

MID-TERM REVIEW

PROJECT TITLE: Sulu-Celebes Sea Sustainable Fisheries Management Project (SCS)

GEFSEC PROJECT ID: 4063

GEF AGENCY PROJECT ID: 3524

EVALUATION TIMEFRAME: April-May 2013

DATE OF EVALUATION FINAL REPORT:

COUNTRIES: Indonesia, Malaysia, and Philippines

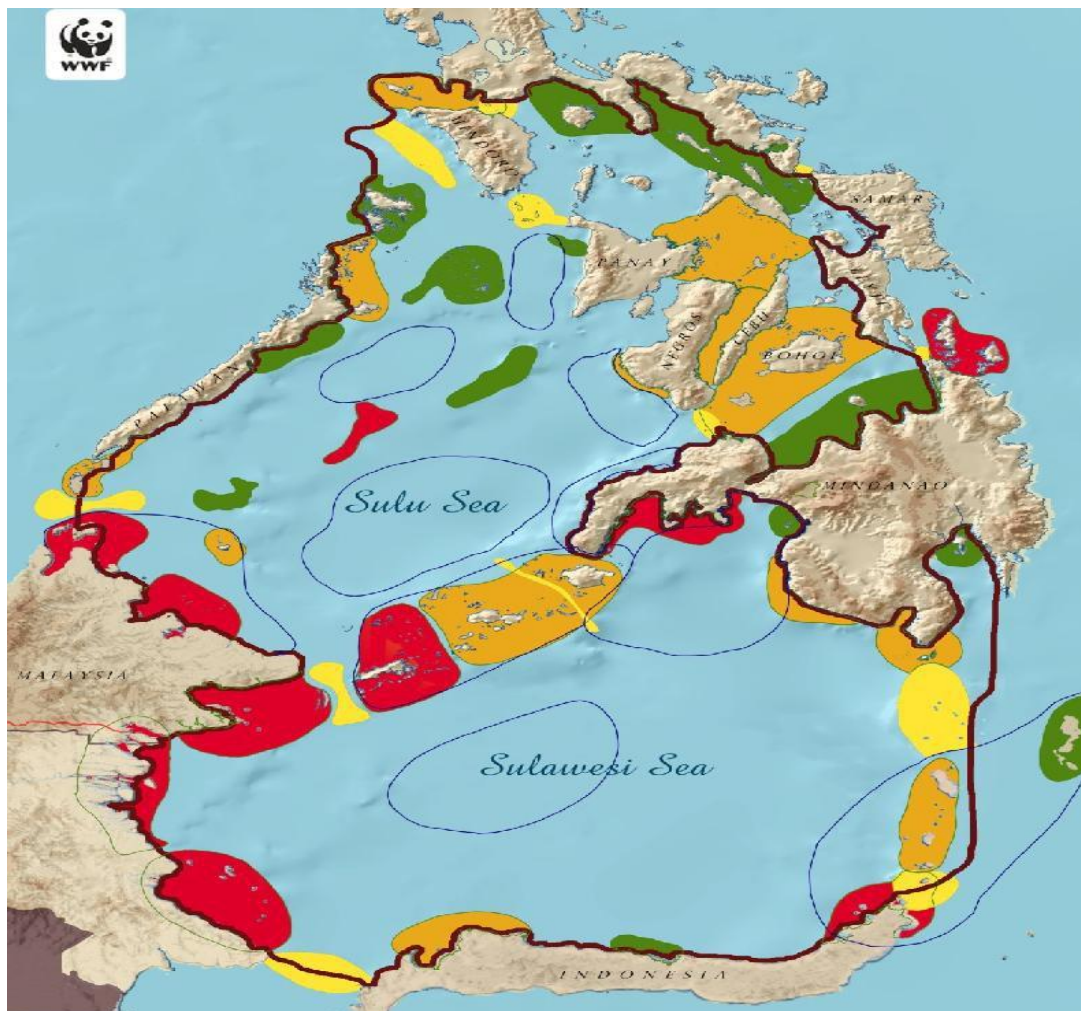
GEF AGENCY: UNDP

GEF FOCAL AREA: International Waters

GEF-4 STRATEGIC PROGRAM: SP-1: Restoring and sustaining coastal and marine fish stocks and associated biological diversity

EXECUTING AGENCY/PARTNER: UNOPS

EVALUATOR: David A. LaRoche



Executive Summary

Introduction

1. The Sulu-Celebes Sea (SCS) is a Large Marine Ecosystem (LME) in the tropical seas of Asia bounded by three countries – Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines. The Global Development of the Project is to contribute to the sustainability of fisheries in the SCS by improving the conservation and management of their marine habitat, including its biodiversity and ecological processes to the benefit of the region's coastal communities to restore and sustain the economically and ecologically important small pelagic fisheries in the SCS, primarily for the benefit of communities that are dependent on these resources for livelihood. The immediate objective of the Project is to improve the condition of fisheries and their habitats in the SCS through an integrated, collaborative and participatory management at the local, national and tri-national levels.

2. The Sulu-Celebes Sea Sustainable Fisheries Management project (SCS SFM) is intended to result in:

1. The achievement of a regional consensus on trans-boundary priorities and their immediate and root causes by updating an earlier Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) with a focus on unsustainable exploitation of fisheries;
2. Agreement on regional measures for improved fisheries management through coordination and formulation of a Strategic Action Program (SAP), which will build on an existing Ecoregion Conservation Plan (ECP);
3. Strengthening of institutions and introduction of reforms to catalyze implementation of policies on reducing overfishing and improving fisheries management, targeting the Sulu-Sulawesi Marine Ecoregion (SSME) Tri-National Committee (TnNC) and its Sub-Committees, in particular the Sub-Committee on Sustainable Fisheries (SSF);
4. Increased fish stocks of small pelagics through the implementation of best fisheries management practices in demonstration sites; and
5. The capture, application and dissemination of knowledge, lessons and best practices within the SCS and other LMEs.

Principal Conclusions

3. The project has experienced a significant amount of difficulty at managerial level. There have been three Regional Project Managers over less than three years; there have been difficult, sometimes acrimonious (termed as “tempestuous” by one interviewee) levels of disagreement among project partners, i.e. the Implementing Agency (IA), Executing Agency (EA), Project Management Unit (PMU), and representatives of the participating countries; and for several months there was no PMU. A continuation of this managerial dysfunction will make difficult the achievement of remaining project objectives.

4. The overall project rating, as below, is Marginally Satisfactory. This rating was given based on an assessment of progress concerning the two principal objectives of GEF IW foundational projects, namely production and participating country endorsement of a high quality transboundary diagnostic analysis, and formal country adoption of a Strategic Action Program. At this time, a comprehensive TDA, developed with strong stakeholder support, has been developed, and approved by the principal sub-committee of the TnNC, a requirement listed in the project document. The Strategic Action Program is under development, but successful completion and adoption is uncertain, under circumstances of managerial dysfunction and limited and rapidly

dwindling resources (financial, human and time). The project partners – the IA, the EA, the PMU, the participating countries, and Conservation International - are thus confronted with a monumental challenge. It is clear, as demonstrated through interviews and document review, that project partners remain committed to a positive outcome. However, the evaluator concludes that should the project partners fail to deliver a SAP - formally adopted by the participating countries and requiring a level of coordination and cooperation that has so far not been demonstrated - the eventual project outcome must be seen as having been unsatisfactory.

Other Major Conclusions

5. The project as designed was too extensive and too ambitious for the amount of funding sought in the GEF grant. Consequences included, among others, budgets and workplans being re-aligned twice during implementation; elements of Component 4 having to be reduced in scope in recognition of their overly ambitious nature; the original budgeted amount for the Regional Project manager having been insufficient; and several originally budgeted positions or consultancies not funded. The latter includes funding for an M&E specialist, knowledge management specialist, and editor.

6. Several key personnel from the participating countries have expressed a lack confidence and even trust in the Executing and Implementing Agencies. This stems from, among other things, lack of participating country involvement in the selection processes for the three Regional Project Managers the project has had to date; slowness on the part of the Executing Agency in issuance of contracts, payments to vendors and reimbursements; and misunderstandings on the part of some officials from the participating countries as to the roles of the Implementing and Executing Agencies. It should be noted that many of the problems related to project the UNDP Regional Technical Advisor and the UNDP Country Office have raised administration and management but were not addressed at higher levels.

7. Given the absence of a PMU for approximately 10 months of project implementation, participating country personnel have looked to UNDP and UNOPS to perform what otherwise would have been tasks routinely performed by the Regional Project Manager and the PMU. Neither the IA nor the EA are capable of assuming such a role, notwithstanding that they are ultimately responsible: UNDP for overall project performance and UNOPS for assurance of efficient project execution.

8. Notwithstanding IA and EA difficulties in maintaining a functioning PMU, and associated difficulties, progress with demonstration activities and development of a TDA by Conservation International has been effective enough to ensure successful delivery of the projected, major outputs of a GEF foundational/capacity building project: A stakeholder driven, comprehensive TDA; an initial draft of a SAP; and overall successful implementation of pilot demonstration activities in each of the participating countries.

9. As there are only twelve months left for project implementation, there is danger that absent close, constant and effective communication and coordination between and among the RPM, the participating countries, the EA, and the IA, the most important element of this foundational project, development and country endorsement of the SAP, will not be realized.

10. Ensuring effective M&E over the remainder of project implementation will be a difficult challenge for the RPM and the PMU, particularly in light of budget and human resource constraints that exist. For example, the current PSC approved budget and workplan contains no financial resources for future M&E work.

Key Recommendations

Principal Recommendations

11. All Project Partners must act quickly to take advantage of the window of opportunity that now exists with country personnel, who are eager to maximize progress over the remaining time. This level of close and constant communication and coordination among the partners of this project, underlain by trust, has not to date been a hallmark of the project.

12. The PMU should make its principal focus in the time remaining to develop, receive country endorsement of, and publish a high quality Strategic Action Program (Component/Outcome 2, Output 2.1).

13. The Implementing Agency, the Executing Agency, and the participating countries should work closely with, and fully support the efforts of the PMU to meet this target, through increased collaboration and provision the necessary and remaining project financial resources and through making available the necessary human resources. More specifically:

- The Implementing Agency should immediately begin assisting the PMU in securing high-level support for the Strategic Action Program, and also assisting the PMU to secure participating country endorsement of the SAP prior to project closure. The Implementing Agency should also use the full power of its IA status to ensure heightened EA efficiency and responsiveness to the administrative needs of the PMU.
- The Executing Agency should work closely with the PMU to assure that unnecessary delays in procurement, reimbursements, and other project administrative issues are processed expeditiously, consistent with existing procedures, as a means of maximizing the extent to which the Regional project manager can focus on SAP development and acceptance and endorsement on the part of the participating countries.
- The Executing Agency should work closely with the Regional Project Manager to ensure that the latter has the requisite administrative and technical support necessary for successful project implementation, consistent with remaining project budget.
- The participating countries, through their designated Project Steering Committee members, should assist the PMU and the UNDP in identifying, and then securing the support of key, high-level country officials whose support for the SAP will be necessary to its endorsement prior to project closure.
- Conservation International, as the contractual entity responsible for delivering a high quality TDA and SAP, should work as expeditiously as possible to undertake the final edit of the TDA and work closely with the RPM to refine and deliver a high quality SAP.

Other Prioritized Recommendations

1. The PMU and the participating countries should prioritize successful completion of the country specific demonstration sites (Component/Outcome 4, Output 4.1). It is recognized that the Indonesia – and perhaps Malaysia - pilot demonstration activities will not be completed by close of project and that no-cost extensions may be necessary.
2. The PMU should, further to and in addition to the analysis contained in this Review, immediately undertake, in consultation with the participating countries and the Implementing Agency, an in-depth analysis of all targets contained in the most recent PSC endorsed logical framework analysis with the objective of determining targets that can realistically be met, and, as importantly those that cannot be met, given remaining project resources (financial, personnel, and time).

3. The Regional Project Manager should, consistent with achievement of the above recommendations and as a priority matter, visit each of the participating countries, including field visits to each of the country demonstration sites, as a means of demonstrating a commitment to close collaboration and cooperation between the re-structured PMU and key personnel and activities within each of the participating countries, and, more specifically, seek out views and encourage the cooperation of each of the National Coordinators.
4. The Executing Agency should, with the strong encouragement, support, and, as necessary and appropriate, direction of the Implementing Agency to, among other things, ensure timely issuance of contracts, payments to participating countries, payment of vendors, processing of travel authorizations for the PMU and country personnel, and reimbursements of those personnel.
5. A representative of the Implementing Agency should, if possible, accompany the Regional Project Manager on early missions to the participating countries as a means of re-establishing a belief on the part of the countries that the UNDP remains committed to the success of the project, that it remains strongly committed to cementing a strong working relationship with the countries in relation to this project, and welcomes and encourages hearing first-hand the views and concerns of country representatives of the project.
6. At a minimum, the Regional Project Manager should ensure that the GEF IW tracking tool is satisfactorily updated and completed by the end of project implementation, notwithstanding the absence of any earmarked financial resources for the task. It appears that responsibility for updating will have to be assumed by the RPM, due to lack of remaining budget. A version of the tracking tool as contained in the 2011 PIR has been taken into account in this evaluation. What is now needed is a 2012 update that could serve the needs of the Terminal Evaluation.

General Recommendations

1. The Implementing Agency should structure projects consistent with available financial resources. In the case of this project, while components, outcomes, and outputs are similar to those found in GEF IW projects in GEF 1-3, this project, under GEF-4, had a much smaller GEF grant that has proved insufficient to deliver all projected outputs, as demonstrated in the revised logical framework analysis and failure to execute many of the targets in the logical framework analysis.
2. The Implementing Agency, given its on-the-ground presence in each of the participating countries, should make every effort to secure high-level membership (Deputy Minister level) on the Project Steering Committee. High-level PSC membership is especially important in GEF IW foundational projects, as is the SCM, as high-level political commitment is seen as necessary for approval and eventual successful implementation of the SAP. The current membership of the SCM PSC is heavily oriented to operational rather than policy level officials. It is recognized by the evaluator that a Deputy Minister may sometimes, or even often delegate attendance at Project Steering Committee meetings. Nonetheless, the formal membership of higher level PSC members from the participating would likely assist in leveraging political support for the work of the project, a crucial ingredient when it comes time to leverage country financial resources to achieve sustainability of project result.

