for better MCS 2.1.2 Implementation of interactive monitoring of EEZ/PNMS through combining satellite information on vessel movements with aerial reconnaissance (drones and patrol aircraft) leading to more effective deployment of patrol vessels 2.1.3 Adoption of innovative technology for monitoring fisheries within Domestic Fishing Zone, including use of E-Monitoring and E-Reporting as appropriate			
Component 3	Ecosystem Assessment and Financial Planning for a Long-term Sustainability Strategy for the PNMS			
Outcome 3.1 Long-term mechanisms to support financial sustainability and security PNMS and its associated administrative and management arrangements are negotiated and identified	INDICATOR 12: Extent of 10 years sustainable funding roadmap for PNMS and DFZ formally adopted integrating ecotourism and livelihoods. 1. No adoption by Government on the 10 years sustainable funding roadmap for PNMS and DFZ 2. Draft 10 years sustainable funding roadmap for PNMS and DFZ developed integrating ecotourism and livelihood	Overall lack of awareness of importance of marine ecosystem goods and services to ecotourism and the need to address the carrying capacity for environmentally sustainable tourism. Baseline Score: 1	Formal Economic Assessment and Ecotourism Cost-Benefit Analysis completed and used to define national tourism policy and planning as well as enhancing awareness and ownership by all stakeholders. Careful consideration of the COVID 19 pandemic constraints and predictions to be a major focus of this assessment and analysis. Mid-Term Target Score: 2	A 10-year sustainable funding roadmap for PNMS and DFZ identified by government which prioritises ecotourism and associated livelihoods enrichment and improvement. Where necessary this will need to address the expected impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic and its predicted impacts on sustainable funding sources and reliability while noting that it is expected that tourism would re-open sometime

Objective, Components and Outcome	Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline	Mid-Term Targets (confirmed by Mid Term Review)	End of Project Targets (confirmed by Terminal Evaluation)
	<p>3. Finalized and adopted 10 years sustainable funding roadmap for PNMS and DFZ established</p> <p>INDICATOR 13: Extent of PNA vessel day scheme and sustainable funding programme established. Scores: 1. No PNA vessels day scheme and sustainable funding programme established 2. Negotiations and drafting of PNA vessel day scheme and sustainable funding programme reviewed and adopted 3. Specific revenue allocations from benefits of PNMS and DFZ (including VDS) at the state and community level & maintenance of at least 75% of the previous VDS income to Palau</p>	<p>Uncertainty of income/revenues and therefore lack of sustainability of revenue sources to support PNMS.</p> <p>Baseline Score: 1</p>	<p>Clear definition of benefits for communities and state-level stakeholders from the overall cost-benefit analysis and tourism policy</p> <p>Negotiations progressing with PNA over the Vessel Day Scheme allocations for Palau.</p> <p>Stakeholder driven Sustainable Funding Programme drafted for formal review and adoption.</p> <p>Mid-Term Target Score: 2</p>	<p>in 2021 when the Project would be expected to be in its first 6-12 months.</p> <p>End of Project Target Score: 3</p> <p>Specific revenue allocations from benefits of PNMS and DFZ (including VDS) at the state and community level.</p> <p>Negotiations completed with PNA regarding the Vessel Day Scheme (VDS) to ensure maintenance of at least 75% of the previous VDS income to Palau – this indicator should be deleted.</p> <p>End-Of Project Target Score: 3</p>
Outputs to achieve the Outcome	<p>3.1.1. Detailed assessment of the economic value of the market and non-market marine ecosystem services within the oceanic jurisdiction of Palau</p> <p>3.1.2. A sustainable funding roadmap negotiated that identifies and confirms cost recovery and financing mechanisms (e.g. from tourism, levies, and taxation on fisheries products, etc.)</p>			
Component 4	Improvement of Knowledge Management, communication and awareness outreach coupled with effective Project Monitoring and Evaluation			
<p>Outcome 4.1</p> <p>Strong stakeholder support for the PNMS and DFZ and associated benefits and fees at the broad stakeholder level including the</p>	<p>INDICATOR 14: Appropriate Lessons and Best Practices (L&BP) (from other similar GEF projects and other relevant initiatives captured and incorporated into this project as appropriate</p>	<p>Absence of experience nationally with managing such a large ‘no-take’ protected area or domestic fisheries management zone and no information on L&BP to fall back on</p>	<p>Report to PNMS Management on lessons and best practices from other initiatives, SIDS, and regions (e.g. LMEs) and appropriate BL&P captured through project activities</p>	<p>L&BP captured in ‘Operational Guidelines’ for PNMS and for DFZ (two documents). TE can clearly identify use of L&BP where appropriate, from other examples within the PNMS project</p>

