



Archipelagic
& Island States
Forum



Mid-Term Evaluation of the Archipelagic and Island States Forum Project
(AIS Forum Support Facility Project)
[Project Number/Project ID: 00133979; Award ID: 00115025]

MID-TERM EVALUATION REPORT

Timeframe of the Evaluation: July 2024 to January 2025

Countries included in the Evaluation Intervention: Archipelagic and Island States in
Asia-Pacific, Europe and Africa Regions

Name of the Organisation Commissioning the Evaluation: UNDP

Evaluation Report Date: January 2025

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIS	Archipelagic and Island States
CMAI	Coordinating Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Investment
CO	Country Office
COVID-19	SARS-COV-2 (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2)
CPD	Country Programme Document
ERG	Evaluation Reference Group
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FSP	Full Size Project
GEDSI	Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion
GRES	Gender Results Effectiveness Scale
HQ	Headquarters
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office
KII	Key Informant Interview
LNOB	Leave No One Behind
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PRODOC	Project Document
PB	Project Board
PIP	Project Initiation Plan
POPP	Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SSC	South-South Cooperation
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Assignable, Relevant and Time-bound
TA	Technical Assistance
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework

PROJECT INFORMATION TABLE

Project Information		
Project Title	Archipelagic and Island States Forum Project (AIS Forum Support Facility Project)	
Project ID	Project Number/Project ID: 00133979; Award ID: 00115025	
Corporate outcome and output	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNSDCF/CPD 2021-2025 Outcome 4: Stakeholders adopt innovative and integrated development solutions to accelerate advancement towards the Sustainable Development Goals. • CPD 2021-2025 Indicative Outputs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Project Output 1 (GEN 2) attribute to CPD Output 4.4: Partnerships strengthened for innovative and inclusive South-South and triangular cooperation (SP Output 1.1.1) ○ Project Output 2 (GEN 2) attribute to CPD Output 4.3: Innovative technology solutions adopted for improved public service delivery (SP Output 3.1.1) ○ Project Output 3 (GEN 2) attribute to CPD Output 4.4: Partnerships strengthened for innovative and inclusive South-South and triangular cooperation (SP Output 1.1.1) ○ Project Output 4 (GEN 2) attribute to CPD Output 4.4: Partnerships strengthened for innovative and inclusive South-South and triangular cooperation (SP Output 1.1.1) 	
Country	Various Archipelagic and Island State Countries	
Region	Asia and Pacific Region; Africa Region; Europe Region; Latin America and the Caribbean Region	
Date project document signed	Original Version: 2 November 2021 2 nd Revision: 5 January 2023	
Project dates	Start	Planned end
	1 November 2021	31 December 2026
Total committed budget	USD 5,349,080	
Project expenditure at the time of evaluation	USD2,248,859 (As of 30 June 2024)	
Funding source	Government of Indonesia	
Implementing party¹	UNDP	
Evaluation Information		
Evaluation type (project/ outcome/thematic/country programme, etc.)	Project Evaluation	
Final/midterm review/ other	Mid-Term Review	
Period under evaluation	Start	End
	22 July 2024	31 October 2024
Evaluators	Dr Jeff Fang – International Consultant/Team Leader Dr Ayu Krishna Yuliawati– National Consultant	
Evaluator email address	fangj2018@gmail.com ayupribadi99@gmail.com	
Evaluation dates	Start	Completion
	22 July 2024	31 January 2025

¹ This is the entity that has overall responsibility for implementation of the project (award), effective use of resources and delivery of outputs in the signed project document and workplan.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Project Description in Brief

The AIS Forum Support Facility Project aims to be a treaty/charter-based international organisation of which efforts are currently implemented by UNDP Indonesia through a 5-year acceleration program. This comprehensive program includes joint research grants, a university network, a blue economy development index, entrepreneurship support, blue financing initiatives, partnerships, and technical assistance. The AIS Forum Support Facility Project has secured a total of US\$5,422,737 in funding from the Government of Indonesia and UNDP Country Office Indonesia and over five years to pursue transitioning the forum into a Treaty-Based Organisation. According to the AIS Forum Support Facility Project’s Theory of Change model, the overall outcome objective is: *“To build collaboration to address global social, environmental, and developmental challenges through coastal community-based activities and ecosystem-based approaches; and to promote sustainable and smart innovative solutions as well as cooperation between its participating countries in the areas of climate change and adaptation, blue economy, marine plastic debris, and good maritime governance.”*

To achieve the forum’s above overall objective, the AIS Forum Support Facility Project has 4 main outputs as follows:

- Output 1: AIS Forum Secretariat Operation - Strengthened capacity of AIS Forum Secretariat to be fully operationalized
- Output 2: Acceleration Programme - Scaled up the Community-based Activities to drive the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 14) in AIS Countries
- Output 3: Institutional Framework - Enhanced capacity of AIS Forum to be a treaty/charter-based organization
- Output 4: Sustainable Funding Mechanism - Strengthened policy environment to ensure sustainable innovative financing scheme through the AIS Fund Facility

2. Brief Overview of the Evaluation Purpose and Objective

After approximately 2.5 years of project implementation in November 2021, the AIS Forum Support Facility Project would be required to undergo a Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) with its main purpose in providing an independent assessment on the project’s progress and results, key lessons learned, and recommendations for potential future initiatives. The main objectives of the MTE are to

- Assess progress towards the achievement of the project objectives and outcomes as specified in the PRODOC:
- 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
- Identify factors that have facilitated or impeded the achievement of the objectives as well as review the project’s strategy and its risks to sustainability
- Assess the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the AIS Forum Support Facility Project.
- Reflect on past performance and focus on deriving detailed insights and lessons for the future, offering recommendations aimed at sustaining project outcomes

3. Summary of the Evaluation Scope and Main Areas of Inquiry

The scope of the MTE covered all activities undertaken in the framework of the AIS Forum Support Facility Project which included (1) reviewing the duration of project implementation (1 November 2021 to present), focusing on project results and experiences as well as key challenges met, lessons learnt, and areas for improvement, (2) reviewing the Results and Resources Framework indicators against progress made towards the project outputs targets, (3) comparing planned outputs of the project to actual outputs and assessed the actual results to determine their contribution to the attainment of the project’s objectives, and (4) drawing lessons learnt and providing clear recommendations for improving/sustaining project outcomes

The Participatory Evaluation methodology was selected as the evaluation methodological approach with data sources from review of project documents, key informant interviews and focus group discussions with project stakeholders/partners/beneficiaries. Based on the TOR requirements and UNDP evaluation guidelines, the main areas of inquiry were applied in following three broad categories namely (1) Project Design/Formulation, (3) Project Implementation, and (3) Project Results using the evaluation criteria of Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability, and the cross-cutting issues of Rights-Based Approach/LNOB, Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment, and Disability.

4. Summary of Key Evaluation Findings and Corresponding Ratings

Category	Summary Assessment	Rating
Relevance	<p>Key Finding #1: The AIS Forum Support Facility Project was strategically aligned with global and organizational priorities through the UNDP’s Strategic Framework (2022-2025), UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD) for Indonesia 2021-2025, and UNSDCF Indonesia (2021-2025)</p> <p>Key Finding #2: The AIS Forum Support Facility Project was a cross-regional platform and not directly relevant to specific country national priorities, strategies and plans, but it was in-line with Indonesia’s priorities in the “Long-term Development Plan 2005-2025” and the “Medium-term Development Plan 2020-2024.”</p> <p>Key Finding #3: The AIS Forum Support Facility Project was strategically aligned with global, national, and organizational priorities, contributing to various SDGs.</p>	<p>5/6 (Satisfactory)</p>

Category	Summary Assessment	Rating
Coherence	Key Finding #4: The AIS Forum Support Facility Project had limited coherence with other external international organizations work, Indonesian and other AIS government counterparts, and with other internal UNDP projects.	3/6 (Mostly Unsatisfactory)
Effectiveness	<p>Key Finding #5: The AIS Forum Support Facility Project’s logical/results framework would need to incorporate stronger S.M.A.R.T. quality output indicators to be able to accurately measure project achievement progress. The latest version of the PRODOC and project results framework did not align with the outdated TOC model which needed refinement to reflect the updates and changes.</p> <p>Key Finding #6: The AIS Forum Support Facility Project would need to continue to build on its foundational activities to realize its full potential. In its current foundational form, the project interventions would not be sufficiently effective to achieve the desired outcome objective.</p> <p>Key Finding #7: The AIS Forum Support Facility Project would need to strengthen project management capacities and technical expertise to be able to strategically implement and monitor project technical interventions to transition into a treaty/charter-based organization.</p> <p>Key Finding #8: Community-based activities and technical assistance were short-term with little strategic considerations to coherently sustain efforts and benefits gained.</p> <p>Key Finding #9: Governance mechanism artefacts to be an effective treaty/charter-based organization had been developed or currently underway but would need strong interest and consensus among the 51 AIS country to become a reality</p> <p>Key Finding #10: Finance mechanism artefacts for a planned fund facility had been developed or currently underway but would need strong buy-in and financial resource contributions among the 51 AIS country members, donor agencies, philanthropic foundations and/or private sector to become a reality</p> <p>Key Finding #11: The AIS Forum Support Facility Project had not yet implemented activities/interventions to strengthen the policy environment at country-level or regional-level through policy and legislative reforms</p>	3/6 (Mostly Unsatisfactory)
Efficiency	<p>Key Finding #12: The AIS Forum Support Facility Project delivery/utilization rate and resource allocation were not efficient</p> <p>Key Finding #13: The AIS Forum Support Facility Project team’s combined expertise could be further strengthened with programme management and technical expert leads with fresh ideas/innovations and capabilities to efficiently deliver against the project’s objectives and targets. Specifically, project M&E system in data collection processes could be strengthened to enable verification of results on the ground and accurately assess the intervention impacts and effectiveness.</p> <p>Key Findings#14: The AIS Forum Support Facility Project in the design stage did not include indicators for disability inclusion elements and there were limited contributions to promoting disability inclusion during implementation</p>	3/6 (Mostly Unsatisfactory)
Cross-Cutting Issue: Disability Inclusion	Key Findings#15: The AIS Forum Support Facility Project in the design stage did not include indicators for disability inclusion elements and there were limited contributions to promoting disability inclusion during implementation.	2/6 (Unsatisfactory)
Cross-Cutting Issue: Rights-Based Approach/LNOB	Key Findings #16: The AIS Forum Support Facility Project in the design stage did not include indicators for Rights-Based Approach/LNOB elements, but there were some contributions to promoting Human Rights /LNOB during implementation.	4/6 (Mostly Satisfactory)
Cross-Cutting Issue: Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment	Key Findings #17: The AIS Forum Support Facility Project in the design stage did not include indicators for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment and there were some contributions to promoting Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment during implementation. There were no unanticipated effects of the project interventions on gender equality and human rights.	4/6 (Mostly Satisfactory)
Sustainability	<p>Key Finding #18: The AIS Forum Support Facility Project had adequate financial resources/commitment from the Government of Indonesia as project donor to sustain project results. But the recent 2024 Indonesia Elections made future ongoing support uncertain with the need to explore further financial/technical resource support from external sources</p> <p>Key Finding #19: The AIS Forum Support Facility Project would need to (1) increase public/stakeholder awareness in support of project objective and outputs being generated, (2) institutionalize the project knowledge products and tools for replication and scaling-up opportunities, (3) deepen engagement with AIS country government counterparts for increased socio-political sustainability, and (4) collaborate with regional/international development agencies with similar work for increased synergies.</p>	2/4 (Moderately Unlikely - Significant Risks)

Category	Summary Assessment	Rating
	<p>Key Finding #20: Current legal frameworks and policies in AIS countries would need to be modernized/strengthened to sustain project benefits at community level.</p> <p>Key Finding #21: Recent national elections and new government in Indonesia may affect project governance and donor continuation of project funding.</p> <p>Key Finding #22: Strong/continuous interest and consensus among the 51 AIS country members required to formally ratify the to-be-formed treaty/charter-based organization within respective jurisdictions and to contribute financially/in-kind to this to-be-formed treaty/charter-based organization</p> <p>Key Finding #23: Climate/weather environment would not undermine the future flow of project benefits that seek to address the environmental sustainability efforts. But potential government staff turnover and government structure changes of the project donor could possibly affect sustainability of project benefits.</p>	

5. Evaluation Rating Table

Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)	Rating
M&E design at entry	3 – Mostly Unsatisfactory (MU)
M&E Plan Implementation	3 – Mostly Unsatisfactory (MU)
Overall Quality of M&E	3 – Mostly Unsatisfactory (MU)
Implementation & Execution	Rating
Quality of UNDP Implementation/Oversight	4 – Mostly Satisfactory (MS)
Quality of Implementing Partner Execution	4 – Mostly Satisfactory (MS)
Overall quality of Implementation/Execution	4 – Mostly Satisfactory (MS)
Assessment of Outcomes	Rating
Relevance	5 – Satisfactory (S)
Coherence	3 – Mostly Unsatisfactory (MU)
Effectiveness	3 – Mostly Unsatisfactory (MU)
Efficiency	3 – Mostly Unsatisfactory (MU)
Disability	2 – Unsatisfactory (U)
Rights-Based Approach/LNOB	4 – Mostly Satisfactory (MS)
Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment	4 – Mostly Satisfactory (MS)
Overall Project Outcome Rating	3 – Mostly Unsatisfactory (MU)
Sustainability	Rating
Financial resource	2/4 (Moderately Unlikely (MU) - Significant Risks)
Socio-political/economic	2/4 (Moderately Unlikely (MU) - Significant Risks)
Institutional framework and governance	2/4 (Moderately Unlikely (MU) - Significant Risks)
Environmental	2/4 (Moderately Unlikely (MU) - Significant Risks)
Overall Likelihood of Sustainability	2/4 (Moderately Unlikely (MU) - Significant Risks)

6. Summary of Concluding Statements

CONCLUSION	LESSONS LEARNED
<p>Conclusion #1: Strategic direction of the project with long-term/forward looking activities to produce specific output/outcome results is critical to strengthen project relevance, impact, gender equality, disability/social inclusion and sustainability.</p> <p>(Based on Key Finding #5, Key Finding #6, Key Finding #7, Key Finding #12, Key Finding #14, Key Finding #15, Key Finding #16, Key Finding #17, Key Finding #20, Key Finding #22)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment with Specific Outcomes is Critical for Achieving Desired Results • Incorporating S.M.A.R.T. Indicators Enhances Accountability • Gender and Disability-Inclusive Planning Addresses Inequalities • Adaptive Strategic Management Ensures Relevance to Shifting Needs and Unforeseen Challenges
<p>Conclusion #2: Engagement with and targeted technical assistance for AIS government counterparts to strengthen the policy/legislative environment in the areas of climate change and adaptation, blue economy, marine plastic debris, and maritime governance is essential</p> <p>(Based on Key Finding #8, Key Finding #9, Key Finding #10, Key Finding #11, Key Finding #13, Key Finding #14, Key Finding #15, Key Finding #16, Key Finding #17)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback Mechanisms for Legislative Alignment is Essential • Gender and Disability-Responsive Toolkits Promotes Inclusivity • Community-Driven Policy Development Bridges Gaps and Needs • Embedding Evaluation Mechanisms Ensure Alignment • Capacity Building for Inclusive Governance Fosters Equity

CONCLUSION	LESSONS LEARNED
<p>Conclusion #3: Close collaboration/cooperation with relevant regional/country offices of international organizations with similar activities needed to strengthen synergies without duplicating efforts and bring collective benefits and impact to local communities.</p> <p>(Based on Key Finding #14, Key Finding #15, Key Finding #16, Key Finding #17, Key Finding #19, Key Finding #20, Key Finding #22)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Synergies will Minimize Duplication and Maximize Resources • Inclusive Partnership Frameworks: • Localized Impact as A Result of Regional Collaborations
<p>Conclusion #4: Knowledge management strategy required to strengthen the communications of the project results and institutionalize all relevant products and tools for future use</p> <p>(Based on Key Finding #8, Key Finding #9, Key Finding #20, Key Finding #22)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of Gender and Disability-Disaggregated Data as Part of Documenting Outcomes • Accessible Knowledge-Sharing Platforms is Essential • Institutionalizing KM Practices Support Long-Term Continuity and Knowledge Retention

7. Recommendations Summary Table

No.	Recommendation	Responsible Entities	Timeframe	Priority (High/Medium/Low)
Corrective actions:				
R1.	<p>Establish a Comprehensive, Forward-Looking Strategic Framework with S.M.A.R.T. Indicators and Inclusive Outcomes/Outputs (Along with an Updated Theory of Change Model) to Strengthen Project Relevance, Impact, Gender Equality, Disability Inclusion and Sustainability</p> <p>(Based on Conclusion #1, Key Finding #5, Key Finding #6, Key Finding #7, Key Finding #12, Key Finding #14, Key Finding #15, Key Finding #16, Key Finding #17, Key Finding #20, Key Finding #22)</p>	AIS Forum Support Facility Project Secretariat, UNDP Indonesia CO	30 June 2025	High
R2.	<p>Strengthen Technical Assistance Initiatives to Partner with AIS Government Counterparts for Inclusive Policy and Legislative Development in Climate Resilience, Blue Economy, Marine Plastic Management, and/or Maritime Governance</p> <p>(Based on Conclusion #2, Key Finding #8, Key Finding #9, Key Finding #10, Key Finding #11, Key Finding #13, Key Finding #14, Key Finding #15, Key Finding #16, Key Finding #17)</p>	AIS Forum Support Facility Project Secretariat, UNDP Indonesia CO	31 October 2025	High
R3.	<p>Establish and Strengthen Strategic Collaborations with Regional/Country Offices of International Organizations to Maximize Synergies and Collective Impact</p> <p>(Based on Conclusion #3, Key Finding #14, Key Finding #15, Key Finding #16, Key Finding #17, Key Finding #19, Key Finding #20, Key Finding #22)</p>	AIS Forum Support Facility Project Secretariat, UNDP Indonesia CO	31 October 2025	High
Actions to follow up or reinforce initial benefits from the project:				
R4.	<p>Develop a Knowledge Management Strategy to Systematically Manage the AIS Forum Support Facility Project's Knowledge Assets to Create Value</p> <p>(Based on Conclusion #4, Key Finding #8, Key Finding #9, Key Finding #20, Key Finding #22)</p>	AIS Forum Support Facility Project Secretariat	31 December 2025	Medium
R5.	<p>Establish a Knowledge Hub to Consolidate, Retain and Share All Institutional Knowledge, Solutions and Tools</p> <p>(Based on Conclusion #4, Key Finding #8, Key Finding #9, Key Finding #20, Key Finding #22)</p>	AIS Forum Support Facility Project Secretariat	31 December 2025	Medium

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background Context of the Mid-Term Evaluation

This evaluation report covers the Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) of the Archipelagic and Island States Forum Project (AIS Forum Support Facility Project). The MTE is conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG ‘Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation’ and UNDP IEO ‘UNDP Evaluation Guidelines’.

As stated in the Project Document (PRODOC), the AIS Forum Support Facility Project has an approximate duration of 62 months (1 November 2021 to 31 December 2026) at an estimated project budget of US\$5,349,080 that funded by the Government of Indonesia through the Coordinating Ministry of Maritime and Investment Affairs (CMMAI)

After approximately 2.5 years of project implementation in 2024, the AIS Forum Support Facility Project is now required to undergo an MTE.

Background and Context

The AIS Forum Support Facility Project# (formally known as the AIS Forum Support Facility Project) was established during the Project Initiation Plan (PIP) stage to operationalise its strategic directions and implement key activities. The AIS Forum Support Facility Project is responsible to build a concrete collaboration among AIS Forum participating countries through acceleration program, establishing the institutional preparation, and developing the sustainable financing mechanism. The AIS Forum Support Facility Project has the following key services to facilitate:

- provision of substantial and technical inputs from UNDP Indonesia’s in-house expert and global network, to ensure activities implemented by the AIS Forum Support Facility and achieve its expected outputs;
- mobilizing new resources to support AIS Forum related activities;
- facilitating operations by recruiting qualified staff and procuring relevant goods and services to be handed over to the AIS Forum Secretariat;
- providing a provision of institutional capacity building for the AIS Forum Secretariat;
- prepare capacity-building mechanisms (institutions and human resources) in program implementation and management systems to become a treaty/charter-based organization in the future.

Recognising the pivotal role of Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI), the AIS Forum Support Facility Project is dedicated to addressing irreversible changes in the marine environment, including climate change, ocean acidification, sea level rise, and the loss of coastal ecosystems. The AIS Forum Support Facility Project actively implements programs/activities in 4 areas of cooperation to accelerate sustainable development and strengthen resilience to crises: (1) Research and Development, (2) Entrepreneurship, (3) Blue Financing and (4) International Partnership and Cooperation.

Recent reported achievements included:

- Engagement with Pacific stakeholders through initiatives such as Start-Up Weekend Pacific, the provision of scholarships, and collaboration with the AIS Blue Hub on innovative projects.
- Formed partnerships with 51 countries, organised knowledge-sharing sessions, and developed financing solutions.
- Implementation of programs in Fiji, Solomon Island, Vanuatu, Malta, Papua New Guinea, Guyana, and Madagascar through various initiatives addressing ocean resource utilisation, climate change, marine plastic debris, and sustainable fisheries.

Brief Description of the AIS Forum Support Facility Project

The AIS Forum Support Facility Project aims to be a treaty/charter-based international organisation of which efforts are currently implemented by UNDP Indonesia through a 5-year acceleration program. This comprehensive program includes joint research grants, a university network, a blue economy development index, entrepreneurship support, blue financing initiatives, partnerships, and technical assistance.

To date, the AIS Forum Support Facility Project has secured a total committed funding of US\$5,349,080 over five years to pursue transitioning the forum into a Treaty-Based Organisation. According to the AIS Forum Support Facility Project’s Theory of Change model, the overall outcome objective is: ***“To build collaboration to address global social, environmental, and developmental challenges through coastal community-based activities and ecosystem-based approaches; and to promote sustainable and smart innovative solutions as well as cooperation between its participating countries in the areas of climate change and adaptation, blue economy, marine plastic debris, and good maritime governance.”***

To achieve the forum’s above overall objective, the AIS Forum Support Facility Project has 4 main outputs as follows:

<p>Output 1: AIS Forum Secretariat Operation - Strengthened capacity of AIS Forum Secretariat to be fully operationalized</p>	<p>The operation is fundamental to running the AIS Forum secretariat. It includes the personnel and other necessities such as office spaces and communication elements. Under the operationalisation of its secretariat, it is expected that they will undertake roles such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Facilitating operations by recruiting qualified staff and procuring relevant goods and services to be handed over to the AIS Forum Secretariat; ● Provision of institutional capacity building for the AIS Forum Secretariat; ● Facilitating transfer of knowledge; ● Accounting and reporting of financial resources.
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<p>Output 2: Acceleration Programme - Scaled up the Community-based Activities to drive the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 14) in AIS Countries</p>	<p>The AIS Acceleration Program is essential for advancing climate change mitigation, social and economic sustainability, and scaling up solutions to drive Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in archipelagic and island states. The programme includes Research and Development, Entrepreneurship Support, Blue Financing, Blue Economy Development Index, and international collaboration. The AIS Acceleration program is imperative to achieve climate change mitigation, as well as social and economic sustainability. It develop upon existing foundations and successes that allow for meaningful new strides in the current global context.</p> <p>The accelerator program scale up solutions to drive the Sustainable Development goals (SDGs) in the archipelagic and island states. The AIS Forum Support Facility Project acceleration program is designed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create a space for inclusive dialogue, exchange of practical experiences, and implement tangible and innovation-based programmes; ● Create programs that stimulate the participating states economic growth and generate prosperity; ● Creating a global platform for solutions and building collective knowledge with grassroots innovators/start-ups through collaborative action. <p>From this acceleration program, there are 3 key activities for the AIS Forum Support Facility Project to become a treaty/charter-based organisation for fostering trust among participating countries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support entrepreneurial endeavours through a start-up incubation program and the development of innovative financing for sustainable businesses. ● Facilitate Research and Development and Human Capital Development initiatives with academic institutions. ● Establish a partnership with relevant stakeholders and facilitate cross-nation collaboration between these entities.
<p>Output 3: Institutional Framework - Enhanced capacity of AIS Forum to be a treaty/charter-based organization</p>	<p>UNDP is spearheading three crucial programs/activities to bolster the institutional readiness of the AIS Forum Support Facility Project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Set up of AIS Advisory Board: Designed to act as a mechanism for providing strategic advice, the AIS Advisory Board is charged with leading in-depth analysis on a range of internationally relevant issues. The AIS Advisory Board shall consist of AIS participating country representatives, who provide a comprehensive range of multilateral perspectives and expert experiences together. ● Development of Program and Operation Policy and Procedure (POPP): UNDP will also ensure to develop the AIS Forum operational manual that will be adopted from UNDP Program Operation Policy and Procedure (POPP). The operational manual will cover 10 main areas such as: (1) Programme and Project Management, (2) Crisis Response, (3), Financial Resources Management, (4) Human Resources Management, (5) Procurement, (6) Partnership, (7) Administrative Service, (8) Ethic, (9) Accountability, (10) Information and Communication Technology, and (10) Security. ● Set up of Administrative Systems: UNDP will support the Government of Indonesia in developing an AIS Forum institutional framework to enact the legal basis and to set up the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders in designing, administering, and delivering the program of the AIS Forum. This will contain all the important elements of secretariat operations and practices to ensure the AIS Forum as an effective functioning platform and adherence to essential regulations. <p>These initiatives aim to solidify manual operations and fortify internal institutional arrangements, recognising the need for a dedicated and competent team to drive success. Learning from UNDP's expertise, these programs will adapt UNDP's operational benchmarks while tailoring them to the unique nature of the AIS Forum Support Facility Project and its member countries, ultimately striving for the AIS Forum Support Facility Project to embody strong institutional values, norms, and standards.</p>
<p>Output 4: Sustainable Funding Mechanism - Strengthened policy environment to ensure sustainable innovative financing scheme through the AIS Fund Facility</p>	<p>The creation of the AIS Fund Facility, incorporating investment mechanisms for potential development partners and stakeholders, established a sustainable funding mechanism to support initiatives and projects aligned with the four key thematic pillar areas of the AIS Forum Support Facility Project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Climate Change and Adaptation: to reduce the atmospheric greenhouse gases levels through carbon capture and storage technology. ● Blue Economy: to create methods for improved measuring of fish stocks or development of fishing gear with reduced environmental impacts. ● Marine Plastic Debris: to find sustainable alternatives to conventional plastic production techniques ● Maritime Governance: focus on the formation of marine protected areas through effective policy measures that are socially and ecologically responsible.

	<p>The AIS Forum Support Facility Project, positioned as a critical platform for generating scalable solutions, necessitates robust financing strategies to fuel acceleration programs focused on knowledge exchange, technology transfer, and innovation stimulation.</p> <p>Leveraging voluntary contributions and innovative financing schemes like Blended Finance and Blue Bonds, the AIS Fund Facility seeks to diversify funding sources, ensuring sustainability while bolstering trust among participating countries. Transparent management by UNDP Indonesia enhances the forum's credibility and readiness, positioning it as a reliable partner for long-term stability and fiscal responsibility.</p> <p>Recognising the significance of forging partnerships with non-government stakeholders, the AIS Forum Support Facility Project aims to amplify its value proposition to governments by securing both financial and non-financial support. Establishing transparent and mutually beneficial partnerships with a wide array of investors and financiers, including impact funds and corporate investors, is essential for mainstreaming investments in climate-resilient projects.</p> <p>Through structured engagement initiatives and strategic planning sessions with interested partners, such as state-owned companies, start-ups, and players in the plastic industry, the AIS Forum Support Facility Project seeks to foster collaborative efforts aimed at achieving shared objectives and maximising positive impacts.</p>
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1.2 Purpose and Objective of the Mid-Term Evaluation

As outlined in the AIS Forum Support Facility Project’s PRODOC, an MTE is to be conducted by an independent party and completed in October 2024, in consultation with the AIS Forum Support Facility Project stakeholders/beneficiaries.