Rating Tables

Goal and Component Ratings

| Goal/Components | | Evaluation | | | | | |
|-----------------|--|------------|---|----|----|---|----|
| | | HS | S | MS | MU | U | HU |
| Goal | To contribute to the sustainability of the fisheries of the SCS by improving the conservation and management of their marine habitat including its biodiversity and ecological processes to the benefit of coastal communities | | | | | | |
| Component 1 | Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis for the SSLME | | | | | | |
| Component 2 | Regional and national legal, policy and institutional reforms for improved fisheries management | | | | | | |
| Component 3 | Introduction of institutional reforms to catalyze regional cooperation in reducing over-fishing and improving fisheries management in the SCS (Greater emphasis on regional cooperation than in the original logframe) | | | | | | |
| Component 4 | Demonstration of best fisheries management practices in critical sites of the SCS (Emphasis on “critical sites” absent in original logframe) | | | | | | |

Project Outcome Ratings

| Outcomes | | Evaluation | | | | | |
|-----------------------|---|------------|---|----|----|---|----|
| | | HS | S | MS | MU | U | HU |
| Component 1 Outcome 1 | Regional consensus on transboundary priorities and their immediate and root causes | | | | | | |
| Component 2 Outcome 2 | Recommend actions on regional and national legal, policy and institutional reforms for improved fisheries management | | | | | | |
| Component 3 Outcome 3 | Strengthening of existing institutions to catalyze regional cooperation in reducing over-fishing and improving fisheries management in the SCS | | | | | | |
| Component 4 Outcome 4 | Increased capacity of SSME national level institutions to implement site-specific EAFM with local partners to rebuild fish stocks and improve fishing incomes | | | | | | |
| Component 5 Outcome 5 | Facilitated uptake of knowledge and lessons learned | | | | | | |

Project Monitoring and Evaluation Ratings

| Criteria | Rating | Comment |
|--|--------|---------|
| Scale for Monitoring and Evaluation: Highly Satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S) Moderately Satisfactory (MS), Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), Unsatisfactory (U), Highly Unsatisfactory (HU) | | |

| | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------|--|
| Overall quality of M&E | MU | Limited past M&E effort, likely the result of RPM turnover, periods of no RPM at the PMU, and a period of no functioning PMU; no financial resources committed to M&E over the remainder of project implementation |
| M&E design at project start up | S | M&E design at start-up consistent with UNDP-GEF IW standards, included the GEF IW Tracking Tool and timing and cost estimates |
| M&E Plan Implementation | MU | PIRs undertaken annually and generally good quality; 2 QPRs produced; QPRs cursory; No ongoing M&E at PMU scale; no TPRs conducted; no results template reporting or IW tracking tool reporting undertaken by PMU |

IA and EA Execution Ratings

| Scale for IA & EA Execution: Highly Satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S) Moderately Satisfactory (MS), Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), Unsatisfactory (U), Highly Unsatisfactory (HU) | | |
|--|-----------|--|
| Overall Quality of Project Implementation/Execution | MU | Responsibility for delays in project implementation start-up and disorganized and sometimes dysfunctional PMU must ultimately rest with the IA and EA |
| Implementing Agency Execution | MU | Country assessments of IA performance range from negative to neutral; UNDP at corporate level is ultimately responsible for overall project performance, including establishment and effective and efficient functioning of a PMU, which has not been the case |
| Implementing Agency Oversight Functions | MS | UNDP at regional and country level have made repeated attempts to address administrative and managerial problems of the project |
| Executing Agency Execution | MU | Country assessments, and to some extent IA assessments of EA performance consistently and highly negative |

Overall Project Rating

| Rating | Description |
|------------------------------|--|
| Marginally Satisfactory (MS) | Project is expected to achieve most of its major relevant objectives but with either significant shortcomings or modest overall relevance. Project is expected not to achieve some of its major global environmental objectives or yield some of the expected global environment benefits. |

Acronyms

| | |
|-----------|---|
| ADB | Asian Development Bank |
| ASEAN | Association of Southeast Asian Nations |
| BFAR | Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (Philippines) |
| BIMP-EAGA | Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East Asia Growth Area |
| CI | Conservation International |
| COBSEA | Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia |
| CPUE | Catch per Unit Effort |
| CTI | Coral Triangle Initiative |
| CTI CFFC | Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Securities and Adaptation to Climate Change |
| CT6 | Coral Triangle (6 countries) |
| DOF | Department of Fisheries, Sabah |
| ECP | Ecoregion Conservation Plan for SSME |
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organization, United Nations |
| GEF | Global Environment Facility |
| GEF SGP | Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme |
| GIWA | Global International Waters Assessment |
| IMP | Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines |
| LME | Large Marine Ecosystem |
| MMAF | Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries |
| NPOA | National Program of Action for Coral Triangle countries (Indonesia) |
| PEMSEA | Partnership in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia PMU Project Management Office |
| PPG | Project Preparation Grant |
| RPO | Regional Project Office |
| RPOA | Regional Program of Action for CT countries |
| RPM | Regional Program Manager |
| SAP | Strategic Action Program |
| SEAFDEC | Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center |
| SCS | Sulu-Celebes Sea Large Marine Ecosystem |
| SCS-SFM | Sulu-Celebes Sea Sustainable Fisheries Management Project |
| SSME | Sulu-Sulawesi Marine Ecoregion |
| TDA | Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis |
| TNC | The Nature Conservancy |
| TnNC | Tri-national Committee (Indonesia, Malaysia, and Philippines) |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNOPS | United Nations Office of Project Services |
| WWF | The World Wildlife Fund |

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1. Introduction

1.1 Project Background

14. The Sulu-Celebes Sea (SCS) is a Large Marine Ecosystem in the tropical seas of Asia bounded by three countries – Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines. Being at the heart of the most bio-diverse marine area in the world, the SCS is also a very rich fishing ground for large and small pelagic as well as bay and coral reef fishes, providing livelihoods to the coastal inhabitants and food for the entire region and beyond. The fishery resources, however, have declined due to various threats, including overexploitation, habitat and community modification and global climate change.

15. The goal of the Project is to have an economically and ecologically sustainable marine fishery in the SCS, for the benefit of communities who are dependent on these resources for livelihood and for the global community who benefit in the conservation of highly diverse marine ecosystems and its ecosystems services. The objective of the Project is to improve the condition of fisheries and their habitats in the SCS through an integrated, collaborative and participatory management at the local, national and tri-national levels.

16. The three countries and other stakeholders, including NGOs, had previously worked together to develop the Sulu-Sulawesi Marine Ecoregion Conservation Plan, and formally put in place a regional institutional mechanism, the Tri-national Committee (TnC), to implement the plan. Project activities, outcomes and outputs were developed to build on these strong regional and national initiatives. There are five major components of the Project:

1. A transboundary diagnostic analysis (TDA) for the SCLME.
2. Regional and national legal, policy and institutional reforms and improved fisheries management.
3. Introduction of institutional reforms regional cooperation to catalyze regional cooperation in reducing overfishing and improving fisheries management in the SCS.
4. Demonstration of best fisheries management practices in critical sites of the SCS.
5. Knowledge management and replication of lessons learned.

17. The five project components are further divided into five project Outcomes. These include (based on the logical framework analysis):

1. Achievement of regional consensus on transboundary priorities, their immediate and root causes.
2. Recommendations on regional and national legal, policy, and institutional reforms for improved fisheries management.
3. Strengthening of existing institutions to catalyze regional cooperation in reducing over-fishing and improving fisheries management in the SCS.
4. Increased capacity of SSME national level institutions to implement site-specific ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAFM) with local partners to rebuild fish stocks and improve fishing incomes.
5. Facilitated uptake of knowledge and lessons learned.

18. The five project components are further broken down into nine project Outputs, which are listed in the following table.

Table 1: Project Outcomes by Output

| | |
|--|---|
| Outcome 1: Achievement of regional consensus on transboundary priorities, their immediate and root causes | Output 1.1: TDA for the SCS LME |
| Outcome 2: Recommendations on regional and national legal, policy, and institutional reforms for improved fisheries management | Outcome 2.1: Regional fisheries strategic action program (SAP) |
| | Outcome 2.2: Collaborative agreements with relevant regional and sub-regional organizations |
| Outcome 3: Strengthening of existing institutions to catalyze regional cooperation in reducing over-fishing and improving fisheries management in the SCS | Output 3.1: Strengthened TnC for SCS and its Sub-Committee on Sustainable Fisheries |
| | Output 3.2: Strengthening of existing national working groups or committees for the effective implementation of the agreed action plans for the SCS |
| Outcome 4: Increased capacity of SSME national level institutions to implement site-specific EAFM with local partners to rebuild fish stocks and improve fishing incomes | Output 4.1: Mobilization/Establishment of one demonstration site for each country |
| | Output 4.2: Better understanding of small pelagics stocks and fisheries in the SCS demo sites |
| | Output 4.3: Integrated fisheries management plans (FMPs) prepared and implemented at each demonstration site |
| Outcome 5: Facilitated uptake of knowledge and lessons learned | Output 5.1: Captured, applied and disseminated knowledge, lessons learned and best practices within the SCS and other LMEs |

1.2 Purpose of the evaluation

19. The purpose of the Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) is to examine progress and performance of the project since implementation. The MTE is to include the evaluation of both the progress in project implementation, measured against planned outputs and outcomes set forth in the Project Document, the assessment of features related to the process involved in achieving those outcomes, and progress towards project objective. The evaluation will also address causes and issues that constrain the achievement of set targets.

20. The evaluation is also intended to assist UNDP in promoting accountability and transparency, and to assess and disclose the extent of project accomplishments; synthesizing lessons that can help to improve the selection, design and implementation of future GEF financed UNDP activities; providing feedback on issues that are recurrent across the UNDP portfolio and need attention, and on improvements regarding previously identified issues; contributing to the overall assessment of results in achieving GEF strategic objectives aimed at global environmental benefit; and gauging the extent of project convergence with other UN and UNDP priorities.

1.3 Key issues to be addressed

21. The MTE is intended to identify weaknesses and strengths in project design, and to develop recommendations for any necessary changes in the overall design and orientation of the project by evaluating the adequacy, efficiency and effectiveness of its implementation, as well as assessing Project outputs and outcomes to date. Consequently, the evaluator is expected to make detailed recommendations on the work plan for the remaining project period. The MTE will assess early signs of project success or failure and prompt necessary adjustments

and identifies lessons-learned and best practices from the Project that can be applied to on-going and future projects.

1.4 Methodology of the evaluation

22. The evaluation follows approaches adopted by the GEF for the assessment of IW projects as well as UNDP M&E guidelines. The Mid-term Evaluation was conducted in a participatory manner working on the basis that its essential objective has been to assess the project implementation and impacts in order to provide a basis for improvement in the implementation and other decisions.

23. The evaluation started with a desk review of project documentation¹ and also included the following activities:

- Desk review of Project Document, outputs, monitoring reports (such as, among others, Project Inception Report, Minutes of Project Steering Committee meetings, other relevant meetings, Project Implementation Reports (PIRs/APRs), quarterly progress reports, and other internal documents including consultant and financial reports);
- Review of specific products including content of the Project web site, datasets, management and action plans, publications and other materials and reports;
- Interviews with the former Senior Project Manager and other project staff who used to work in the Project Management Unit, if available after their departure from the project, and interviews with consultants involved in Project implementation; and
- Consultations and/or interviews with relevant stakeholders involved, including government representatives (Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines), other related projects and programs within the region, Conservation International as major project contractor, relevant UNDP Country Offices (Philippines, Asia Pacific Regional Center) and UNOPS personnel, and NGOs.
- In summary, 49 interviews were conducted with 41 interviewees. Several interviewees, such as the UNDP RTA, the UNOPS IW Portfolio Manager, and the current RPM were interviewed multiple times.

1.5 Data and Information Limitations

24. This Mid-term Review has been written in the context of some notable data and information limitations. These include:

- Unavailability of a functioning PMU during the evaluator's field trip to the three participating countries made accessing project files and other information normally available from a functioning PMU impossible to access. In the absence of a functioning PMU, the office of the Philippine National Coordinator agreed to develop the evaluator's itinerary and expedited travel in the Philippines and to the other two participating countries. While the National Coordinator and his staff were extremely helpful, and it is inconceivable of how the evaluator could have undertaken the mission without their invaluable support, the absence of a Regional Project Manager and PMU staff with ongoing and direct knowledge of the overall activities of the PMU was a distinct liability. For example, project files, beyond those available through the National Coordinator, were not available for evaluator review.

¹ The document review was continuous as the evaluator collected and reviewed documents over the course of interviews with various stakeholders.

- The records of the PMU, to the extent they were available at all, were incomplete and disorganized. The newly appointed Regional Project Manager shares this view of incompleteness and disorganization. The incompleteness and disorganization of the PMU electronic files are no doubt in part related to Regional Project Manager turnover and administrative difficulties experienced by the PMU, difficulties that are chronicled elsewhere in this report.
- The project website was woefully incomplete and seriously outdated, thus eliminating a usually valuable source of information for an evaluation.
- Project Monitoring and Evaluation, also an indispensable tool for an evaluator, has not been a focus of the PMU, with many critical pieces having either not been done, or not made available to the evaluator.
- The current financial status of the project cannot be described in a chronologically consistent way. The current level of expenditure from the GEF grant has been kept current by UNOPS. The level of country co-finance is reported to 30 June 2012 due to the absence of the PMU that would normally track it.
- Very few respondents were familiar with the history of project development and implementation history thus making difficult a standard questionnaire that relies heavily on questions related to such matters.

Each of these points is elaborated upon in this Review.

2. The Project and its Development Context

2.1 Project start, duration, and partners

25. The project was scheduled to start in January of 2010, but did not start effectively until June of 2010 with the arrival of the Regional Project Manager to her duty station in Manila. The project is now scheduled to end in June of 2014 under a no-cost extension.

26. The duration of the project was to be four years. However, due to a later than scheduled start and the later than anticipated arrival and orientation of the first RPM, and establishment of a functioning PMU, the project will have run for 4.5 years by the time of closure. Project financing remains the same as calculated in the project document, with a total budget of US\$ 6.12 million. The GEF grant is US\$ 2.89 million, government in-kind co-finance of US\$ 3 million, UNDP in-kind co-finance of US\$ 90,000, and CI cash co-finance of US\$ 140,000.