Objective, Components and Outcome	Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline	Mid-Term Targets (confirmed by Mid Term Review)	End of Project Targets (confirmed by Terminal Evaluation)
state, national, and international community	INDICATOR 15: Lessons and Best Practices from the project identified and documented and distributed to support a) an effective long-term Communications and Awareness strategy, and b) replication of the project results and achievements in other SIDS/PICTs	Few examples for other Pacific or global SIDS to follow or learn from in the context of managing similar areas within their vast EEZs	Best lessons and practices captured at Mid Term for consideration in MTR. A Communications and Awareness Outreach Programme under delivery from early stages of Project Implementation with clear assessment and reporting on its effectiveness	Final best lessons and practices captured in Experience Notes (at least 3) for IW: LEARN and other appropriate bodies (IUCN, WWF, etc.) for distribution. Two or more twinning exercises / BL&P workshops within the South Pacific region/SIDS At least one global twinning exercise (possibly virtual)
Outputs to achieve Outcome	4.1.1. Lessons and practices from other similar projects and initiatives both within and outside the GEF ‘stable’ incorporated into project activities and deliverables, along with sharing of information and close cooperation on complementary activities 4.1.2. Capture and appropriate distribution of Best Lessons and Practices from the Project in a user-friendly format to support further capacity building and training and to encourage replication and/or scaling up as and where appropriate. This process should link into the Stakeholder Engagement Plan to ensure stakeholder input as well as sharing/ learning. This process will also advise and provide feedback/documentation to IW: LEARN 4.1.3. A communications and awareness outreach programme established and delivered that explains the function and benefits derived from the PNMS and DFZ			
Outcome 4.2 Effective Project Management, Monitoring and Evaluation	INDICATOR 16: Project Coordination Unit and Project Management supported by the host organisation(s) with appropriate staffing levels and Monitoring and Evaluation as defined in the Project Document INDICATOR 17: Stakeholder and Partner Engagement Plan functional within the project	No current project management base or staffing in support of PNMS institutionalisation. No associated M&E Plan No stakeholder engagement strategy or process for supporting PNMS	Quarterly and annual (PIR) reporting support effective management and capturing improvements in METT targets Stakeholder Engagement Plan and Roadmap (with budget) finalised as a document and under implementation. Partnership Platform engaging directly with Stakeholders	Overall Project Management receives minimum ‘Satisfactory’ at TE PCU physical structure and staff rolled over into permanent PNMS establishment by end of project Stakeholder Engagement receives minimum ‘Satisfactory’ at TE Partnership Platform includes linkage to Stakeholders as a long-term formal agreement
Outputs to achieve Outcome	4.2.1 Project management structure in place, functional and under appropriate monitoring for delivery of the GEF Project Objectives including full use of a formal M&E process. 4.2.2 Updated stakeholder and partner engagement process/strategy in the project in support of its long-term objectives			

APPENDIX G – EVALUATION MATRIX

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
Project Strategy: To what extent is the project strategy relevant to country priorities, country ownership, and the best route towards expected results?			
Were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated into the project design?	Number of stakeholders participating in PPG Number of stakeholders participating in project sponsored training sessions and meetings	PPG stakeholder meeting minutes Project designers QPRs	Desk review of QPRs and interviews with project designers, PMU, stakeholders
Was the project concept in line with the national sector development priorities and plans of the country (or of participating countries in the case of multi-country projects)?	Quality of outcomes and indicators on log frame	Project document	Desk review
Were relevant gender issues (e.g., the impact of the project on gender equality in the programme country, involvement of women’s groups, engaging women in project activities) raised in the Project Document?	Gender indicators in PRF	QPRs	Desk review, interviews with PMU and stakeholders
Are the project’s objective and outcomes clear, practical, and feasible to be realized within its time frame?	Quality of outcomes and indicators on log frame	Project document	Desk review
Are each of the project components comprised of the relevant and necessary activities that will deliver the required outputs that will collectively bring about the expected outcome in each component?	Quality of outcomes and indicators on log frame	Project document	Desk review
Progress Towards Results: To what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved thus far?			
Has the Project been effective in achieving the expected outcomes and objectives?	Effectiveness ratings of the project by the evaluation	QPRs	Desk review, interviews with PMU and stakeholders
How well are risks, assumptions and impact drivers being managed?	Content of risk management in QPRs	QPRs and information from PMU personnel	Desk review, interviews with PMU and GoP personnel
To what extent has the project contributed to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • institutional arrangements strengthened. • effective information dissemination program developed. • stakeholder capacity enhanced 	Indicator targets of GoP and other institutional strengthening Indicator targets of governate and stakeholder strengthening	Progress reports, QPRs, and information from PMU and GoP personnel	