As stated in the TOR, the main objectives of the MTE are to:

- Assess progress towards the achievement of the project objectives and outcomes as specified in the Prodoc
- 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
- Identify factors that have facilitated or impeded the achievement of the objectives as well as review the project’s strategy and its risks to sustainability
- Assess the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the AIS Forum Support Facility Project.
- Reflect on past performance and focus on deriving detailed insights and lessons for the future, offering recommendations aimed at sustaining project outcomes

The MTE provide insights on the AIS Forum Support Facility Project’s impact contributions as follows:

- Contributions to scaling up community-based activities status: The MTE should assess the effectiveness of the accelerator program in scaling up community-based activities for Sustainable Development Goal 14 initiatives, evaluating their impact on marine conservation and sustainable development goals.
- Contributions to facilitating entrepreneurial endeavours and innovative financing status: The MTE should analyse how the AIS Forum Support Facility Project has facilitated entrepreneurial endeavours and innovative financing for sustainable businesses, assessing their impact on economic growth, job creation, and environmental sustainability.
- Contributions to establishing partnerships for cross-nation collaboration status: The MTE should assess the progress in establishing partnerships for cross-nation collaboration, evaluating their effectiveness in addressing global challenges such as climate change, marine pollution, and maritime governance.

1.3 Scope

The scope of the MTE covers all activities undertaken in the framework of the AIS Forum Support Facility Project which included:

- Reviewing the duration of project implementation (1 November 2021 to present), focusing on project results and experiences as well as key challenges met, lessons learnt, and areas for improvement;
- Reviewing the Results and Resources Framework indicators against progress made towards the project outputs targets, using a results matrix with colour code progress in a “traffic light system” based on the level of progress achieved, and assign a rating on achievement of the project objective and each outcome and make recommendations from the areas marked as “not on target to be achieved”;
- comparing planned outputs of the project to actual outputs and assess the actual results to determine their contribution to the attainment of the project’s objectives;
- drawing lessons learnt and provided clear recommendations for similar/future initiatives.

The evaluation further assessed AIS Forum Support Facility Project in the following three broad categories of (1) Project Design/Formulation, (2) Project Implementation and Adaptive Management (3) Project Results with the achievement of results in the project rated as follows:

Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)	Rating
M&E design at entry	
M&E Plan Implementation	
Overall Quality of M&E	

Implementation & Execution	Rating
Quality of UNDP Implementation/Oversight	
Quality of Implementing Partner Execution	
Overall quality of Implementation/Execution	
Assessment of Outcomes	Rating
Relevance	
Coherence	
Effectiveness	
Efficiency	
Rights-Based Approach/LNOB	
Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment	
Disability	
Overall Project Outcome Rating	
Sustainability	Rating
Financial resource	
Socio-political/economic	
Institutional framework and governance	
Environmental	
Overall Likelihood of Sustainability	
<p>Ratings for Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Rights-Based Approach/LNOB, Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, Disability</p> <p>(1) Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): None of the parameters were met and there were severe shortcomings (2) Unsatisfactory (U): Most parameters were not met and there were major shortcomings (3) Mostly Unsatisfactory (MU): More than one parameter was unmet with significant shortcomings (4) Mostly Satisfactory (MS): The parameters were partially met with some shortcomings (5) Satisfactory (S): All parameters fully met with minor shortcomings (6) Highly Satisfactory (HS): All parameters fully met, no shortcomings</p> <p>Ratings for Sustainability will be as follows:</p> <p>(4) Likely (L): negligible risks to sustainability (3) Moderately Likely (ML): moderate risks (2) Moderately Unlikely (MU): significant risks (1) Unlikely (U): severe risks</p> <p><i>Additional ratings where relevant:</i> Not Applicable (N/A) Unable to Assess (U/A)</p>	

The MTE also assessed whether the risks identified in the PRODOC, Annual Project Annual Progress/ Monitoring Reports and the ATLAS Risk Management Module (if applicable) have been mitigated and whether the risk ratings applied are appropriate.

1.4 Evaluation Approach and Methodology

The evaluability of the AIS Forum Support Facility Project was guided by the UNDP IEO's "UNDP Evaluation Guidelines" on conducting evaluations using the principle of "do no harm". The evaluation was also conducted with the safety and mental well-being of UNDP staff, consultants, stakeholders, and communities as paramount. The evaluation scope covered the timeframe, outputs, and outcomes defined by the Terms of Reference (ToR). It included activities and interventions related to ocean resource utilization, climate change, marine plastic debris, and sustainable fisheries across several countries, including Indonesia, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, and others.

However, certain geographic areas and thematic elements were excluded due to limited access/engagement between the AIS Forum Support Facility Project and the geographic areas of stakeholders/beneficiaries, safety concerns and data gaps. These exclusions and their justifications—such as logistical constraints and/or ToR specifications—were therefore noted to ensure transparency. To enhance the validity of findings, the evaluation incorporated the following triangulation and validation strategies:

- **Comparative Analysis:** Cross-referencing evidence from extensive and extended desk reviews of project documentation, interviews and FGDs.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Presentation of initial findings at an MTE debriefing session with key stakeholders to validate data, refine conclusions, and build stakeholder consensus.
- **Evaluation Matrix:** Aligning evaluation criteria, data sources, and questions through the matrix to ensure consistency and coherence across the evaluation process. The evaluation matrix also served as an additional supplementary tool for triangulation and validation of data collected through multiple sources.

1.4.1 Evaluation Methodological Approach

The MTE TOR emphasized the need for the evaluation to (1) have collaboration and participation among the project stakeholders/partners/beneficiaries, and (2) engage key stakeholders such as the UNDP Country Office, Regional Technical Advisors, M&E Focal Points, Government counterparts including the Coordinating Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Investment (CMMAI), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Marine and Fisheries in Indonesia. While reflecting on past performance is important, the evaluation was primarily focused on deriving detailed insights and lessons for the future, offering recommendations aimed at sustaining project outcomes.

Based on the stated MTE TOR requirements, the Participatory Evaluation methodology was selected as the evaluation methodology as per UNDP IEO’s guidelines on Methodological Fundamentals for Evaluations ².

The Participatory Evaluation methodology involved the AIS Forum Support Facility Project key stakeholders to define what would be evaluated, with what objectives, when it would take place, what data collection and analysis methods would be used, how the results would be communicated, how the evaluation recommendations would be implemented. The Participatory Evaluation methodology was also able to adapt to specific contexts such as focusing on the beneficiaries’ needs, being consistent with human rights-based approaches and enabling advances to be made in the areas of gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI). Furthermore, the Participatory Evaluation methodology approach emphasized triangulation to ensure the reliability and credibility of findings. Triangulation methods involved integrating data collected through various techniques and sources, such as extensive desk reviews of project documentations, key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) to cross-check and validate information. The evaluation matrix, provided in Annex A10, served as a key tool for designing evaluation questions, aligning data sources, and facilitating the triangulation and validation process.

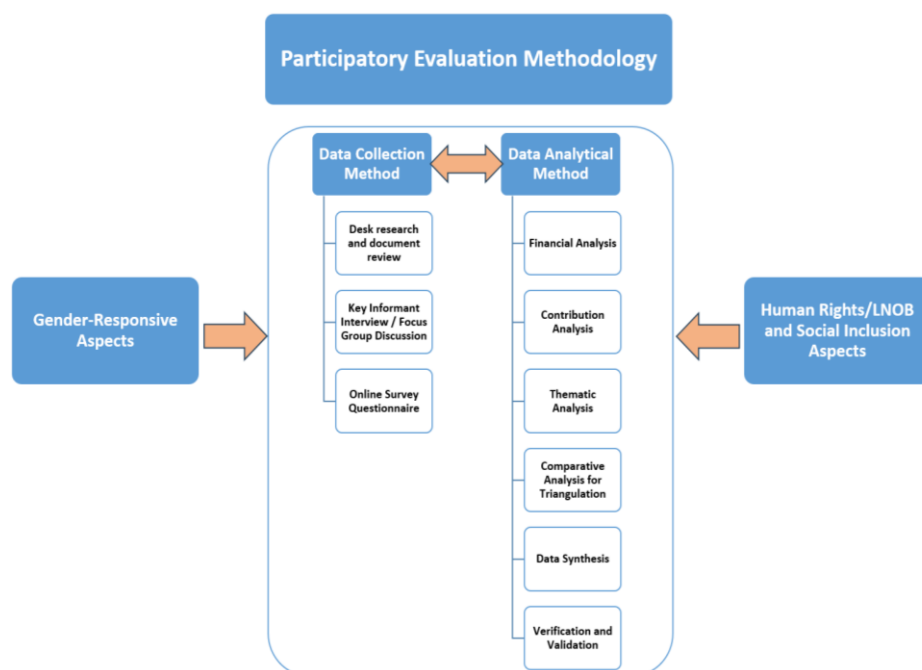


Figure 1: Evaluation Methodological Approach

1.4.2 Evaluation Data Sampling and Data Sources/Collection Method

Data Sampling

The evaluation used purposive sampling technique to select participants from different country regions where the project activities have been undertaken, to ensure their inclusion and participation in the evaluation and data collection processes. Purposive sampling was used to ensure adequate gender/group representation in the KIIs/FGDs and adequate representation of participants to be able to actively engage and provide the needed information during the KIIs/FGDs. Purposive sampling was also used for the online survey questionnaire respondents.

In implementing purposive sampling, the evaluation worked closely with the AIS Forum Support Facility Project Secretariat Team to develop a stakeholder contact list. Additionally due to already established relationships/partnerships and active implementation of programs/activities addressing ocean resource utilization, climate change, marine plastic debris, and sustainable fisheries, the evaluation included participants mainly from Indonesia, Fiji, Solomon Island, Vanuatu, Malta, Papua New Guinea, Guyana, and Madagascar.

Data Sources/Collection Method

To collect as much primary/secondary and quantitative/qualitative data as possible, the evaluation utilized the following different data collection methods and instruments:

- a) Desk research and document review - Desk research and document review of secondary data sources in a project evaluation leverages existing data, saving both time and resources compared to primary data collection. This also offered a broad overview of existing knowledge, setting a contextual foundation for the evaluation. During the inception phase, the evaluation team conducted a detailed desk research and document review of all project documents provided by the AIS Forum Support Facility Project Secretariat Team. This included extraction of all GEDSI related data from the documents that were shared as well as from the online research. The desk research and document review process remained on-going throughout the MTE to obtain additional information, to validate and verify preliminary findings, and to fact-check and cross-reference data and information. The desk review and document research

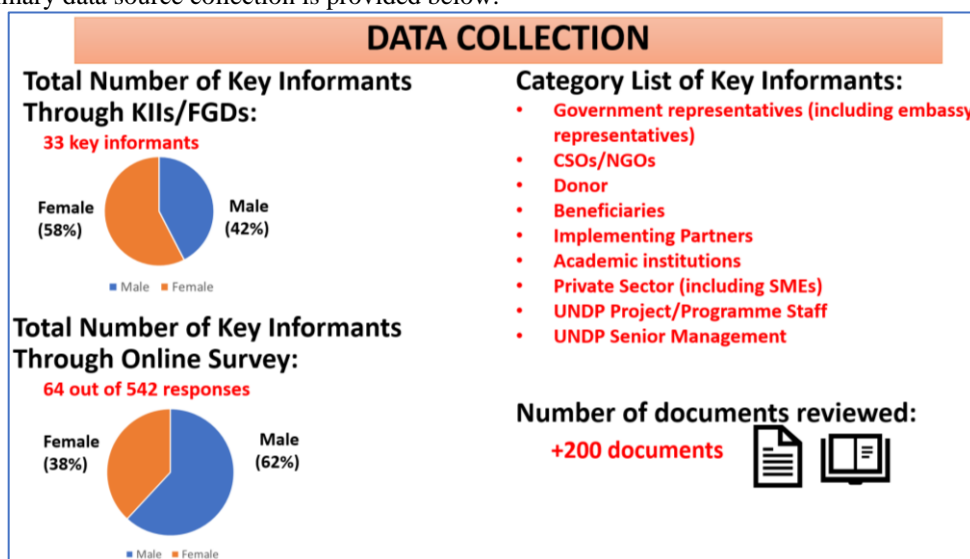
²UNDP Independent Evaluation Office, Methodological Fundamentals for Evaluations - Participatory Evaluation, <https://erc.undp.org/methods-center/methods/methodological-fundamentals-for-evaluations/participatory-evaluation>;

Better Evaluation, Evaluation Approaches - Participatory Evaluation, <https://www.betterevaluation.org/methods-approaches/approaches/participatory-evaluation>

triangulated with other data collection methods used in this MTE to answer the evaluation questions as specified in the TOR and evaluation matrix. The evaluation conducted a detailed desk research and document review of over 200 documents.

- b) **KIIs/FGDs** - Key informant interviews (KIIs) are crucial in project evaluations to provide in-depth insights from individuals with significant knowledge and experience related to the project. A balanced gender of men and women consulted during the key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs). All KIIs and FGDs were conducted virtually online. The level of involvement of both men and women in the evaluation process contributed to the evaluation findings. The qualitative KIIs and FGDs were conducted using KII/FGD questions developed based on the evaluation questions/evaluation matrix. The KIIs/FGDs were semi-structured, with questions included from the interview guide but also with enough flexibility to expand the topics of conversation based on the respondents' knowledge of the project's activities/interventions. The evaluation ensured the confidentiality of all information provided by respondents, such that comments reported in such a way that they would not be traced back to a particular individual. This allowed a frank and honest discussion to encourage respondents to provide an accurate assessment of the project. In particular, the evaluation team consulted both men and women with a total of 33 KIIs/FGDs conducted, including 19 women (58%) and 14 men (42%), which was an adequate sample size and qualitative data that provided (i) diversity of the stakeholder groups such as project team members, government counterparts, local communities, and beneficiaries; and (ii) a broad representation of perspectives.
- c) **Online survey questionnaire** - Survey questionnaire are important in project evaluations to get information from a large audience in a short period and to quantify the evidence found in qualitative methods. An online survey questionnaire was administered to complement the above-mentioned data collection methods. The online survey questionnaire was to strengthen the evidence base by capturing data from an expanded coverage of the project stakeholders/beneficiaries. By doing so, this validated the collected data as well as to accommodate project stakeholders/beneficiaries who were not available or accessible for the KIIs/FGDs. The evaluation collected 63 responses out of 542 participants who were sent invitations to complete the survey questionnaire, including 24 women (38%) and 39 men (62%). As the survey response rate was considered low and was not able to cover the broad geographical region, the survey results served as a good indication but were not utilized in this MTE. To mitigate this, the MTR utilized the data collected from KIIs/FGDs that represented the biggest group of countries participating in the AIS Forum Support Facility Project, UNDP project staff and Implementing Partners, and triangulated them with the desk research and document review of the over 200 documents received. This ensured cross verification and that the assessment of the AIS Forum Support Facility Project was reliable and credible.

A summary of the primary data source collection is provided below.



1.4.3 Evaluation Data Analytical Method

To analyze the collected data, the evaluation utilized the following analytical techniques:

- a) **Financial Analysis** - Using the project's financial reports/data and related documentation, financial analysis was conducted to assess appropriate funding allocations and any variances between planned and actual expenditures utilized in the project key outputs for each financial year to determine the level of project implementation/delivery efficiency.
- b) **Contribution Analysis** - Contribution analysis provided a systematic way of understanding the AIS Forum Support Facility Project's contributions, according to the key evaluation criteria, to observed results. This involved assessing whether existing and additional evidence was consistent with the project Theory of Change model, revising the Theory of Change to better incorporate other contributory factors, and identifying and ruling out alternative explanations to understand the AIS Forum Support Facility Project's actual contribution. The project's contributions to the CPD, SDGs and Moonshot targets under the UNDP CO was analysed. This was being done by analysing the project's Theory of Change model and Results Framework, documenting the project's successes and value-added, applying the "before and after" effects (ie. what exists now that did not exist before and what has changed since the start of the project).
- c) **Thematic Analysis** - Most of the primary data collection methods (Key Informant interviews and focus group discussions) collected qualitative data. The qualitative data from the primary data collection methods was also cross-referenced with other document sources. This method provided systematic breaking down and organizing rich insights from the collected data to facilitate the discovery of significant themes, according to the 3 broad categories (Project Design/Formulation, Project Implementation, Project

Results) and key evaluation criteria ((1) Relevance, (2) Coherence, (3) Effectiveness, (4) Efficiency, (5) Sustainability, (6) Human Rights/LNOB, (7) Gender Equality and (8) Disability), that emerged across multiple times across the data sources.

- d) **Comparative Analysis for Triangulation** - This method conducted the triangulation of results such as comparing information from different sources like documentation and interviews, or interviews on the same subject with different stakeholders used to corroborate or verify the evidence collected. Wherever possible all data gathered, both qualitatively and/or quantitatively, were triangulated through cross verification from two or more sources. For KIIs/FGDs/surveys, this was done through developing a similar set of questions to multiple interviewees. For the documentation review, this was done through crosschecking data and information from multiple sources to increase the material credibility and validity.
- e) **Data Synthesis** - This was the process of bringing all the evidence together to synthesize the data and formulate findings, conclusions and recommendations. This was a systematic review process where extracted data were analyzed to turn information data into meaningful and useful evaluation knowledge.
- f) **Verification and Validation** - The above steps incorporated verification and validation of evidence during the data collection and data analysis processes. In addition, the evaluation team presented the initial findings at an MTE de-brief held with the UNDP AIS Forum Support Facility Project stakeholders and the ERG. By doing so, this provided an opportunity to share key findings, offer mutual challenges, and discuss the feasibility of and receptiveness to draft insights and provisional recommendations. This also enabled an important opportunity to foster stakeholder buy-in to the MTE process, particularly for the key project stakeholders who were responsible for implementing recommendations.

1.4.4 Evaluation Step-By-Step Phase Approach

Based on the objectives and scope of the evaluation assignment as outlined in the MTE TOR, the evaluation approach was conducted in three phases namely: Phase 1 - Desk Review of Documentation; Phase 2 - Data Collection and Data Analysis; Phase 3 - Draft and Finalization of Evaluation Report

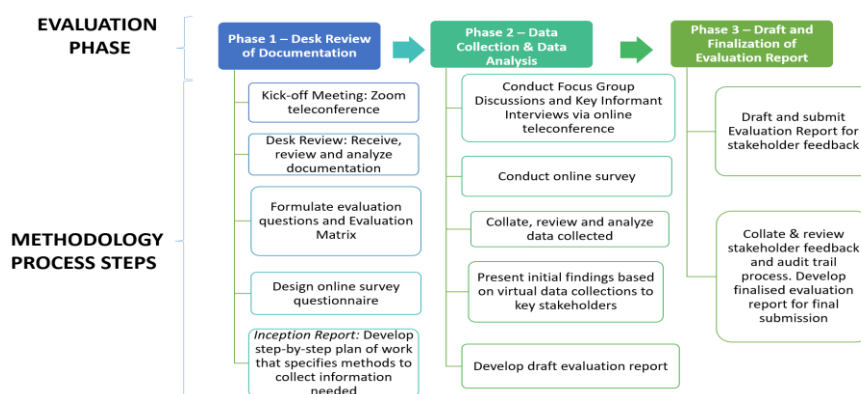
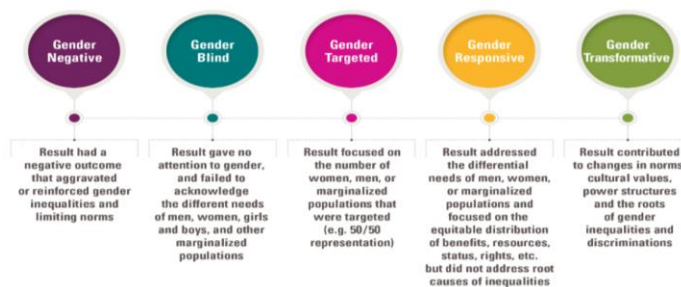


Figure 2. Evaluation Step-by-Step Phase Approach

1.4.5 Incorporating Cross-Cutting Aspects

Human Rights/LNOB and Social Inclusion Aspects - To incorporate human rights/LNOB and social inclusion aspects in the Participatory Evaluation methodology, the evaluation collected data on evidence for intervention inclusion and impact for human rights, disabilities, ethnic/indigenous and vulnerable groups. Evaluation questions and evaluation matrix relating to human rights/LNOB, and social inclusion were incorporated. To the extent possible, the evaluation used an intersectionality lens to look at gender, age, disability status, ethnicity and other intersectional elements that may be relevant. By doing so, the evaluation assessed how the project contributes towards diversity and inclusion due to affected gender, power and social relations/structures.

Gender-Responsive Aspects - To incorporate gender-responsive aspects in the Participatory Evaluation methodology, the evaluation applied the UNDP Independent Evaluation Office’s Gender Results Effectiveness Scale (GRES). The GRES utilized the gender lens by providing operational definitions and marking distinctions between different types of results. The GRES is provided below.



Source: Adapted from the Evaluation of UNDP Contribution to Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment, IEO, UNDP, 2015

Figure 3. The Gender Results Effectiveness Scale

The GRES enabled the evaluation to communicate in more granularity about the project output/outcome results such as: Is the project output/outcome result primarily focused on counting the number of men or women (Gender Targeted.)? Does the project output/outcome result translate to truly moving to shifting norms, values, power and social structures in communities or institutions (Gender Transformative).

1.5 Limitations of the Mid-Term Evaluation

As this evaluation was conducted remotely with support from one national consultant, there were challenges and limitations in data availability and data collection. Specifically, there were limited observation and contact with selected beneficiaries with virtual interviews/FGDs being conducted. As previously mentioned in the scope of evaluation approach and methodology, the MTE was limited by the extent of the AIS Forum Support Facility Project's relationship and engagement with various stakeholders across the geographical regions. To mitigate this, the MTE team requested for a wider range of documentation for extended desk reviews, including internal operational data, project reports and data to help triangulate and verify with the data sources from the virtual interviews/FGDs.

Another challenge/limitation faced was the reliability of the internet signals to conduct virtual interviews/FGDs using Zoom. This was mitigated by arranging a suitable time outside of internet peak traffic to have better internet signals. The compressed timeline for data collection also had some effect on the availability of interviewees who were project beneficiaries, Implementing Partners, and UNDP staff who already left the project. To mitigate this:

- the MTE team worked closely with the AIS Forum Support Facility Project's secretariat team (project team) to prioritize contact with key informants.
- FGDs were conducted with some beneficiary groups and Implementing Partners (such as the academic institutions) to maximize time
- key informants of the virtual interviews/FGDs were provided key questions/talking points prior to commencing any remote interviews/FGDs.

The project team's dedicated support in coordinating meetings and identifying critical stakeholders helped the MTE team focus on key interviews/FGDs and streamline the engagement process.

This assistance effectively prevented management challenges from overwhelming the evaluation and ensured that the necessary breadth of input and comprehensive qualitative data was gathered within the limited timeframe.

The above mitigation measures covered a broader range of information and ensured that essential perspectives from various stakeholders were gathered, despite the challenges/limitations. Where applicable, the MTE was guided by the UNDP IEO's evaluation guidelines on conducting desk review and remote data collection with the evaluation analysis focusing on whether what is being done is the "right" thing to do rather than measuring the results.

1.6 Ethics

The evaluation team members read and signed the Evaluation Consultant Code Of Conduct Agreement Form (Annex 5) and United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Code Of Conduct Agreement Form (Annex 6). The measures taken to protect the rights and confidentiality of informants as per the UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluators' have been assured³. The ethical principles of integrity, accountability, respect and beneficence are forward-looking and have been employed to help the evaluators and clients at UNEG fulfilling their common mission, in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and for the good of the world's people.

1.7 Structure of the Mid-Term Evaluation Report

The report is divided into four major sections:

- **Section 1** summarises the project together with the purpose of the MTE, scoping and methodology
- **Section 2** outlines the development context and discusses the problems that the project sets out to address, immediate and development objective, expected result and main stakeholders also the theory of change impacted by the AIS Forum Support Facility Project
- **Section 3** reports the key findings from the AIS Forum Support Facility Project and presents under the perspectives of project design, project implementation and achievement of project results
- **Section 4** reveals the summary of the key findings and ratings, conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

2.1 Project Start and Duration

Project Implementation Start:	2 November 2021
Closing Date (Original):	31 December 2022
Closing Date (Actual):	31 December 2026

The evaluation noted that the AIS Forum Support Facility Project was previously established during the Project Initiation Plan (PIP) stage from 2019-2021 to operationalize its strategic directions and implement key activities. The AIS Forum Support Facility Project was first formally signed off as an FSP on 2 November 2021 and originally planned to end on 31 December 2022 at an estimated project budget of US\$349,080 (totally funded by the Government of Indonesia).

³ In 2020, the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) updated the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation. This document aims to support leaders of United Nations entities and governing bodies, as well as those organizing and conducting evaluations for the United Nations, to ensure that an ethical lens informs day-to-day evaluation practice. This document provides: • Four ethical principles for evaluation; • Tailored guidelines for entity leaders and governing bodies, evaluation organizers and evaluation practitioners; • A Pledge of Commitment to Ethical Conduct in Evaluation that all those involved in evaluations are required to sign.

Subsequently to continue supporting the establishment of the AIS Forum as a treaty/charter-based organization, further funding support by the Government of Indonesia enable the AIS Forum Support Facility Project to ensure the secretariat adapts its role to facilitate closer cooperation between island and archipelagic countries, increase efforts to forge partnerships with various stakeholders, and facilitate necessary actions in the development of AIS Forum’s strategic programs for a sustainable future. This resulted in another 4-year project extension till 31 December 2026 with an estimated additional project budget of US\$5,000,000 (funded by the Government of Indonesia).

Hence as stated in the 2nd revised PRODOC, the AIS Forum Support Facility Project would have an approximate duration of 62 months (2 November 2021 to 31 December 2026) at an estimated total project budget of US\$5,349,080 (totally funded by the Government of Indonesia).

2.2 Development context: environmental, socio-economic, institutional, and policy factors relevant to the project objective and scope

Archipelagic and Island States (AIS) countries, with their vast ocean territories, face common development challenges that inhibit their ability to prosper and grow sustainably. Many of these nations are confronted by existential threats such as climate change, natural disasters, marine plastic pollution, and unsustainable marine activities. Failing to protect the ocean ecosystem and address climate change will have dire social and economic consequences for these countries. Oceans cover approximately 71% of the Earth’s surface and contain about 97% of the planet’s water⁴. These oceans provide a wide array of ecosystem services, including food provision, shipping routes, and cultural services like recreation and education. They are essential to global economic activity, supporting the livelihoods of over three billion people. Coastal and marine sectors alone contribute an estimated \$3-6 trillion annually to the global economy, including tourism, fishing, and marine transportation industries⁵. Approximately 40% of the global population (around 3.1 billion people) lives within 100 kilometers of the coastline⁶.

However, the very industries that rely on healthy oceans are contributing to their degradation. Anthropogenic activities such as overfishing, pollution, and carbon emissions have triggered climate change effects, including rising sea levels, increased ocean acidification, and extreme weather events. These changes, coupled with the loss of vital marine ecosystems like coral reefs and mangroves, have severe implications for human well-being—disproportionately affecting women and children. It is reported that women and children are up to 14 times more likely to die in natural disasters due to inequities in resource access⁷. Furthermore, while women make up half the workforce in the aquaculture sector, they earn only 64% of what men do⁸. Addressing these inequities is essential for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) are crucial to the pathway toward inclusive, environmentally sustainable development. STI can catalyze transformative actions, from promoting equitable production systems to providing solutions for environmental protection. Some AIS countries are better equipped than others to tackle climate change and environmental degradation due to access to technology. However, many AIS countries lack the technological capacity to adapt to changing conditions and implement sustainable practices to protect their coastal ecosystems. This highlights the critical need for technology transfer and capacity building⁹.

Moreover, addressing ocean degradation requires international cooperation for two reasons. First, many of the technologies needed to decarbonize economies, such as renewable energy innovations, are not yet commercially viable on a large scale. Cooperation across AIS nations can help achieve critical mass, enabling widespread adoption of these technologies. Second, ocean degradation and climate change are transboundary issues; no single country has the financial or human resources to solve them alone. Collaboration in research, entrepreneurship, and technology transfer between developed and developing nations will be crucial¹⁰.