27. Project partners include the UNDP as Implementing Agency; UNOPS as the Executing Agency; the participating countries of Indonesia, Malaysia and Philippines; and Conservation International.

2.2 Problems that the Project seeks to address

28. The project seeks to address declining fishery resources in the area of the project. These declines are the result of overexploitation, habitat and community modification, and global climate change.

2.3 Immediate and development objectives of the Project

29. The immediate objective of the Project is to improve the condition of fisheries and their habitats in the SCS through an integrated, collaborative and participatory management at the local, national and tri-national levels. The development objective of the project is to create conditions that will lead to economically and ecologically sustainable marine fisheries in the SCS, for the benefit of communities who are dependent on these resources for livelihood and for the global community who benefit in the conservation of highly diverse marine ecosystems and its ecosystems services.

2.4 Main stakeholders

30. According to the project document there are three types of identified stakeholders of the SCS SFM by management level: local, national and sub-regional.

31. In terms of organizations, the stakeholders include, among others, government agencies and offices, private and public learning institutions, business organizations, non-government organizations, people organizations, and coastal communities. By economic occupation, the stakeholders represent not only fishermen but also backward linkage participants of fisheries such as input suppliers and forward linkage participants such as fish processors and sellers of fish and fish products. In addition, stakeholders include participants in aquaculture and other economic activities in the coastal areas such as agriculture, forestry and mining that may have impacts or are impacted by fisheries in the SCS.

32. A stakeholder analysis by participating country was undertaken during preparation, and the analysis included the specific stakeholder individuals and groups and their respective stake in the project at Outcome and Output level.

2.5 Results expected

33. Results expected include:

- A regional consensus on trans-boundary priorities and their immediate and root causes by updating an earlier Trans-boundary Diagnostic Analysis for the SCS, with a focus on unsustainable exploitation of fisheries.
- Agreement on regional measures for improved fisheries management through coordination in the formulation of a Strategic Action Program, which will build on an earlier Ecoregion Conservation Plan;
- Strengthening of institutions, specifically targeting the Sulu-Sulawesi Marine Ecoregion Tri-National Committee and its Sub-Committees, and introduction of reforms to catalyze implementation of policies on reducing overfishing and improving fisheries management;
- Increased fish stocks of small pelagics through the implementation of best fisheries management practices in demonstration sites; and
- The capture, application and dissemination of knowledge, lessons and best practices within the SCS and other LMEs.

3. Findings and Conclusions

3.1 Project Concept and Formulation

34. The evaluator has structured this section in relation to suggested questions in UNDP and GEF guidelines, and an additional question on adequacy of project finance in relation to the scope of the project. These Questions, and evaluator findings and conclusions related to them, include:

35. Were the project's objectives and components clear, practicable and feasible within its timeframe?

The project objectives and components were clearly elaborated and described. They were specific; included measurable targets; were achievable under conditions of a stable and well-functioning PCU and efficient project execution; relevant in relation to UNDP and participating country development objectives which were elaborated in the PIP and the project document; and were time bound as described in a timeline/calendar included as a table in the project document.

36. Was the level of funding requested from the GEF consistent with the project scope of work?

The level of funding was not adequate to the scope of work foreseen. In general, GEF IW foundational projects, during GEF 1-3, received in the vicinity of US\$ 10 million to undertake a similar scope of work to this project. At US\$ 2.89 million this project not surprisingly has experienced difficulty marshalling the resources to successfully meet its targets. For example, limitations in project funding necessitated dropping of replication sites foreseen in Component 3. The UNDP Regional Technical Advisor as described in a PIR, concluded it was best to focus available resources in one demo site per country in order to ensure at least one full cycle of IFMP formulation and initial implementation with demo site partners and stakeholders.

37. Were the capacities of the executing institution(s) and its counterparts properly considered when the project was designed?

The UNOPS, the Executing Agency selected by UNDP, was described in the project document as the entity that would “in accordance with standard operational, financial guidelines and procedures.....be accountable to UNDP for the delivery of agreed outputs as per agreed

project work plans, and for financial management and reporting as well as ensuring cost-effectiveness.” UNDP has a long history of using UNOPS as the Executing Agency for GEF International Waters LME projects for, among others, the Benguela Current, Caspian Sea, Yellow Sea, and Agulhas and Somali LMEs. Therefore UNOPS capacities and its comparative advantage as an Executing Agency were quite well understood and taken into account.

38. Were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated in the project design?

Lessons learned from other projects/experience were incorporated into project design. For example, the results of relevant, earlier studies spearheaded by WWF and the Global International Waters Assessment (GIWA) such as scaling, scoping, causal chain analysis, policy options analysis, and preparation of the Strategic Action Program were referenced.

39. Were the partnership arrangements properly identified and roles and responsibilities negotiated prior to project approval?

Partnership arrangements were negotiated with CI during project development, and were clearly described in the project document. The project organogram and accompanying text described the full range of expected partner roles and responsibilities.

40. Were counterpart resources (funding, staff, and facilities), enabling legislation, and adequate project management arrangements in place at project entry?

Participating country resources necessary to project implementation were defined as part of project preparation. Also during project preparation it was clear that CI would be both a recipient of and contributor to overall project resources. As this is a GEF IW foundational project, the issue of pre-existing enabling legislation is not seen to be relevant.

41. Were the project assumptions and risks well articulated in the PIF and project document?

In general, assumptions and risks were described at Outcome and Output level. However, a major missing assumption is that of an efficient, uninterrupted functioning PMU, stable leadership from an RPM, and efficient and effective execution and implementation. An example of a missing risk is that, as the participating countries have among them ongoing territorial disputes in the SSCLME, there is a risk that these territorial disputes could lead to difficulties if not direct resistance to further institutional development to address issues at regional scale. Another missing risk is that of the countries, or any of the countries, needing to take considerable time to finally endorse the Strategic Action Program. Indonesia did not sign the project document for close to one year into implementation due to an unwillingness to commit to SAP endorsement by end of project. During this evaluation Indonesia expressed this concern again.

3.1.1 Project Relevance

42. The project document made clear that the countries are committed to the objectives of the project as signatories to all relevant international conventions and through consistency with existing, explicitly stated priorities of the countries and legislation. The establishment and continued operation of country specific National Coordinating Units, and particularly the work being undertaken by Philippines and Malaysia at demonstration sites, and planned by Indonesia, demonstrates the continuing relevance of this project to the participating countries.

3.1.2 Implementation Approach

43. The logical framework is clear and is a useful tool in assessing implementation progress. However, many targets lack sufficient clarity needed to enable accurate assessment of the extent to which targets have been met, and whether they were met in timely fashion. For example, one logframe target is to secure collaborative agreements with relevant regional and sub-regional organizations, but there is not target established for how many or by when. There is a target that

calls for the results national level and demonstration site activities to be incorporated into national and regional policies, although no targets are presented or timing suggested for when this might happen. Further, there is a target that reads “Results of studies support fisheries management (G.C.M) in demo sites.” This is not a target but rather an outcome that is difficult if not impossible to quantify. A hallmark of a solid logframe should be its continuing relevance and use as a, if not the principal tool for project M&E. The project logframe meets this standard.

3.1.3 Country Ownership/Engagement

44. The project was developed consistent with participating country development objectives, which in turn are consistent with the projects objectives, components, outcomes and outputs. However, participating countries seem not to have had, and to certain extent continue not to have, an accurate understanding of the respective roles, and limitations of the IA, the EA, and GEF approaches in relation to the financial modalities of GEF IW projects.

3.1.4 Stakeholder Participation

45. Broad and effective stakeholder participation has been characteristic of this project in several areas of project activities. The TDA, the subject of Component 1, had broad stakeholder participation in Malaysia and Philippines, and is planned in Indonesia. Information regarding stakeholder participation in activities to date comes from interviewees. There have been no PMU reports developed to describe in detail the extent of stakeholder participation.

3.1.5 Replication Approach

46. There have been few recorded lessons and experiences coming out of this project to date. The issue of replication is primarily addressed in Component 5 of the project, and is shown in the Results section of this evaluation there is little progress to report in relation to targets of Component 5 having been met.

3.1.6 Cost-effectiveness/efficiency

47. Cost effectiveness and efficiency were not specifically addressed in any dedicated section in the project document. However, the project document does state “UNOPS will be accountable to UNDP for the delivery of agreed outputs as per agreed project work plans, and for financial management and reporting as well as ensuring cost-effectiveness.”

3.1.7 UNDP Comparative Advantage

48. There was no specific section on UNDP comparative advantage in the project document. While the UNDP has successfully implemented a number of GEF IW LME projects, and its comparative advantage includes Country Offices with related capacity in each of the participating countries, these advantages seem to have been assumed rather than described.

3.1.8 Linkages between the project and other interventions within the sector

49. Linkages between the project and other interventions within the sector were described in the project document, but the turnover of RPMs, periods of absence of a functioning and efficient PMU have prevented any concerted effort to create and nurture linkages. A collaborative agreement with FAO was concluded to cooperate on establishment of an ecosystem approach to fisheries at selected sites in the SSLME, but no other collaborative agreements have been negotiated. An actively maintained project website would facilitate communication between the project and other interventions but the website has been largely moribund for well over a year.

3.1.9 Indicators

50. Indicators appeared in several sections of the project document but were most specifically referenced by type, timing of development, and financing in the Monitoring and Evaluation table.

3.1.10 Management Arrangements

51. Management arrangements appeared in Section III of the project document, and arrangements regarding implementation, execution and project coordination and administration were comprehensively described. A project organogram, depicting management arrangements from regional to local level also appeared in the project document.

3.2 Implementation

3.2.1 Background/History

52. The Project was approved in October of 2009, but implementation was effectively delayed until June of 2010 when the first Regional Project Manager (RPM) arrived in Manila. The Philippine Government (the lead country) had not been informed of her selection or her planned arrival, and thus no office space had been prepared or communications equipment purchased. Further, the RPM experienced great difficulty in obtaining a Philippine work visa, necessitating considerable time in attempting to secure the visa, and travel in and out of the country to meet conditions of her tourist visa. The combination of these early problems meant that, effectively, implementation of project activities did not commence until January of 2011. In May of 2011 the first RPM chose not to renew her contract.

53. A second Regional project manager was selected in October of 2011, a five month gap in project leadership at PMU level. From the outset the second RPM experienced difficulty relating effectively to several key project personnel at country level. There were budget disputes, including one related to the salary of the new RPM. The second RPM chose not to renew his contract in November of 2012. A third, and current RPM was selected and contracted on May 1 of 2013, after having served in an interim capacity from early 2013 until May 1.

54. In December of 2012 the project's remaining two staff members, a fisheries specialist and administrative/financial officer, also resigned. At this time there is no budget to continue these two positions. The Government of Philippines has indicated its willingness to contribute additional staff resources to the PMU to facilitate completion of remaining outputs and relieve the RPM of administrative and financial burdens.

3.2.2 Country Ownership

55. While a number of participating country personnel have found IA and EA performance to have been sub-optimal, recipient country commitment to the project's objectives, components, outcomes and outputs remains strong, based on interviews undertaken and reviews of the content of country presentations at the Inception Workshop and at each of the three PSC meetings.

56. Country commitment is especially marked in relation to activities that have been and are planned within each of the country demonstration sites and in relation to the creation of National Coordinating Units, National Coordinators, and local stakeholders from local government, NGOs, and the private sector within each of the participating countries. There is evidence of country ownership at local level. Demonstration projects in Philippines and Malaysia have focused on sustainable livelihoods, a key national level priority in both countries, and one that is a principal priority for the project. For example, as part of the demonstration activity in Philippines breeding pens for the brood stock of key food fishes have been established, with fry made available to small-scale fish farmers as a means of stabilizing small incomes and a source of protein to local fishers. Further national and local country officials connected to the project have worked with the private sector and civil society to protect sardine stocks through a closure of the fishery during spawning, thus increasing the likelihood of sustainability for this species, an important and

affordable source of protein for low income populations. For these purposes the level of country co-finance has actually increased beyond projections as contained in the project document.

57. Country representatives have expressed great disappointment at their lack of involvement in the selection process of Regional Project Managers. There is a general conclusion among participating country partners that the selection process was exclusive, lacked transparency, and was inconsistent with the GEF objective of project country-divineness.

58. At the beginning of project implementation, and to a lesser degree at present, some country officials believe that GEF financial resources should have been, and should be, given directly to the countries so that in effect the regional dimension of the project, as theoretically driven by a Project Management Unit, would be diluted or lost altogether. There is also little sympathy for the delays in reimbursements and other financial requirements that come with administration of a UNDP-GEF grant. This issue is addressed in more detail elsewhere in this report.

3.2.3 Mainstreaming

59. In general, GEF IW foundational projects are not intended to immediately result in on-the-ground progress or positive changes in poverty alleviation, natural disasters, improved governance, or gender opportunities. However, the pilot demonstration component of the project does lend itself to the following observations and conclusions with regard to these UNDP priorities:

- Poverty alleviation. The project addresses poverty alleviation in both the short and long term. In the short term, the project has protected and likely created jobs through the role it played in bringing about a closure during the sardine spawning season in Philippines area of the SSLME. Since spawning season closure was effected there has been a measured increase in sardine catch, thus providing jobs and, importantly, an affordable source of protein in impoverished areas. In the long run, successful development and implementation of the Strategic Action Program, whose principal objective is sustainable fisheries to, among other things, will maintain and likely create job opportunities as well as continuing to provide an affordable source of protein to poor communities, as, for example, approximately 95% of the sardine harvest in the Philippines sector of the SSLME is for domestic consumption and maintained at a price that is affordable for even poor households.
- Natural disasters. The project was not designed to address natural disaster planning, such as earthquakes and possible, consequent tsunamis. However, the project document identifies climate change as a key threat to SSLME fisheries resources, and increasing severity of storms due to climate change is identified as a serious risk. While the project has identified climate change as both a threat and a risk, the project document makes clear that this threat and risk is, and will continue to be addressed through the Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Securities and Adaptation to Climate Change (CCI-CFFSA).
- Improved governance. The project has yet to produce clear evidence of improvements in regional governance of the fishery resources of the SSLME. However, at local level the project has improved governance through execution of the demonstration projects. For example, the demonstration projects in Philippines and Malaysia have actively recruited and involved local government representatives in demonstration project execution, thus improving knowledge of the importance and approaches to sustaining fish populations, an important source of jobs and protein, to local populations.
- Gender. The SCS SFM Project does not specifically target children or women and thus no gender assessment has been undertaken. However, women are very visible and at all

levels of project execution, and girls and women, who tend to be stakeholders heavily involved in fisheries in rural areas, stand to benefit from a successful project outcome, especially as a result of the demonstration activities within the three participating countries. For example, in the Philippine demonstration activity was instrumental in securing a closed season for sardine capture during the spawning season. The sardine fishery, and more specifically the availability of jobs connected to that fishery, jobs that women can and do occupy, results in opportunities for women. The improvement of the fisheries in the SSME will be beneficial to the coastal community and for both men and women. Men, who are engaged in harvesting and transport of fish products, will be assured of livelihoods and income. Women, who are involved in post-harvest activities such as marketing and fish processing, will be assured of livelihoods and incomes. Also, the First Technical Workshop has identified specific socio-economic indicators of fisheries improvement to include: "increased participation of women in all aspects of decision-making" in fisheries management. As the current project is a GEF IW foundational project, it is too early to see results from this socio-economic indicator.