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
To what extent did the dissemination activities facilitate progress towards Project impacts?	Number of knowledge products created by Project	Survey of feedback of training sessions, testimonial evidence from training participants, and information from PMU and GoP personnel	Desk review, interviews with training participants, PMU and GoP personnel
Project Implementation and Adaptive Management: Has the project been implemented efficiently, cost-effectively, and been able to adapt to any changing conditions thus far? To what extent are project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, reporting, and project communications supporting the project's implementation?			
Have changes been made and are they effective? Are responsibilities and reporting lines clear?	Effectiveness ratings of the project by the evaluation	QPRs	Desk review, interviews with PMU and stakeholders
Do the Executing Agency/Implementing Partner and/or UNDP and other partners have the capacity to deliver benefits to or involve women? If yes, how?	Adaptive management reporting in QPRs	QPRs and information from PMU personnel	Desk review, interviews with PMU
What is the gender balance of project staff? What steps have been taken to ensure gender balance in project staff?	Adaptive management reporting in QPRs	QPRs and information from PMU personnel	Desk review, interviews with PMU
What is the gender balance of the Project Board? What steps have been taken to ensure gender balance in the Project Board?	Adaptive management reporting in QPRs	QPRs and information from PMU personnel	Desk review, interviews with PMU
Are work-planning processes results-based? If not, suggest ways to re-orientate work planning to focus on results.	Annual work plans	AWPs and information from PMU personnel	Desk review, interviews with PMU
Does the project have the appropriate financial controls, including reporting and planning, that allow management to make informed decisions regarding the budget and allow for timely flow of funds?	Institutional arrangements of the Project	QPRs and information from PMU personnel	Desk review, interviews with PMU
Is co-financing being used strategically to help the objectives of the project? Is the Project Team meeting with all co-financing partners regularly to align financing priorities and annual work plans? Are the committed co-financing by the project partners/co-financers being realized?	Institutional arrangements of the Project	QPRs and information from PMU personnel	Desk review, interviews with PMU
Regarding monitoring tools being used, do they provide the necessary information? Do they involve key partners? Are they aligned or mainstreamed with national systems? Do they use existing information? Are they efficient? Are they	Monitoring systems	QPRs and information from PMU personnel	Desk review, interviews with PMU

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
cost-effective? Are additional tools required? How could they be made more participatory and inclusive?			
Has the project developed and leveraged the necessary and appropriate partnerships with direct and tangential stakeholders?	Level of stakeholder engagement	QPRs and information from PMU personnel and stakeholders	Desk review, interviews with PMU and stakeholders
Do local and national government stakeholders support the objectives of the project? Do they continue to have an active role in project decision-making that supports efficient and effective project implementation?	Level of stakeholder engagement	QPRs and information from PMU personnel and stakeholders	Desk review, interviews with PMU and stakeholders
To what extent has stakeholder involvement and public awareness contributed to the progress towards achievement of project objectives?	Level of stakeholder engagement	QPRs and information from PMU personnel and stakeholders	Desk review, interviews with PMU and stakeholders
How does the project engage women and girls? Is the project likely to have the same positive and/or negative effects on women and men, girls, and boys? Identify, if possible, legal, cultural, or religious constraints on women’s participation in the project. What can the project do to enhance its gender benefits?	Level of stakeholder engagement	QPRs and information from PMU personnel and stakeholders	Desk review, interviews with PMU and stakeholders
How has the Project Team addressed poorly rated PIRs, if applicable?	Monitoring systems	QPRs and information from PMU personnel	Desk review, interviews with PMU
Is internal project communication with stakeholders regular and effective? Are there key stakeholders left out of communication? Are there feedback mechanisms when communication is received? Does this communication with stakeholders contribute to their awareness of project outcomes and activities and investment in the sustainability of project results?	Adaptive management reporting in QPRs	QPRs and information from PMU personnel	Desk review, interviews with PMU
Are proper means of external project communication established or being established to express the project progress and intended impact to the public (is there a web presence, for example? Or did the project implement appropriate outreach and public awareness campaigns?)	Level of stakeholder engagement	QPRs and information from PMU personnel and stakeholders	Desk review, interviews with PMU and stakeholders
Sustainability: To what extent are there financial, institutional, socio-economic, and/or environmental risks to sustaining long-term project results?			