2.3 Problems that the Project Sought to Address

The AIS Forum Support Facility Project is responsible to build a concrete collaboration among AIS Forum member countries through acceleration program, establishing the institutional preparation, and developing the sustainable financing mechanism. The AIS Forum Support Facility Project has the following key services to facilitate:

- Provision of substantial and technical inputs from UNDP Indonesia’s in-house expert and global network, to ensure activities implemented by the AIS Forum Support Facility Project and achieve its expected outputs.
- Mobilising new resources to support the AIS Forum Support Facility Project’s related activities.
- Facilitating operations by recruiting qualified staff and procuring relevant goods and services to be handed over to the AIS Forum Support Facility Project
- Providing institutional capacity building for the AIS Forum Support Facility Project
- Prepare capacity-building mechanisms (institutions and human resources) in program implementation and management systems to become a treaty/charter-based organisation in the future.

⁴ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). (2020, October 13). *How much of the ocean have we explored?* U.S. Department of Commerce. <https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/oceanwater.html>

⁵ U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP). (2023). *Fifth National Climate Assessment (NCA5)*. U.S. Global Change Research Program. <https://nca2023.globalchange.gov>; Ocean Health Index. (2023). 2023 Global Ocean Health Index Report.

Retrieved from: <https://www.oceanhealthindex.org/news/2023-global-ocean-health-index>

⁶ UNCTAD. (2023). Oceans Economy and Ecosystem Services.

Retrieved from: <https://unctad.org/topic/trade-and-environment/oceans-economy>

⁷ U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP). (2023). *Fifth National Climate Assessment (NCA5)*. U.S. Global Change Research Program.

<https://nca2023.globalchange.gov>

⁸ Ocean Health Index. (2023). 2023 Global Ocean Health Index Report. Retrieved from: <https://www.oceanhealthindex.org/news/2023-global-ocean-health-index>

⁹ Ocean Health Index. (2023). 2023 Global Ocean Health Index Report. Retrieved from: <https://www.oceanhealthindex.org/news/2023-global-ocean-health-index>

¹⁰ UNCTAD. (2023). Oceans Economy and Ecosystem Services.

Retrieved from: <https://unctad.org/topic/trade-and-environment/oceans-economy>; U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP). (2023). *Fifth National Climate Assessment (NCA5)*. U.S. Global Change Research Program. <https://nca2023.globalchange.gov>

The AIS Forum Support Facility Project, initially formed in 2019 and operating under the UNDP Indonesia Country Office, is a global initiative that would bring together 51 AIS countries to address key challenges in ocean resource utilisation, climate change mitigation and adaptation, marine plastic debris, and sustainable fisheries. With a specific focus on engaging youth and women, the AIS Forum Support Facility Project aims to enhance coastal communities and promote sustainable development. Recognising the pivotal role of Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI), the AIS Forum Support Facility Project is dedicated to addressing irreversible changes in the marine environment, including climate change, ocean acidification, sea level rise, and the loss of coastal ecosystems. The AIS Forum Support Facility Project actively implements programs/activities in 4 areas of cooperation to accelerate sustainable development and strengthen resilience to crises: (1) Research and Development, (2) Entrepreneurship, (3) Blue Financing and (4) International Partnership and Cooperation.

2.4 Immediate and Development Objectives of the Project

The AIS Forum Support Facility Project aims to be a treaty/charter-based international organisation of which efforts are currently implemented by UNDP Indonesia through a 5-year acceleration program. This comprehensive program includes joint research grants, a university network, a blue economy development index, entrepreneurship support, blue financing initiatives, partnerships, and technical assistance. According to the AIS Forum Support Facility Project’s Theory of Change model, the overall outcome objective is:

“To build collaboration to address global social, environmental, and developmental challenges through coastal community-based activities and ecosystem-based approaches; and to promote sustainable and smart innovative solutions as well as cooperation between its participating countries in the areas of climate change and adaptation, blue economy, marine plastic debris, and good maritime governance.”

To achieve the above overall outcome objective, the AIS Forum Support Facility Project has 4 main outputs as follows:

<p>Output 1: Strengthened capacity of AIS Forum Secretariat to be fully operationalized</p>	<p>The operation is fundamental to running the AIS Forum secretariat. It includes the personnel and other necessities such as office spaces and communication elements. Under the operationalisation of its secretariat, it is expected that they will undertake roles such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitating operations by recruiting qualified staff and procuring relevant goods and services to be handed over to the AIS Forum Secretariat • Provision of institutional capacity building for the AIS Forum Secretariat • Facilitating transfer of knowledge • Accounting and reporting of financial resources.
<p>Output 2: Scaled up the Community-based Activities to drive the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 14) in AIS Countries</p>	<p>The AIS Acceleration Program is essential for advancing climate change mitigation, social and economic sustainability, and scaling up solutions to drive Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in archipelagic and island states. The programme includes Research and Development, Entrepreneurship Support, Blue Financing, Blue Economy Development Index, and international collaboration. The AIS Acceleration program is imperative to achieve climate change mitigation, as well as social and economic sustainability. It will develop upon existing foundations and successes that will allow for meaningful new strides in the current global context.</p> <p>The accelerator program will scale up solutions to drive the Sustainable Development goals (SDGs) in the archipelagic and island states. The AIS Forum Support Facility Project acceleration program is designed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create a space for inclusive dialogue, exchange of practical experiences, and implement tangible and innovation-based programmes. • create programs that stimulate the participating states economic growth and generate prosperity. • creating a global platform for solutions and building collective knowledge with grassroots innovators/start-ups through collaborative action. <p>From this acceleration program, there are 3 key activities for the AIS Forum Support Facility Project to become a treaty/charter-based organisation for fostering trust among participating countries:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Support entrepreneurial endeavours through a start-up incubation program and the development of innovative financing for sustainable businesses. b) Facilitate Research and Development and Human Capital Development initiatives with academic institutions. c) Establish a partnership with relevant stakeholders and facilitate cross-nation collaboration between these entities.
<p>Output 3: Enhanced capacity of AIS Forum to be a treaty/charter-based organization</p>	<p>UNDP is spearheading three crucial programs/activities to bolster the institutional readiness of the AIS Forum Support Facility Project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up of AIS Advisory Board: Designed to act as a mechanism for providing strategic advice, the AIS Advisory Board is charged with leading in-depth analysis on a range of internationally relevant issues. The AIS Advisory Board shall consist of AIS participating country representatives, who provide a comprehensive range of multilateral perspectives and expert experiences together. • Development of Program and Operation Policy and Procedure (POPP): UNDP will also ensure to develop AIS Forum operational manual that will be adopted from UNDP Program Operation Policy and Procedure (POPP). The operational manual will cover 10 main areas such as: (1) Programme and Project Management, (2) Crisis Response, (3), Financial Resources Management, (4) Human Resources Management, (5) Procurement, (6) Partnership, (7) Administrative Service, (8) Ethic, (9) Accountability, (10) Information and Communication Technology, and (10) Security. • Set up of Administrative Systems: UNDP will support the Government of Indonesia in developing an AIS Forum institutional framework to enact the legal basis and to set up the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders in designing, administering, delivering the program of the AIS Forum. This will contain all the important elements of

	<p>secretariat operations and practices to ensure the AIS Forum as an effective functioning platform and adherence to essential regulations</p> <p>These initiatives aim to solidify manual operations and fortify internal institutional arrangements, recognising the need for a dedicated and competent team to drive success. Learning from UNDP's expertise, these programs will adapt UNDP's operational benchmarks while tailoring them to the unique nature of the AIS Forum Support Facility Project and its member countries, ultimately striving for the AIS Forum Support Facility Project to embody strong institutional values, norms, and standards.</p>
<p>Output 4: Strengthened policy environment to ensure sustainable innovative financing scheme through the AIS Fund Facility</p>	<p>The creation of the AIS Fund Facility, incorporating investment mechanisms for potential development partners and stakeholders, established a sustainable funding mechanism to support initiatives and projects aligned with the four key thematic pillar areas of the AIS Forum Support Facility Project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Change and Adaptation: to reduce the atmospheric greenhouse gases levels through carbon capture and storage technology, • Blue Economy: to create methods for improved measuring of fish stocks or development of fishing gear with reduced environmental impacts • Marine Plastic Debris: to find sustainable alternatives to conventional plastic production techniques • Maritime Governance: focus on the formation of marine protected areas through effective policy measures that are socially and ecologically responsible. <p>The AIS Forum Support Facility Project, positioned as a critical platform for generating scalable solutions, necessitates robust financing strategies to fuel acceleration programs focused on knowledge exchange, technology transfer, and innovation stimulation.</p> <p>Leveraging voluntary contributions and innovative financing schemes like Blended Finance and Blue Bonds, the AIS Fund Facility seeks to diversify funding sources, ensuring sustainability while bolstering trust among participating countries. Transparent management by UNDP Indonesia enhances the forum's credibility and readiness, positioning it as a reliable partner for long-term stability and fiscal responsibility.</p> <p>Recognising the significance of forging partnerships with non-government stakeholders, the AIS Forum Support Facility Project aims to amplify its value proposition to governments by securing both financial and non-financial support. Establishing transparent and mutually beneficial partnerships with a wide array of investors and financiers, including impact funds and corporate investors, is essential for mainstreaming investments in climate-resilient projects.</p> <p>Through structured engagement initiatives and strategic planning sessions with interested partners, such as state-owned companies, start-ups, and players in the plastic industry, the AIS Forum Support Facility Project seeks to foster collaborative efforts aimed at achieving shared objectives and maximising positive impacts.</p>

2.5 Main Stakeholders

There are key partners/stakeholders in the project, comprising the following with their roles and involvement as detailed below in Table 1:

Table 1: Main Stakeholders of the AIS Forum Support Facility Project

<u>Key Partners</u>	<u>Role</u>	<u>Involvement</u>
<p>Government of Indonesia: Coordinating Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Investment (CMMAI)</p> <p>Note: Since the 2024 Indonesian Elections, the CMMAI ceased to exist. A new government entity would be appointed as the project donor.</p>	<p>Donor</p>	<p>The Coordinating Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Investment (CMMAI) has been key to establishing and running the Archipelagic and Island States (AIS) Forum Support Facility Project since 2017. CMMAI has promoted collaboration among island nations on maritime development, climate change, and marine pollution. The ministry has partnered with UNDP Indonesia to support the AIS Forum Secretariat, provided significant funding, and fostered international dialogue and cooperation.</p>
<p>Government of Indonesia: Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA)</p> <p>Note: Since the 2024 Indonesian Elections, the MOFA's role would be subjected to change.</p>	<p>Coordinating ministry</p>	<p>The AIS Forum Support Facility Project also receives advice and direction from other Indonesian ministries, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA).</p> <p>MOFA is instrumental in fostering collaboration among the participating countries and provides strategic direction for this initiative. Their efforts are particularly focused on the long-term goal of evolving the AIS Forum Support Facility Project into an international organization, thereby enhancing its global impact and effectiveness.</p>

Key Partners	Role	Involvement
Research and Academic Institutions	Implementing partner	As the entities that produce innovation, universities and research institutions will play a central role in the AIS Forum Support Facility Project's effort to achieve its missions. Through a research funding program, the AIS Forum Support Facility Project will support research, development, and deployment of prototypes that could potentially address the issues pertaining to archipelagic and island states. Through these programs as well, the AIS Forum Support Facility Project intends to foster collaboration between multiple institutions from different countries to ensure the transfer of technology can occur.
Government Authorities	Coordinating	Through technical aid programs, the AIS Forum Support Facility Project is committed to ensure that sharing best practices between government authorities from different archipelagic and island states will occur. Well-designed, gender-sensitive policies and effective and inclusive governance are essential elements that will determine the process of technology transfer and knowledge can lead to an enhancement in a country's capability and capacity to implement sustainable practices and climate change mitigation and adaptation. The program allows authorities to aid with their counterparts from different countries.
Private Sectors: DBS Bank	Implementing Partner	There is Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between UNDP Indonesia and DBS Bank for the areas of cooperation: (1) Development of Blue Financing Instrument strategic document; (2) Development of the draft of Blue Bond and Blue Sukuk Framework; (3) Facilitate and disseminate the information contained in the Blue Financing Instrument strategic document; (4) Facilitate cooperation between the parties to design and implement a joint program to support the SDGs achievement in particular SDG 14 (Life Below Water). This agreement was signed in 2020 and ended in 2021/22.
Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG)	Implementing Partner	Statement of Intent (SoI) between UNDP Indonesia and Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) for collaboration in two programs: (1) Blue Entrepreneurship Programs; (2) Plastic Waste Management. This SoI valid up to 31 December 2026.

Project Beneficiaries	Involvement
Entrepreneurs (Startup Founders)	To establish startup ecosystems in several archipelagic and island states, the AIS Forum Support Facility Project aims to nurture and grow entrepreneurial talents by conducting business competitions and incubation programs. Through a startup hub (The AIS Blue Hub), developed for the purpose of providing a platform for early-entrepreneurs, investors, and incubators to collaborate with each other, the AIS Forum Support Facility Project intends to discover business founders and create a safe space for them to learn from each other. The AIS Blue Hub's development model aims to be replicated in several regions, particularly those that do not have an established startup ecosystem. The AIS Blue Hub will also promote women leaders and entrepreneurs to connect with investors and incubators.
Students (Scholarship Awardees)	Scholarship Awardees contribute to the AIS Forum Support Facility Project by participating in various collaborative and research initiatives. They are involved in innovative research projects, capacity-building activities, and workshops aimed at addressing maritime issues such as climate change, marine pollution, and sustainable development. These scholars help foster international dialogue, support the implementation of strategic programs, and promote innovative solutions within the forum.
Marine and Coastal Communities	People who are living in coastal areas and or earn their livelihood from marine activities are the ones who are directly affected by climate change and environmental degradation, women are particularly vulnerable to those challenges. The AIS Forum will first identify the areas that should be prioritized and receive support and assistance. It will include the use of gender lens. Through its training and other entrepreneurial - related programs, the AIS Forum Support Facility project aims to empower the marine and coastal communities, particularly women.
Women and Children (Womenpreneur programme: Papua New Guinea)	The AIS Forum Support Facility Project will promote gender equality and ensure it plays into the decision-making process of the organization. One of the efforts includes promoting UNDP's value and standards on Gender Equality, including in gender equal composition of project personnel. Foundation activities will establish the framework for the forum and its primary partnership will incorporate a gender approach on its implementation. The establishment of the forum will enable the potential opportunities for the development of gender-sensitive policy for the blue economy platform and the promotion of women's economic empowerment and women's leadership.

2.6 Theory of Change at Evaluation

The Theory of Change (TOC) model can be structured into several key components, each representing a stage in the process of achieving the desired impact. The stages are Inputs, Activities, Outputs, Outcomes and Impact. Each stage is interconnected, showing the flow from one stage to the next, and is categorized under headings such as ‘What is done?’, ‘With whom?’, and ‘To what end?’.

The intended outcome objective of the AIS Forum Support Facility Project is " *To build collaboration to address global social, environmental, and developmental challenges through coastal community-based activities and ecosystem-based approaches; and to promote sustainable and smart innovative solutions as well as cooperation between its participating countries in the areas of climate change and adaptation, blue economy, marine plastic debris, and good maritime governance*". The realisation of this outcome objective was based on the following 3 assumptions:

- there is good coordination among donors, participating countries and implementing partners through the multi-stakeholder coordination mechanism
- the Government of Indonesia, even with the changing of the political figures, will still support the AIS Forum and will continue to enhance the development of the AIS program as well as the country's engagement
- the financial management mechanisms are established and there are sufficient capacities to sustain the quality of its development interventions

To deliver the above outcome, the project Theory of Change specified three outputs:

- Output 1: The Acceleration Program. Community-based activities to drive the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 14) in the AIS countries are scaled up
- Output 2: Institutional Preparation. The preparation of the AIS Forum to be a treaty/charter-based organization
- Output 3: Sustained Financing Mechanism. Through innovative financing schemes, the AIS Fund Facility is developed.

The evaluation observed that the output on strengthened capacity of the AIS Forum Secretariat to be fully operationalized was not included in the TOC.

The project's TOC model showed the flow of key activities leading to corresponding key results and eventually achieving the desired outputs, which in turn would lead to the overall outcome objective. The TOC also stated risks (political, operational, organizational) and barriers that would jeopardize the project performance.

The evaluation assessed that:

- The PRODOC and project results framework had recently been revised with updated outputs (4 outputs instead of 3 outputs) but the TOC model did not reflect these updates and changes.
- The TOC did not clearly show what the Inputs and Impact are. Specifically, an analysis and description of what were the gaps/issues/challenges would need to be addressed. The identified gaps/issues/challenges could then be listed as inputs which would complete the entire results chain in the standard theory of change
- The TOC appeared to show a disconnect between institutional activities and real outcomes for blue communities and ecosystems. While organizational development and capacity-building are crucial, in this context they should not overshadow the project's overall outcome objective of addressing social, environmental, and developmental challenges
- Linkage between objective and outputs
 - Output needed closer alignment with objective: While the objective sets a broad and ambitious goal, the Outputs 2 and 3 appeared to focus on institutional and policy outcomes. Output 1 (community-based activities for SDG 14) aligned with the stated objective. The other Outputs 2 and 3 seemed more focused on capacity-building and structural transformation rather than directly addressing social, environmental, and developmental challenges.
 - Opportunity for impact: The linkages between outputs and the broader objective of tackling global challenges through ecosystem-based approaches was vague. The Outputs 2 and 3 appeared to lean more on institutional strengthening rather than demonstrating clear impact pathways on communities or ecosystems.
- Linkage between Activities and Outputs
 - Activity-Output Disconnect: Many activities were considered technical, administrative, or policy-driven (e.g., creating advisory boards, fund facilities, or establishing research centers), while the overall outcome objective emphasized global collaboration and ecosystem-based approaches. It was not clear how these activities directly contributed to on-the-ground community impact or drive coastal development. For instance, Activity Set 2.1.1 (creating an advisory board) would be more bureaucratic and did not have a clear, direct line to addressing environmental issues or community-based challenges.
 - Overemphasis on Institutional Capacity-Building: Activities in Output 2 and Output 3 appeared to lean heavily towards organizational development rather than fostering community-based action or ecosystem-driven solutions, leading to a weakened link to the objective of addressing global social and environmental issues.

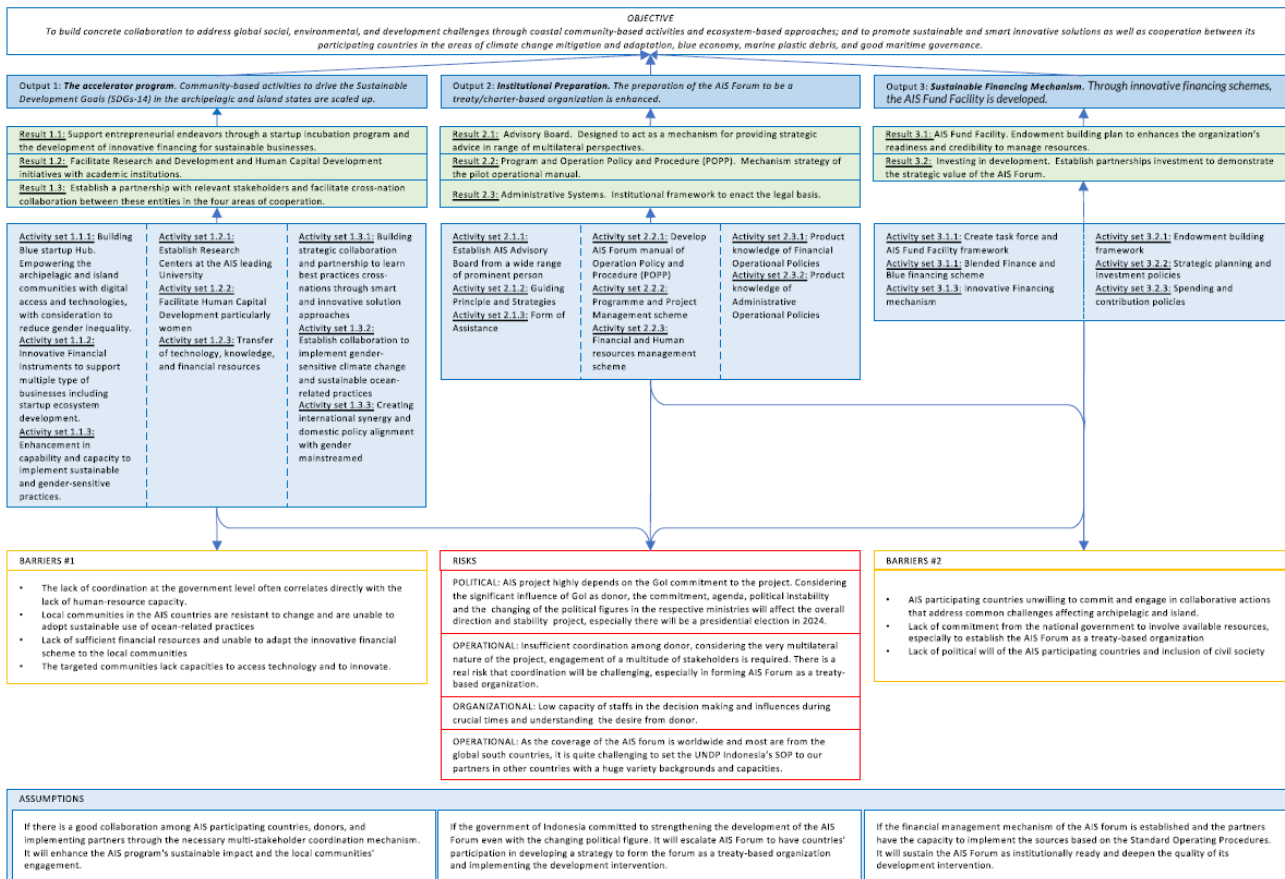


Figure 4. AIS Forum Support Facility Project Theory of Change Model

2.7 Baseline and Expected Result Targets Established

The baseline and expected result targets of the AIS Forum Support Facility Project was originally set for 2 years but had since been updated for another 4 years with the latest version shown below in Table 2.

Table 2: Baseline and Expected Result Targets of the AIS Forum Support Facility Project

EXPECTED OUTPUTS	OUTPUT INDICATORS	DATA SOURCE	BASELINE		TARGETS						
			Value	Year	(by frequency of data collection)						
					Year						
					2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	Final
1.Strengthened capacity of AIS Forum secretariat to be fully operationalized	1.1.The management and technical operations of the Secretariat are available and implemented	UNDP Project Report	Limited	2020	AIS Forum secretariat is partially operationalized	AIS Forum secretariat is operationalized	the operation will be started to be implemented smoothly with 12 staffs hired	the operation will be implemented smoothly	the operation will be implemented smoothly	all the operation runs smoothly and to prepare the project transition	all the operation runs smoothly and to prepare the project transition
2. Scaled up the Community Based activities to drive the Sustainable Development Goals (SGD-s 14) in AIS countries	2.1 Extend to which the partners (Local Communities and Government of the AIS Countries) are facilitated under the AIS Forum	UNDP Project Report	Limited	2020	Partially implemented	Largely implemented	Fully implemented	Fully implemented	Fully implemented	Fully implemented	Fully implemented
	2.2 Start-up Hub and Women Entrepreneurs programmes are developed and engaged AIS countries	UNDP Project Report	Early development	2020	Conduct 3 programmes	Conduct 4 programmes	Engaging additional startup from 25 ais countries	Engaging additional startup from 35 ais countries	Engaging additional startup from 45 ais countries	Engaging additional startup from 47 ais countries	Engaging additional startup from 47 ais countries
	2.3 The Blue Economy Index of AIS Countries is developed	UNDP Project Report	Early development	2020	3 countries	4 countries	n/a (included in Output 2.5)	n/a (included in Output 2.5)	n/a (included in Output 2.5)	n/a (included in Output 2.5)	n/a (included in Output 2.5)
	2.4 Joint research and student exchange is implemented by AIS Forum	UNDP Project Report	Only 2 joint research programmes conducted with no student exchange	2020	3 research and/or student exchange	5 research and/or student exchange	n/a (included in Output 2.5)	n/a (included in Output 2.5)	n/a (included in Output 2.5)	n/a (included in Output 2.5)	n/a (included in Output 2.5)

EXPECTED OUTPUTS	OUTPUT INDICATORS	DATA SOURCE	BASELINE		TARGETS						
			Value	Year	(by frequency of data collection)						
					Year						
					2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	Final
	2.5 The research centre is being developed and engaged AIS countries (including joint research and BEDI)	UNDP Project Report	Early development	2023	n/a	n/a	2 research grants will be provided and BEDI will be expanded to 25 countries	3 research grants will be provided and BEDI will be expanded to 25 countries	4 research grants will be provided and BEDI will be expanded to 45 countries	5 research grants will be provided and BEDI will be expanded to 47 countries	5 research grants will be provided and the online platform is operated
	2.6 Numbers of partnership between AIS countries established under the AIS Support Facility (including technical assistance)	UNDP Project Report	Limited	2020	50 partnership activities through technical assistance	50 partnership activities through technical assistance from 20 AIS countries	Engaging 25 AIS countries through technical assistance	Engaging 26 AIS countries through technical assistance	Engaging 35 AIS countries through technical assistance	Engaging 47 AIS countries through technical assistance	Engaging 47 AIS countries through technical assistance
	2.7 Numbers of AISF participation in Regional and Global Meetings	UNDP/ Coordinating Ministry for Maritime and Investment Affairs	1 SOM and 1 MM were conducted	2020	1 global meeting	3 global meetings	3 global meetings	2 global meetings	4 global meetings	5 global meetings	5 global meetings
	2.8 Numbers of technical assistance given by AIS Secretariat to strengthen the partnership between AIS Countries	UNDP/ Coordinating Ministry for Maritime and Investment Affairs	4 technical assistances conducted	2020	4 technical assistances	4 technical assistances	n/a (included in Output 2.6)	n/a (included in Output 2.6)	n/a (included in Output 2.6)	n/a (included in Output 2.6)	n/a (included in Output 2.6)
3. Enhanced capacity of AIS Forum to be a treaty/charter-based organization	3.1 Advisory Board is developed	UNDP / Coordinating Ministry for Maritime and Investment Affairs	n/a	2023	n/a	n/a	the structure is being developed	the initial draft of the Advisory Board Framework is conceptualized	the framework is being finalized and getting input from stakeholders	the framework is ready to be implemented	the framework is ready to be implemented
	3.2 POPP and administrative system is developed	UNDP / Coordinating Ministry for Maritime and Investment Affairs	n/a	2023	n/a	n/a	the structure is being developed	the initial draft of the POPP and Administrative System Framework is conceptualized	the framework is being finalized and getting input from stakeholders	the framework is ready to be implemented	the framework is ready to be implemented

EXPECTED OUTPUTS	OUTPUT INDICATORS	DATA SOURCE	BASELINE		TARGETS						
					(by frequency of data collection)						
			Value	Year	Year						
					2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	Final
	3.3 Strategic Roadmap is developed	UNDP / Coordinating Ministry for Maritime and Investment Affairs	n/a	2024	n/a	n/a	n/a	the initial draft of the Strategic Roadmap is conceptualized	the Strategic Roadmap draft is finalized and getting input from stakeholders.	Strategic Roadmap is developed.	Strategic Roadmap is developed.
4. Strengthened policy environment to ensure sustainable innovative financing schemes through the AIS Fund Facility .	4.1 AIS fund facility is developed	UNDP / Coordinating Ministry for Maritime and Investment Affairs	1 SOM and 1 MM were conducted	2023	n/a	n/a	the structure is being developed	the initial draft of the AIS Fund Facility Framework is conceptualized	the framework is being finalized and getting input from stakeholders	the framework is ready to be implemented	the framework is ready to be implemented

Further analysis and evaluation of the baseline and targets of the AIS Forum Support Facility Project will be discussed in Sections 3.2.3 and 3.3.3 of this report.