3.2.4 Achievement of impacts

60. As is the case with mainstreaming, GEF IW foundational projects are not intended to immediately result in the achievement of immediate stress reduction or environmental status impacts. However, and again, the pilot demonstration activities have resulted in the following with regard to:

- Verifiable improvements in ecological status. As described earlier in this Review the project, having been instrumental in bringing about a closure in sardine fishing during the critical spawning season, does seem to have contributed to an increase in sardine catch and also seems to have added to the stabilization of sardine stocks.
- Verifiable reductions in stress on ecological systems. As above, the elimination of fishing effort during sardine spawning can be seen to have resulted in stress reduction in the SSLME.

3.2.5 Financial Management

61. As of 1 January 2013 the project had a cash balance of US\$ 1,146,983. Existing commitments for the remainder of 2013 was calculated at US\$ 446,128. Programmable funds remaining for the period 1 January 2013 to end-of-project in June 2014 totals US\$ 414,123. The table below summarizes overall project finance and co-finance. It should be noted that while the current level of expenditure from the GEF grant has been kept current by UNOPS, the level of country co-finance is only reported to 30 June 2012.

Project finance and co-finance

| Finance (Type) | IA own finance (mill US\$) | | Government (millions US\$) | | Other Sources (millions US\$) | | Total Fin. to date (millions US\$) | Est. End-of-Project (millions US\$) |
|----------------|----------------------------|---------|----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|---------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| | Proposed | To Date | Proposed | To Date | Proposed | To Date | | |
| Grant | 2.890 ² | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2.890 |
| Cash | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | .140 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| In-kind | .090 | .045 | 3.230 | .657 ³ | 0 | 0 | .747 | 3.420 |

² Exclusive of preparation grant of US\$ 85,000.

³ As of 30 June 2012. The Regional Technical Advisor estimates end-of-project total will be US\$ 3.420 million, as projected in the project document.

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------|-------|--|-------|------|---|---|---|-------|
| TOTAL | 2.980 | | 3.230 | .657 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6.310 |
|-------|-------|--|-------|------|---|---|---|-------|

62. Financial management issues have been a frequent source of friction between and among the IA< EA, the PMU, and the participating countries. According to the UNDP it recommended that reimbursement delays and other issues related to project finance could be addressed by UNOPS authorizing the UNDP-Manila Finance Officer to hold and disburse a cash advance for the project, as was the practice for another UNOPS executed project, the GEF Small Grants Programme (GEF SGP). However, and as noted by the RPM at the time, this practice (i.e. the GEF SGP model) would have been subject to a recovery charge by UNDP, as required by UNDP Executive Board for all services it renders to external parties, including other UN agencies. Another option would have been for UNOPS to fast track release of grants to the countries and Project's main NGO partner, CI, noting that they were identified as recipients of project resources per the project document, and not treat them as private service providers, to be subjected to the regular competitive procurement process. However, neither option was adopted and delays in payments from Copenhagen to vendors, PMU staff members, and participating country agencies and individuals have continued to be an irritant.

3.2.6 Monitoring and Evaluation

63. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) has been detrimentally affected by the absence of a functioning PMU, over roughly fifty percent of implementation time to date.

64. According to the project document, the RPM was to be responsible for the day-to-day monitoring and implementation progress of the Project based on the Annual Workplan (AWP). For this purpose, the RPM and the project team was to develop specific targets for implementation performance indicators and their means of verification during the first year of the implementation of the Project. These targets and means of verification were to be used to evaluate the pace of implementation and form part of the AWP. As an annual activity for the succeeding years, targets and indicators for project implementation were to likewise be defined as part of the internal evaluation and planning processes conducted by the project team and agreed with the executing and implementing agencies.

65. Indicators were to have been defined, reviewed and evaluated at the beginning of project implementation, at mid-term, and at the end of implementation. There is no evidence that definition, review and evaluation of indicators has taken place at the beginning or at mid-term of project implementation. The workplan that has been agreed to by the PSC has no mention of indicators. The budget that has been approved by the PSC for the remainder of the project has no financial allocation for the development of indicators, despite the fact that the M&E plan contained in the project document had allocated US\$ 50,000 for "Measurement verification for IW Indicators and Project Performance Indicators." Under these circumstances it appears unlikely that project work on indicators, as foreseen and described in the project document, will not be realized.

66. As the table below demonstrates little of this work has taken place for reasons that are also summarized in the table. Further, and as described in the rating scale below, reasons for this failure include, among other things, RPM turnover; periods of no RPM at the PMU, and a period of no functioning PMU; and lack of financial and human resources committed to M&E to date. Further, there are no financial resources currently committed to M&E for the remainder of project implementation.

67. Ensuring effective M&E over the remainder of project implementation will be a difficult challenge for the RPM and the PMU, particularly in light of budget and human resource

constraints that exist. For example, the current PSC approved budget and workplan contains no financial resources for future M&E work. At a minimum, the RPM should ensure that the GEF tracking tool is satisfactorily updated and completed by the end of project implementation, not withstanding the absence of any earmarked financial resources for the task. It appears that responsibility for updating will have to be assumed by the RPM.

M&E Planned Activities with Evaluator Comment on Implementation

| Type of Activity | Responsible Parties | Time Frame | Evaluator Comments |
|---|--|---|--|
| Inception Meeting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Regional Project Manager •UNDP CO •UNDP/GEF | Within first two months of project start up | Inception meeting held on 29-30/09/2010 |
| Inception Report | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Project Team •UNDP CO | Immediately following inception meeting | Report undated |
| Measurement & Verification for IW Indicators and Project Performance Indicators | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Oversight by Project GEF Technical Advisor and Regional Project Manager •Measurement by regional field officers and local IAs | Start, mid and end of Project | No measurement or verification report for M&E at beginning or at mid-point of project implementation |
| PIR | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Project Team •UNDP CO •UNDP/GEF | Annually | Timely PIRs submitted for each year of project implementation |
| GEF IW Results template reporting and IW Tracking Tool reporting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> PMU <input type="checkbox"/> Project Steering Committee Review <input type="checkbox"/> Implementing Agencies | Annually | No GEF IW results templates or IW tracking tools reports written to date |
| TPR and TPR Report | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Government Counterparts •UNDP CO •Project Team •UNDP/GEF Regional Coordinating Unit (RCU) | Every year, upon receipt of APR | There have been no TPRs undertaken |
| Quarterly Progress Reports | The RPC and Project Team | Each quarter | There have been two quarterly reports over the 9 quarters of project implementation |
| Steering Committee Meetings/Reports | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Regional Project Manager •UNDP CO | Following Inception and subsequently at least once a year | Three Steering Committee meetings held. Reports for each produced. Each PSC meeting delayed beyond originally planned dates. |

| Type of Activity | Responsible Parties | Time Frame | Evaluator Comment |
|--|--|---|--|
| Periodic status reports | <input type="checkbox"/> Project Team | To be determined by project team/UNDP CO | No periodic reports in written form |
| Technical reports | <input type="checkbox"/> Project Team <input type="checkbox"/> Hired consultants as needed | To be determined by project team/UNDP CO | Technical reports have been produced. |
| Mid-Term (External) Evaluation (MTE) | <input type="checkbox"/> Project Team <input type="checkbox"/> UNDP CO <input type="checkbox"/> UNDP/GEF RCU <input type="checkbox"/> External | At the mid-point of project implementation | Subject of this report |
| Final External Evaluation | <input type="checkbox"/> Project Team <input type="checkbox"/> UNDP CO <input type="checkbox"/> UNDP/GEF RCU External (i.e. evaluation team) | At the end of project implementation | N/A |
| Terminal Report | <input type="checkbox"/> Project Team <input type="checkbox"/> UNDP CO <input type="checkbox"/> External Consultant | 6 months before and not later than 6 months after the project | N/A |
| Lessons learned | <input type="checkbox"/> Project Team <input type="checkbox"/> Consultancies <input type="checkbox"/> UNDP/GEF RCU (suggested formats) | Yearly | Lessons learned in PIRs but no additional written reports on lessons learned exist |
| Audit | <input type="checkbox"/> UNDP CO <input type="checkbox"/> Project Team | Unspecified | No audit undertaken to date |
| Visits to field sites (UNDP staff travel costs to be charged to IA fees) | <input type="checkbox"/> UNDP Country Offices <input type="checkbox"/> UNDP/GEF RCU (as appropriate) <input type="checkbox"/> Government representatives | Yearly (average one visit per year) | Field site visits regularly undertaken by government representatives. |

Monitoring and Evaluation Rating Scale

| Criteria | Rating | Comment |
|--|-----------|--|
| Scale for Monitoring and Evaluation: Highly Satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S) Moderately Satisfactory (MS), Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), Unsatisfactory (U), Highly Unsatisfactory (HU) | | |
| Overall quality of M&E | MU | Limited past M&E effort, likely the result of RPM turnover, periods of no RPM at the PMU, and a period of no functioning PMU; no financial resources committed to M&E over the remainder of project implementation |
| M&E design at project start up | S | M&E design at start-up consistent with UNDP-GEF IW standards, included the GEF IW Tracking Tool and timing and cost estimates |
| M&E Plan Implementation | MU | PIRs undertaken annually and generally good quality; 2 QPRs produced; QPRs cursory; No ongoing M&E at PMU scale; no TPRs conducted; no results template reporting or IW tracking tool reporting undertaken by PMU |

3.2.7 Execution and Implementation performance

68. The difficulties that have characterized implementation of this project, particularly at PMU level, have been documented in section 3.2.1 of this Review. The table below summarizes evaluator conclusions on the performance of the Implementing and Executing Agencies of the Project.

| | | |
|--|-----------|--|
| Scale for IA & EA Execution: Highly Satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S) Moderately Satisfactory (MS), Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), Unsatisfactory (U), Highly Unsatisfactory (HU) | | |
| Overall Quality of Project Implementation/Execution | MU | Responsibility for delays in project implementation start-up and disorganized and sometimes dysfunctional PMU must ultimately rest with the IA and EA |
| Implementing Agency Execution | MU | Country assessments of IA performance range from negative to neutral; UNDP at corporate level is ultimately responsible for overall project performance, including establishment and effective and efficient functioning of a PMU, which has not been the case |
| Implementing Agency Oversight | MS | UNDP at regional and country level made repeated attempts to address administrative and managerial problems of the project |

| | | |
|----------------------------|-----------|---|
| Executing Agency Execution | MU | Country assessments, and to some extent IA assessments of EA performance consistently and highly negative |
|----------------------------|-----------|---|

69. Project effectiveness and efficiency have suffered as a result of the RPM turnover, and in December of 2012 by the resignation of remaining PMU staff. While PMU personnel were in place, a substantial amount of time placed on administrative and bureaucratic matters resulting in inefficient and unproductive use of PMU time and energy. Relations between and among the PMU, the EA, the IA and the some personnel of the participating countries have been frequently marked by disagreements, animosity and mistrust, with a resultant, predictable decrease in efficiency and overall effectiveness. The project, with just over one year of implementation has a limited amount of uncommitted funds, thus making some previously planned project activities, such as M&E and other technical assistance, impossible to realize. The IA and EA must ultimately accept responsibility for these problems and, at a minimum, work with the participating countries to enable a better understanding of reasons why some delays are inevitable given the requirements of UN grant disbursement requirements and, where possible, attempt, consistent with those requirements, to lessen onerous requirements that have been having an impact on performance and establishment of a healthy rapport between the IA, EA and project stakeholders.

3.2.8 Assistance by the UNDP

70. While difficulties experienced by the project in issuance of contracts, payment to vendors, and PMU staff and countries “fronting” expenditures because of slow processing of requests have been due to UNOPS execution and turnover and other difficulties within the PMU (see below), in the end the it is the UNDP that has overall substantive and operational oversight of the Project, and must accept some of the responsibility for these difficulties.

71. There appears to be understandable confusion on the part of some country officials on the role of the UNDP Regional Technical Advisor, occasioned by the title itself. Several interviewees commented on the absence of actual technical support that has been rendered by the RTA, support that the title would suggest that they would receive. However, the RTA is responsible for 22 projects, and has a very substantial paperwork burden associated with management of this portfolio in addition to overall responsibility for project delivery. Thus the RTA is in fact not a technical advisor, in the sense that this title would infer, and thus the countries might expect. He is, rather, and more accurately, a regional portfolio manager, who cannot be expected to render technical advice on individual project matters.

3.2.9 Operational Support by UNOPS

72. Based on interviews and document review, the evaluator concludes the following with regard to operational issues experienced through UNOPS execution.

73. RPM selection and hiring process

The recruitment process overall has led to a conclusion on the part of a number of country personnel that the IA and the EA do not take seriously country involvement in all aspects of the project and lack transparency. The countries were not invited to participate in any way in the hiring of the first two RPMs. Responsible officials of the project host country, Philippines, were taken by surprise when the first RPM appeared in Manila. Indeed, these officials had not been made aware that an RPM had been selected. No country representatives were invited to participate in any part of the hiring process. The explanation given by UNDP for this absence of country involvement is that the RPM is financed completely through UNDP-GEF funds, and

therefore the process needs to be entirely driven by the IA and the EA. The issue of whether or not RPM salary and benefits being entirely under-written by UNDP justifies participating involvement in RPM selection is noted. However, the lack of transparency and failure to notify the participating countries that a selection has taken place has undercut participating country confidence and trust in the IA and the EA, and could well have been prevented with better communication.