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
What is the likelihood of financial and economic resources not being available once the GEF assistance ends (consider potential resources can be from multiple sources, such as the public and private sectors, income generating activities, and other funding that will be adequate financial resources for sustaining project’s outcomes)?	Opinions of stakeholders	Survey of feedback of training sessions, and testimonial evidence from government personnel and stakeholders	Desk review, interviews with government personnel and stakeholders
Appropriateness of the institutional arrangement and whether there was adequate commitment to the Project	Number of institutions and local government agencies that have had capacities built	Progress reports, QPRs, and information from PMU and GoP personnel	Desk review, interviews with government personnel and stakeholders
To what extent are the stakeholders are realizing benefits from the project?	Opinions of stakeholders (i.e., farmers, fishermen, local residents)	Stakeholder interviews	Stakeholder interviews
Sustainability: To what extent are there financial risks to sustaining long-term project results?			
What is the likelihood of financial and economic resources not being available once the GEF assistance ends (consider potential resources can be from multiple sources, such as the public and private sectors, income generating activities, and other funding that will be adequate financial resources for sustaining project’s outcomes)??	Opinions of GoP and PMU personnel	Stakeholder interviews	Desk review, interviews with government personnel, PMU, and stakeholders
Appropriateness of the institutional arrangement and whether there was adequate commitment to the Project	Number of institutions and local government agencies that have had capacities built	Progress reports, QPRs, and information from PMU and DoECC personnel	Desk review, interviews with government personnel and stakeholders
To what extent are the stakeholders are realizing benefits from the project?	Opinions of stakeholders (i.e., farmers, fishermen, local residents)	Stakeholder interviews	Stakeholder interviews
Sustainability: To what extent are there institutional risks to sustaining long-term project results?			
How effective is the project in terms of strengthening the capacity of GoP professionals?	Opinions of training participants	Survey of feedback of training sessions, and testimonial evidence from government personnel and stakeholders	Desk review, interviews with government personnel and stakeholders
Appropriateness of the institutional arrangement and whether there was adequate commitment to the Project	Number of institutions and local government agencies that have had capacities built	Progress reports, QPRs, and information from PMU and GoP personnel	Desk review, interviews with government personnel and stakeholders
Do the legal frameworks, policies, governance structures and processes pose risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project benefits?	Opinions of GoP stakeholders and PMU	Stakeholder interviews	Stakeholder interviews

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
Sustainability: To what extent are there socio-economic risks to sustaining long-term project results?			
What is the risk that the level of stakeholder ownership (including ownership by governments and other key stakeholders) will be insufficient to allow for the project outcomes/benefits to be sustained?	Opinions of training participants and GoP personnel	Survey of feedback of testimonial evidence from government personnel and stakeholders	Desk review, interviews with government personnel and stakeholders
Do the various key stakeholders see that it is in their interest that the project benefits continue to flow? Is there sufficient public / stakeholder awareness in support of the long-term objectives of the project?	Opinions of training participants and GoP personnel	Survey of feedback of testimonial evidence from government personnel and stakeholders	Desk review, interviews with government personnel and stakeholders
Are lessons learned being documented by the Project Team on a continual basis and shared/ transferred to appropriate parties who could learn from the project and potentially replicate and/or scale it in the future?	Opinions of training participants and GoP personnel	Survey of feedback of testimonial evidence from government personnel and stakeholders	Desk review, interviews with government personnel and stakeholders
Sustainability: To what extent are there environmental risks to sustaining long-term project results?			
Are there any environmental risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project outcomes?	Opinions of training participants and GoP personnel	Survey of feedback of testimonial evidence from government personnel and stakeholders	Desk review, interviews with government personnel and stakeholders

ANNEX H - QUESTIONS FOR STAKEHOLDERS

These questions apply to all stakeholders.

1. Has the Project been implemented efficiently, cost-effectively, and been able to adapt to any changing conditions thus far? If not, what needs to be done?
2. Has the COVID-19 pandemic affected Project implementation and how? Were alternative approaches considered in the course of implementation? What are other potential risks for the Project's efficient implementation?
3. What has been your experience and role with Project implementation and performance of Project partners thus far?
4. Has financing technical assistance been an issue in implementing the Project?
5. What should be strengthened in the Project post MTR? What are the weaknesses?
6. What main risks did you see in this GEF project?
7. Is there any specific need for training?

Additional questions will be formulated during the MTR period.

APPENDIX I – RESPONSES TO COMMENTS RECEIVED ON DRAFT MTR REPORT

Annexed as a separate file.



APPENDIX J – EVALUATION CONSULTANT AGREEMENT FORM

Evaluator 1:

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 during 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.
8. Must ensure that independence of judgement is maintained, and that evaluation findings and recommendations are independently presented.
9. Must confirm that they have not been involved in designing, executing, or advising on the project being evaluated.

Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form⁴⁴

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 23 August 2024



⁴⁴ www.unevaluation.org/unegcodeofconduct

APPENDIX K – MTR FINAL REPORT CLEARANCE FORM

Midterm Review Report Reviewed and Cleared By:	
Commissioning Unit (M&E Focal Point)	
Name: _____	
Signature: _____	Date: _____
Regional Technical Advisor (Nature, Climate and Energy)	
Name: _____	
Signature: _____	Date: _____