3. FINDINGS

3.1 Project Design

3.1.1 Project Document (PRODOC) Formulation

The AIS Forum Support Facility Project, initially formed in 2019 and operating under the UNDP Indonesia CO, is a global initiative that brings together 51 archipelagic and island states to address key challenges in ocean resource utilisation, climate change mitigation and adaptation, marine plastic debris, and sustainable fisheries. With a specific focus on engaging youth and women, the forum aims to enhance coastal communities and promote sustainable development.

The AIS Forum Support Facility Project was previously established during the Project Initiation Plan (PIP) stage from 2019-2021 to operationalize its strategic directions and implement key activities. The AIS Forum Support Facility Project was first formally signed off as an FSP on 2 November 2021 and originally planned to end on 31 December 2022. Subsequently to continue supporting the establishment of the AIS Forum as a treaty/charter-based organization, further funding support by the Government of Indonesia enable the AIS Forum Support Facility Project to ensure the secretariat adapts its role to facilitate closer cooperation between island and archipelagic countries, increase efforts to forge partnerships with various stakeholders, and facilitate necessary actions in the development of AIS Forum's strategic programs for a sustainable future. This resulted in another 4-year project extension till 31 December 2026.

The Government of Indonesia had initially provided an earlier US\$ 1 million in funding to the AIS Forum Support Facility Project to establish and operationalize the secretariat foundation, and implement key foundational activities as formulated in PRODOC 2021 (1 November 2021 - 31 December 2022). Subsequently under a revised PRODOC 2023, the AIS Forum Support Facility Project has since secured US\$5,349,080 in funding from the Government of Indonesia over five years to pursue transitioning the forum into a Treaty-Based Organisation. Specifically, the aim was to accommodate the additional contributions from the Government of Indonesia (GoI) and extension of the period until 31 December 2026 to align with the agreed 5-year workplan as supplementary document in the financing agreement between UNDP and GoI. This resulted in the adjustment of the project's theory of change, strategy, result and partnership, result framework, multi-year plan and budget, governance and management arrangement, and risk. In addition, there would be two additional outputs as the basis of this revision, such as (1) To be Institutional-Ready as Treaty/Charter-Based Organization, and (2) Establishing the Sustainable Financing Mechanism of the AIS Forum.

In 2024 and subsequent 2024 Indonesian Elections, another major revision of the PRODOC would be required. This would include updating the TOC model to reflect the changes to the PRODOC and project results framework restructuring of the organization's resource personnel, changes to the financing agreement and project board structure.

3.1.2 Analysis of Results and Resources Framework (Project Logic/Strategy and Indicators)

The evaluation analysis of the results and resources framework highlighted the following regarding the project logic, strategy, and the use of indicators:

1. Project logic and strategy were not aligned and disconnected:
 - The overall framework focussed heavily on administrative and bureaucratic achievements rather than directly measuring the changes or outcomes necessary to meet the project's goals. For example, output indicators such as the establishment of partnerships, the development of frameworks, and the operationalization of the Secretariat would be important but did not provide insights into how these would contribute to tangible improvements in addressing environmental or developmental challenges.
 - There was also a disconnect between the 4 outputs and the overarching outcome objective of fostering collaboration to address environmental issues. Furthermore, the project had several output key deliverable indicators that were not clearly aligned or integrated with the broader goal of fostering collaboration among AIS countries on key issues like climate change, blue economy, marine plastic debris and maritime governance.
2. Output key deliverable indicators were too generalized, unclear and disconnected:
 - Many of the output key deliverable indicators were too generalized, making it difficult to assess their relevance or measure progress accurately. For instance, the target of facilitating partners (e.g., governments and embassies) under the AIS Forum lacked specificity regarding the nature and depth of partnerships being measured.
 - In some cases, the final targets did not provide a clear understanding of what success would look like. For example, the target of providing 5 research grants for setting up a research center did not demonstrate how this directly would relate to the aim of fostering regional collaboration or addressing environmental challenges.
 - Several output key deliverable indicators (e.g. Output Indicator 2.5 on research grants and the development of an online platform) seemed disconnected from the actual outputs, leading to ambiguity about how progress should be measured.
3. Challenges in tracking real progress:
 - Baseline data was missing or unclear for many of the output key deliverable indicators, making it challenging to track progress. Without proper baselines, the results framework lacked a starting point for measuring improvements over time.
 - The absence of clear, outcome-based indicators limited the project to measure actual impact/effectiveness. The indicators primarily tracked administrative milestones (e.g., development of frameworks, operational readiness), rather than concrete outcomes such as improvements in collaboration, increased environmental sustainability, or improved economic development.

3.1.3 Risks and Assumptions

The PRODOC had appropriate risk assessments with impact and probability ratings, and prepared corresponding counter-measures/management responses which were appropriate at that point of time and for the project duration. During the project design phase in the original PRODOC, a total of 4 risks were identified alongside their respective mitigation measures and recorded in the risk register system. During the project implementation when the project was to be extended for another 4 years, there were an additional 6 risks identified corresponding with counter-measures/management responses. These risks were updated into the risk register system as presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Project Risk Register

#	Risk Description	Risk Type	Impact & Likelihood = Risk Level	Risk Treatment / Management Measures
1	Original PRODOC – AIS project highly depends on the GoI commitment to the project. Considering the significant influence of GoI as donor, the commitment, agenda, political instability and the changing of the political figures in the respective ministries will affect the overall direction and stability project.	POLITICAL: Government commitment	Likelihood = 3 Impact = 4 Risk level = Substantial	The risk will be mitigated by promoting the more involvement of AIS participating countries, therefore it is expected that the project could sustain themselves.
2	Original PRODOC – Insufficient coordination among donor, participating countries and implementing partners in the necessary multi-stakeholder coordination mechanism. Considering the very multilateral nature of the project, engagement of a multitude of stakeholders is required. There is a real risk that coordination will be challenging.	OPERATIONAL: Partnership	Likelihood = 5 Impact = 3 Risk level = Substantial	The risk will be mitigated by encouraging all parties including AIS secretariat and GoI, AIS secretariat and participating countries, AIS and implementing partner to coordinate closely through continuous communication and meetings
3	Original PRODOC – Low capacity of staffs in the decision making and influences during crucial times and understanding the desire from donor	ORGANIZATIONAL: Human Resources	Likelihood = 5 Impact = 3 Risk level = Substantial	The risk will be mitigated by having a specific and solid program planning to be approved by donor in the beginning of every quarter year.
4	Original PRODOC – Restrictions on travel and mass gathering. Considering AIS Forum is a multi-national Forum, ownership to countries other than Indonesia will be diminished if the secretariat can only organize events in Indonesia.	SAFETY AND SECURITY: Natural Hazards	Likelihood = 5 Impact = 3 Risk level = Substantial	The risk will be mitigated by having online events and gatherings. The online platform can help reach out to wider audience than offline events.
5	2 nd Revision PRODOC - There is a risk that the overall direction and stability of the project will be affected/ changed	STRATEGIC - Government Commitment	Likelihood: 3 – Moderately likely Impact: 4 - Extensive Risk level: Substantial	The risk will be mitigated by promoting the more involvement of AIS participating countries, therefore it is expected that the project could sustain themselves.
6	2 nd Revision PRODOC – There is a risk that AIS Forum will face the challenge in forming the treaty-based organization	OPERATIONAL: Partnership	Likelihood: 5 - Expected Impact: 3 - Intermediate Risk level: Substantial	The risk will be mitigated by encouraging all parties including AIS secretariat and GoI, AIS secretariat and participating countries, AIS and implementing partner to coordinate closely through continuous communication and meetings.

#	Risk Description	Risk Type	Impact & Likelihood = Risk Level	Risk Treatment / Management Measures
7	2 nd Revision PRODOC – There is a risk that AIS Forum will face the challenge in the decision making process	ORGANIZATIONAL: Human Resources	Likelihood: 5 - Expected Impact: 3 - Intermediate Risk level: Substantial	The risk will be mitigated by having a specific and solid program planning to be approved by donor and hire more staff at the higher level.
8	2 nd Revision PRODOC – There is a risk that we will face challenge in setting the UNDP Indonesia’s SOP to the partner in other countries	OPERATIONAL: Capacities of the partners	Likelihood: 5 - Expected Impact: 3 - Intermediate Risk level: Substantial	The risk will be mitigated by having intensive socialization on the UNDP Indonesia’s SOP and conducting a frequent provision of experts to more AIS countries
9	2023 Annual Report – There is a risk delayed procurement of higher- level staff members and ICs/consultants	Organizational - Procurement	Not known	The risk will be mitigated by more intensive communication with all relevant units in the CO related to procurements of ICs/Consultants to accelerate the hiring process
10	2023 Annual Report – There is a risk that cross-cultural understanding issues might hinder the operation of the Forum’s activities.	Operational - Partners’ Engagement	Not known	The risk will be mitigated by improving adaptability of the Forum management unit in creating and maintaining partnership with AIS country members

The evaluation assessed that the project risks were well identified and the proposed mitigative measures were appropriate if followed through.

3.1.4 Lessons from Other Relevant Projects Incorporated into Project Design

The design of the project drew upon lessons learned from the high level conference and meetings of AIS countries in 2017 the Ocean Conference in New York City, and Archipelagic and Island States (AIS) Forum was held in Jakarta on the 21st–22nd of November 2017. The participating countries found the AIS Forum could be an innovative vehicle for effectively addressing climate change and marine issues. The following key insights were as follows:

- The project aimed to provide an umbrella for development of AIS Forum as a treaty based organization and coordinating mechanism for activities carried out by the secretariat of AIS Forum Facility Project with Coordinating Ministry for Maritime and Investment Affairs (CMMAI) and partner projects, integrating interventions from various field. It adopted a multisector and portfolio approach to address diverse needs.
- Output 1 was closely linked to AIS Forum Secretariat, facilitating operations by recruiting qualified staff and procuring relevant goods and services to be handed over to the AIS Forum Secretariat.
- Output 2 was primarily related to promoting blue economy initiatives such as start-up incubation program and the development of innovative financing, research and development and human capital initiatives involved close collaboration with Universities in Indonesia and outside of Indonesia (Fiji), UK Tech, and MSG. Establish a partnership with relevant stakeholders and facilitate cross-nation collaboration between these entities. The project also leveraged insights and recommendations from the Coordinating Ministry for Maritime and Investment Affairs (CMMAI) and project partners.
- Output 3 was to set up of AIS Advisory Board, Development of Program and Operation Policy and Procedure (POPP) and administration as a pathway to make AIS Forum as a Treaty Based Organization.
- Output 4 focused on the AIS Fund Facility, incorporating investment mechanisms for potential development partners and stakeholders, established a sustainable funding mechanism to support initiatives and projects aligned with the four key thematic pillar areas of the AIS Forum Support Facility Project. Output 4 project integrated approaches and expertise from the Building on UNDP's strength in innovative financing, the project collaborated with DBS to explore innovative financial mechanisms.
- Gender empowerment activities involved gender mainstreaming and gender focus in the outcome, outputs and indicators of the project framework. At the same time, the project also has been trying to identify the inequalities which lie at the heart of issues relating to access to knowledge, capital and redress discriminatory practices and unjust distributions of power due to climate change.

3.1.5 Planned Stakeholder Participation

The AIS Forum Secretariat aimed to establish collaborations with relevant stakeholders, such as private companies, governmental bodies, academic institutions, NGOs, media, and international or regional organizations, particularly those promoting women's empowerment. The strategy seeks to create a network of experts, researchers, and policymakers who can contribute their expertise and services to support the AIS Forum in fulfilling its objectives. The stakeholders planned include Ministers and Senior Officials of AIS Countries.

3.1.6 Replication Approach

A clear arrangement of phase out of AIS Forum Support Facility Project should be developed with key stakeholders, as the goal of this project is to develop AIS Forum as a treaty-based organization. A transition period will be put in place, so other AIS countries can lead implementing activities. AIS Forum Support Facility Project has built networking and partnership with the Government of Indonesia and government from other AIS countries, thus can develop further local presence in other AIS countries. Therefore, the AIS Forum Support Facility Project results can be sustained through resources of partners. The AIS forum exit strategy are emphasized in the PRODOC (2023) to implement the institutional preparation and sustainable financing mechanism to transition it as a treaty-based organization.

The strong partnership developed through the AIS Forum Support Facility Project is a solid foundation to leverage lesson learned and scale up intervention to replicate the startup activities and hub in other AIS partner countries. As the AIS hub model developed for the purpose of providing a platform for early-entrepreneurs, investors, and incubators to collaborate with each other, the AIS Forum Secretariat intended to discover business founders and create a safe space for them to learn from each other. The hub's development model was to be replicated in several regions, particularly those that did not have an established startup ecosystem. The hub was to also promote women leaders and entrepreneurs to connect with investors and incubators. The hub was to serve as cooperation platform for South-South Cooperation for knowledge and technology exchange expanding institutional tools across the AIS countries partners.

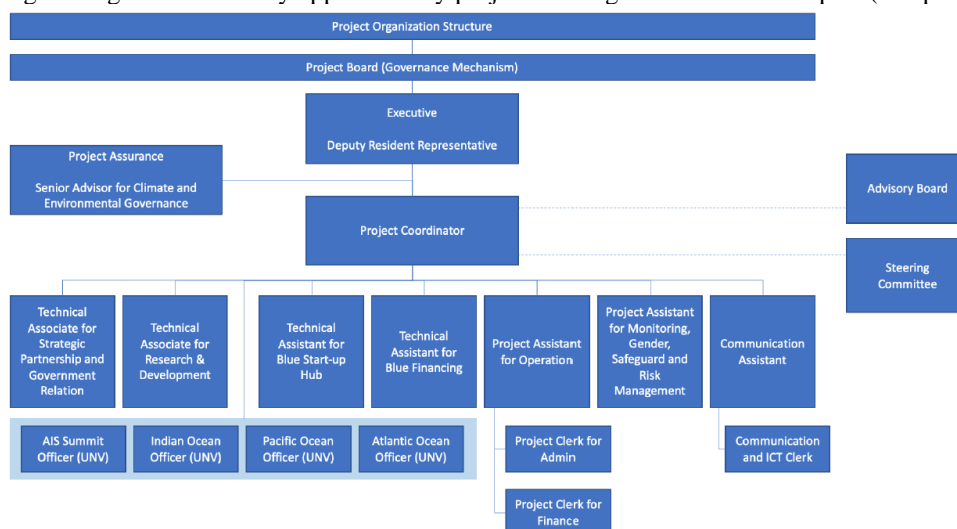
3.1.7 Management Arrangements

Execution Modality: In accordance with the AIS PRODOC, UNDP served as Managing Agent (MA) for the AIS Forum Facility Project and was responsible for overall project financial management, performance monitoring and reporting, evaluation and ensuring achievement of project results with inputs from GOI (CMMAI). A unique characteristic was the use of an umbrella and portfolio approach as well as adaptive management by UNDP through Direct Implementation Modality (DIM) to provide a coordinated and integrated multi-sectoral response platform, and to facilitate collaboration with all the various stakeholders involved. UNDP is responsible for:

- recruitment of project-funded staff as approved by the selected in consultation;
- ensuring funds were made available to AIS Forum Facility Project related outputs and activities in as timely a manner as possible, per the PB approved annual allocations – and in line with any project cash flow management constraints;
- facilitating procurement of expendable and non-expendable equipment in accordance with approved project work plans and budgets, based on independent needs assessments, implemented through DIM or NIM with 100% CO Support collaboration with national counterparts and UNDP Country Offices;
- all efforts to ensure that the project delivers value for money, taking a cost-conscious approach to the project.

Project Board (PB): The PB was established to provide high-level oversight and to steer the AIS Project. The PB is responsible for high-level management decisions and policy guidance required for implementation of the project, including recommendations and approval of project plans, budget and revision. The board is chaired by representatives from the government of Indonesia (the Coordinating Ministry of Maritime and Investment Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia) and other ministries, UNDP representatives form other AIS participating countries and development partners.

The PB membership comprised the key main stakeholders, which are listed in Figure 5. Due to the recent 2024 Indonesian Elections, the PB structure had to undergo changes for the newly appointed key project donor/government counterpart (this process is still ongoing).



Source: AIS Forum Support Facility Project PRODOC 2023

Figure 5: Project Organizational Structure for AIS Forum Support Facility Project

3.1.8 Linkages between Project and Other Interventions within the Sector

AIS Forum made efforts to support and strengthen discussion and cooperation on the nexus of climate change and oceans within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its 2015 Paris Agreement. The project role underscored the crucial importance of a common goal to hold the global average temperature increase to well below 2°C above the pre-industrial levels, and pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C. AIS Forum aimed to work closely with the other projects and units within UNDP Indonesia to find a synergy in program collaboration. Thus, the project was designed through several AIS participating countries and Senior Official Meetings and Ministerial Meetings to address the challenges of climate change adaptation.

3.2 Project Implementation

3.2.1 Adaptive Management

The evaluation observed the high turn-over of key Project Team secretariat members (with the exception of the National Project Coordinator) from the start of the project and funding disbursement delays played significant roles that could have affected the adaptability, effectiveness and efficiency of the overall project implementation. The external circumstances, such as political office and government changes, and economical challenges brought upon by the COVID-19 pandemic, significantly affected many planned activities/interventions in the early stages of the project. However, the evaluation noted that such external circumstances would often be beyond the control of the project team, and they should be prepared to adapt to the changing circumstances.

3.2.2 Actual Stakeholder Participation and Partnership Arrangements

In order to achieve an effective implementation of stakeholder participation and partnership arrangements, the AIS Forum Support Facility Project utilized the following key activities as part of a long-term goal for the AIS Forum to become a treaty/charter-based organisation for fostering trust among participating countries:

- a) Support entrepreneurial endeavours through a start-up incubation program and the development of innovative financing for sustainable businesses – The focus of the initiatives around entrepreneurship would be to support the establishment of the blue economy in AIS participating countries. The AIS Forum Secretariat aimed to achieve this objective by building startup ecosystems, introducing blue financing mechanisms, and empowering the AIS communities with digital access and technologies, with consideration to reduce gender inequality.
- b) Facilitate research and development and human capital development initiatives with academic institutions - The AIS Forum Secretariat will allocate resources to support not only research and development but also a demonstration of solution prototypes that could potentially be scaled up. The areas of R&D will be centred around the 4 thematic areas of the Forum: Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation, Blue Economy, Marine Plastic Debris, and Good Maritime Governance. The Secretariat will build public-private partnerships with universities and research institutions to conduct thematic research that looks to enhance the adaptation and resilience of archipelagic and island states, with gender-sensitive approaches.
- c) Establish a partnership with relevant stakeholders and facilitate cross-nation collaboration between these entities - The AIS Forum Secretariat would develop partnerships with relevant parties including private enterprises, government authorities, universities, NGOs, media, and global or regional organizations particularly those that encourage women empowerment. The idea of this approach was to create a network of experts, researchers, and policymakers who are able to provide their insights and services to help the AIS Forum in achieving its missions.

Table 4 below showed the list of AIS participating countries' involvement in respective type of programmes offered in the AIS Forum Support Facility Project since 2021. Indonesia would be the most active followed by Fiji. The evaluation noted and observed from project annual reports and interviews with various stakeholders that many of these programmes were event-based or short-term activities without long-term commitments. Due to the size and capabilities of the current AIS Forum Support Facility Project's secretariat team as well as the secretariat team being predominantly based in Jakarta Indonesia, the outreach communications and engagement to all other AIS participating countries was deemed minimal.

Table 4: AIS participating countries' involvement in respective type of programmes offered in the AIS Forum Support Facility Project since 2021

No.	Countries	Number of Programme					TOTAL
		Entrepreneurship	Research and Development	Partnership	Innovative Financing	Others	
1.	Antigua and Barbados	0	2	3	0	0	5
2.	Bahamas	0	2	0	0	1	3
3.	Bahrain	0	1	2	0	0	3
4.	Barbados	6	6	7	0	1	20
5.	Belize	4	0	0	0	0	4
6.	Cabo Verde	2	3	3	0	1	9
7.	Comoros	0	2	2	0	0	4
8.	Cook Islands	0	0	0	0	0	0
9.	Cuba	0	1	0	0	0	1

No.	Countries	Number of Programme					TOTAL
		Entrepreneurship	Research and Development	Partnership	Innovative Financing	Others	
10.	Cyprus	2	2	1	0	1	6
11.	Dominica	0	3	4	0	0	7
12.	Dominican Republic	0	1	0	0	0	1
13.	Federated States of Micronesia	0	0	0	0	0	0
14.	Fiji	18	24	9	1	3	55
15.	Grenada	0	2	0	0	0	2
16.	Guinea Bissau	0	0	2	0	0	2
17.	Guyana	0	13	5	0	1	19
18.	Haiti	0	4	1	0	1	6
19.	Iceland	0	0	0	0	0	0
20.	Indonesia	37	35	33	4	5	114
21.	Ireland	1	5	4	0	2	12
22.	Jamaica	5	6	7	0	0	18
23.	Japan	3	8	2	0	0	13
24.	Kiribati	5	2	2	0	0	9
25.	Madagascar	13	8	7	0	1	29
26.	Maldives	4	1	3	0	0	8
27.	Malta	0	4	2	0	0	6
28.	Marshall Island	0	0	1	0	0	1
29.	Mauritius	4	8	5	0	2	19
30.	Nauru	0	0	0	0	0	0
31.	New Zealand	8	3	1	0	0	12
32.	Niue	4	0	0	0	0	4
33.	Palau	0	0	1	0	0	1
34.	Papua New Guinea	8	9	5	0	1	23
35.	Philippines	13	8	3	0	1	25
36.	Saint Kitts and Nevis	1	0	3	1	0	5
37.	Saint Lucia	1	0	0	0	0	1
38.	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	4	4	0	0	0	8
39.	Samoa	7	3	1	0	0	11
40.	Sao Tome and Principe	0	0	0	1	0	1
41.	Seychelles	4	2	2	0	2	10
42.	Singapore	10	6	4	0	1	21
43.	Solomon Island	9	12	7	0	1	29
44.	Sri Lanka	6	4	4	1	1	16
45.	Suriname	4	2	0	0	1	7
46.	Timor Leste	1	4	2	0	2	9
47.	Tonga	2	0	1	0	1	8
48.	Trinidad & Tobago	0	6	1	0	1	8
49.	Tuvalu	0	1	0	0	0	1
50.	United Kingdom	8	10	4	2	2	26
51.	Vanuatu	10	4	2	0	1	17

3.2.3 Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Design at Entry, Implementation, and Overall Assessment of M&E

M&E Design at Entry

The project's PRODOC incorporated an M&E system that was in accordance with UNDP's programming policies and procedures. However in the original PRODOC version when the project was only for 2 years, there was no budget allocated to M&E efforts and there was no project M&E personnel that had M&E responsibilities. The evaluation noted that as part of project assurance, the UNDP Indonesia (Environment Unit) carried out objective and independent project oversight and monitoring functions, which included a biannual process incorporated in the Project Board. This role ensured appropriate project management milestones were managed and completed.

Due to the intention for the project to extend for another 4 years, with support from UNDP and the Government of Indonesia, the PRODOC was revised to include budget allocation for M&E efforts and one project assistant with assigned responsibilities for M&E activities. Subsequently in the multi-year workplan, there was allocated monitoring budget for each outcome.

A results framework was designed to monitor results and track progress toward achieving the outcome objective. In implementing the M&E system, the PRODOC included an M&E plan that comprised standard M&E activities. At the M&E design stage, the evaluation assessed the quality of the results framework to be short of S.M.A.R.T. criteria, which would include the following: S - Specific, M - Measurable, A- Attributable, R- Relevant, T - Time-bound/Timely/ Trackable/Targeted.

Table 5 below showed the results of the quality assessment of project output key deliverable indicators based on the project's results framework as stated in the PRODOC.

Table 5: Quality Assessment of Project Output Key Deliverable Indicators

S.M.A.R.T. Criteria Fully Met		S.M.A.R.T. Criteria Partially Met		S.M.A.R.T. Criteria Not Fully Met	
Output	Output Key Deliverable Indicators	Baseline	Target (2026)	Smart Criteria Assessment	MTR Comments
Prior to 2023: Output 1: AIS Forum Secretariat Operation Strengthened capacity of AIS Forum Secretariat to be fully operationalized From 2023: Output 1: AIS Forum Secretariat Operation Strengthened capacity of AIS Forum Secretariat to be fully operationalized	1.1. The management and technical operations of the Secretariat are available and implemented	Limited	All the operation runs smoothly and to prepare the project transition (to become treaty/charter-based organization)	S.M.A.R.T. Criteria Partially Met	Missing the specificity and measurable elements that are directly attributable and relevant to the desired outcome
Prior to 2023: Output 2: The AIS' Framework and Partnership is developed From 2023: Output 2: Scaled up the Community-based Activities to drive the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 14) in AIS Countries	2.1 Extend to which the partners (Government of AIS Countries) and Embassies are facilitated under the AIS Forum 2.2 Start-up Hub and Women Entrepreneurs programmes are developed and engaged AIS countries	Limited	Fully Implemented	S.M.A.R.T. Criteria Partially Met	Denominator missing eg. How many partners. Missing the specificity and measurable elements that are directly attributable and relevant to the desired outcome
		Early development	Engaging additional startup from 47 AIS countries	S.M.A.R.T. Criteria Partially Met	Missing the specificity and measurable elements that are directly attributable and relevant to the desired outcome

S.M.A.R.T. Criteria Fully Met		S.M.A.R.T. Criteria Partially Met		S.M.A.R.T. Criteria Not Fully Met	
Output	Output Key Deliverable Indicators	Baseline	Target (2026)	Smart Criteria Assessment	MTR Comments
Prior to 2023: Output 2: The AIS' Framework and Partnership is developed From 2023: Output 2: Scaled up the Community-based Activities to drive the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 14) in AIS Countries (CONTINUED)	2.3 The Blue Economy Index of AIS Countries is developed	Early development	Not Applicable (included in Output indicator 2.5)	S.M.A.R.T. Criteria Not Fully Met	Indicator should not be tied to the performance of another indicator
	2.4 Joint research and student exchange is implemented by AIS Forum	Only 2 joint research programmes conducted with no student exchange	Not Applicable (included in Output indicator 2.5)	S.M.A.R.T. Criteria Not Fully Met	Indicator should not be tied to the performance of another indicator
	2.5 The research centre is being developed and engaged AIS countries (including joint research and BEDI) *New indicator from 2023	Early development	5 research grants will be provided and the online platform is operated	S.M.A.R.T. Criteria Partially Met	Missing the specificity and measurable elements that are directly attributable and relevant to the desired outcome. Eg. What is the end result of the research grants? How to measure the successfulness of operating the online platform? Which online platform is this?
	2.6 Numbers of partnership between AIS Countries established under the AIS Support Facility (including Technical assistance) *Previously an output 3 indicator prior to 2023	Limited	Engaging 47 AIS countries through technical assistance	S.M.A.R.T. Criteria Partially Met	Missing the specificity and measurable elements that are directly attributable and relevant to the desired outcome. Eg. How to measure the successfulness of technical assistance?
2.7 Numbers of AISF participation in Regional and Global Meetings *Previously an output 4 indicator prior to 2023	1 SOM and 1 MM were conducted	5 global meetings	S.M.A.R.T. Criteria Partially Met	Missing the specificity and measurable elements that are directly attributable and relevant to the desired outcome. Eg. How to measure the successfulness of global meetings?	