74. Vendor payments

Vendor payments have in some instances not been timely. The evaluator has seen three notices of non-payment by a single vendor over a period of three months, and there are other examples. Further, vendors complain that the additional cost incurred by exchange losses and bank wire transfers make doing business with the project cumbersome and cost-inefficient. UNOPS has stated that in some of the instances of slow payments UNOPS procedures were not followed by the PMU, with reimbursements slowed as a result. The evaluator notes, based on experience, that slowness of payments seems endemic to GEF IW projects, whether the payments emanate from UNOPS or UNDP country offices. The evaluator has also seen evidence that delays in some payments have been the result of errors made at PMU level or the improper filling out of reimbursement requests.

75. No matter the causes, or that the same problem occurs in other GEF IW projects, vendor payment delays have hampered project implementation, and some vendors have reportedly refused to contract with the project as a result of exchange rate disadvantages, costs of bank transfers, as well as delays in payment.

76. Reimbursements

There have been numerous instances of substantial delays in travel and other reimbursements. Compounding this problem is an exchange rate calculation by UNOPS (as above) that is unfavorable to PMU staff and country personnel and agencies, and bank transfer charges that are applied to claimants. While some of these charges can be further claimed through the filling out of more forms, PMU staff and country personnel have complained of the additional paperwork.

77. Final observation

It is not possible to objectively demonstrate the extent to which personality issues may have played a role in creation of the operational issues that have plagued this project, although interviews make clear this has been the case. The evaluator has explored to some degree the extent to which other projects executed by the UNOPS are characterized by the same issues recorded here. Generally, while other projects express some frustration at the slowness of operational procedures of the UNOPS, it is felt that UNOPS does meet its responsibilities well, if not always in a timely manner. It seems that the sometimes-rancorous level of the relationship between former PMU staff, some of the country representatives and the UNOPS has been pronounced in this project. UNOPS is the understandable, easy target for frustrations experienced as a result of an often-cumbersome financial system. However, resolving or mitigating some of the issues highlighted in this evaluation will require a unified, good-faith effort on the part of all project partners.

3.2.10 Coordination and Operational Issues by the PMU

78. The PMU has been limited in its ability to effectively coordinate project activities and in its operations generally in the following ways and for the following reasons:

79. Turnover of Regional Project Managers

There have been to date three Regional Project Managers over as many years. Each of the two previous RPMs has cited administrative and budget difficulties with UNOPS as a continuing problem during their rather brief tenures, with one of the former RPMs citing that issue as a principal reason for departure. Another RPM cited difficulties in working with the participating countries generally, and personnel from one participating country in particular, as a reason for departure. The turnover of RPMs, and resultant gaps in project leadership, has had a detrimental effect on continuity, quality and quantity of effort, loss of “corporate memory”, problems with timely decision-making, and difficulty or outright inability to execute project requirements in such areas as monitoring and evaluation, among others, and establish and maintain systematic and effective contact with key participating country personnel.

80. Absence of all PMU staff

Beginning in December of 2012 and until May of 2013 there were no staff members in the PMU, the RPM, fisheries specialist, and administrative/financial officer all having resigned. The effect has been for some country personnel to wonder aloud when and from whom important technical and other advice can be forthcoming. The revised budget agreed to by the PSC at its 3rd PSC meeting in February of 2013 has no provision for any professional or administrative support staff for the newly appointed RPM.

81. Ongoing issues of timely reimbursement and contractual payments

There have been repeated instances where PMU staff has felt the need to use their personal funds to meet project expenditure obligations. The result has been delays in repayment and eventual loss of a small percentage of the funds through the incurring of exchange losses and bank wire transfer fees, which, while some of these costs could be recovered through a separate claim, would require more paperwork at the expense of project delivery.

82. Country personnel and agencies, and project vendors have also experienced some long delays in reimbursement. Philippines has established a special fund to “front” payments for project related expenses knowing that if they do not do so, some activities will have to be foregone or vendors not paid in a timely way. Philippines, however, also incurs losses in its “fronting” of funds through exchange rate and banking charge losses.

83. While delayed payments to country personnel, agencies and vendors are not directly related to operational issues of the PMU, they have a negative effect on the workings of the PMU as a result of the lack of confidence in project ability to deliver effective and efficient project administrative and budgetary services which in turn reflects negatively on the PMU and the project generally.

84. SAP endorsement

Indonesia did not endorse the Project Document until January of 2011. The delay was caused by, among other things, concern that the document committed Indonesia, as well as the other two participating countries, to “adopt” a SAP as part of implementation. Indonesia cautioned that adoption of the SAP was perhaps too ambitious and adoption of the SAP could take time, and refused to sign the PD until this language was amended in that “adopt” has now been changed to “recommended.” Based on this experience, the IA should expect that consultations leading to adoption of the SAP could take considerable time, and thus ensure that a draft SAP be concluded as soon as possible, and circulated to the participating countries at earliest practicable date, to help ensure timely adoption of the SAP.

3.2.11 Role and Contribution of Partners

85. The principal partners in the project include the UNDP, UNOPS, the three participating countries, Conservation International, and the local level governments taking part in the demonstration activities.

86. The UNDP

In its role as Implementing Agency, the contribution of UNDP to the project has been sub-optimal. The primary example is lack of follow through on assuring that the Executing Agency take necessary measures to assure project efficiency in the areas of timely contract issuance, payments to vendors, and overall financial matter related to the functioning of the PMU.

87. UNOPS

Issues related to UNOPS have been detailed in Section 3.2.6.

88. The participating countries

The project document states that the management of project activities at the regional, national and local levels require an adequate degree of cohesion and integration, the regional, national and demonstration site coordinators of the Project will regularly and continuously coordinate, communicate and disseminate data and information on project activities to the various stakeholders at all levels. The countries have generally met this requirement, especially with regard to the pilot demonstration activities, with the exception of Indonesia, where the demonstration activity is only now moving into full execution mode. Malaysia may also require some additional time (beyond June 2013 with implementation of the fisheries management plan beginning in 2014) to successfully conclude the pilot demonstration activity. The NCs have presented updates and developments of project activities within their domain in each of the PSC meetings and conferences.

89. Conservation International

Conservation International has delivered a thorough and well-reviewed TDA, although it has not received a final edit and, while it has been approved by the by the TnC Sub-committee on fisheries, it has not been finally approved by the TnC. CI is currently developing a SAP, and an initial draft has been completed. At this time the draft, which has been reviewed by the RTA and the evaluator, is deficient in a number areas considered important to GEF IW SAPs, for example in the areas of policy and institutional arrangements.

90. CI was supposed to have made a cash co-finance contribution of US\$ 140,000 to the project in year one of implementation. This co-finance has yet to be delivered. Finally, CI is asking that the project increase the contracted amount that was agreed upon for development of the SAP. The new RPM is currently considering this request.

91. Local level governments

Local governments have been active participants in each of the country demonstration sites. Local government officials are active members of stakeholder committees at each of the sites, and have been key to ensuring the participation of local level stakeholder in project related activities. For example,

3.2.12 Identification and Management of Risks (Adaptive Management)

92. The original logframe was amended during year 2 of implementation, due to recognition that that several Outcomes could not be realized given existing human and financial resources. For example, Outputs 4.2 through 4.5 were amended based on an assessment undertaken by the PMU, and approved by the PSC, in relation to overly ambitious targets that were developed during

project preparation. The realization of the overly ambitious nature of these outputs allowed the PMU and the PSC to adapt to a reality more consistent with the resources of the project.

3.2.13 Results

93. Project results are summarized in the Table below, which is adapted from the PSC approved logframe that was amended during the second PSC meeting.

Current Status of Logframe Targets by Outcomes and Outputs

| Outcomes | Targets | Current Status | Evaluator Comments |
|---|---|--|--|
| Outcome 1: Achievement of regional consensus on transboundary priorities, their immediate and root causes | Updated TDA and analysis of unsustainable exploitation of marine resources delivered on the 2 nd year of project | Completed | Final edit is needed; translation is needed |
| | TDA on regional priorities and their immediate and root causes in the Sulu/Celebes Sea accepted by the SSME TnC and the Sub-Comm. On Sustainable Fisheries right after completion of the report | Sub-Committee on fisheries have approved as recorded in minutes; TnC not yet formally approved | Final approvals scheduled for November |
| Outcome 2: Recommendations on regional and national legal, policy, and institutional reforms for improved fisheries management | Regional fisheries SAP endorsed by the SSME TnC during third project year | Pending; initial draft submitted but not yet reviewed by TnC | The evaluator considers this the most important remaining task |
| | Endorsement or approval of the Regional fisheries SAP by relevant national agencies and its implementation initiated during the life of the project | Pending; final draft will be sent to countries for endorsement | As above |
| | Collaborative agreements with regional organizations are established during the life of the project | One collaborative agreement entered into with FAO on EAFM | Definition of other agreements with other relevant organization hampered by periodic absence of RPMs and effective and functional PMU. Lack of resources may hamper efforts to develop and secure collaborative agreements |
| Outcome 3: Strengthening of existing institutions to catalyze regional cooperation in reducing over-fishing and improving fisheries management in the SCS | Institutional review of strengthening agenda produced in the 2 nd year of the project and implementation initiated in subsequent years. RF SAP is | There is no institutional review <i>per se</i> of strengthening agenda. There is a Governance study for SSLME, financed by the project, but not yet made | The report is to be accessed and reviewed by the RPM and delivered to the RTA for his review and comment |

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| | properly implemented with better institutions | available to the evaluator or to the RTA | |
| Outcome 4: Increased capacity of SSME national level institutions to implement site-specific EAFM with local partners to rebuild fish stocks and improve fishing incomes | Within the demonstration sites adoption of IFMP using EAFM during 3 rd year of the project and implementation during the rest of the life of the project | No formal adoption of IFMP using EAFM. Philippines and Malaysia have signed agreements with stakeholders to undertake the task | Indonesia is expected to enter an LOA with stakeholders now that its demonstration activity will be moving into full implementation |
| | Possible supporting indicators are discussed with projects outputs | No additional indicators developed | The PMU may have to rely on the National Coordinators to develop indicators as the PMU will be pressed on resources to accomplish this task |
| Outcome 5: Facilitated uptake of knowledge and lessons learned | Regularly conducted information, education and communication, M&E reports covering local, national and regional activities | There is a project brochure; Three editions of a project newsletter issue; No overall reports issued to date; some information presented in PIRs; three early UNDP newsletters called <i>CTI Currents</i> had sections devoted to the project | The commitment of the Philippines to make available additional staff resources for this Outcome will make possible progress on execution of this Outcome |
| | Creation of a project website that is linked to the websites of participating country government agencies, UNDP, CI and IW:LEARN | Website created and linked to IW:LEARN; no direct link to UNDP; not linked to government agency websites | RPM is working with Philippines to hire staff for web site improvement. Current website woefully out-of-date with last entry having been in early 2012; re-establishment of the project website considered an important vehicle for Outcome 5 execution over remainder of project time |
| Outputs | Targets | Current Status | Evaluator Comments |
| Output 1.1: TDA for the SCS LME | Completed biophysical profile of the SCS and coastal areas including comprehensive ecosystems in the SCS | TDA contains a biophysical profile, but based on major identified transboundary problems; there is comprehensive description of the target LME | |
| | Completed socio-economic and governance profile of the SCS and resource user | Governance study undertaken but not yet available; remainder of profile | Final reports from the demonstration activities and the SAP should provide further information for the refinement of this target |

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| | groups, market networks, productive value chains, and market access opportunities as well as economic valuation of fisheries goods | described to some extent in the TDA | |
| | Causal chain analysis on unsustainable exploitation of fisheries conducted and options to address national and transboundary problems proposed | Present in the TDA | |
| | TDA approved by relevant National agencies and SSME TnC and SubComm on sustainable fisheries | TDA approved by the Sub-committee on Sustainable Fisheries, but not yet by the SSME TnC | SSME TnC endorsement targeted for next meeting in November 2013 |
| | Comprehensive stakeholder assessment completed and stakeholder integration and engagement plan developed for entire LME | Stakeholder assessment undertaken as part of project preparation but has not been refined during implementation | Lack of resources likely to inhibit refinement of existing work on stakeholder assessment and integration; as above, final reports from the demonstration activities and the SAP should provide further information for the refinement of this target |
| Output 2.1: Regional fisheries strategic action program (SAP) | The RFSAP together with the national action programs are completed and adopted during the third year of the project and initiated thereafter | The RFSAP targeted for completion by end of year 3, but formal endorsement by countries at end of year 3 unlikely, and initiation of SAP activities in year 4 highly unlikely | Indonesia delayed signing the project document based on their reluctance to agree to formal SAP adoption by end of project. Obtaining Indonesia formal adoption of SAP before the end of the project expected to be a challenge |
| | Considering financial restraints the priority for implementation will be on the small pelagic fisheries component | Not a target, rather an output or footnote to the above target | |
| Output 2.2: Collaborative agreements with relevant regional and sub-regional organizations | Collaborative agreements with relevant regional and sub-regional organizations have been initiated and | As earlier in this assessment. One collaborative agreement signed; prospect for other likely constrained by meager | |

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| | signed over the life of the project | available resources | |
| Output 3.1: Strengthened TrnC for SCS and its Sub-Committee on Sustainable Fisheries | Inst. Strengthening review and action agenda of the TnC and the SC on Sustainable Fisheries completed in the 2 nd year of the project and agreement on options for the regional mechanisms (e.g. evolution of the TnC into a Commission for the SCS as may be decided by the countries). | Pending further development of the SAP, which is behind schedule | Important to have form of the institutional arrangements of the SAP be driven by function. I.e. definition of what the countries will agree to achieve during SAP implementation should drive the content of the institutional arrangements |
| | Options for the long term financing for SSME are developed by the 3 rd year of the project | Target will not be met by end of year 3; expected to be developed and present as part of further drafts of the SAP | |
| | Implementation of the institutional strengthening action agenda for the TnC and SC on Sustainable Fisheries initiated during year 3 of the project | Target will not be met by end of year 3; expected to be developed and present as part of further drafts of the SAP | |
| Output 3.2: Strengthening of existing national working groups or committees for the effective implementation of the agreed action plans for the SCS | Inst. Strengthening review and action agenda for national working groups committees completed during the second year of the project with implementation of the action agenda initiated during the 3 rd year of the project | Work has not yet begun on this activity | No projected date was made part of this target |
| Output 4.1: Mobilization/Establishment of one demonstration site for each country | MoUs and MoAs signed with local partners on the first year of the project | MOAs have been signed with the National Implementing Partners, and demonstration sites are part of those MOAs; | Countries are firmly committed to these demonstration activities as evidenced by commitments of personnel and financial resources and results as documented in progress |