S.M.A.R.T. Criteria Fully Met		S.M.A.R.T. Criteria Partially Met		S.M.A.R.T. Criteria Not Fully Met	
Output	Output Key Deliverable Indicators	Baseline	Target (2026)	Smart Criteria Assessment	MTR Comments
	2.8 Numbers of technical assistance given by AIS Secretariat to strengthen the partnership between AIS Countries *Previously an output 3 indicator prior to 2023	4 technical assistances conducted	Not Applicable (included in Output indicator 2.6)	S.M.A.R.T. Criteria Not Fully Met	Indicator should not be tied to the performance of another indicator
Prior to 2023: Output 3: Strengthened partnership of AIS Members Countries	3.1 Advisory Board is being Developed *New indicator from 2023	No Baseline	The framework is ready to be implemented	S.M.A.R.T. Criteria Partially Met	Missing the specificity and measurable elements that are directly attributable and relevant to the desired outcome. Eg. How to measure the successfulness of advisory board?
From 2023: Output 3: Enhanced capacity of AIS Forum to be a treaty/charter-based organization	3.2 POPP and administrative system is being developed *New indicator from 2023	No Baseline	The framework is ready to be implemented	S.M.A.R.T. Criteria Partially Met	Missing the baseline, specificity and measurable elements that are directly attributable and relevant to the desired outcome. Eg. How to measure the successfulness of implementing POPP and administrative system?
Prior to 2023: Output 4: Strengthened roles of AIS Forum in International Fora. From 2023: Output 4: Strengthened policy environment to ensure sustainable innovative financing scheme through the AIS Fund Facility	4.1 AIS fund facility is being developed *New indicator from 2023	No Baseline	The framework is ready to be implemented	S.M.A.R.T. Criteria Partially Met	Missing the baseline, specificity and measurable elements that are directly attributable and relevant to the desired outcome. Eg. How to measure the successfulness of implementing a sustainable innovative financing scheme?

Based on the above, the evaluation assessed the project's M&E Design at Entry to be Mostly Unsatisfactory but noting that the AIS Forum Support Facility Project's secretariat team (project team) is currently reviewing the S.M.A.R.T. quality of the project results framework indicators as part of the process to revise the PRODOC.

M&E Implementation

As previously mentioned, the results framework comprised M&E activities in accordance with UNDP's programming policies and procedures. Additionally as per the evaluation plan of the updated PRODOC, there would be one Mid-Term Evaluation and one Terminal Evaluation. Table 6 below summarises the achievement of M&E actions so far as required by the PRODOC.

Table 6 : AIS Forum Support Facility Project M&E Activity Status

M&E Activity	Frequency/ Timing	Status	Evaluation Comments
Track results progress (Project Assurance Report)	Twice a year, or in the frequency required for each indicator. Will be conducted in every December and July of each year 2022 – 2026	Ongoing	Results compiled in written report (Project Assurance Report) and presented to the Project Board meeting.
Monitor and Manage Risk	Will be conducted in every December and July of each year (2022 – 2026)	Ongoing	This is part of the Project Assurance Report which is completed by the AIS Forum Support Facility Project secretariat team
Learn	Will be conducted in every December and July of each year (2022 – 2026)	Ongoing	This is part of the Project Assurance Report which is completed by the AIS Forum Support Facility Project secretariat team
Annual Project Quality Assurance	Will be conducted once a year in every November.	Ongoing	This is part of the Project Assurance Report which is completed by the AIS Forum Support Facility Project secretariat team
Review and Make Course Corrections	Will be conducted in every December of each year (2022 – 2026)	Ongoing	This is part of the Project Assurance Report which is completed by the AIS Forum Support Facility Project secretariat team
Project Report	Will be conducted once a year in every November.	Ongoing	Completed by the AIS Forum Support Facility Project secretariat team. Currently there are one combined 2021-2022 Project Report and one 2023 Project Report
Project Board	Will be conducted twice a year in every February and November.	Ongoing	Project Board meetings are conducted on a rather irregular basis: 2021 – September and November 2022 – No Project Board meeting 2023 – January 2024 – January and June
Mid-Term Evaluation	To be conducted in 2024	Ongoing	Expected to complete in January 2025
Terminal Evaluation	To be conducted in 2026	Not yet commenced	Expected to complete in June 2026

The evaluation further assessed that:

- M&E processes were in place to ensure key recommendations and corrective actions/asures could be provided to further improving the project implementation if required. However, monitoring, evaluation and reporting systems through one project M&E staff proved challenging as the project activities were wide spread and many activities/programmes/research were conducted at other AIS countries
- Knowledge, good practices and lessons were not regularly captured regularly for the M&E “Learn” activity. Additionally, there was lack of a knowledge management strategy or a knowledge repository to retain all institutional knowledge and products that were developed during project implementation for easy accessibility
- As the project team structure was designed in such a way that there were minimal field mission visits (except for the annual high-level AIS summits/meetings) to the project’s activities/programmes, it would be challenging for the M&E system to verify results on-the-ground and could only rely on end-of-activity/programme reports. Additionally, the quality of the results framework (as assessed by the evaluation) was such that it would be challenging on the M&E staff on what should be monitored and evaluated to accurately measure the progress of project performance
- The project previously had 3 regional representatives to cover the respective countries as part of engagement, coordination and also could have covered some form of M&E activity follow-up on the ground. However the evaluation noted that these 3 regional representatives did not continue and were not recruited
- The evaluation also noted the high staff turnover resulted in a new project M&E technical assistant staff recruited recently in December 2023. Besides the M&E responsibilities, the project M&E technical assistant also had to take on other roles such as to revise the PRODOC and to implement/manage one of the project outputs. By doing so, there could be a risk of M&E system not being carried out effectively. There would be a need to strengthen the M&E capacities through capacity building in M&E and also increasing to a small M&E team that would purely focus on M&E activities across the 4 project outputs

Based on the above, the evaluation assessed the project’s M&E Implementation to be Mostly Unsatisfactory.

Overall Assessment of M&E

Despite these constraints, the project continued to perform some M&E tracking and consistently provided 2 Project Assurance reports per year. The evaluation assessed the Project Assurance reports to be of sufficient quality despite the limitations. Project Board meetings were conducted as per the M&E plan to Track results progress and make any adjustments/corrections to project activities.

There were still significant gaps in the quality of the M&E system which needed improvement, especially in improving the quality of the project results framework and TOC model to be able to better track project performance.

Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)	Rating
M&E design at entry	3 - Mostly Unsatisfactory (MU)
M&E Plan Implementation	3 - Mostly Unsatisfactory (MU)
Overall Quality of M&E	3 - Mostly Unsatisfactory (MU)

3.2.4 UNDP Implementation/Oversight and Implementing Partner Execution, Overall Project Implementation/Execution, Coordination, and Operational Issues

The project was being implemented following UNDP’s DIM execution modality. UNDP was the key Implementing Agency for the AIS Forum Support Facility Project and as such remained the ultimate responsible party towards the Project Board with regard to the use of financial and technical resources and of any cash co-financing passing through UNDP accounts. UNDP Indonesia CO was responsible for the overall supervision and monitoring of the AIS Forum Support Facility Project and providing overall project assurance through active participation of UNDP senior management in the Project Board. During the project design stage, UNDP Indonesia CO delivered on activities relating to project identification, concept preparation, appraisal, preparation of detailed project proposal, and approval which ultimately led to project commencement. There was also a UNDP Project Team for the AIS Forum Support Facility Project, led by a UNDP Project Coordinator with guidance from a more senior UNDP Programme Manager/Adviser, that managed and administered the project’s day-to-day activities. The evaluation assessed that UNDP as the key Implementing Agency had:

- adequately on results and timeliness despite encountering project finance issues due to the delay in funding disbursement
- adequately used all available funds, procurement and contracting of goods and services
- implemented appropriate risk management processes
- provided adequate annual reporting but could have been more transparent in project challenges faced and financial statements
- adequately managed environmental and social risks as identified through the UNDP SESP and implementation of associated safeguards requirements

Based on this, quality of UNDP implementation/oversight is rated **Mostly Satisfactory (MS)**.

The Implementing Partners for the AIS Forum Support Facility Project are mainly in Output 2 and comprised the following:

- Research and Academic Institutions - Through a research funding programme, the AIS Forum Support Facility Project partnered with these research and academic institutions to support research, development, and deployment of prototypes that could potentially address the issues pertaining to archipelagic and island states. There was also an intention that the AIS Forum Support Facility Project could foster collaboration between multiple institutions from different countries to ensure the transfer of technology and knowledge. The evaluation assessed that this partnership started laying key foundations but could have more frequent follow-up communications on the research activity progress and also more frequent exchanges and knowledge-sharing
- Private Sector – The AIS Forum Support Facility Project was to develop deep partnerships with the private sector to drive the sustainability agenda. One notable partnership was with DBS Bank Indonesia to cooperate in the area of blue economy and blue financing. The evaluation assessed that this partnership was short-lived with only one high-level Blue Financing Instrument strategic document being developed but not certain of its intended application for use. It was intended that the AIS Forum Support Facility Project would continue to seek out partnerships with other private sector companies and would need to strengthen its strategic partnership roles with a long-term action plan.
- Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) – The AIS Forum Support Facility Project partnered with the MSG to make in-roads into the Pacific Islands countries to collaborate on capacity building programmes for local communities, particularly local entrepreneurs. Small short-term capacity building programmes were being conducted. While proving useful, the AIS Forum Support Facility Project would need to further develop a more strategic partnership with the MSG for long-term sustainability. Monitoring and evaluation of these capacity building programmes together with follow-up communications could also be strengthened to enhance the implementation partnership.

Based on the above the quality of Implementing Partner Execution is rated **Mostly Satisfactory (MS)**.

A combined rating of overall project implementation/execution is rated **Mostly Satisfactory (MS)**.

Implementation & Execution	Rating
Quality of UNDP Implementation/Oversight	4 - Mostly Satisfactory (MS)
Quality of Implementing Partner Execution	4 - Mostly Satisfactory (MS)
Overall quality of Implementation/Execution	4 - Mostly Satisfactory (MS)

3.2.5 Risk Management, including Social and Environmental Standards (Safeguards)

In regards to environmental and social risks, an environmental and social risks screening was conducted for the project to identify potential risks. The screening was conducted using the UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Report, comprising checklist questions in 2 parts:

- Part A. Integrating Programming Principles to Strengthen Social and Environmental Sustainability. The tool comprises of three principles: Human Rights (Principle 1); Gender Equality and Women Empowerment (Principle and Environmental Sustainability (Principle 3).
- Part B. Identifying and Managing Social and Environmental Risks. Screening questions for the environmental sustainability principles were structured under 3 categories and 7 standards:
 - Overarching Principle: Leave No One Behind Human Rights
 - Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment
 - Accountability
 - Standard 1: Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Natural Resource Management;
 - Standard 2: Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation;
 - Standard 3: Community Health, Safety and Working Conditions;
 - Standard 4: Cultural Heritage;
 - Standard 5: Displacement and Resettlement;
 - Standard 6: Indigenous Peoples; and
 - Standard 7: Pollution Prevention and Resource Efficiency

As per the results of the screening, there were no risks identified in Parts A and B, and the overall project risk categorization listed as “Low Risk” with the following justification:

“Though the Blue Economy component of the project inevitably involves the utilization of ocean resources, including fishery, aquaculture, mining etc, the goal is to provide a tool for evaluation and assessment, and a platform to exchange good practices, so that sustainable development plans can be formulated and implemented, therefore the social environmental risk is low.

The project also supported field actions by academia, startups or other participants, but because the selections were proposal-based, a social and environmental risk screening was done in advance to exclude candidates with apparent risks.”

During the project implementation period, the project would update the Project Board in its biannual Project Board meeting of any risks faced. These identified risks were duly noted down in its Project Assurance report and discussed in the Project Board meeting. Additionally, the project would also consult/inform the programme manager and UNDP CO of any risks encountered and any unresolved risks would be escalated up to UNDP CO programme units and senior management if needed to.

The evaluation noted that the project’s risk register was duly updated during project implementation. Furthermore, the evaluation observed that all the risks in the risk register had occurred and/or would still be occurring. The project secretariat team is currently working through all these risk issues and coming out with mitigation measures to resolve these issues, especially on:

- the need for closer coordination through continuous engagement and communications with government counterparts of AIS countries to forming a treaty-based/charter-based organization
- closer coordination among participating AIS countries, academic institutions and implementing partners to develop a cohesive and strategic approach through multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms for output 2 which was to ultimately scale up community-based activities to drive the Sustainable Development Goals.

3.3 Achievement of Project Results

3.3.1 Relevance

Achievement Rating: **5/6** (Satisfactory)

In order to obtain the relevance of the AIS Forum Support Facility Project and its alignment with strategic frameworks, the evaluator took a comprehensive approach to cross check the secondary data with primary data (KII from stakeholders).

Key Finding #1: The AIS Forum Support Facility Project was strategically aligned with global and organizational priorities through the UNDP’s Strategic Framework (2022-2025), UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD) for Indonesia 2021-2025, and UNSDCF Indonesia (2021-2025)

At the international level, the project integrated principles of sustainability, resilience, and the commitment to "leave no one behind" and “sustainability and resilience” by strengthening countries and institutions to address climate and socio-economic shocks. The project responded to the Archipelagic and Island States (AIS) Forum 2017 which resulted in a common understanding among participating AIS countries that a forum could be an innovative vehicle for effectively addressing climate change and marine issues.

The AIS Forum Support Facility Project was also in alignment within the UNDP’s Strategic Plan (2022-2025) in which the strategic directions of systemic change are: leave no one behind (climate action and sustainable economic growth, involve and benefit communities, promoting empowerment at a grassroots level) and building resilience, such as strengthening countries and institutions to prevent, mitigate and respond to climate and social and economic shocks. The Key Programs and Strategic Focus would be as follows:

1. **Resilience and Environment: Climate Change Adaptation** where UNDP emphasizes building resilience against climate change and natural disasters by supporting policies, strategies, and community-level interventions aimed at sustainable and adaptive practices. This focus aligns with blue economy initiatives that involve managing and protecting marine and coastal resources. Environment as a Core Focus where UNDP places nature and environmental protection at the center of national economic planning, which aligns with promoting and sustaining a blue economy.
2. **Strategic Innovation: Research and Innovation** where UNDP supports strategic innovation and digitalization as enablers to enhance development outcomes. This includes fostering new technologies and practices that could directly support research and innovation for blue economy advancements. Development Financing partnering with governments and private sectors to align capital flows with SDGs, which can aid startups and innovation in blue economy sectors.
3. **Community Empowerment and Inclusive Development: Building Resilience** through UNDP's approach includes empowering communities to become resilient to climate and social shocks, fostering community-led initiatives that could extend to sustainable practices and blue economy participation.
4. **Integrated Solutions: Support for Sustainable Solutions** UNDP plans to implement integrated development solutions that address climate change while also enhancing economic opportunities, such as those present in the blue economy. Focus on Green and Inclusive Transitions are efforts to facilitate transitions that include sustainable practices (e.g., renewable energy, ecological conservation) align with supporting startups and research in blue economy sectors.

The AIS Forum Support Facility Project aligned with two strategic priorities of UNSDCF Results Framework Indonesia (2021-2025). The Strategic Priority 3: Climate and Disaster Resilience with Outcome 3: Institutions, communities and people actively apply and implement low carbon development, sustainable natural resources management, and disaster resilience approaches that are all gender sensitive; and the Strategic Priority 4: Innovation to accelerate SDGs achievement with Outcome 4: Stakeholders adopt innovative and integrated development solutions to accelerate advancement towards the SDGs.

The AIS Forum Support Facility Project aligned with the following outcomes outlined in the UNDP CPD Indonesia (2021-2025), particularly in fostering inclusive human development (Outcome 1), economic transformation (Outcome 2), resilience to climate change and disasters (Outcome 3), and innovation for accelerating the achievements of Sustainable Development Goals (Outcome 4).

Specifically, the AIS Forum Support Facility Project contributed to the UNSDCF Indonesia 2021-2025 Results Framework through supporting the goals for institutions and people contribute more effectively to advance a higher value-added and inclusive economic transformation (Cooperation Framework 2) and institutions, communities and people actively apply and implement low carbon development, sustainable natural resources management, and disaster resilience approaches that are all gender sensitive (Cooperation Framework 3). By promoting socio-economic resilience and sustainable livelihoods, the AIS Forum Support Facility Project directly supported these strategic outcomes, contributing to both national and global sustainability goals.

Key Finding #2: The AIS Forum Support Facility Project was a cross-regional platform and not directly relevant to specific country national priorities, strategies and plans, but it was in-line with Indonesia's priorities in the “Long-term Development Plan 2005-2025” and the “Medium-term Development Plan 2020-2024.”

As it had indirect alignment with Government of Indonesia (GoI) strategic priorities, the AIS Forum Support Facility Project was funded from the GoI Budget Support to UNDP (USD 5,349,080 million). At the national level, the project design reflected key areas of Indonesia's Medium-term Development Plan 2020-2024, specifically its four mainstreaming areas: (1) the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), (2) gender equality, (3) social and cultural capital, and (4) digital transformation, especially in these following priorities:

- Priority 1 Economic Resilience:
- Priority 2 Human Resources Development:
- Priority 6 Climate and Disaster Resilience: Building Environmental Resilience, Disaster Management, and Climate Change Adaptation. The RPJMN outlines efforts to enhance resilience against climate impacts, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and implement sustainable resource management to protect ecosystems.

The AIS Forum Support Facility Project's focus on climate change adaptation, the Blue Economy, and sustainable development supported these national objectives. This approach promoted gender inclusivity by addressing gender disparities in economic recovery efforts, thus aligning with Indonesia's priority for inclusive economic growth. Through its adaptability and strategic alignment with Indonesia's development plans, the AIS Forum Support Facility Project was to be a significant contributor to the country's climate change adaptation strategy, fostering cooperation among government and community stakeholders and advancing sustainable economic opportunities across Indonesia.

Key Finding #3: The AIS Forum Support Facility Project was strategically aligned with global, national, and organizational priorities, contributing to various SDGs.

The AIS Forum Support Facility Project aligned closely with global and national priorities, particularly in support of the 2030 Agenda and Indonesia's commitment to various Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The project was strategically designed to address SDG 13 (Climate Action) and SDG 14 (Life Below Water) through initiatives that enhance climate resilience, adaptive capacity, and sustainable marine resource management. Specific targets included 13.3 (improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning) and 14.7 (promoting economic benefits from sustainable marine use for island states), reflect its direct contributions to climate adaptation and ocean health. Additional SDGs that the AIS Forum

Support Facility Project were aligned to included SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), emphasizing resilience, inclusive education, gender equality, and economic empowerment in coastal and island communities.

The AIS Forum Support Facility Project was strategically developed to mitigate the socio-economic impacts of climate change. By adopting a multi-sectoral approach, the project would contribute to SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) to deliver integrated climate change adaptation, targeting equitable and sustainable outcomes. The AIS Forum Support Facility Project was to play a key role in advancing island states' transition to a Blue Economy, emphasizing climate resilience, sustainable marine management, and inclusive economic growth in alignment with the global and national strategies, as well as SDG targets for environmental sustainability, poverty reduction, and gender equality. While the project initially focused on marine governance and blue financing, it did not explicitly include indicators for vulnerable groups, gender equality, or a rights-based approach. These were later incorporated through the Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP) during implementation, demonstrating the project's adaptability. This flexible approach enabled the AIS Forum to support sustainable development and inclusiveness for coastal and island communities, reinforcing its mission to foster a resilient, equitable Blue Economy.

3.3.2 Coherence

Achievement Rating: **3/6** (Mostly Unsatisfactory)

Key Finding #4: The AIS Forum Support Facility Project had limited coherence with other external international organizations work, Indonesian and other AIS government counterparts, and with other internal UNDP projects.

Internal Coherence

The evaluation data analysis revealed that the AIS Forum Support Facility Project was designed to foster international and regional collaboration to address marine and blue economy challenges. However, while the AIS Forum Support Facility Project collaborated with academic institutions and NGOs to fund and implement various activities, the evaluation assessed limited internal coherence within UNDP and weak alignment with other international organizations. In particular:

- **Partnership with CMMAI for COP26:** The AIS Forum Support Facility Project aligned with UNDP Indonesia's collaboration with the Coordinating Ministry for Maritime Affairs and Investment (CMMAI) for COP26, where shared goals in climate resilience have fostered more unified action. The AIS Forum Support Facility Project's had some integration to strengthen climate and blue economy efforts in Indonesia, where AIS Forum Joint Statement was briefly mentioned in the speech by the President of Indonesia at the World Leaders' Summit COP 26
- **Support for the 2022 United Nations Ocean Conference:** As UNDP Indonesia supported the Government of Indonesia's engagement at the 2022 United Nations Ocean Conference, the AIS Forum Support Facility Project leveraged this partnership to reinforce its own marine sustainability goals. Enhanced alignment with this collaboration supported Indonesia's ocean governance priorities and amplified regional efforts in sustainable blue economy practices, for example hosting side events on "Best Practices of Blue Innovative Financing in AIS Countries."
- **MoU with DBS Bank for Blue Financing:** In 2020, UNDP Indonesia signed an MoU with DBS Bank, focusing on blue financing strategies, including frameworks for Blue Bonds and Blue Sukuk to support SDG 14 (Life Below Water). The AIS Forum Support Facility Project coordinated with this initiative, thereby the framework document became a key reference for the Government of Indonesia in the development of the **ROI SDG Government Securities Framework**.

Results from key informant interviews with national counterparts and the project team indicated that although the AIS Forum Support Facility Project aimed to leverage partnerships and promote sustainable development through maritime initiatives, its coherence with other UNDP projects and initiatives could be further strengthened to increase the project's potential to reinforce and amplify broader UNDP strategic goals. Notably although the AIS Forum Support Facility Project targeted sustainable blue economy development, its activities often operated in silos, with insufficient coordination or linkages to other UNDP interventions in similar thematic areas.

Furthermore, in May 2024, UNDP Indonesia launched the ASEAN Blue Business Matchmaking Program with ASEAN Secretariat support, funded by Japan, to foster blue economic growth by nurturing blue economy startups and MSMEs. This initiative shared similar goals with the AIS Forum Support Facility Project, there was some coordination to increase synergies within UNDP's blue economy programs, such as: collaborated with the ASEAN Blue Business Matchmaking Program/ASEAN JSB project. However at the national level with the Government of Indonesia, coherence could be improved through stronger collaboration with various ministries and agencies. There needs to be a closer alignment with the AIS Forum Support Facility Project to reduce redundancy and achieve the desired sustainable impact. Strengthening coherence with internal UNDP projects, like-minded external organizations, and the Government of Indonesia is essential for the AIS Forum Support Facility Project to maximize its relevance and effectiveness in the blue economy sector.

External Coherence

The AIS Forum Support Facility Project engaged in extensive partnerships to address climate change adaptation across AIS countries through innovative programs and solutions. Through the AIS Forum, the project reportedly collaborated with 47 countries, 1,000 startups and youth communities, 75 NGOs and local communities, 100 groups of researchers and academics, and 75 private sector entities. The Coordinating Ministry for Maritime and Investment Affairs (CMMAI) played a strategic role in fostering this collaboration by providing direction for participating countries.

High-level external partnerships between UNDP, the Government of Indonesia, and AIS partner countries were developed through Senior Officials’ Meetings (SOMs) and collaborations with selected NGOs, scientific organizations, and academic institutions to address climate adaptation challenges. For example, the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN) in Indonesia was working on mobile applications to support environmental sustainability, such as the Carbon Inventory for Seagrass Ecosystem (CISE), Mangrove Health Index (MonMang), and AI tools for coral reef data analysis.

Several external partnerships were found, as below:

- OXFAM for Impacts of Climate Change for Small Scale Producers and Ecology of AIS Countries program.
- the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) for Bluepreneur: Coastal Youth Communities Training program. Additionally, a landmark Letter of Agreement (LoA) with the MSG symbolises AIS Forum commitment to fostering robust regional and sub-regional alliances, leveraging shared knowledge and resources to address our collective challenges.
- the UK Tech Hub for the Indonesia Digital Economy Assessment (IDEA) program.
- Lazada Indonesia and the Coordinating Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Investment for Island Hackathon and Clean Up program.
- the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) and Irish Aid for Blue Innovation Solutions–Catalysing Pacific Bluepreneur event.
- the Ministry of Fisheries and the Blue Economy of Madagascar and with support from Next A for AIS Innovation Challenge on Blue Economy initiative.
- the Institut Halieutique et des Sciences Marines for the Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries Training.
- Several agencies (BEM FPIK IPB, Wakatobi Regency, Universitas Halu Oleo, Universitas Mesamus Merauke, and Universitas Kristen Papua) for beach clean-up programs.
- the SOA Pacific Hub for Youth Leadership Workshop on Ocean Governance.
- Pacific Island Development Forum for the training for Floating Net Cage (FNC) technique implementation.
- Pacific Community (SPC), for ARHEA (Advanced Drifter GPS Oceanography Coverage Area) training.
- the Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Science, Diponegoro University for the International Tropical Summer Course (ITroSCo).
- IPB University and the ATSEA Secretariat for the 4th ICMMBT Conference: The 4th ICMMBT Conference.

While these external partnerships demonstrated engagement across various sectors, the above partnerships needed to be more strategic with long term view for sustainable long term impact with a strategic outlook/purpose. The evaluation further assessed that this was also due to the AIS Forum Support Facility Project lacking a long-term strategic direction/roadmap that could bring improved coherence and a long-term vision to its many initiatives and partnerships.

The AIS Forum Support Facility Project could further deepen and sustain these external partnerships for a longer period by strengthening long-term partnerships with AIS partner country governments and relevant UNDP regional and country offices. By doing so, this would enhance the AIS Forum Support Facility Project’s impact by creating synergies, minimizing duplication, and delivering collective benefits to local communities.

3.3.3 Effectiveness

Achievement Rating: **3/6** (Mostly Unsatisfactory)

Progress towards Outcome Objective and Expected Outputs

Key Finding #5: The AIS Forum Support Facility Project’s logical/results framework would need to incorporate stronger S.M.A.R.T. quality output indicators to be able to accurately measure project achievement progress. The latest version of the PRODOC and project results framework did not align with the outdated TOC model which needed refinement to reflect the updates and changes.

The evaluation rated the project’s progress towards its outcome objective and output results with reference to its 1 outcome and 4 project outputs as per stated in the PRODOC. The overall progress results are presented below in Table 7.

Table 7: Overall Reported Progress Results – AIS Forum Support Facility Project

On track to achieve 2026 target		Slow progress to achieve 2026 target			Unable to accurately access progress
OUTCOME/ OUTPUTS	OUTPUT KEY DELIVERABLE INDICATORS	2021-2026			MTR Comments/Remarks
		Baseline	Target (2026)	Implementation Status	
Outcome Objective:					The 4 outputs and corresponding output key deliverable indicators in their current form did not provide enough S.M.A.R.T. qualities to be able to measure its achievement progress.
To build collaboration to address global social, environmental, and developmental challenges through coastal community-based activities and ecosystem-based approaches; and to promote sustainable and smart innovative solutions as well as cooperation between its participating countries in the areas of climate change and adaptation, blue economy, marine plastic debris, and good maritime governance					

On track to achieve 2026 target		Slow progress to achieve 2026 target			Unable to accurately access progress
OUTCOME/ OUTPUTS	OUTPUT KEY DELIVERABLE INDICATORS	2021-2026			MTR Comments/Remarks
		Baseline	Target (2026)	Implementation Status	
Prior to 2023: Output 1: AIS Forum Secretariate is fully operated From 2023: Output 1: Strengthened capacity of AIS Forum Secretariat to be fully operationalized	1.1. The management and technical operations of the Secretariat are available and implemented	Limited	All the operation runs smoothly and to prepare the project transition (to become treaty/charter-based organization)	On track to achieve 2026 target (but based on a non-S.M.A.R.T. target)	Output indicator in its current form is too generalized and measures the completion of overall administrative set up which has already been completed.
Prior to 2023: Output 2: The AIS' Framework and Partnership is developed From 2023: Output 2: Scaled up the Community-based Activities to drive the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 14) in AIS Countries	2.1 Extend to which the partners (Government of AIS Countries) and Embassies are facilitated under the AIS Forum	Limited	Fully Implemented	Unable to accurately access progress	The final target does not provide enough specificity and relevance to measure its achievement progress. The output indicator of partners and embassies being facilitated under the AIS Forum is too generalized and also not clear on what it intends to measure in relation to achieving Output 2
	2.2 Start-up Hub and Women Entrepreneurs programmes are developed and engaged AIS countries	Early development	Engaging additional startup from 47 AIS countries	Unable to accurately access progress	The final target does not provide enough specificity and relevance to measure its achievement progress. The output indicator of engaging additional startup from 47 AIS countries is too generalized and also not clear on what it intends to measure
	2.3 The Blue Economy Index of AIS Countries is developed	Early development	Not Applicable (included in Output indicator 2.5)	Unable to accurately access progress	The PRODOC stated that this indicator is now dependent on Output indicator 2.5
	2.4 Joint research and student exchange is implemented by AIS Forum	Only 2 joint research programmes conducted with no student exchange	Not Applicable (included in Output indicator 2.5)	Unable to accurately access progress	The PRODOC stated that this indicator is now dependent on Output indicator 2.5
	2.5 The research centre is being developed and engaged AIS countries (including joint research and BEDI) *New indicator from 2023	Early development	5 research grants will be provided and the online platform is operated	Unable to access progress	It is not clear how the target of providing 5 research grants can relate to setting up of a research centre as the AIS Forum Support Facility Project is already providing research grants. It is also not clear on what online platform needs to be operationalized and also how the target of operating the online platform can relate to setting up a research centre as the AIS Forum Support Facility Project currently has an online platform.