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| | | | reports to the PSC |
| | Inter-sectoral committee (comprised of relevant stakeholders from gov., fisher groups, private sector, others) have been formed and actively carrying out mandated functions in each demo site, starting in year 2 of the project | Committees have been formed and are operational in Philippines and Malaysia; The committee in Indonesia is becoming increasingly operational as the demo site activity moves into execution status | As above |
| Output 4.2: Better understanding of small pelagics stocks and fisheries in the SCS demo sites | Completed regional stock definition study in collaboration with cooperating agencies (e.g. SEAFDEC) | Completed; has been peer reviewed and presented at the 3 rd PSC meeting | The study is moving into publication |
| | Completed synopsis of evident trend, population dynamics and ecology of small pelagic fisheries and stocks from SCS region, national and demo site information studies | These reports have been completed | News of these reports, and others should be summarized and presented on a reinvigorated project website |
| | Results of study incorporated into national and regional policies | While the above reports were completed, there is no documented evidence to suggest the extent, if any, they have been incorporated into national and regional policies | Possible that further definition of the SAP will include incorporation of some for the study results into specific SAP obligations; absence of timeframe for this target |
| | Results of studies support fisheries management (G.C.M) in demo sites | As above | As above |
| Output 4.3: Integrated fisheries management plans (FMPs) prepared and implemented at each | Baseline assessments (covering env., socio-econ., fisheries and governance | Baseline assessments have been undertaken | |

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| demonstration site | indicators) and secondary information gathering completed by 3 rd quarter of 2 nd year of implementation | | |
| | Demo site field assessment supporting research and PCRAs completed by 2 nd year of project | The target was met | |
| | Site profiling using EAFM framework with synopsis of key status trends, issues, opportunities, and analysis of causes completed for each demo site by end of year 2 | The target was met | |
| | IFMP action programs, implementation/financing, and M&E plan completed by year 3 | IFMP programs are not yet under implementation; no M&E plan; this target will not be met by year 3 | M&E at all levels is judged by the evaluator to have been moderately unsatisfactory |
| | IFMP consultations and adoption/enactment completed by year 3 | This target duplicated the target above | |
| | Early fisheries management, capacity building and constituency building activities are implemented during year 2 and 3 (at least 1 GCM, 1 constituency building, and one capacity building early action each for year 2 and year 3 | Some constituency building has occurred, as well as some capacity building, particularly at demo sites; description and extent of constituency building present in the reports of the countries to PSC meetings | |
| | Impl. of IFMP initiated by responsible agencies or partners during year 4 | The agreements with FAO are in place with implementation pending | |
| Output 5.1: Captured, applied and disseminated knowledge, lessons learned and best practices within the SCS and other LMEs | Dissemination of project reports thru various channels and to various audiences including thru | Modest dissemination of project knowledge in three early editions of the UNDP <i>CTI Currents</i> newsletter; little | The Philippines decision to make staff resources available to assist at the PMU should make progress on achievement of this Output possible |

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| | IW:LEARN.net | work done to date on this Output and no documentation available | |
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Prospects of Sustainability

94. As has been stated in this report, the major consideration in determining the prospect of sustainability of this report will be project agreement to and endorsement of the Strategic Action Program which will be designed to address and country commitments to implement a broad set of policy, program and other objectives over a twenty year period, including a financing scheme to implement the SAP. A calculation on the extent to which the project can be seen to be sustainable can therefore not be made until the Terminal Evaluation.

4. Conclusions/Recommendations/Lessons

4.1 Conclusions

95. The Conclusions of this Mid-term review include the following:

96. Principal Conclusions

The project has experienced a significant amount of difficulty at managerial level. There have been three Regional Project Managers over less than three years; there have been difficult, sometimes acrimonious (termed as “tempestuous” by one interviewee) levels of disagreement among project partners, i.e. the Implementing Agency (IA), Executing Agency (EA), Project Management Unit (PMU), and representatives of the participating countries; and for several months there was no PMU. A continuation of this managerial dysfunction will make difficult the achievement of remaining project objectives.

97. The overall project rating, as below, is Marginally Satisfactory. This rating was given based on an assessment of progress concerning the two principal objectives of GEF IW foundational projects, namely production and participating country endorsement of a high quality transboundary diagnostic analysis, and formal country adoption of a Strategic Action Program. At this time, a comprehensive TDA, developed with strong stakeholder support, has been developed, and approved by the principal sub-committee of the TnNC, a requirement listed in the project document. The Strategic Action Program is under development, but successful completion and adoption is uncertain, under circumstances of managerial dysfunction and limited and rapidly dwindling resources (financial, human and time). The project partners – the IA, the EA, the PMU, the participating countries, and Conservation International - are thus confronted with a monumental challenge. It is clear, as demonstrated through interviews and document review, that project partners remain committed to a positive outcome. However, the evaluator concludes that should the project partners fail to deliver a SAP - formally adopted by the participating countries and requiring a level of coordination and cooperation that has so far not been demonstrated - the eventual project outcome must be seen as having been unsatisfactory.

98. General Conclusions

The project as designed was too extensive and too ambitious for the amount of funding sought in the GEF grant. Consequences included, among others, budgets and workplans being re-aligned twice during implementation; elements of Component 4 having to be reduced in scope in recognition of their overly ambitious nature; the original budgeted amount for the Regional Project manager having been insufficient; and several originally budgeted positions or consultancies not funded. The latter includes funding for an M&E specialist, knowledge management specialist, and editor.

Several key personnel from the participating countries have expressed a lack confidence and even trust in the Executing and Implementing Agencies. This stems from, among other things, lack of participating country involvement in the selection processes for the three Regional Project Managers the project has had to date; slowness on the part of the Executing Agency in issuance of contracts, payments to vendors and reimbursements; and misunderstandings on the part of some officials from the participating countries as to the roles of the Implementing and Executing Agencies. It should be noted that many of the problems related to project the UNDP Regional Technical Advisor and the UNDP Country Office have raised administration and management but were not addressed at higher levels.

99. Given the absence of a PMU for approximately 10 months of project implementation, participating country personnel have looked to UNDP and UNOPS to perform what otherwise would have been tasks routinely performed by the Regional Project Manager and the PMU. Neither the IA nor the EA are capable of assuming such a role, notwithstanding that they are ultimately responsible: UNDP for overall project performance and UNOPS for assurance of efficient project execution.

100. Notwithstanding IA and EA difficulties in maintaining a functioning PMU, and associated difficulties, progress with demonstration activities and development of a TDA by Conservation International has been effective enough to ensure successful delivery of the projected, major outputs of a GEF foundational/capacity building project: A stakeholder driven, comprehensive TDA; an initial draft of a SAP; and overall successful implementation of pilot demonstration activities in each of the participating countries.

101. As there are only twelve months left for project implementation, there is danger that absent close, constant and effective communication and coordination between and among the RPM, the participating countries, the EA, and the IA, the most important element of this foundational project, development and country endorsement of the SAP, will not be realized.

102. Ensuring effective M&E over the remainder of project implementation will be a difficult challenge for the RPM and the PMU, particularly in light of budget and human resource constraints that exist. For example, the current PSC approved budget and workplan contains no financial resources for future M&E work.

4.2 Recommendations

Principal Recommendations

103. The PMU should make its principal focus to develop, in the time and resources remaining, develop, receive country endorsement of, and publish a high quality Strategic Action Program (Component/Outcome 2, Output 2.1).

104. The Implementing Agency, United Nations Office of Project Services, and the participating countries should work closely with, and fully support the efforts of the PMU to meet this target, through provision the necessary and remaining project financial resources and through making available the necessary human resources. More specifically:

1. The Implementing Agency should immediately begin assisting the PMU in securing high-level support for the Strategic Action Program, and also assisting the PMU to secure participating country endorsement of the SAP prior to project closure.

2. The Executing Agency should work closely with the PMU to assure that unnecessary delays in procurement, reimbursements, and other project administrative issues are processed expeditiously, consistent with existing procedures, as a means of maximizing the extent to which the Regional project manager can focus on SAP development and acceptance and endorsement on the part of the participating countries.
3. The Executing Agency should work closely with the Regional Project Manager to ensure that the latter has the requisite administrative and technical support necessary for successful project implementation, consistent with remaining project budget.
4. The participating countries, through their designated Project Steering Committee members, should assist the PMU and the UNDP in identifying, and then securing the support of, key, high-level country officials whose support for the SAP will be necessary to its endorsement prior to project closure.

Other priority recommendations

105. The PMU, in consultation with the participating countries, should prioritize successful completion of the country specific demonstration sites (Component/Outcome 4, Output 4.1). It is recognized that the Indonesia pilot demonstration activity will not be completed by close of project and that Indonesia has asked for a no-cost extension to complete activities at its selected site.

106. The PMU should, further to and in addition to the analysis contained in this Review, immediately undertake, in consultation with the participating countries and the Implementing Agency, an in-depth analysis of all targets contained in the most recent PSC endorsed logical framework analysis to determine unmet targets that can realistically be met, and those that cannot, given remaining project resources (financial, personnel, and time).

107. The Regional Project Manager should, consistent with achievement of the above recommendations and as a priority matter, visit each of the participating countries, including field visits to each of the country demonstration sites, as a means of demonstrating a commitment to close collaboration and cooperation between the re-structured PMU and key personnel and activities within each of the participating countries, and, more specifically, seek out views and encourage the cooperation of each of the National Coordinators.

108. A representative of the Implementing Agency should, if possible, accompany the Regional Project Manager on early missions to the participating countries as a means of re-establishing a belief on the part of the countries that the UNDP remains committed to the success of the project, that it remains strongly committed to cementing a strong working relationship with the countries in relation to this project, and welcomes and encourages hearing first-hand the views and concerns of country representatives of the project.

109. As previously stated the RTA and the UNDP Country Office have recommended that UNOPS address these constraints by either building capacity of the PMU and/or review of such operational policies and procedures or any other applicable measures. Therefore the Executing Agency should, with the strong encouragement, support, and, as necessary and appropriate direction of the Implementing Agency, to, among other things, work closely with the PMU to ensure issuance of contracts, payments to participating countries, payment of vendors, processing of travel authorizations for the PMU and country personnel, and reimbursements of those personnel.

110. At a minimum, the RPM should ensure that the GEF tracking tool is satisfactorily updated and completed by the end of project implementation, notwithstanding the absence of any earmarked financial resources for the task. It appears that responsibility for updating will have to be assumed by the RPM.

General Recommendations

111. The Implementing Agency should structure projects consistent with available financial resources. In the case of this project, while components, outcomes, and outputs are similar to those found in GEF IW projects in GEF 1-3, this project, under GEF-4, had a much smaller GEF grant that has proved insufficient to deliver all projected outputs, as demonstrated in the revised logical framework analysis and failure to execute many of the targets in the logical framework analysis.

112. The Implementing Agency, given its on-the-ground presence in each of the participating countries, should make every effort to secure high-level membership (Deputy Minister level) on the Project Steering Committee. High-level PSC membership is especially important in GEF IW foundational projects, as is the SCM, as high-level political commitment is seen as necessary for approval and eventual successful implementation of the SAP. The current membership of the SCM PSC is heavily oriented to operational rather than policy level officials. It is recognized by the evaluator that a Deputy minister may sometimes, or even often delegate attendance at Project Steering Committee meetings. Nonetheless, the formal membership of higher level PSC members from the participating would likely assist in leveraging political support for the work of the project, a crucial ingredient when it comes time to leverage country financial resources to achieve sustainability of project result.

4.3 Lessons Learned

113. The PMU has not to date developed any lessons learned. However, the evaluator, based on review of documents and interviews, concludes the following can at this point be seen as lessons learned.

➤ Re. PSC membership

114. The Implementing Agency should make every effort to secure high-level membership (Deputy Minister level) on the Project Steering Committee. High-level PSC membership is especially important in GEF IW foundational projects, as is the SCM, as high-level political commitment is seen as necessary for approval and eventual successful implementation of the SAP. The current membership of the SCM PSC is heavily oriented to operational rather than policy level officials. It is recognized by the evaluator that a Deputy Minister may sometimes, or even often delegate attendance at Project Steering Committee meetings. Nonetheless, the formal membership of higher level PSC members from the participating would likely assist in leveraging political support for the work of the project, a crucial ingredient when it comes time to leverage country financial resources to achieve sustainability of project result.

➤ Re. Project design

115. The Implementing Agency should structure projects consistent with available financial resources. In the case of this project, while components, outcomes, and outputs are similar to those found in GEF IW projects in GEF 1-3, this project, under GEF-4, had a much smaller GEF grant that has proved insufficient to deliver all projected outputs, as demonstrated in the revised

logical framework analysis and failure to execute many of the targets in the logical framework analysis.

➤ Re. The importance of well-designed and effective stakeholder involvement

116. The focus on broad stakeholder involvement during project preparation, the TDA development process, and consequent level of acceptance of the TDA result underlines the importance of locally driven processes as opposed to an academically oriented and driven exercise conducted by “experts” at the cost regional, national and local buy-in.

➤ Re. The importance of reliance on national and regional expertise

117. The selection of regional and participating country individuals and organizations will yield greater levels of trust in the process of implementation, credibility of the result, and sustainability of the effort. The reliance on national and regional level expertise can also serve as “insulation” against shortcomings in IA and EA performance

➤ Re. Lack of country involvement in all aspects of project implementation can and often does result in lack of trust and even acrimony

118. The failure to involve the countries in any meaningful way in selection of project personnel and budgetary decisions can result in the IA and the EA being held in generally low esteem by a number of key persons within the participating countries.

➤ Re. The UNDP vis-à-vis resolution of administrative and management issues within GEF IW projects

119. Notwithstanding the fact that UNDP relies on other entities for project execution, it still must assume part of the responsibility for failures in execution. It should therefore take a more proactive and directive role in development of guidelines for efficient and effective execution and for intervening constructively to address inefficiencies as they occur.

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

Best practices.

120. Best practices in this project include:

➤ Preparation of the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis

121. Respondents without exception agree that the TDA, a cornerstone in GEF IW foundational projects, was prepared well, and according to GEF-IW specifications. Respondents also agree that the TDA was prepared with a high and effective level of stakeholder involvement in each of the three participating countries.

➤ Engagement of experts from the region generally and specifically from the participating countries

122. The project has relied on regional experts and organizations for its technical and other inputs. This has given the project the benefit of regional and local knowledge, as well as the credibility and trust that comes of having relied on expertise that project stakeholders see as sharing their values and experience. The practice of involving local and regional expertise is also a capacity building tool that will help assure project sustainability.

➤ Selection and locally-driven execution of activities in the country demonstration activities

123. Notwithstanding the difficulties encountered at PMU level, i.e. the turnover of RPMs and the eventual dissolution of the PMU, the participating countries were able to largely insulate the demonstration sites from negative effects. This reliance on locally-driven activities at the demonstration site is not only resulting in successful execution of this activity during project implementation, but will help ensure sustainability of results in the mid and longer term, as well as serve as models that other localities can learn from/emulate in future. As above, the reliance on locally driven execution of demonstration activities is a capacity building tool that will help assure project sustainability.

➤ Coastal Resource Management in Philippines Demonstration Sites

124. A central focus of the Philippine demonstration activity has been adoption of Coastal Resource Management Plans through municipal ordinances, thereby substantially increasing local level buy-in to the result, as well as ensuring sustainability of results through locally driven rules, regulations, monitoring and enforcement. There are 23 municipalities in the demonstration area. Three municipalities are directly involved in the SCS SFM project, while the other 20 are included in other projects. According to stakeholders at national and local levels, other projects and municipalities are seeing the demonstration activity of the SCS SFM project, focused in Palawan and Mindanao, as best practice for the larger Coral Triangle Initiative.

Worst practices

125. Worst practices include:

- Lack of transparency and communication with participating countries in the hiring of Regional Project Managers.
- Overall lack of communication, coordination and timeliness on issues regarding contracts, reimbursements and budget.

4.5 Rating Tables

By Goal and Project Components

| Goal/Components | | Evaluation | | | | | |
|-----------------|---|------------|---|----|----|---|----|
| | | HS | S | MS | MU | U | HU |
| Goal | To contribute to the sustainability of the fisheries of the SCS by improving the conservation and management of their marine habitat including its biodiversity and ecological processes to the benefit of coastal communities (Unchanged from original logframe) | | | | | | |
| Component 1 | Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis for the SSLME (Unchanged from original logframe) | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|-------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Component 2 | Regional and national legal, policy and institutional reforms for improved fisheries management (Unchanged from original logframe) | | | | | | |
| Component 3 | Introduction of institutional reforms to catalyze regional cooperation in reducing over-fishing and improving fisheries management in the SCS (Greater emphasis on regional cooperation than in the original logframe) | | | | | | |
| Component 4 | Demonstration of best fisheries management practices in critical sites of the SCS (Emphasis on “critical sites” absent in original logframe) | | | | | | |

By Project Outcome

| Component/ Outcomes | | Evaluation | | | | | |
|-----------------------|---|------------|---|----|----|---|----|
| | | HS | S | MS | MU | U | HU |
| Component 1 Outcome 1 | Regional consensus on transboundary priorities and their immediate and root causes | | | | | | |
| Component 2 Outcome 2 | Recommend actions on regional and national legal, policy and institutional reforms for improved fisheries management | | | | | | |
| Component 3 Outcome 3 | Strengthening of existing institutions to catalyze regional cooperation in reducing over-fishing and improving fisheries management in the SCS | | | | | | |
| Component 4 Outcome 4 | Increased capacity of SSME national level institutions to implement site-specific EAFM with local partners to rebuild fish stocks and improve fishing incomes | | | | | | |
| Component 5 Outcome 5 | Facilitated uptake of knowledge and lessons learned | | | | | | |

| Outcomes Highly Satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S) Moderately Satisfactory (MS), Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), Unsatisfactory (U), Highly Unsatisfactory (HU) | | |
|--|--------------------|--------|
| Overall Quality of Project Outcomes | (rate 6 pt. scale) | 4 (MS) |
| Relevance: relevant (R) or not relevant (NR) | (rate 2pt. scale) | 2 (R) |
| Effectiveness | (rate 6 pt. scale) | 4 (MS) |
| Efficiency | (rate 6 pt. scale) | 3 (MU) |
| Sustainability: Likely (L); Moderately Likely (ML); Moderately Unlikely (MU); Unlikely (U). | | |
| Overall likelihood of risks to Sustainability: | (rate 4pt. scale) | 3 (ML) |
| Financial resources | (rate 4pt. scale) | U/A |
| Socio-economic | (rate 4pt. scale) | 3 (ML) |
| Institutional framework and governance | (rate 4pt. scale) | U/A |
| Environmental | (rate 4pt. scale) | U/A |
| Impact: Significant (S), Minimal (M), Negligible (N) | | |
| Environmental Status Improvement | (rate 3 pt. scale) | M |
| Environmental Stress Reduction | (rate 3 pt. scale) | M |
| Progress towards stress/status change | (rate 3 pt. scale) | M |

| | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|---|
| Overall Project results | (rate 6 pt. scale) | 3 |
|-------------------------|--------------------|---|

Overall Project Rating

| Rating | Description |
|------------------------------|--|
| Marginally Satisfactory (MS) | Project is expected to achieve most of its major relevant objectives but with either significant shortcomings or modest overall relevance. Project is expected not to achieve some of its major global environmental objectives or yield some of the expected global environment benefits. |

Annex 1: Terms of Reference

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Title: | Mid-term Evaluation Consultant |
| Project: | Sulu-Celebes Sea Sustainable Fisheries Management |
| Duty station: | Home-based with travel |
| Section/Unit: | EMO IWC |
| Contract/Level: | International Specialist ICA/ Level 4 |
| Duration: | 30 workdays |
| Supervisor: | UNDP RTA Asia/ UNOPS SPM IWC |

1. General Background

The GEF financed Sulu-Celebes Sea Regional Fisheries Management project is implemented by UNDP and executed by UNOPS. The Sulu-Celebes Sea (SCS) is a Large Marine Ecosystem in the tropical seas of Asia bounded by three countries – Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines. Being at the heart of the most bio-diverse marine area in the world, the SCS is also a very rich fishing ground for large and small pelagic as well as bay and coral reef fishes, providing livelihoods to the coastal inhabitants and food for the entire region and beyond. The fishery resources, however, have declined due to various threats, including overexploitation, habitat and community modification and global climate change. The project aims to improve the condition of fisheries and their habitats in the Sulu-Celebes Sea (Sulu-Sulawesi Marine Ecoregion) through an integrated, collaborative and participatory management at the local, national and tri-national levels. The goal of the project is to have an economically and ecologically sustainable marine fisheries in the region for the benefit of communities who are dependent on these resources for livelihood and for the global community who benefit in the conservation of highly diverse marine ecosystems and its ecosystems services. The five expected outcomes of the Project are:

Achievement of a regional consensus on trans-boundary priorities and their immediate and root causes by updating an earlier Trans-boundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) for the region and focusing on unsustainable exploitation of fisheries.

1. Agreement on regional and national legal, policy and institutional reforms for improved fisheries management through the formulation of a Strategic Action Program (SAP), which will build on the existing Conservation Plan for the Sulu-Sulawesi Marine Ecoregion.
2. Strengthening of institutions and introduction of reforms to catalyze implementation of policies on reducing overfishing and improving fisheries management. The primary target for institutional strengthening is the Sulu-Sulawesi Marine Ecoregion Tri-National Committee and its Sub-Committees, in particular the Sub-Committee on Sustainable Fisheries.
3. Increased fish stocks of small pelagics through the implementation of best fisheries management practices in demonstration sites.
4. Capture, application and dissemination of knowledge, lessons and best practices within the region and other LMEs.

The project initiated its operations in 2010 and is now at mid-point of its implementation.

2. Purpose and Scope of Assignment

General Responsibilities:

The purpose of the Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) is to examine the progress and performance of the project since the start of its implementation. The MTE will include the evaluation of both the

progress in project implementation, measured against planned outputs and outcomes set forth in the Project Document, and the assessment of features related to the process involved in achieving those outcomes, and the progress towards project objective. The evaluation will also identify and address causes and issues that constrain the achievement of set targets.

The MTE is intended to identify weaknesses and strengths of the project design, and to develop recommendations for any necessary changes in the overall design and orientation of the project by evaluating the adequacy, efficiency and effectiveness of its implementation, as well as assessing Project outputs and outcomes to date. Consequently, the MTE mission is also expected to make detailed recommendations on the work plan for the remaining project period. It will also provide an opportunity to assess early signs of project success or failure and prompt necessary adjustments.

The evaluation will follow approaches adopted by GEF for the assessment of IW projects and UNDP M&E guidelines.

The MTE mission will also identify lessons learnt and best practices from the Project that could be applied to future and on-going projects.

Specific Duties

The scope of the MTE will cover all activities undertaken within the framework of the project. One evaluator with a combination of regional knowledge, evaluation experience, and in-depth knowledge of GEF IW projects will compare planned project outputs and outcomes to actual/achieved outputs and outcomes and assess the actual results to determine their contribution to the attainment of Project objectives.

The evaluation will extract lessons learned, diagnose and analyse issues of concern and formulate a concrete and viable set of recommendations. It will evaluate the efficiency of Project management, including the delivery of outputs and activities in terms of quality, quantity, timeliness and cost efficiency. The evaluation will also determine the likely outcomes and impact of the Project in relation to the specified Project goals and objectives.

The evaluation will comprise the following elements:

1. Assess whether the Project design is clear, logical and commensurate with the time and resources available;
2. A summary evaluation of the Project and all of its major components undertaken to date and a determination of progress toward achievement of its overall objectives;
3. An evaluation of Project performance in relation to the indicators, assumptions and risks specified in the logical framework matrix and the Project Document;
4. An assessment of the scope, quality and significance of Project outputs and outcomes produced to date in relation to expected results;
5. An assessment of the functionality of the institutional structure established and the role and effectiveness of the Project Board (PB);
6. Identification and, to the extent possible, quantification of any additional outputs and outcomes beyond those specified in the Project Document;
7. Identification of any programmatic and financial variance and/or adjustments made during the first 2.5 years of the Project and an assessment of their conformity with decisions of the PSC and their appropriateness in terms of the overall objectives of the Project;
8. Identification and to the extent possible the quantification of the co-financing commitments realized (those committed at the beginning of the project as well as those that emerged during the project implementation).

9. An evaluation of Project coordination, management and administration provided by the PCU. This evaluation should include specific reference to:
 - Organizational/institutional arrangements for collaboration among the various agencies and institutions involved in project arrangements and execution;
 - The effectiveness of the monitoring mechanisms currently employed by the PCU in monitoring on a day-to-day basis, progress in Project execution;
 - Administrative, operational and/or technical problems and constraints that influenced the effective implementation of the Project and present recommendations for any necessary operational changes; and
 - Financial management of the project, including the balance between expenditures on administrative and overhead charges in relation to those on the achievement of substantive outputs.
10. An evaluation of the effectiveness of UNOPS and the PMU in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities in their executing capacities and of UNDP, as implementing agency in its oversight responsibilities.
11. A prognosis of the degree to which the overall objectives and expected outputs of the Project are likely to be met;
12. An assessment of the M&E approach adopted by the Project;
13. Progress towards sustainability and replication of project activities;
14. Lessons learned and best practices during Project implementation which would benefit the GEF IW portfolio;
15. Recommendations regarding any necessary corrections and adjustments to the overall Project workplan and timetable for purposes of enhancing the achievement of Project objectives and outcomes.

3. Methodology

The Mid-term Evaluation will be conducted in a participatory manner working on the basis that its essential objective is to assess the project implementation and impacts in order to provide a basis for improvement in the implementation and other decisions.

The evaluation will start with a desk review of project documentation and also include the following activities:

- Desk review of project document, outputs, monitoring reports (such as, among others, Project Inception Report, Minutes of Project Steering Committee meetings, other relevant meetings, Project Implementation Reports (PIRs/APRs), quarterly progress reports, and other internal documents including consultant and financial reports);
- Review of specific products including content of the Project web site, datasets, management and action plans, publications and other materials and reports;
- Interviews with the former Senior Project Manager and other project staff who used to work in the Project Management Unit, if available after their departure from the project, and interviews with consultants involved in Project implementation;
- Consultations and/or interviews with relevant stakeholders involved, including government representatives (Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines), other related projects and programmes within the region, Conservation International as major project contractor, relevant UNDP Country Offices (Philippines, Asia Pacific Regional Center) and UNOPS personnel, and NGOs;
- Attend the Project Steering Committee foreseen for Mid-January 2013.
- Submission of a draft report by end Mid- March 2013.

The Project Management Unit will provide the consultant with support to obtain all the necessary and requested documentations and necessary logistical assistance to conduct the evaluation mission.

4. Evaluation Deliverables

The expected output from this evaluation will include the following:

a) Inception report that will include the following:

- (i) Activities to be undertaken
- (ii) Draft outline of the full report

The inception report will be reviewed and endorsed by UNDP and UNOPS as applicable.

b) Full evaluation report that would include:

- (i) An executive summary, including findings and recommendations and an overall rating of project performance;
- (ii) A detailed evaluation report covering items presented above in the Scope of the Mid-Term Evaluation of this TOR with special attention to lessons learned and recommendations;
- (iii) A table of planned vs. actual project financial disbursements, and planned co-financing vs. actual co-financing for the Project;
- (iv) A list of Annexes prepared by the evaluator, which includes TORs, Itineraries, List of Persons Interviewed, Summary of Field Visits, List of Documents reviewed, Questionnaire used and Summary of results, Identification of Co-financing and Leveraged Resources, etc.

Suggested Table of Contents of the Mid-Term Report will be shared with the consultant together with the UNDP MTE guidance note.