On track to achieve 2026 target		Slow progress to achieve 2026 target			Unable to accurately access progress
OUTCOME/ OUTPUTS	OUTPUT KEY DELIVERABLE INDICATORS	2021-2026			MTR Comments/Remarks
		Baseline	Target (2026)	Implementation Status	
(CONTINUED)	<p>Prior to 2023: Output 2: The AIS' Framework and Partnership is developed</p> <p>From 2023: Output 2: Scaled up the Community-based Activities to drive the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 14) in AIS Countries</p>	Limited	Engaging 47 AIS countries through technical assistance	Unable to accurately access progress	The final target does not provide enough specificity and relevance to measure its achievement progress. The output indicator of engaging 47 AIS countries through technical assistance is too generalized and also not clear on what it intends to measure in relation to achieving Output 2
	<p>2.7 Numbers of AISF participation in Regional and Global Meetings</p> <p>*Previously an output 4 indicator prior to 2023</p>	1 SOM and 1 MM were conducted	5 global meetings	On track for achievement of 2026 target (but based on a non-S.M.A.R.T. target)	The final target does not provide enough specificity and relevance to measure its achievement progress. The output indicator of 5 global meetings is too generalized and also not clear on what it intends to measure in relation to achieving Output 2
	<p>2.8 Numbers of technical assistance given by AIS Secretariat to strengthen the partnership between AIS Countries</p> <p>*Previously an output 3 indicator prior to 2023</p>	4 technical assistances conducted	Not Applicable (included in Output indicator 2.6)	Unable to accurately access progress	The PRODOC stated that this indicator is now dependent on Output indicator 2.6
<p>Prior to 2023: Output 3: Strengthened partnership of AIS Members Countries</p> <p>From 2023: Output 3: Enhanced capacity of AIS Forum to be a treaty/charter-based organization</p>	<p>3.1 Advisory Board is being Developed</p> <p>*New indicator from 2023</p>	No Baseline	The framework is ready to be implemented	On track for achievement of 2026 target (but based on a non-S.M.A.R.T. target)	The final target does not provide enough specificity and relevance to measure its achievement progress. The output indicator of setting up advisory board is too generalized and also not clear on what it intends to measure
	<p>3.2 POPP and administrative system is being developed</p> <p>*New indicator from 2023</p>	No Baseline	The framework is ready to be implemented	On track for achievement of 2026 target (but based on a non-S.M.A.R.T. target)	The final target does not provide enough specificity and relevance to measure its achievement progress. The output indicator is too generalized and also not clear on what it intends to measure
<p>Prior to 2023: Output 4: Strengthened roles of AIS Forum in International Fora.</p> <p>From 2023: Output 4: Strengthened policy environment to ensure sustainable innovative financing scheme through the AIS Fund Facility</p>	<p>4.1 AIS fund facility is being developed</p> <p>*New indicator from 2023</p>	No Baseline	The framework is ready to be implemented	Slow progress to achieve 2026 target (but based on a non-S.M.A.R.T. target)	The output indicator in its current form appeared insufficient to achieve the desired output of strengthening the policy environment. Other indicators are required to guide the project towards achieving a strengthened policy environment AIS-wide or in a specific country/region

The evaluation further assessed:

- as previously mentioned, the latest version of the PRODOC and project results framework did not align with the outdated TOC model which needed refinement to reflect the updates and changes (the MTR noted that the project secretariat team is currently reviewing and revising the PRODOC, project results framework and TOC model)
- output key deliverable indicators would need to incorporate stronger S.M.A.R.T. qualities to be able to measure project achievement progress. The S.M.A.R.T. qualities would include the following: S - Specific, M - Measurable, A- Attributable, R- Relevant, T - Time-bound/Timely/Trackable/Targeted
- the project secretariat team, despite its current composition/structure as previously mentioned in Section 3.1.7, experienced high turnover with new project members joining and early budgetary constraints, had done its best to deliver and achieve the desired project results despite encountering significant external factors/challenges
- activities/interventions designed under the project could not yet be determined if they were broadly effective in bringing about the desired outcome. This was due to the need to give time for the long-term effects of the project activities/interventions to be embedded and to measure according to the outcome. Furthermore, these activities/interventions could be assessed as potential if the outputs, output key deliverable indicators and corresponding activities could be re-designed accordingly with S.M.A.R.T. qualities for closer alignment to the desired outcome

Overall Analysis of the Effectiveness of the AIS Forum Support Facility Project Interventions

The evaluation provided an overall analysis of the effectiveness of the AIS Forum Support Facility Project interventions as shown below in Table 8.

Table 8: Overall Analysis of Effectiveness of the AIS Forum Support Facility Project

Overall Analysis of Effectiveness of AIS Forum Support Facility Project	Evaluation Assessment/Remarks
<p>Outcome Objective:</p> <p>To build collaboration to address global social, environmental, and developmental challenges through coastal community-based activities and ecosystem-based approaches; and to promote sustainable and smart innovative solutions as well as cooperation between its participating countries in the areas of climate change and adaptation, blue economy, marine plastic debris, and good maritime governance</p>	<p>Key Finding #6: The AIS Forum Support Facility Project would need to continue to build on its foundational activities to realize its full potential. In its current foundational form, the project interventions would not be sufficiently effective to achieve the desired outcome objective.</p> <p>As the project was still mid-way through the implementation, the evaluation assessed the current output interventions as being foundational which would need to be further build upon to realize the full potential. Additionally, the evaluation assessed weak contribution/attribution linkages between the outcome objective and project outputs 1, 3 and 4. Hence in its current foundational form, the evaluation determined that current interventions delivered under the project would not be sufficiently effective in achieving the desired outcome objective as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was lack of sustained and strategic collaborations among participating AIS country governments/partners/beneficiaries in coastal community-based activities and ecosystem-based approaches. • Sustainable and smart innovative solutions still needed to be further promoted and socialized among participating AIS countries, especially partnering with AIS country government counterparts for greater acceptance and customization in respective participating AIS countries • There would need to be an integrated and strategic approach for knowledge management of all institutional knowledge/products that could be shared among AIS countries, AIS partners/beneficiaries
<p>Output 1: Strengthened capacity of AIS Forum Secretariat to be fully operationalized</p>	<p>Key Finding #7: The AIS Forum Support Facility Project would need to strengthen project management capacities and technical expertise to be able to strategically implement and monitor project technical interventions to transition into a treaty/charter-based organization.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current secretariat team capacity was assessed to be adequate purely for administrative/secretariat functions. Additionally, there should be additional technical expertise with more senior-level experiences who could deal with and navigate the geo-political environment at national/regional levels and gather collective consensus among the AIS country members for the AIS Forum transitioning to be a charter-based organization. • To be a more effective AIS Forum Secretariat, there would need to be strengthened and additional capacities in technical expertise in the areas of (1) Project Management for UNDP projects, Partnership Development/Engagement, Resource Mobilization to effectively transition into a treaty/charter-based organization, and (2) climate change and adaptation, blue economy, marine plastic debris and maritime governance to be able to strategically implement project technical interventions in output 2.
<p>Output 2: Scaled up the Community-based Activities to drive the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 14) in AIS Countries</p>	<p>Key Finding #8: Community-based activities and technical assistance were short-term with little strategic considerations to coherently sustain efforts and benefits gained.</p> <p>The AIS Forum Support Facility Project piloted community-based activities and technical assistance with selected regional partners and governments. However, the evaluation observed that most community-based activities and technical assistance were short-term with little strategic considerations to coherently sustain efforts being made as indicated below:</p>

Overall Analysis of Effectiveness of AIS Forum Support Facility Project	Evaluation Assessment/Remarks
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustaining efforts would need to increase stronger/deeper engagement with AIS participating country governments in the country sites where the community-based activities were currently being implemented. • The Start-Up Blue Hub started off well at the “pilot” stage with keen interest. But the evaluation assessed that the Start-Up Blue Hub was currently inactive as the needs of the Start-Up Blue Hub members evolved, ie. Start-ups were predominantly looking for funding/financing schemes rather than connecting through a network platform. • The Blue Economy Development Index that was meant to track the blue economy progress of different country jurisdictions currently on hold with little progress due to: (1) the challenges in collecting meaningful and accurate data from different jurisdictions, and (2) the need to receive strong interest and consensus among the 51 AIS country members to be an effective index tool. • Linkages between output 2 and AISF participation in Regional and Global Meetings for effectiveness could be strengthened. • AIS Innovators Scholarship Program currently underway. However continuous monitoring required to assess program effectiveness. There would be a need to develop strategic direction on post program activities for the scholarship recipients to sustain the program results. • Research grants given to academic institutions progressing well, but would need to have strategic considerations on how to (1) Deepen exchange between academic institutions with similar research interests through a regional research center, (2) Utilize research outputs as institutional knowledge/products that could be useful for effective policy-making decisions, (3) Promote relevant research outputs as community-based solutions for policy-makers or private sector among AIS countries.
<p>Output 3: Enhanced capacity of AIS Forum to be a treaty/charter-based organization</p>	<p>Key Finding #9: Governance mechanism artefacts to be an effective treaty/charter-based organization had been developed or currently underway but would need strong interest and consensus among the 51 AIS country to become a reality.</p> <p>The following governance mechanism artefacts had been developed or currently underway:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft advisory board structure and terms of reference • Development of Programme and Operational Policy and Procedure (POPP) currently underway. This would likely be modelled after the UNDP POPP. • Development of the institutional framework of the AIS Forum as a future International Organization currently underway. <p>Despite the above, perceived effectiveness risks would exist as the above governance mechanism artefacts would still need to receive strong interest and consensus among the 51 AIS country members to be an effective treaty/charter-based organization. Furthermore, making the AIS Forum's intention of becoming a treaty/charter-based organization a reality would require a strategic and well-coordinated approach. This would involve building political consensus, developing an effective process for national ratification of the treaty-based organization among AIS country members, and ensuring sustainable financial and institutional support through AIS country member contributions and external funding. The AIS Forum Support Facility Project should incorporate workplans or technical activities on building political consensus and implementing a national ratification process.</p>
<p>Output 4: Strengthened policy environment to ensure sustainable innovative financing scheme through the AIS Fund Facility</p>	<p>Key Finding #10: Finance mechanism artefacts for a planned fund facility had been developed or currently underway but would need strong buy-in and financial resource contributions among the 51 AIS country members, donor agencies, philanthropic foundations and/or private sector to become a reality.</p> <p>The following financing mechanism artefacts had been developed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline of AIS Fund Facility establishment (including the AIS Forum Endowment Fund set up) to support the AIS Forum’s work programme and operational costs • Mapping of potential conventional and innovative funding sources • Investment for development strategies <p>Despite the above, perceived effectiveness risks existed as there would need to be a strong buy-in and financial resource contributions among the 51 AIS country members, donor agencies, philanthropic foundations and/or private sector to make the AIS Fund Facility a reality.</p> <p>Key Finding #11: The AIS Forum Support Facility Project had not yet implemented activities/interventions to strengthen the policy environment at country-level or regional-level through policy and legislative reforms.</p> <p>Additionally, this output had not yet implemented activities/interventions to strengthen the policy environment at country-level or regional-level through policy and legislative reforms. This would include (1) technical assistance for reviewing and drafting legislation and policies that would support marine conservation, climate adaptation and sustainable development, (2) modernizing laws on marine protected areas, fisheries management, and pollution control.</p>

3.3.5 Efficiency

Achievement Rating: **3/6** (Mostly Unsatisfactory)

Utilization of Project Funding for Efficient Delivery

Key Finding #12: The AIS Forum Support Facility Project delivery/utilization rate and resource allocation were not efficient

The project had an initial duration of 13 months but was subsequently extended (approved by the PB with additional funding from the Government of Indonesia) to 62 months, with an approved total funding of US\$5,349,080. The budget and actual expenditure of the AIS Forum Support Facility Project up to 2023 (mid-way through the project duration) are provided below in Table 9.

Table 9: Summary of Budget and Actual Expenditure (AIS Forum Support Facility Project)

Project Output	PRODOC Revised Budget (2021 – 2026) (US\$)	Total Actual Expenditure (2021 – 2024) (US\$)	2021 (US\$)		2022 (US\$)		2023 (US\$)		2024 (Up to 30 June 2024) (US\$)	
			Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual
Prior to 2023: Output 1: AIS Forum Secretariat is fully operated From 2023: Output 1: Strengthened capacity of AIS Forum Secretariat to be fully operationalized	1,649,551	440,170	103,880	98,942	129,600	115,567	239,120	212,717	207,000	12,945
Output 1 Utilisation Rate (Actual/Budget)	26.7% of total budget		95.2%		89.2%		88.9%		6.4%	
Prior to 2023: Output 2: The AIS' Framework and Partnership is developed From 2023: Output 2: Scaled up the Community-based Activities to drive the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 14) in AIS Countries	2,635,688	1,374,334	180,124	128,774	62,567	93,557	977,489	1,010,813	360,000	141,191
Output 2 Utilisation Rate (Actual/Budget)	52.1% of total budget		71.5%		149.5%		103.4%		39.2%	
Prior to 2023: Output 3: Strengthened partnership of AIS Members Countries From 2023: Output 3: Enhanced capacity of AIS Forum to be a treaty/charter-based organization	778,406	130,927	28,204	3,037	39,485	17,407	194,400	110,483	115,000	0
Output 3 Utilisation Rate (Actual/Budget)	16.8% of total budget		10.8%		44.1%		56.8%		0%	
Prior to 2023: Output 4: Strengthened roles of AIS Forum in International Fora. From 2023: Output 4: Strengthened policy environment to ensure sustainable innovative financing scheme through the AIS Fund Facility	285,435	59,177	76,255	28,489	23,928	23,096	116,050	7,592	25,000	0
Output 4 Utilisation Rate (Actual/Budget)	20.7% of total budget		37.4%		96.5%		6.5%		0%	
Total	5,349,080	2,248,859	388,463	259,242	255,580	249,626	1,527,059	1,341,605 + 21,249 (additional activity) + 223,001 (commitment) = 1,585,855	707,000	154,136
Utilisation Rate (Total Actual/Budget)	42.0% of total budget		66.7%		97.7%		103.9%		21.8%	

Source: AIS Forum Support Facility Project PRODOC, annual financial reports (2021, 2022, 2023), annual work plan (2021, 2022, 2023), internal project finance data

The evaluation assessed that the project delivery/utilization rate and resource allocation were not efficient based on the following observations:

- The evaluation noted that the AIS Forum Support Facility Project revised its PRODOC with amended outputs and new activities which included output 3 for the AIS Forum to be a treaty/charter-based organization and output 4 to develop sustainable innovative financing scheme through the AIS Fund Facility. Outputs 3 and 4 had yet to commence even though these 2 outputs would also be considered critically important to build the foundations laid on the project and to solidify a strategic direction to go forward.
- The design of the project output targets being based on non S.M.A.R.T. criteria made it difficult to assess the synergies/coherence with other project outputs, and unable to accurately assess progress or if the project was indeed on track for achievement.
- The project in 2021 under-spent its allocated total project funds by about 33%. This was due to the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions which resulted in reduced travel costs and reduced local training/workshop venues costs. There were also reduced activities in outputs 3 and 4
- The project in 2022 over-spent the allocated budget in output 2 by almost 50% while under-spending the allocated budget in output 3 by almost 55%. This was due to the post COVID-19 activities/programmes being ramped up for output 2 through engagement in coordination/consultation meetings, talk shows, trainings, research grants disbursed, webinars, and seminars. But overall, the project had a total utilization rate of about 98%.
- The project in 2023 overspent its total project funds by about 4%. This was mainly due to additional project commitments and additional activities that were not part of the 2023 Annual Workplan which costs about \$223,001. This came about as the project revised its PRODOC with amended outputs and new activities which include output 3 now undertaking institutional preparations in transition for the AIS Forum to be a treaty/charter-based organization and output 4 to develop sustainable innovative financing scheme through the AIS Fund Facility.
- The AIS Forum Support Facility Project in 1st half of 2024 faced financial challenges due to the delayed receipt of donor funding tranche, which resulted in delays in implementing planned activities. The AIS Forum Support Facility Project implemented cost-saving measures and reallocated funds from non-essential areas to cover critical expenditures, hence there were no activities implemented for Outputs 3 and 4 for the 1st half of 2024. The AIS Forum Support Facility Project also managed to secure pre-financing from the Country Office TRAC to maintain essential operational activities. As a result, the AIS Forum Support Facility Project utilization rate at mid-year was about 21.8%.
- Based on discussion with the project team and the MTE's review of subsequent/future activities to be implemented by the AIS Forum Support Facility Project, expected expenditure is assessed to remain on track and the likelihood that the total project budget would be fully utilized/spent by the end of the project term remain high.

Efficiency of the Project Management Structure

Key Finding #13: The AIS Forum Support Facility Project team's combined expertise could be further strengthened with programme management and technical expert leads with fresh ideas/innovations and capabilities to efficiently deliver against the project's objectives and targets. Specifically, project M&E system in data collection processes could be strengthened to enable verification of results on the ground and accurately assess the intervention impacts and effectiveness.

The project management structure played a crucial role in driving its efficiency. A well-organized and structured approach to project management ensured that resources were allocated effectively and that activities were aligned with the project's goals. The AIS Forum Support Facility Project management structure as outlined in the PRODOC could be further improved to be more efficient in generating the expected results. In the last 2.5 years of the implementation period, the project team had several staff changes with on 2 project staff who were hired from the beginning. Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021, the AIS Forum Support Facility Project demonstrated resilience and agility in adapting to the changing circumstances by implementing appropriate measures to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on the project's implementation such as virtual meetings and remote work arrangements. By doing so, this ensured the safety and well-being of project stakeholders/beneficiaries. Additionally, the project's financial management could be further strengthened with the project team establishing appropriate financial controls and practices in relation to allocating funds only to project activities approved in the Annual Workplans. The project team would also need to deploy strategic allocation of funds, through proper planning of project output delivery, ensuring that activities in each output would be implemented coherently and strategically implemented to maximize effectiveness and efficiency of project results. This ensured that the project budget could be managed efficiently and that resources were deployed where they were most needed. Overall, the AIS Forum Support Facility Project also displayed adequate financial governance which contributed to the overall accountability of the project, helping to prevent more waste and ensuring that funds were used to maximize impact.

Current staff capabilities were adequate for secretariat/administrative functions. The evaluation assessed that the combined expertise of the project team could be further strengthened with programme management and technical expert leads with fresh ideas/innovations and capabilities to efficiently deliver against the project's objectives and targets. This could be enhanced by adding full-time technical expert leads in the areas of Project Management for UNDP projects, Partnership Development/Engagement, Resource Mobilization, Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation, Blue Economy, Marine Plastic Debris, and Maritime Governance where necessary to improve the team's ability to manage the project's implementation effectively, deliver quality outputs and outcomes, and achieve the project's objectives and targets efficiently. The evaluation also assessed that these technical expert leads would ideally be of senior-levels with the international/regional experiences to adequately handle and navigate the complexities of the geo-political environment. In particular, as previously highlighted in Section 3.2.3 Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Design at Entry, Implementation, and Overall Assessment of M&E, the evaluation further assessed that project M&E system in data collection processes could be strengthened to enable verification of

results on the ground and accurately assess the intervention impacts and effectiveness. Hence, there would need to be increased dedicated resources/further strengthening in project M&E capabilities to closely track the progress of project activities that are implemented in Indonesia and overseas.

3.3.6 Cross Cutting Issues - Background

An effective evaluation requires a comprehensive understanding of the social groups impacted by the intervention or policy under review. Gender equality and human rights concerns often intersect with the experiences of marginalized or underrepresented groups, which must be explicitly addressed to ensure an inclusive analysis. This section provides an overview of the specific social groups affected, as well as the key instruments and policies that frame gender equality and human rights in this context.

Analysis of Affected Social Groups

Social groups impacted by policies or interventions can include women, men, children, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and other historically marginalized communities. Women and girls, in particular, often face systemic barriers to accessing education, healthcare, and economic opportunities due to entrenched gender norms and discrimination. Similarly, other marginalized groups/individuals may encounter exclusion, violence, or stigma that limits their full participation in society.

For instance, women in rural areas in AIS countries especially in the Pacific Region may face compounded disadvantages due to the intersection of gender and geography, including limited access to resources like transportation, technology, and financial services. Likewise, indigenous communities frequently experience exclusion from decision-making processes and inequitable access to public services, exacerbating gender-based disparities within these groups. Recognizing these intersecting vulnerabilities is critical for understanding how policies or interventions influence social outcomes. The evaluation made efforts to examine how the voices and experiences of these groups were incorporated into the design, implementation, and assessment of the intervention, ensuring a participatory approach that aligns with principles of equity and inclusion.

Relevant Instruments and Policies

The MTE drew its motivations from various international instruments such as the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**, the **Beijing Platform for Action**, and the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, particularly Goals 5 and 10, which emphasize gender equality and reducing inequality. Other frameworks, like the **Yogyakarta Principles** and the **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)**, further support inclusive approaches. National laws and gender action plans also shape the context for assessing the intervention’s compliance and impact.

The above ensured that the MTE captured where applicable the experiences of diverse populations, aligning with established legal and policy commitments, and provided actionable insights to address systemic inequities. The subsequent sections covered the various key cross cutting issues.

3.3.7 Cross Cutting Issues – Disability Inclusion

Achievement Rating: **2/6** (Unsatisfactory)

Key Findings #15: The AIS Forum Support Facility Project in the design stage did not include indicators for disability inclusion elements and there were limited contributions to promoting disability inclusion during implementation.

Table 10 below assessed how each component output of the project contributed to promoting social inclusion in the areas of disability inclusion.

Table 10: Disability Inclusion Assessment for the AIS Forum Support Facility Project

<u>AIS Forum Support Facility Project Output</u>	<u>Disability Inclusion</u>
Output 1. AIS Forum Secretariat Operation Strengthened capacity of AIS Forum Secretariat to be fully operationalized	3 - Mostly Unsatisfactory (MU)
Output 2. Scaled up the Community-based Activities to drive the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 14) in AIS Countries	3 - Mostly Unsatisfactory (MU)
Output 3. Enhanced capacity of AIS Forum to be a treaty/charter-based organization	2 - Unsatisfactory (U)
Output 4. Strengthened policy environment to ensure sustainable innovative financing scheme through the AIS Fund Facility	2 - Unsatisfactory (U)
Overall Rating	2 - Unsatisfactory (U)

Output 1:

In relation to the development of management and technical operations of the project secretariat, the evaluation showed that in the project design stage the outcome of this component output incorporated some People With Disabilities (PWD) elements in their project activities. However, there was an absence of output indicators explicitly related to those elements and there was a lack of strategic direction to fill these gaps of disability inclusion in a transformative way during the implementation phase. Strengthening the institutionalization of the system like incorporating disability inclusion targets and setting mandatory criteria of disability inclusion in the project activities would significantly improve the inclusion of PWDs.

Output 2:

Training, capacity-building, and advocacy activities targeted CSOs and youth, including those from rural areas. However, the handbooks, manuals, guides, and methodologies could be further strengthened by placing a greater emphasis on PWD principles where applicable.

Disability inclusion not integrated in the indicators of the project results framework could potentially result in missed opportunities to harness the full potential of PWDs as entrepreneurs, researchers, and contributors to the AIS Forum Support Facility Project. However, the cross-cutting issue of inclusivity, especially for PWDs, was largely covered in the AIS Forum Entrepreneurship Programme, but not in other activities such as the AIS Forum Research and Development Programme. While this was a positive indication, the AIS Forum Support Facility Project still lacked adequate inclusivity for PWDs and would need to further strategically strengthen disability inclusion aspects in its project activities.

Output 3:

This output had not yet commenced. In developing the POPP and administrative system there would be an opportunity to include PWD aspects as part of the procedural/requirement. The five-year work plan and its project indicators for the AIS Forum Support Facility Project did not explicitly include PWD aspects. This omission was concerning, as PWDs in many AIS countries faced unique challenges in accessing equal opportunities. Going forward, the AIS Forum Support Facility Project would need to strategically plan/implement specific activities to include PWD aspects.

Output 4:

This output had not yet commenced other than just developing an outline of sustainable innovative financing schemes. In strengthening policy environment to ensure sustainable innovative financing scheme through the AIS Fund Facility, the evaluation assessed that there would be a strategic opportunity include PWD/disability inclusion elements as part of the policy/regulation development and the AIS Fund Facility. This would ensure that PWDs elements could be incorporated as a key institutional feature/product of AIS Forum Support Facility Project.

Overall, as evident from the absence of such insights/views during stakeholder interviews/FGDs, the project would need to strengthen its references to disability inclusion and mitigate the challenges faced by PWDs. Furthermore, the absence of such insights/views regarding the adoption of the twin-track approach highlighted the gap in addressing disability inclusion within the project's execution.

3.3.7 Cross Cutting Issue - Human Rights-Based Approach/LNOB

Achievement Rating: **4/6** (Mostly Satisfactory)

Key Findings #16: The AIS Forum Support Facility Project in the design stage did not include indicators for Rights-Based Approach/LNOB elements but there were some contributions to promoting Human Rights /LNOB during implementation.

Table 11 assessed how each component of the project contributed to promoting social inclusion in the areas of disability inclusion and rights-based approach /LNOB.

Table 11: Human Rights/LNOB - AIS Forum Support Facility Project

<u>AIS Forum Support Facility Project Output</u>	<u>Rights-Based Approach/LNOB</u>
Output 1. AIS Forum Secretariat Operation Strengthened capacity of AIS Forum Secretariat to be fully operationalized	4 - Mostly Satisfactory (MS)
Output 2. Scaled up the Community-based Activities to drive the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 14) in AIS Countries	4 - Mostly Satisfactory (MS)
Output 3. Enhanced capacity of AIS Forum to be a treaty/charter-based organization	5 - Satisfactory (S)
Output 4. Strengthened policy environment to ensure sustainable innovative financing scheme through the AIS Fund Facility	4 - Mostly Satisfactory (MS)
Overall Rating	4 - Mostly Satisfactory (MS)

Output 1:

Development and recruitment process of the project secretariat was based on human rights/LNOB elements. However, the evaluation assessed that more could be done to reduce barriers to the inclusion of vulnerable groups in the AIS Forum Support Facility Project due to the downsizing of the secretariat and the lack of specific mechanisms to engage marginalised communities, such as poor, indigenous, and disabled populations. Without a robust team or clear engagement strategies, the project risked overlooking these groups. To improve inclusion, more dedicated resources and tailored programs for these groups would need to be established.

Output 2:

The project lacked target indicators with human rights/LNOB elements in this project but had some contributions to promoting Human Rights /LNOB during implementation:

- The project developed scholarship programmes for students from diverse background, potentially promoting inclusivity in the blue economy sector.

- There was no specific mention of human rights in the DBS-UNDP project documentation provided as this activity primarily focused on sustainability and financial mechanisms (blue bonds) rather than explicitly addressing human rights issues. However, by promoting inclusive economic growth and focusing on vulnerable communities—especially those reliant on marine ecosystems—the project indirectly aligned with human rights principle.
- The project activity involving the UK Tech Hub’s collaboration with the AIS Forum Support Facility Project made strides in digital inclusion and entrepreneurship development but showed limited direct benefits for the poor, indigenous, and disabled groups. Barriers to inclusion included limited outreach to these communities and insufficient focus on accessibility.
- Targeted programs, such as the Blue Startup Hub, offer tailored support and funding for disadvantaged groups. Research and development include studies on the needs and contributions of marginalised groups. The project context offered limited specific data, but the "Bluepreneur" training in Vanuatu, targeted young women and entrepreneurs, exemplifies efforts to engage disadvantaged groups. The training program addressed communities who are vulnerable towards Climate Change impact. It is known that gender disparities in education and access to information exacerbate the impacts of climate change on women. The poor and indigenous communities may have gained practical skills, the inclusion of PWDs and other marginalised groups in the training and associated activities have a good impact on them to increase community resilience. In addition, one speaker specifically mentioned prioritising the use of female trainers and participants to promote gender equality. Unfortunately, the Womenpreneur project, aimed at empowering women, was currently being postponed in 2024.
- Through the AIS Forum Support Facility Project, some partners developed solutions/applications accessible to all levels of the community, aiming for inclusivity for all citizens. This initiative demonstrated a commitment to ensuring that technology benefits everyone, regardless of their abilities or socio-economic status. By providing accessible digital tools and resources, the project aimed to bridge the digital divide and empower marginalised groups. Despite these efforts, the evaluation assessed there could be more room for improvement in terms of reporting on the inclusion of marginalised groups. This information could help identify gaps and inform future strategies to ensure that interventions effectively reach and benefit all members of society.

Output 3:

This output had not yet started, but there would be an opportunity to further integrate human rights/LNOB elements while transitioning the AIS Forum to be a treaty/charter-based organization. In the Draft of the Leaders’ Declaration, the AIS Forum aimed to foster synergy with other initiatives and serve as a platform for collaboration, knowledge sharing, and the generation of smart-innovative solutions among archipelagic states. The cooperation framework was designed to facilitate the implementation of smart innovative solutions to address sustainable development challenges related to climate change, including mitigation, adaptation, disaster management, risk reduction, and other challenges. It also focused on creating sustainable economic development and decent blue job opportunities, as well as protecting the marine environment from ocean health degradation, loss of biodiversity, acidification, plastic waste, and marine pollution. Additionally, the framework emphasises good maritime governance. The AIS Forum supported cross-cutting issues such as human rights in several ways. Firstly, it emphasised transparent and bottom-up public participation, ensuring that local communities have a say in decisions that affect their lives and livelihoods. This approach respected local culture and protects indigenous rights, as it recognised the importance of traditional knowledge and practices in sustainable development

Output 4:

There was no direct or explicit mention of human rights/LNOB in the project indicators, however, there were a few elements that could indirectly relate to human right aspects. The project’s emphasis on regional cooperation, ownership, and inclusive governance for archipelagic and island states would have an indirect connection to human rights, particularly in promoting equitable access to resources, sustainable development, and regional cooperation. The AIS Forum promoted financing for capacity building, providing training and resources to local communities to enable them to participate effectively in decision-making processes. This was crucial for ensuring that human rights are respected and protected, as it empowered communities to advocate for their rights and hold decision-makers accountable. Additionally, the AIS Forum emphasised environmental defenders and community empowerment, recognising the vital role that local communities play in protecting the environment and ensuring sustainable development. By supporting these communities, the AIS Forum helps to ensure that their human rights are upheld and that they have a voice in shaping their future.

The work plan for the AIS Forum Support Facility Project did not explicitly detail specific barriers to the inclusion of vulnerable groups or the exact measures needed to address these barriers. However, it did mention several related aspects. The work plan includes efforts to mainstream gender and promote women’s empowerment, but it did not provide detailed strategies for including other vulnerable groups. The focus was on developing the Advisory Board and operational manuals, but there was no specific mention of addressing barriers faced by vulnerable groups in these processes. The workplan mentioned establishing the AIS Fund Facility and using a blended finance model but did not specify financial support mechanisms for vulnerable groups. While there was a general mention of auditing and evaluation, specific measures to assess and improve the inclusion of vulnerable groups were not detailed.

Based on the AIS Forum member states meeting, this project aimed to enhance transparency, promote grassroots public participation, build capacity, respect local culture, protect indigenous rights, safeguard environmental defenders, and empower communities. This was complemented by showcasing sustainable business practices through the Startup Blue Business Summit and the Research and Development Conference. For blue recovery to be successful, it is essential to strengthen enabling environments by investing in institutional and human capacity building and promoting open access to science, knowledge, infrastructure, technology, and innovation. Additionally, adopting nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches is considered crucial. The project aimed to promote transparency, encourage grassroots public participation, build capacity, respect local culture, protect indigenous rights, safeguard environmental defenders, and

empower communities. It highlighted sustainable business practices through events like the Startup Blue Business Summit and the Research and Development Conference. These initiatives aimed to create a more inclusive and sustainable approach to blue recovery. To ensure the success of blue recovery, it is vital to strengthen enabling environments by investing in institutional and human capacity building. This includes promoting open access to science, knowledge, infrastructure, technology, and innovation. Additionally, adopting nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches is crucial. Nature-based solutions involve using natural resources and ecosystems to address societal challenges, while ecosystem-based approaches consider the interdependence of humans and nature in decision-making. By implementing these strategies, blue recovery initiatives can contribute to a more sustainable and resilient future.

Based on the interviews, most of the AIS Forum Support Facility Project implementation did not explicitly support or mention inclusivity of vulnerable groups, moreover the challenges. In addition, the reliance on online communication, such as with MSG Secretariat’s partnership and the AIS Forum, might hinder participation from those without access to technology or the internet. This challenge created additional obstacles to inclusivity for vulnerable populations, particularly those experiencing marginalisation and lacking access to the internet.

The project contributed to the LNOB agenda through its focus on gender equality and capacity-building initiatives. This proved quite successful as the project’s on-the-ground work, particularly through its hands-on and community-based training programs like the Bluepreneur training, showed a commitment to leaving no one behind by empowering youth, women, and entrepreneurs in vulnerable communities. However, the limited coverage of other vulnerable groups, such as PWDs, suggested that while there were steps toward inclusivity, they could be more comprehensive. The focus on blue economy development and research also appeared to have primarily engaged high-level stakeholders (e.g., ministers and academic institutions), which might have left out more vulnerable populations in direct project participation.

Based on the workplan, the AIS Forum Support Facility Project included elements that aligned with human rights concerns, particularly through its focus on gender equality, social inclusion, and sustainable development. However, the work plan did not provide extensive details on how human rights would be systematically integrated into all activities. The project's emphasis on gender and social inclusion, entrepreneurship support, and targeted research could positively impact human rights by promoting equity and providing economic opportunities to marginalized groups. This could enhance their ability to exercise their rights and participate fully in economic and social life. However, the extent of this influence would depend on the depth of human rights integration in practice. There could be several measures that could be taken to improve the involvement and integration of human rights/LNOB in the AIS Forum Support Facility Project. These would include:

- developing clear human rights guidelines and ensuring they are integrated into all aspects of the project;
- planning, implementation, and evaluation, actively involving a diverse range of stakeholders, including marginalised and vulnerable groups, in decision-making processes to ensure their rights and needs are considered
- implementing targeted programs to address barriers faced by vulnerable groups, such as providing accessibility, financial support, and culturally sensitive services;
- incorporating human rights/LNOB criteria into monitoring and evaluation processes to assess the impact of the project on human rights and make necessary adjustments, and ensuring that environmental protection measures were aligned with human rights principles, recognizing the right to a healthy environment as a fundamental aspect of human rights.

3.3.8 Cross Cutting Issue - Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment

Achievement Rating: **4/6** (Mostly Satisfactory)

Key Findings #17: The AIS Forum Support Facility Project in the design stage did not include indicators for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment and there were some contributions to promoting Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment during implementation. There were no unanticipated effects of the project interventions on gender equality and human rights.

Table 12 below assessed how each component of the project contributed to promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment based on the GRES scale assessment.

Table 12: Gender Results Effectiveness Scale (GRES) Assessment for the AIS Forum Support Facility Project

<u>AIS Forum Support Facility Project Output</u>	<u>GRES Scale Assessment</u>
Output 1. AIS Forum Secretariat Operation Strengthened capacity of AIS Forum Secretariat to be fully operationalized	Level 3: Gender Targeted
Output 2. Scaled up the Community-based Activities to drive the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 14) in AIS Countries	Level 4: Gender Responsive
Output 3. Enhanced capacity of AIS Forum to be a treaty/charter-based organization	Level 3: Gender Targeted
Output 4. Strengthened policy environment to ensure sustainable innovative financing scheme through the AIS Fund Facility	Level 3: Gender Targeted

As indicated in the PRODOC, the AIS Forum Support Facility Project built upon UNDP Gender Strategy (2018-2021) by recognizing the importance of gender equality and women empowerment vis-a-vis with men. The AIS Forum Support Facility Project promoted gender equality and ensured it played a role in the decision-making process of the organization. One of the efforts included promoting UNDP's value and standards on Gender Equality, including in gender equal composition of project personnel. Foundation activities established the framework for the forum and its primary partnership incorporated a gender approach on its implementation. The establishment of the forum enabled the potential opportunities to address the gender inequality in AIS Forum's 4 areas of focus: climate change, blue economy, marine plastics and good maritime governance, the project undertook the following strategies:

1. **Mainstreaming gender in AIS partnership activities.** In partnership building activities, AIS Forum aims to promote the common recognition and understanding of women empowerment and leaving no one behind, thereby ensuring their integration in the cooperation among AIS participating countries on climate change mitigation and adaptation, blue economy, marine plastic debris, and good maritime governance
2. **Women Entrepreneur program.** When developing the startup system, the project introduces support programs for women entrepreneurs around coastal areas so they are able to have a sustainable business that is more financeable.
3. **Gender-sensitive policy studies and research.** The Blue Economy Development Index should be analysed through the gender lens. Joint-research, and Student Exchange programs will encourage women participating, and promote a women-friendly research environment with universities and research institutions partners.

Output 1: Strengthened capacity of AIS Forum Secretariat to be fully operationalized (Level 3: Gender Targeted)

In general, the operation of the project secretariat team seek to promote economic diversification and green growth through low-emission and climate resilient measures and to discover innovative nature-based and gender-responsive solutions for sustainable recovery. In 2023, the secretariat recruited 15 personnel members (13 women and 2 men) and procured the relevant office supplies. The AIS Forum Support Facility Project facilitated operations by recruiting qualified staff and procuring relevant goods and services. Institutional capacity building for the AIS Forum Secretariat also incorporated GEWE elements. The AIS Forum Support Facility Project had the presence of its 3 virtual offices represented by regional officers in Fiji, Madagascar and Barbados. However, these virtual offices ceased to exist.

Output 2: Scaled up the Community-based Activities to drive the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 14) in AIS Countries (Level 4: Gender Responsive)

The AIS Forum Support Facility Project made progress in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, aligning with its work plan. Initiatives like gender-sensitive policy studies, women-centric entrepreneurship programs, and gender-inclusive research expanded opportunities and support for women. Ongoing efforts and expansion in these areas were expected to further strengthen these positive changes. Through the evaluation interviews, it was found that the project successfully achieved gender-balanced activities in income generation, particularly for women, mainly fishermen's wives. However, the extent to which this program generated income was not elaborated upon due to the lack of follow-up monitoring and evaluation. In general, the AIS Forum Support Facility Project could further strengthen gender-disaggregated data for all of its project activities.

The Project design had very little/no specific output indicators directly relating to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) elements. GEEW elements could be further embedded directly in the output indicators as performance indicator targets to track progress in incorporating GEDSI elements. Some project implementation and activities incorporated GEWE elements and made starting contributions to respond to considering equal access to all people, including marginalized groups and ensuring the sustainable use of natural resources. The AIS Forum Support Facility Project did not explicitly address GEWE elements, but some indirect alignment with GEWE principles existed, especially through including women in capacity-building activities and supporting vulnerable communities, including those in coastal and archipelagic areas.

Most of the stakeholder interviews/FGDs did not highlight gender equality, disability, or social inclusion directly. The project focused on capacity building, governance, and sustainable development for participating states, but it did not specify how it addressed gender aspects. One notable best practice came from the UK Tech Hub project with the AIS Forum, which contributed to the GEWE agenda by addressing gender disparities in digital access and entrepreneurship. Womenpreneur initiatives focused on supporting women entrepreneurs and creating opportunities for underrepresented groups aligned with GEWE principles.

Overall, although AIS Forum tried to mainstream GEWE issues in the project design and workplan, the implementation lacked actualisation. Most interviewed stakeholders did not mention any inclusivity or gender mainstreaming in their project. The MTE further noted that there were no unanticipated effects of the project interventions on gender equality and human rights. The AIS Forum Support Facility Project also considered GEDSI context in the project design to empower women in coastal communities. For gender equality, it was found that the project recruited many women trainers as well as female participants. In the work plan, the gender marker data assigned to the AIS Forum Support Facility Project appeared to be generally representative of reality, reflecting the project's commitment to gender equality. The data showed active engagement in gender-sensitive initiatives and policies. However, continuous verification and updates would be essential to ensure that the data remained accurate and reflective of the project's evolving gender-related outcomes.

Some examples of project activities that mainstreamed GEWE included:

- 1 **Women Entrepreneur program.** When developing the startup system, the project introduced support programs for women entrepreneurs around coastal areas so they would be able to have a sustainable business that would be more financeable. In 2024, the Blue Hub engaged around 100 bluepreneurs in the region, focusing on the Atlantic Ocean through innovation challenge and networking session. Training was provided for approximately 100 beneficiaries through capacity-building programs, and delivered grants of up to \$10,000 in the Indian Ocean region. In effort to support gender equality, more than **100 womenpreneurs** would be generated through

- womenpreneurs training which was held in several region to equip the women with skills and assist them to be active in the workforce.
- 2 **The IDEA programme, a joint initiative by the AIS Forum and the UK Tech Hub**, aimed to strengthen the creative and digital economy in Indonesia. The programme targeted five specific areas to spur job creation and socio-economic growth. The programme reached 90% of the targeted participants for FGDs, involving six government bodies and ten communities, and expanding networks to eight village tourism destinations. The programme's survey involved 66 participants (**26 women, 40 men, including 1 man with disability**). Meanwhile, the FGD benefited 45 participants (**17 women, 28 men, including 1 woman and 1 man with disability**).
 - 3 **MSME Support** (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) aim to assist in regards to accessing the digital economy and entrepreneur path for >1,500 women, youth, and people with disabilities were trained.
 - 4 **In the Solomon Islands, the programme enhanced the capacity of 20 participants (8 women, 12 men)** during the event "Educating and Engaging Youths of Solomon Islands to Understand the Importance of Conservation and Protected Area". The AIS Youth Ambassador from Solomon Islands initiated the programme in partnership with the Solomon Islands Ranger Association in Honiara City, engaging youths in the country to comprehend the importance of conservation and protected areas.
 - 5 **International Tropical Summer Course (ITroSCo)**: The AIS Forum annually hosted the International Tropical Summer Course (ITroSCo) in partnership with the Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Science at Diponegoro University. The event featured a session on coral reef restoration, led by an expert from Trinidad and Tobago. The session was attended by 19 participants (**11 women, 8 men**), primarily Indonesian bachelor's students and some master's students from international universities.
 - 6 **Exploring Innovation in Marine Research and Science Event**: The Exploring Innovation in Marine Research and Science event was held on August 28, 2023, by the AIS Forum Secretariat and the University of Antananarivo. This event was conducted as a side event of the 8th SOM. The event successfully brought together 25 participants (**10 women, 15 men**), including lecturers, scientists, and the public. The workshop served as a dynamic platform for exchanging knowledge and ideas in marine conservation and management.
 - 7 **The AIS Youth Conference: The First AIS Youth Conference was held in Bali, Indonesia** from October 7-11, 2023. The conference brought together 26 young people (**15 women, 11 men**) from 24 AIS countries under the theme "Bridging the Waves for the Future Ocean We Want". This event led to the creation of the First AIS Youth Declaration, focusing on four AIS Forum's key areas.
 - 8 **The AIS Research & Development Conference 2023**: The AIS R&D Conference 2023, themed "Advancing the Blue Frontier in Innovative Ocean Science," was successfully held in Bali, Indonesia, from the 9th – 11th of October. The conference brought together 22 delegates (**11 women, 11 men**) from 18 archipelagic and island states, along with ocean science and technology experts. The event also attracted 82 external participants (**42 women, 40 men**).
 - 9 **The Islands Clean Up Program** was a collaborative initiative by the AIS Forum, the Coordinating Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Investment, and Lazada Indonesia, supported by Divers Clean Action. The program kicked off with a clean-up at Pulau Pramuka's beach, mangrove, and underwater area. The event was joined by 56 participants (**26 women, 30 men**) from 7 organisations and institutions..
 - 10 **The Bluepreneur: Coastal Youth Communities Training** was facilitated by the Secretariat on the 15th – 17th June in Port Vila, Vanuatu. This programme marked the first collaboration between the AIS Forum and the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG). The training was attended by 19 beneficiaries (**10 women, 9 men**). The training has not only increased awareness but also equipped participants with the necessary knowledge and skills for blue entrepreneurship and sustainable business development.
 - 11 **The 4th ICMMBT Conference: The 4th ICMMBT Conference**, themed "Good practices and Innovations Towards Blue Economy," was organized by the AIS Forum, IPB University, and the ATSEA Secretariat in Denpasar, Bali, from September 11 to 15, 2023. This hybrid event saw the physical attendance of 197 participants (**84 women, 113 men**) from academics, researchers, and experts from five AIS countries - Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Japan, Madagascar, and Timor-Leste. Additionally, researchers from non-AIS countries like Malaysia, Australia, China, Thailand, South Korea, and Argentina also participated in person.
 - 12 The Focus Group Discussion on the **Blue Economy Development Index (BEDI)** was held on July 18th. The discussion involved two sessions focusing on refining BEDI's conceptual framework, objectives, methodology, and indicators. The discussion was attended by 39 participants (**19 women, 20 men**), drawing valuable input from various ministries, agencies, and experts.

Output 3: Enhanced capacity of AIS Forum to be a treaty/charter-based organization (Level 3: Gender Targeted)

This output had not yet started but there would be an opportunity to further integrate GEWE elements while transitioning the AIS Forum to be a treaty/charter-based organization. The AIS Forum Support Facility Project workplan integrated gender equality and the empowerment of women through its strategic design and implementation. When enhancing capacity of AIS Forum to be a treaty/charter-based organization, development of Program and Operation Policy and Procedure (POPP) could potentially incorporate GEWE elements to be in-line with UNDP commitment to No One Left Behind.

Output 4: Strengthened policy environment to ensure sustainable innovative financing scheme through the AIS Fund Facility (Level 3: Gender Targeted)

This output had yet to commence even though there were outlines of sustainable innovative financing schemes being developed. The sustainable innovative financing scheme design could potentially include GEWE elements being embedded as one of the financing criteria. To further enhance stakeholder involvement and promote gender equality, measures such as increased gender-focused training, improved data collection and analysis, and broader engagement with women and vulnerable groups can be implemented. These efforts would ensure that gender equality would be more effectively addressed and integrated into all project aspects. During the international forum, AIS Forum member states commended the project's successful mainstreaming of gender issues, without providing specific details. Monitoring and reporting mechanisms should be in place to ensure GEWE would be addressed, and gender-sensitive policies being incorporated into activities.

3.3.9 Sustainability

Sustainability Rating: **2/4** (Moderately Unlikely - Significant Risks)

In this evaluation, sustainability would be defined as the continuation or likely continuation of positive effects from the AIS Forum Support Facility Project after it has come to an end, and its potential for scale-up and/or replication. The evaluation noted that UNDP-supported projects are intended to be environmentally as well as institutionally, financially, politically, culturally and socially sustainable. Table 13 below showed the assessment on the 4 dimensions of sustainability.

Table 13: Evaluation Assessment/Remarks on Dimensions of Sustainability

Dimensions of Sustainability	Evaluation Assessment/Remarks
Financial sustainability	<p>Key Finding #18: The AIS Forum Support Facility Project had adequate financial resources/commitment from the Government of Indonesia as project donor to sustain project results. But the recent 2024 Indonesia Elections made future ongoing support uncertain with the need to explore further financial/technical resource support from external sources.</p> <p>The evaluation noted that as the sole project donor the Government of Indonesia, through the CMMAI as the national counterpart representative, provided significant financial commitment/resources to sustain the AIS Forum Support Facility Project in achieving its objectives. This financial commitment/resources from the Government of Indonesia were adequate to sustain current project results if utilized well. The recent 2024 Indonesia Elections resulted in change of government and major re-structuring where CMMAI would not exist in the new government structure. Although this would not have any effect on the existing financial commitments/resources, the evaluation could not yet determine if the Government of Indonesia would still fully commit to future financial support for the AIS Forum Support Facility Project to continue. Furthermore, there would need to be a revision of the financial agreement and PRODOC to a newly appointed national counterpart that would replace the non-existent CMMAI. As financial sustainability to continue project efforts would depend on support/endorsement from the incoming political officeholders, the evaluation could not yet fully determine the level of support/endorsement as it would depend on the new government agenda and whether the AIS Forum Support Facility Project would be well-positioned as a priority in the new government’s agenda. Similarly, there would remain a need to strengthen project management capacities and technical expertise to be able to strategically implement and monitor project technical interventions to sustain the transition into a treaty/charter-based organization</p> <p>Due to the critical importance of sustaining the foundational work of the AIS Forum Support Facility Project for the next phase of its project implementation, there would need to be a strong buy-in and financial resource contributions among the 51 AIS country members, donor agencies, philanthropic foundations and/or private sector to make the AIS Fund Facility a reality. Additionally, UNDP would possibly need to be open to consider sourcing for further financial/technical resource support from external sources to enter another phase to support the continuation of project benefits. The likelihood of this happening would largely depend on UNDP’s discussion with the newly appointed national counterpart for the Government of Indonesia (this appointment process is still currently underway due to the restructuring of the Government of Indonesia).</p> <p>The financial sustainability can be rated as: 2/4 (Moderately Unlikely (MU): Significant Risks)</p>
Socio-political sustainability	<p>Key Finding #19: The AIS Forum Support Facility Project would need to (1) increase public/ stakeholder awareness in support of project objective and outputs being generated, (2) institutionalize the project knowledge products and tools for replication and scaling-up opportunities, (3) deepen engagement with AIS country government counterparts for increased socio-political sustainability, and (4) collaborate with regional/international development agencies with similar work for increased synergies.</p> <p>The evaluation assessed that there were significant social and political risks that could undermine the longevity of the AIS Project. Even though there was an annual AIS Forum being held among high-level/senior government officials, interviews/FGDs among MSMEs, academic institutions, implementing partners and beneficiaries indicated a lack of public and stakeholder awareness of what the AIS Forum Support Facility Project could deliver as a whole. Particularly, there was lack of knowledge sharing and awareness on the current knowledge products and solutions generated by the AIS Forum Support Facility Project. Insufficient public and stakeholder awareness in support of project objectives/outputs were being generated through the mainstream media, social media and promotional campaign events. For example, the AIS Forum Support Facility Project website was still in development and in need of more updated news/information. The AIS Forum Support Facility Project website could be further enhanced as an online information resource that could provide (1) a knowledge repository for institutionalizing all knowledge products, solutions and tools developed in the project, (2) extensive information and awareness to allow for the project outcomes/benefits to be sustained. As previously mentioned, the project’s community-based activities and technical assistance were considered short-term with little strategic considerations to coherently sustain efforts and benefits gained.</p> <p>Stronger and deeper engagement with respective AIS country government counterparts, especially when the AIS Forum Support Facility Project implemented activities in the respective AIS country sites, was needed to increase socio-political sustainability. This would ensure that the AIS Forum Support Facility Project’s objectives align with the country government’s priorities and policies by working closely with government counterparts to develop and implement project plans and strategies. This would also maintain open lines of communication to address any project implementation issues and adapt to changing political landscapes.</p> <p>Additionally, the AIS Forum Support Facility Project had not fully collaborated with regional/international development agencies who were doing similar work. The lack of collaboration might result in the AIS Forum Support Facility Project</p>

<u>Dimensions of Sustainability</u>	<u>Evaluation Assessment/Remarks</u>
	<p>becoming irrelevant in the bigger picture of what the regional/international development agencies were collectively trying to achieve in the national/regional landscape. Therefore, the AIS Forum Support Facility Project would need sustain its socio-political relevance by developing a strategic action plan to strengthen collaboration with regional/international development agencies to increase synergies and produce collective benefits.</p> <p>The socio-political sustainability can be rated as: 2/4 (Moderately Unlikely (MU): Significant Risks)</p>
<p>Institutional framework and governance sustainability</p>	<p>Key Finding #20: Current legal frameworks and policies in AIS countries would need to be modernized/strengthened to sustain project benefits at community level.</p> <p>Key Finding #21: Recent national elections and new government in Indonesia may affect project governance and donor continuation of project funding.</p> <p>Key Finding #22: Strong/continuous interest and consensus among the 51 AIS country members required to formally ratify the to-be-formed treaty/charter-based organization within respective jurisdictions and to contribute financially/in-kind to this to-be-formed treaty/charter-based organization</p> <p>Recent 2024 Indonesia Elections resulted in significant changes of political officeholders and major government structure changes with the AIS Forum Support Facility Project’s key donor/national counterpart (CMMAI) ceasing to exist. A new key donor/national counterpart had yet to be appointed. Without fully knowing what the new national counterpart’s priorities and directions are, this could affect the project’s support/endorsement and as well as continuation of future project funding once the AIS Forum Support Facility Project ends in 2026.</p> <p>Although the AIS Forum, attended by high-level and senior officials, in 2023 had the support of 32 out of 51 AIS countries through the adoption of the AIS Leader’s Declaration on the Solidarity of the AIS on the future of the AIS Forum to become a charter-based organization, this declaration was not fully-binding and the evaluation could not fully determine the willingness and endorsement of the AIS country members for the AIS Forum to become a fully-funded charter-based organization. The AIS Forum Support Facility Project is currently engaging technical assistance to create a strategic roadmap and institutional framework to form this charter-based organization and developing a funding mechanism to sustain the operations of this to-be-formed charter-based organization.</p> <p>Ultimately, a strong/continuous interest and consensus among the 51 AIS country members would be required. Furthermore, each AIS country member would need to formally ratify the to-be-formed treaty/charter-based organization within respective jurisdictions which would take time and political willingness to contribute financially/in-kind to this to-be-formed treaty/charter-based organization. Additionally, AIS countries, especially the AIS developing countries in the Pacific Islands region, would need technical assistance to modernize/strengthen their current legal frameworks, governance and policies to sustain project benefits at community level. This type of technical assistance had not been the focus of the AIS Forum Support Facility Project.</p> <p>The institutional framework and governance sustainability can be rated as: 2/4 (Moderately Unlikely (MU): Significant Risks)</p>
<p>Environmental sustainability</p>	<p>Key Finding #23: Climate/weather environment would not undermine the future flow of project benefits that seek to address the environmental sustainability efforts. But potential government staff turnover and government structure changes of the project donor could possibly affect sustainability of project benefits.</p> <p>The climate and weather environment would not undermine the future flow of project benefits as the AIS Forum Support Facility Project activities and products/solutions would seek to address the environmental sustainability efforts. However, environmental sustainability efforts and priorities could be viewed differently among other AIS countries’ incoming political officeholders when respective national/local elections take place and result in a change of government.</p> <p>Due to the recent 2024 Indonesia Elections, there could be possibly significant government staff turnover and government structure changes of the project donor/national counterpart. Most notably, the project’s national counterpart of CMMAI ceased to exist and therefore a newly appointed national counterpart with a different agenda/priority could possibly affect the sustainability of project benefits.</p> <p>The environmental sustainability can be rated as: 2/4 (Moderately Unlikely (MU): Significant Risks)</p>
<p>Overall Likelihood of Sustainability</p>	<p>2/4 (Moderately Unlikely (MU): Significant Risks)</p>

4. MAIN FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Main Findings

The summary of the key evaluation findings and their corresponding ratings are shown below in Table 14.

Table 14: Summary of Key Evaluation Findings and Corresponding Ratings

Category	Summary Assessment	Rating
Relevance	<p>Key Finding #1: The AIS Forum Support Facility Project was strategically aligned with global and organizational priorities through the UNDP’s Strategic Framework (2022-2025), UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD) for Indonesia 2021-2025, and UNSDCF Indonesia (2021-2025)</p> <p>Key Finding #2: The AIS Forum Support Facility Project was a cross-regional platform and not directly relevant to specific country national priorities, strategies and plans, but it was in-line with Indonesia’s priorities in the “Long-term Development Plan 2005-2025” and the “Medium-term Development Plan 2020-2024.”</p> <p>Key Finding #3: The AIS Forum Support Facility Project was strategically aligned with global, national, and organizational priorities, contributing to various SDGs.</p>	5/6 (Satisfactory)
Coherence	<p>Key Finding #4: The AIS Forum Support Facility Project had limited coherence with other external international organizations work, Indonesian and other AIS government counterparts, and with other internal UNDP projects.</p>	3/6 (Mostly Unsatisfactory)
Effectiveness	<p>Key Finding #5: The AIS Forum Support Facility Project’s logical/results framework would need to incorporate stronger S.M.A.R.T. quality output indicators to be able to accurately measure project achievement progress. The latest version of the PRODOC and project results framework did not align with the outdated TOC model which needed refinement to reflect the updates and changes.</p> <p>Key Finding #6: The AIS Forum Support Facility Project would need to continue to build on its foundational activities to realize its full potential. In its current foundational form, the project interventions would not be sufficiently effective to achieve the desired outcome objective.</p> <p>Key Finding #7: The AIS Forum Support Facility Project would need to strengthen project management capacities and technical expertise to be able to strategically implement and monitor project technical interventions to transition into a treaty/charter-based organization.</p> <p>Key Finding #8: Community-based activities and technical assistance were short-term with little strategic considerations to coherently sustain efforts and benefits gained.</p> <p>Key Finding #9: Governance mechanism artefacts to be an effective treaty/charter-based organization had been developed or currently underway but would need strong interest and consensus among the 51 AIS country to become a reality</p> <p>Key Finding #10: Finance mechanism artefacts for a planned fund facility had been developed or currently underway but would need strong buy-in and financial resource contributions among the 51 AIS country members, donor agencies, philanthropic foundations and/or private sector to become a reality</p> <p>Key Finding #11: The AIS Forum Support Facility Project had not yet implemented activities/interventions to strengthen the policy environment at country-level or regional-level through policy and legislative reforms</p>	3/6 (Mostly Unsatisfactory)
Efficiency	<p>Key Finding #12: The AIS Forum Support Facility Project delivery/utilization rate and resource allocation were not efficient</p> <p>Key Finding #13: The AIS Forum Support Facility Project team’s combined expertise could be further strengthened with programme management and technical expert leads with fresh ideas/innovations and capabilities to efficiently deliver against the project’s objectives and targets. Specifically, project M&E system in data collection processes could be strengthened to enable verification of results on the ground and accurately assess the intervention impacts and effectiveness.</p> <p>Key Findings#14: The AIS Forum Support Facility Project in the design stage did not include indicators for disability inclusion elements and there were limited contributions to promoting disability inclusion during implementation</p>	3/6 (Mostly Unsatisfactory)
Cross-Cutting Issue: Disability Inclusion	<p>Key Findings#15: The AIS Forum Support Facility Project in the design stage did not include indicators for disability inclusion elements and there were limited contributions to promoting disability inclusion during implementation. There were no unanticipated effects of the project interventions on gender equality and human rights</p>	2/6 (Unsatisfactory)
Cross-Cutting Issue: Rights-Based Approach/LNOB	<p>Key Findings#16: The AIS Forum Support Facility Project in the design stage did not include indicators for Rights-Based Approach/LNOB elements but there were some contributions to promoting Human Rights /LNOB during implementation.</p>	4/6 (Mostly Satisfactory)
Cross-Cutting Issue: Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment	<p>Key Findings #17: The AIS Forum Support Facility Project in the design stage did not include indicators for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment and there were some contributions to promoting Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment during implementation.</p>	4/6 (Mostly Satisfactory)

Category	Summary Assessment	Rating
Sustainability	<p>Key Finding #18: The AIS Forum Support Facility Project had adequate financial resources/commitment from the Government of Indonesia as project donor to sustain project results. But the recent 2024 Indonesia Elections made future ongoing support uncertain with the need to explore further financial/technical resource support from external sources</p> <p>Key Finding #19: The AIS Forum Support Facility Project would need to (1) increase public/ stakeholder awareness in support of project objective and outputs being generated, (2) institutionalize the project knowledge products and tools for replication and scaling-up opportunities, (3) deepen engagement with AIS country government counterparts for increased socio-political sustainability, and (4) collaborate with regional/international development agencies with similar work for increased synergies.</p> <p>Key Finding #20: Current legal frameworks and policies in AIS countries would need to be modernized/strengthened to sustain project benefits at community level.</p> <p>Key Finding #21: Recent national elections and new government in Indonesia may affect project governance and donor continuation of project funding.</p> <p>Key Finding #22: Strong/continuous interest and consensus among the 51 AIS country members required to formally ratify the to-be-formed treaty/charter-based organization within respective jurisdictions and to contribute financially/in-kind to this to-be-formed treaty/charter-based organization</p> <p>Key Finding #23: Climate/weather environment would not undermine the future flow of project benefits that seek to address the environmental sustainability efforts. But potential government staff turnover and government structure changes of the project donor could possibly affect sustainability of project benefits.</p>	2/4 (Moderately Unlikely - Significant Risks)

4.2 Conclusions and Lessons Learned

Conclusion #1: Strategic direction of the project with long-term/forward looking activities to produce specific output/outcome results is critical to strengthen project relevance, impact, gender equality, disability/social inclusion and sustainability.

- To what extent has progress been made towards strengthening employment support programme design, outreach, effectiveness, and budget efficiency? What has been the UNDP contribution in addressing the needs of different target groups, as well as progress in national policies and legislation?
- What were both negative and positive factors that have facilitated or hampered progress in achieving the project outcomes, including external factors/environment, design, management, and resource allocation?
- To what extent have the project outputs resulted from economic use of resources?

While the AIS Forum Support Facility Project has laid essential foundations, several gaps require focused attention to ensure the effectiveness, relevance, and longevity of its impact. In particular, the AIS Forum Support Facility Project needs to review its strategic direction with greater emphasis on its relevance to addressing the specific needs of archipelagic and island states in climate resilience, blue economy, marine plastic management, and maritime governance.

The evaluation identified insufficient alignment between project activities and long-term outcome indicators. Key programs and activities lack precise metrics to evaluate progress against strategic objectives. This issue is compounded by the project's adaptive scope where needs evolve and specific technical expertise with appropriate senior-level experience is required.

The lack of strategic gender transformative action and disability inclusion in the project indicates a missed opportunity for equitable impact. Women and individuals with disabilities remain underrepresented in maritime and coastal industries, with limited tailored support and funding channels for these groups. Without a focused inclusion strategic direction, the project risks increasing inequalities within these sectors.

Going forward with a clear strategic direction, the project needs to ensure comprehensive progress measurement by implementing S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) indicators for each output activity/initiative to ensure tangible milestones for success. This would include developing an effective exit strategy for post project continuity. Furthermore, the latest version of the PRODOC and project results framework would need to align with an updated/refined TOC model to reflect the updates and changes.

By doing so, this will create a strong and sustainable foundation for the AIS Forum's strategic goals. Partnering with local organizations focused on gender and disability inclusivity can help reach underrepresented groups, expanding the project's impact across diverse populations. Furthermore, a robust strategic direction that reflects an inclusive economy provides a model for other sustainability initiatives in the archipelagic and island states.

Therefore Recommendation R1 provides concrete applications to help improve the AIS Forum Support Facility Project's strategic direction.

Lesson Learned:

- **Alignment with Specific Outcomes is Critical for Achieving Desired Results:** A strategic direction that clearly aligns activities with long-term, specific outcomes is critical to achieving meaningful and measurable results. Laying down measurable outcome indicators from the outset (including a forward looking TOC model ensures that all project activities contribute to sustainable, long-term goals.
- **Incorporating S.M.A.R.T. Indicators Enhances Accountability:** Utilizing S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) indicators for each project output activity can enhance accountability and track the progress more effectively.

- **Gender and Disability-Inclusive Planning Addresses Inequalities:** An inclusive strategic approach that integrates gender and disability considerations from the design phase can significantly improve project reach and equity. Ensuring early-stage inclusion of marginalized/vulnerable groups helps avoid perpetuating inequalities within key sectors.
- **Adaptive Strategic Management Ensures Relevance to Shifting Needs and Unforeseen Challenges:** Flexibility and regular strategy reviews are crucial to remain responsive and effective to evolving needs. Adaptive management with additional capacities in technical expertise ensures that the project remains relevant despite shifting needs or unforeseen challenges.

(Based on Key Finding #5, Key Finding #6, Key Finding #7, Key Finding #12, Key Finding #14, Key Finding #15, Key Finding #16, Key Finding #17, Key Finding #20, Key Finding #22)

Conclusion #2: Engagement with and targeted technical assistance for AIS government counterparts to strengthen the policy/legislative environment in the areas of climate change and adaptation, blue economy, marine plastic debris, and maritime governance is essential

- To what extent has progress been made towards strengthening employment support programme design, outreach, effectiveness, and budget efficiency? What has been the UNDP contribution in addressing the needs of different target groups, as well as progress in national policies and legislation?
- To what extent have the project outputs resulted from economic use of resources?
- To what extent the Government has the capacity and the intent to continue the project activities on its own?

Engagement with government counterparts through targeted technical assistance is required to build the AIS countries' legislative frameworks for climate adaptation, marine plastic reduction, blue economy, and maritime governance. However, for these legislative improvements to fully benefit all communities, a more inclusive approach is required.

The AIS Forum Support Facility Project has yet to initiate programmes/activities that would advance legislative support and sufficiently incorporated gender and disability considerations within these frameworks. As a result, there is a risk that legislations and policies may not fully address the needs of all segments of the population. Legislative improvements would also require clearer feedback mechanism that incorporates inputs from local communities, especially vulnerable groups. Hence, any legislative support provided by the project would need to prioritize direct engagement with those who are most impacted by policy decisions to maximize alignment with community needs.

The AIS Forum Support Facility Project should consider enhancing future technical assistance with gender-responsive and disability-inclusive policy toolkits tailored to the needs of respective AIS government counterparts. This toolkit would support policy development with templates, guidelines, and best practices that promote inclusive legislative approaches in the related areas of climate resilience, blue economy, marine plastic management, and maritime governance. Embedding evaluation mechanisms in the legislative process can also allow communities, especially the vulnerable, minority and marginalized groups, to provide feedback on implemented policies, helping government counterparts to adjust and improve frameworks as needed. This iterative approach could enhance the alignment of policies with local realities, strengthening their relevance and impact.

Strengthened and inclusive policy frameworks would then serve as valuable models for AIS countries, demonstrating that sustainable development can go hand in hand with social equity. Furthermore, this approach could enhance collaboration with international organizations and reflect a commitment to inclusive and transparent governance, which is crucial for long-term, impactful partnership.

Recommendation R2 aligns with this conclusion to strengthen engagement efforts with AIS country government counterparts and deliver greater benefits, change and transformation.

Lesson Learned:

- **Feedback Mechanisms for Legislative Alignment is Essential:** Establishing feedback mechanisms that allow vulnerable communities to participate in legislative development has been essential for ensuring that new policies genuinely address local needs and conditions.
- **Gender and Disability-Responsive Toolkits Promotes Inclusivity:** Providing government counterparts with specialized toolkits for gender and disability-inclusive policy development improves the likelihood of creating comprehensive, socially responsible legislation. Toolkits should be context-specific and offer templates that simplify the implementation of inclusive frameworks.
- **Community-Driven Policy Development Bridges Gaps and Needs:** Direct engagement with community representatives, especially marginalized and minority groups, can bridge the gap between legislative goals and practical, community-driven needs.
- **Embedding Evaluation Mechanisms Ensure Alignment:** Continuous monitoring and evaluation within policy development processes will be useful in adapting legislative frameworks to evolving local needs and in ensuring ongoing community alignment.
- **Capacity Building for Inclusive Governance Fosters Equity:** Building capacity within government agencies to understand and implement inclusive policies strengthens their ability to foster equity across social groups, including women, youth, and persons with disabilities.

(Based on Key Finding #8, Key Finding #9, Key Finding #10, Key Finding #11, Key Finding #13, Key Finding #14, Key Finding #15, Key Finding #16, Key Finding #17)

Conclusion #3: Close collaboration/cooperation with relevant regional/country offices of international organizations with similar activities needed to strengthen synergies without duplicating efforts and bring collective benefits and impact to local communities.

The AIS Forum Support Facility Project has successfully formed partnerships with various academic institutions and regional non-governmental organizations. Yet, these partnerships can be further aligned to maximize sustainable community impact without duplicating existing efforts.

While partnerships with various academic institutions and regional non-governmental organizations have expanded the project's scope, the AIS Forum Support Facility Project has yet to strategically collaborate/cooperate with relevant regional/country offices of international organizations with similar initiatives/activities. A close collaboration/cooperation with these international organizations is needed to strengthen synergies in strategically targeting the related areas of climate resilience, blue economy, marine plastic management, and maritime governance. This would also minimize overlapping initiatives that can dilute resources and reduce the effectiveness of project interventions.

Enhanced partnerships with regional/country offices of international organizations will allow UNDP and AIS governments to make more efficient use of resources, while beneficiaries, especially those in underserved communities, will gain increased access to the programs designed for them. UNDP and the AIS Forum Support Facility Project can play a central role in establishing inclusive criteria for these partnerships, setting a high standard for future collaborations. This approach will not only enhance the project's collective impact but also create replicable models for other AIS and regional projects focused on inclusive growth and sustainable development

Hence Recommendation R3 provides the practical steps of strengthening the foundations of collaboration/cooperation between the AIS Forum Support Facility Project and like-minded organizations.

Lesson Learned:

- **Strategic Synergies will Minimize Duplication and Maximize Resources:** Close collaboration/cooperation with regional/country offices of international organizations with similar initiatives/activities ensures that resources are maximized and duplication of efforts is minimized. Such partnerships help consolidate regional knowledge and resources for more effective interventions.
- **Inclusive Partnership Frameworks:** Adopting partnership frameworks that mandate gender and disability inclusivity strengthens each partner's accountability and broadens the impact on local communities, including marginalized groups.
- **Localized Impact as A Result of Regional Collaborations:** Partnerships with regional/country offices of international organizations can empower local communities by creating culturally and contextually relevant interventions that resonate with local context.

(Based on Key Finding #14, Key Finding #15, Key Finding #16, Key Finding #17, Key Finding #19, Key Finding #20, Key Finding #22)

Conclusion #4: Knowledge management strategy required to strengthen the communications of the project results and institutionalize all relevant products and tools for future use

- What are the unfinished issues that should be taken account in further projects/programs and policies?
- What were both negative and positive factors that have facilitated or hampered progress in achieving the project outcomes, including external factors/environment, design, management, and resource allocation?

The AIS Forum Support Facility Project lacks a comprehensive knowledge management (KM) strategy that is essential for institutionalizing project resources and communicating outcomes effectively. While foundational KM mechanisms such as an online website are in place, the KM strategy needs to be enhanced to ensure accessibility and inclusivity for all project stakeholders. The AIS Forum Support Facility Project has made notable efforts to integrate gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) into its initiatives, as such through women-centric entrepreneurship programs and capacity-building activities. It also has made progress in documenting project outcomes, however the project lacks a robust system for gender-disaggregated and disability-related data collection. Without this information, it is challenging to evaluate the project's true impact on marginalized, minority and vulnerable groups (including women, youth and disability groups), which may limit the insights drawn for future programmes and initiatives.

The accessibility of KM tools through a suitable online information resource is also yet to be available as the digital platforms used for data sharing may not be accessible to people with disabilities or individuals in remote areas with limited internet access. The absence of tailored KM materials and existing institutional knowledge and solutions produced through the AIS Forum Support Facility Project being available as knowledge sharing risks excluding beneficiaries from different AIS countries who could benefit from these resources.

The AIS Forum Support Facility Project should have a refined KM strategy and develop a suitably accessible and inclusive KM platform that will benefit stakeholders and beneficiaries. By doing so, government national counterparts involved in the AIS Forum Support Facility Project could use these knowledge resources to support policy planning and sustainable development projects. Additionally, this KM platform will empower local entrepreneurs, community leaders, academic institutions and other stakeholders by equipping them with relevant, accessible information on sustainable practices, fostering a more inclusive knowledge-sharing culture across AIS countries/regions.

Therefore Recommendations R4 and R5 focus on strengthening the knowledge management capabilities and actions of the AIS Forum Support Facility Project.

Lesson Learned:

- **Importance of Gender and Disability-Disaggregated Data as Part of Documenting Outcomes:** Collecting gender-disaggregated and disability-related data enhances project transparency and provides insights into its impact on marginalized groups, allowing for more informed and equitable decision-making.
- **Accessible Knowledge-Sharing Platforms is Essential:** Ensuring that knowledge management tools and platforms are accessible to people with disabilities and under-served communities with limited internet access and also to regional communities foster inclusive knowledge-sharing.
- **Institutionalizing KM Practices Support Long-Term Continuity and Knowledge Retention:** Embedding knowledge management into the project’s operational framework ensures that valuable insights, tools, and best practices are retained and accessible for future use, supporting long-term continuity and knowledge retention.

(Based on Key Finding #8, Key Finding #9, Key Finding #20, Key Finding #22)

4.3 Recommendations

The evaluation proposes 5 recommendations for consideration and implementation whereby:

- 3 recommendations relate to corrective actions for the AIS Forum Support Facility Project
- 2 recommendations relate to follow-up actions or reinforced initial benefits from the AIS Forum Support Facility Project to implement

It is to be noted that the implementation of these recommendations would be dependent on the funding and technical resource availability for UNDP, and the willingness and support of the Government of Indonesia as the key project donor/government counterpart.

No.	Recommendation	Responsible Entities	Timeframe	Priority (High/Medium/ Low)
Corrective actions:				
R1.	<p><u>Establish a Comprehensive, Forward-Looking Strategic Framework with S.M.A.R.T. Indicators and Inclusive Outcomes/Outputs (Along with an Updated Theory of Change Model) to Strengthen Project Relevance, Impact, Gender Equality, Disability Inclusion and Sustainability</u></p> <p>To ensure the AIS Forum Support Facility Project’s continued relevance, effectiveness, and long-term impact, there needs to be for a well-defined and coherent strategic framework. This framework should be adaptable, inclusive, and centred on clear, measurable outcomes/outputs that address the unique needs of archipelagic and island states in areas such as climate resilience, blue economy, marine plastic management, and maritime governance. Action steps should include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> extensive reviewing and outlining a detailed and logical results framework to realign the project’s strategic direction with performance targets that balance expected results with both output-oriented and outcome-oriented indicators (including indicators relating to gender equality and women’s empowerment, disability inclusion, social inclusion for disadvantaged/vulnerable groups) to better assess the project effectiveness and efficiency updating the project TOC model to align with the updated PRODOC and project results framework and reflect the updates and changes developing a suitable financial management plan/process ensuring sufficient funding levels commensurate with the scope and objectives of the project without the need to further mobilise resources during project implementation establishing a fit-for-purpose project management structure with appropriate full-time project management capabilities, adding full-time technical expert leads in the areas of project management, monitoring and evaluation, partnership development/ engagement and resource mobilization, where necessary to improve the team's ability to manage the project's implementation effectively, deliver quality outputs and outcomes incorporating exit strategies early in the project to sustain all outputs/outcomes after the project is completed <p>(Based on Conclusion #1, Key Finding #5, Key Finding #6, Key Finding #7, Key Finding #12, Key Finding #14, Key Finding #15, Key Finding #16, Key Finding #17, Key Finding #20, Key Finding #22)</p>	AIS Forum Support Facility Project Secretariat, UNDP Indonesia CO	30 June 2025	High

No.	Recommendation	Responsible Entities	Timeframe	Priority (High/Medium/ Low)
R2.	<p><u>Strengthen Technical Assistance Initiatives to Partner with AIS Government Counterparts for Inclusive Policy and Legislative Development in Climate Resilience, Blue Economy, Marine Plastic Management, and/or Maritime Governance</u></p> <p>The AIS Forum Support Facility Project should strategically reallocate part of its funding for technical assistance initiatives, identifying and partnering with AIS government counterparts to develop and implement inclusive policies and strengthened legislative frameworks that address climate change adaptation, marine plastic reduction, blue economy development, and maritime governance. This approach must incorporate gender-responsive and disability-inclusive practices, enabling policies that meet the needs of diverse communities and align with international standards for inclusivity and social equity. Action steps should include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging full-time technical expert leads in the areas of Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation, Blue Economy, Marine Plastic Debris, and Maritime Governance where applicable in the relevant technical assistance initiative fostering partnerships with like-minded AIS government counterparts and international organizations for synergies in policy/legislative development and capacity building developing and deploying gender-responsive and disability-inclusive policy toolkits <p>(Based on Conclusion #2, Key Finding #8, Key Finding #9, Key Finding #10, Key Finding #11, Key Finding #13, Key Finding #14, Key Finding #15, Key Finding #16, Key Finding #17)</p>	AIS Forum Support Facility Project Secretariat, UNDP Indonesia CO	31 October 2025	High
R3.	<p><u>Establish and Strengthen Strategic Collaborations with Regional/Country Offices of International Organizations to Maximize Synergies and Collective Impact</u></p> <p>To fully realize the AIS Forum Support Facility Project’s potential for sustainable community impact, there should be deeper, more coordinated partnerships with regional and country offices of international organizations that share aligned goals in climate resilience, blue economy, marine plastic management, and maritime governance.</p> <p>Strategic collaboration with these entities will allow the project to leverage complementary resources, avoid duplicative efforts, and foster inclusive, locally adapted interventions that amplify community benefits across AIS member countries.</p> <p>Action steps should include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> identify and map international organizations with aligned goals and ongoing initiatives in AIS member countries to establish a database of potential partners. host joint workshops or stakeholder forums with regional and country offices to discuss synergies, share expertise, and align objectives. develop formal partnership agreements (e.g., Memorandums of Understanding) to define roles, responsibilities, and shared goals for collaborative initiatives. create a multi-stakeholder working group to facilitate ongoing coordination, resource sharing, and monitoring of collaborative projects. establish localized pilot programs in partnership with these organizations to test and refine interventions that address community needs in climate resilience, the blue economy, marine plastic management, and maritime governance. 	AIS Forum Support Facility Project Secretariat, UNDP Indonesia CO	31 October 2025	High

No.	Recommendation	Responsible Entities	Timeframe	Priority (High/Medium/ Low)
	f. regularly evaluate the outcomes and lessons learned from partnerships and use these insights to scale successful models across AIS member countries. (Based on Conclusion #3, Key Finding #14, Key Finding #15, Key Finding #16, Key Finding #17, Key Finding #19, Key Finding #20, Key Finding #22)			
Actions to follow up or reinforce initial benefits from the project:				
R4.	<p><u>Develop a Knowledge Management Strategy to Systematically Manage the AIS Forum Support Facility Project’s Knowledge Assets to Create Value</u></p> <p>The AIS Forum Support Facility Project should develop a knowledge management (KM) strategy that is specifically designed to capture, organize, and disseminate the AIS Forum Support Facility Project’s institutional knowledge, best practices, tools, and solutions. Implementing this will ensure that critical information and resources are accessible to all stakeholders—government counterparts, local communities, development partners, and marginalized groups. Action steps should include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> outlining the objectives and action plans for the KM Strategy. providing an action plan to consolidate all project knowledge, promoting easy access to resources, fostering learning among stakeholders, and enabling knowledge retention for continuity after project activities end identifying the primary and secondary audiences such as government agencies, academic institutions, local community organizations, NGOs, and private sector partners. Segmentation of knowledge should be conducted to ensure relevant content is tailored to meet diverse needs. (Based on Conclusion #4, Key Finding #8, Key Finding #9, Key Finding #20, Key Finding #22)	AIS Forum Support Facility Project Secretariat	31 December 2025	Medium
R5.	<p><u>Establish a Knowledge Hub to Consolidate, Retain and Share All Institutional Knowledge, Solutions and Tools</u></p> <p>For ease of access to all institutional knowledge, solutions and tools, the AIS Forum Support Facility Project should convert its existing online website to become a single one-stop-shop knowledge hub with the following action steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> developing an intuitive and accessible interface to facilitate easy navigation and retrieval of knowledge consolidating all institutional knowledge, solutions and tools from project activities serves as a centralized repository for all project materials, such as research reports, training materials, toolkits, policy templates, case studies, success stories, and video tutorials. strengthening the communications of the project results with a focus on reporting and presenting the project’s outcome-based benefits and impacts on the societal and community well-being. <p>By doing so, the project would enable international donors, national/regional/ local authorities and local communities to better understand the positive changes to beneficiaries made by project interventions.</p> (Based on Conclusion #4, Key Finding #8, Key Finding #9, Key Finding #20, Key Finding #22)	AIS Forum Support Facility Project Secretariat	31 December 2025	Medium

ANNEXES

A.1 TERMS OF REFERENCE

Annexed in a separate file

A.2 LIST OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED

Annexed in a separate file

A.3 LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

Document (electronic versions preferred if available)	
1.	UNDP Evaluation Guideline
2.	UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD) and United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, 2021-2025
3.	UNDP Strategic Plan 2022-2025
4.	Final AIS Forum Support Facility Project Document (PRODOC) with all annexes
5.	Project Initiation Plan supporting documents (PIP)
6.	Annual Workplan AIS 2021-2024
7.	AIS Forum Support Facility Project Signed Agreements and Declaration
8.	Workplan AIS 2022-2026
9.	All Project Assurance Reports (PARs) from 2021-2023
10.	Progress reports (quarterly, semi-annual, or annual, with associated workplans and financial reports)
11.	Activity/Programme Reports from each unit of AIS Forum
12.	Minutes of Project Board Meetings and of other meetings (i.e. Project Appraisal Committee meetings)
13.	Electronic copies of project outputs (booklets, manuals, technical reports, articles, etc.)
14.	Sample of project communications materials
15.	Summary list of formal meetings, workshops, etc. held, with date, location, topic, and number of participants
16.	List/map of project sites, highlighting suggested site for virtual data collections
17.	Sample of Mid-Term Review report and management response to MTR recommendations from other related projects
18.	Financial data, including actual expenditures by project outcome, including management costs, and including documentation of any significant budget revisions
19.	Co-financing data with expected and actual contributions broken down by type of co-financing, source, and whether the contribution is considered as investment mobilized or recurring expenditures
20.	List of contracts and procurement items over ~US\$5,000 (i.e. organizations or companies contracted for project outputs, etc., except in cases of confidential information)
21.	List and contact details for project staff, key project stakeholders, including Project Board members, Project Team members, and other partners to be consulted
22.	AIS Forum Support Facility Partnerships Agreements
23.	Other project deliverables that provide documentary evidence of achievement towards project outcomes
24.	Additional documents, as required

A.4 LIST OF QUESTIONS USED DURING THE EVALUATION

Annexed in a separate file

A.5 EVALUATION CONSULTANT CODE OF CONDUCT AGREEMENT FORM

Annexed in a separate file

A.6 UNITED NATIONS EVALUATION GROUP (UNEG) CODE OF CONDUCT AGREEMENT FORM

Annexed in a separate file

A.7 AUDIT TRAIL

Annexed in a separate file

A.8 EVALUATION MATRIX

Annexed in a separate file

A.9 ONLINE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE INSTRUMENT

Annexed in a separate file