5. Indicative outline of the Mid-Term Evaluation report

The key product expected from this Mid-Term Evaluation is a comprehensive analytical report in English that should, at least, include the following contents:

- Executive summary
 - ✓ Brief description of the project
 - ✓ Context and purpose of the evaluation
 - ✓ Main conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned
- Introduction
 - ✓ Project background
 - ✓ Purpose of the evaluation
 - ✓ Key issues to be addressed
 - ✓ Methodology of the evaluation
 - ✓ Structure of the evaluation
- Project and its development context
 - ✓ Project start and its duration
 - ✓ Implementation status
 - ✓ Problems that the project seeks to address
 - ✓ Immediate and development objectives of the project
 - ✓ Main stakeholders
 - ✓ Results expected

- Findings and Conclusions
 - ✓ Project concept and formulation
 - Project relevance
 - Implementation approach
 - Countries ownership/Engagement
 - Stakeholders participation
 - Replication approach
 - Cost-effectiveness
 - UNDP comparative advantage
 - Linkages between the project and other interventions within the sector
 - Indicators
 - Management arrangements
 - ✓ Implementation
 - Financial management
 - Monitoring and evaluation
 - Execution and implementation modalities
 - Assistance by the UNDP (RCU)
 - Operational support by UNOPS
 - Coordination and operational issues by the PMU
 - Role and contributions of partners
 - Identification and management of risks (adaptive management)
 - ✓ Results
 - Attainment of objectives
 - Prospects of sustainability
 - ✓ Recommendations
 - Corrective actions for the design, duration, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project
 - Actions to follow up or reinforce initial benefits from the project
 - Proposals for future directions underlining main objectives
 - Suggestions for strengthening ownership, management of potential risks
 - ✓ Lessons learned
 - Best and worst practices in addressing issues relating to relevance, performance and success
 - Significant lessons that can be drawn from the experience of the project and its results, particularly those elements that have worked well and those that have not
 - ✓ Annexes

6. Monitoring and Progress Controls

The MTE will be conducted under the overall guidance of UNDP using a participatory approach under which UNOPS and UNDP will be kept informed and will provide administrative and logistical support.

A detailed mission schedule will be drafted with the logistical assistance from UNOPS, in consultation with UNDP, and inputs from the consultant once the consultant is selected.⁴

⁴ These dates were amended by the UNOPS in consultation with the consultant

The report production schedule includes:

- Inception report – March 1st
- Document review – Beginning March 15th
- Draft evaluation report – May 15th
- Comment on Draft evaluation received – May 22nd
- Final Report – May 26th

7. Qualifications and Experience

The Evaluator is expected to have the following expertise and experience:

- Advanced University Degree in Natural Science and relevant demonstrated regional/international consulting experience in project evaluations, preferably in projects dealing with marine sciences or large marine ecosystems.
- A minimum of 15 years' relevant experience is required. Previous experience in the region advantageous;
- Substantive experience in reviewing and evaluating similar technical assistance projects, preferably those involving UNDP/GEF or other United Nations development agencies and/or other major donors;
- Excellent English writing and communication skills and demonstrated ability to assess complex situations in order to succinctly and clearly distil critical issues and draw well supported conclusions;
- An ability to assess policy and governance framework and institutional capacity;
- Understanding of governance, political, economic and institutional issues associated with transboundary water issues in Sulu Celebes seas; and
- Familiarity with GEF International Waters strategies and its portfolio.

Annex 2: Itineraries

Flight schedule

| Date | Flight | Operated by | Origin | Destination | Depart | Arrive |
|---------|--|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------|----------|
| April 2 | 2P 997 | PAL Express | Manila | Zamboanga City | 05:30 PM | 07:10 PM |
| April 4 | 2P PP4 | PAL Express | Zamboanga City | Manila | 06:30 AM | 08:00 AM |
| April 4 | 2P 853 | PAL Express | Manila | Puerto Princesa City | 1:25 PM | :00 AM |
| April 6 | We can arrange for you to visit the underground river then depart for Manila at 8:00 PM We need your advise on this. | | | | | |
| April 6 | 2P 304 | PAL Express | Puerto Princesa City | Cebu | 03:40 PM | 05:00 PM |
| April 6 | 2P 864 | Philippine Airlines | Cebu | Manila | 07:00 PM | 08:15 PM |

Itinerary

March 31 – Arrival in Manila flight ?

April 1 – Visit BFAR, NFRDI and PCAARRD at Los Banos, Laguna interview

2 – AM Visit DENR/PAWB interview

PM – visit ECOFISH project interview

2 – Depart for Zamboanga at 5:30 PM check-in time 4:00 PM

2 - Check in at Garden Orchid hotel –

3- Interview with the site committee members, LGU and stakeholders at the hotel and visit canneries.

4 - Depart for Manila connecting to Puerto Princesa City

- Check in at Sunlight Hotel –

-Visit the Provincial Capitol, Governor and Provincial Officers for interviews.

- Evening interview with the replication site committee members

5 - visit replication site, (2 hours drive) interview stakeholders, Local Government Officials (LGU), etc . back in the hotel late afternoon.

6 – morning visit landing sites in Puerto Princesa City

- 6 – Afternoon travel back to Manila via Cebu
- 7 – Depart for Jakarta

LAROCHE/DAVIDALBERTMR*PTA 356

Via Philippine Airlines / Malaysia Airlines / Royal Brunei, split ticketing

The consultant interviewed country personnel related to project implementation in Jakarta and Kota Kinabalu. Representatives of the Government of Philippines and the UNDP Country Office in Manila arranged the following itinerary for the consultant.

PR 535 X 07APR MNLCGK HK1 2100 2355
MH 710 M 08APR CGKKUL HK1 1110 1410
MH 2640 M 08APR KULBKI HK1 1530 1805
BI 822 L 11APR BKIBWN HK1 0850 0930 ** with 9 hour layover in Brunei ***
BI 685 L 11APR BWNMNL HK1 1850 2100

Interviews were conducted in Jakarta with elements of the Project Coordination Team. After travel from Jakarta to Koata Kinabalu interviews were undertaken with members of the Malaysia Project Coordination team. Upon his return from the above portion of his mission, further interviews were conducted in Manila on 21 April. The evaluator departed manila on 22 April.

Annex 3: List of Persons interviewed

Mr. Noel Baskut
National Project Coordinator
NFRDI
Manila, PH

Ms. Eunice Gasmin
National Coordination Unit
Manila, PH

Dr. Lilis Sadiyah
Center for Fisheries Management and Conservation
Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia

Ms. Ria Faizah
Center for Fisheries Management and Conservation
Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia

Ms. Sabrina Makajil
Department of fisheries Sabah
Conservation and Environment Section
Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia

Affendy Bin Derisa
Department of Fisheries Sabah
Conservation and Environment Section
Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia

Dr. Haijah Norasma Dacho
Malaysia Project National Coordinator
PSC Member
Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia

Ms. Regina Sison
Former Administrative/Finance Officer
SCS-SFM PMU
Manila, PH

Ms. Annedel Cabanban
Former Fisheries Advisor
SCS-SFM PMU
Manila, PH

Dr. Andrew Hudson
Head, Water and Ocean Governance Program

UNDP
NY, NY

Mr. Jose Padilla
Regional Technical Advisor
International Waters
Bangkok, Thailand

Ms. Amelia Supetran
Programme Officer
UNDP
Manila, PH

Mr. Michael Jaldon
Energy and Environment Unit
UNDP
Manila, PH

Ms. Katrin Lichtenberg
Senior Portfolio Manager
UNOPS
Copenhagen, Denmark

Ms. Lynette Laroya
Senior Ecosystem Management Specialist
Coastal and Marine Management Office
DENR
Manila, PH

William Tiu Lim
President and CEO
Mega Fishing Corporation
Navotas City, PH

Ms. Myrna B. Candelario
OIC – Center Chief
Inland Sea Ranching Station
Puerto Princesa City, PH

Michael Tiu Lim
VP Operations
Mega Fishing Corporation
Navotas City, PH

Rosaldo Tenorio
Associate Professor

Zamboanga State College of Marine Sciences and Technology
Fort Pilar, Zamboanga City, PH

Mr. Rex Montebon
Manager
UNOPS-GEF SCS-SFM project
Conservation International
Quezon City, PH

Dr. Romeo Cobungcal
Assistant Provincial Agriculturalist
City of Puerto Princesa, PH

Mr. Geronimo Silvestre
Former RPM
SCS-SFM Project
Manila, PH

Atty. Benjamin Tabios, Jr.
Asst. Director for Administrative Services
Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources
Quezon City, PH

Edgar B. Lim
Plant Manager
Permex Producer and Exporter Corp.
Manila, PH

Ms. Connie Chiang
Former RPM
SCS-SFM Project
Bangkok, TH

Mr. Renato Cruz
Suervising Ecosystem Specialist
Coastal Marine Management Office
PANB-DENR
Manila, PH

Dr. David Vousden
Project manager
UNDP-GEF ASCLME Project
Grahamstown, SA

Mr. Jhun Fernandez
Research Assistant SCS-SFM Project

Project National Coordination Unit
Manila, PH

Mr. Albert Ladica
OIC Port Manager
Palawan, PH

Ms. Cherrylyn Loab
Agricultural Toxicologist
Fisheries Services
Palawan, PH

Mr. Romeo Trono
Current RPM
SCS-SFM Project
Manila, PH

Dr. Lilis Sadiyah
Center for Fisheries Management and Conservation
Jakarta, Indonesia

Dr. Duto Nugroho
Indonesia National Coordinator
PSC Member
Center for Fisheries Management and Conservation
Jakarta, Indonesia

Ms. Ria Faizah
Center for Fisheries Management and Conservation
Jakarta, Indonesia

Mr. Andhika Prima Prasetyo
Center for Fisheries Management and Conservation
Jakarta, Indonesia

Sisi-Ahsanal Kasasiah
Deputy Director for Networks, Data and Information of Conservation
Sulu-Selawesi Marine Ecoregion (SSME) Indonesia
Directorate of Marine and Aquatic Resources Conservation
Directorate General of Marine, Coasts, and Small Islands Affairs
Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries
Jl. Medan Merdeka Timur 16, Jakarta-Indonesia

Mr. Pedling Inunap
Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources
Regional Office #9

RT Lim Blvd.
Zamboanga City, PH

Dr. Eduardo Pisquem, Jr.
Asst. City Environmental Officer
Zamboanga City, PH

Mr. Roberto Baylosis
Southern Philippines Deep Sea Fishing Association
Executive VP
Zamboanga City, PH

Mr. Muhaimim Albani
Chief, R&D
Office of the City Agriculturalist
Zamboanga City, PH

Ms. Kathrine Rose S. Gallardo
Technical Officer for Events Management and
SDS-SEA Monitoring and Evaluation
PEMSEA Resource Facility
Manila, PH

Annex 4: Summary of Field Visits

Conducting face-to-face interviews with key country project representatives and other stakeholders was the principal activity during field visits. As part of stakeholder engagement, the evaluator was also briefed on stakeholder views on and expectations of the project, and, in Philippines, undertook an extensive tour of demonstration sites in the southern Philippines (Puerto Princesa and Zamboanga City).

All interviewees continue to have high hopes for success of the project. However, to the extent that stakeholders have had contact with the IA and EA, views expressed are largely negative. There is an especially strong commitment on the part of stakeholders at local and national levels to the successful execution of the respective demonstration sites within each of the three countries. Progress with the demonstration activity varies from country to country. Budgeting issues prevented timely execution of the demonstration activity in Indonesia, but those budget issues have now been resolved and while the demonstration activity will not be concluded by end-of-project, Indonesia wishes to continue the activity on a no-cost extension basis.

The Malaysia demonstration activity is well underway, but it, too, will remain under implementation beyond the planned life of the project. At this point the demonstration site has been established; the collection of baseline data and socio-economic indicators is ongoing, as are studies on genetics, biology, ecology (population dynamics) of selected fish species; and the Inter-sectoral Committee has been established. The formulation of an integrated fisheries management plan is foreseen as an activity starting in 2013 and finishing in 2014. Implementation of the fisheries management will occur from 2014 onwards.

The Philippines demonstration activity is well underway and has broad stakeholder involvement and support. A central focus of the Philippine demonstration activity has been adoption of Coastal Resource Management Plans through municipal ordinances, thereby substantially increasing local level buy-in to the result, as well as ensuring sustainability of results through locally driven rules, regulations, monitoring and enforcement. There are 23 municipalities in the demonstration area. Three municipalities are directly involved in the SCS SFM project, while the other 20 are included in other projects. According to stakeholders at national and local levels, other projects and municipalities are seeing the demonstration activity of the SCS SFM project, focused in Palawan and Mindanao, as best practice for the larger Coral Triangle Initiative.

As previously mentioned, respondents and others in the field were generally not extremely knowledgeable of the history of the project, its larger objectives, or even the project Components and Outputs in which they were directly involved. The only exceptions were the UNDP Regional Technical Advisor for International Waters and the current RPM who had previously been employed by Conservation International and, in that role, participated in project preparation and implementation activities that were contracted to CI.

Annex 5: List of Documents Reviewed

Core and other documents reviewed by the evaluator included, among others:

The SCS-SFM PIF

SCS-SFM Project Document and Annexes

Minutes and the Final Report of the Project Inception Workshop

UNDP Project Implementation Reviews
2010, 2011, 2012

Sulu Celebes Sea Sustainable Fisheries
Management (SCS-SFM UNDP GEF) Project
Progress Report
2011

Sulu Celebes Sea Sustainable Fisheries
Management (SCS SFM UNDP GEF) Project
Workshop and Meeting Report
Volume 1
January – June 2011

Sulu Celebes Sea Sustainable Fisheries
Management (SCS SFM UNDP GEF) Project
Workshop and Meeting Report
Volume 2
July – December 2011

UNDP GEF Sulu Celebes Sea
SFM Project
National Coordinating Unit, Malaysia
2013 Workplan and Budget

Report of the National Coordinator
Malaysia
2012

Report for Collaborative Agreement Submission
Malaysia
January-December 2012

SCS SFM UNDP GEF Project
Workshop, Meeting and
Consultancy Reports

January – December 2012

Report, including all Annexes of the 1st Project Steering Committee Meeting

Report, including all Annexes of the 2nd Project Steering Committee Meeting

Report, including all Annexes of the 3rd Project Steering Committee Meeting

The project web site

Correspondence and exchanges of emails between and among the IA, EA, PMU, project vendors, and representatives of the participating countries

Quarterly Reports of project progress

Minutes of consultations between and among the National Coordinators and their respective delegations

Annex 6: Questions Used and Summary Results

Questions used during the evaluation were both generic and specific. The evaluator notes that information related to the generic questions, which tended to be what might be termed “insider specific”, were not the kinds of questions that national, provincial, and local officials and other stakeholders were knowledgeable. The evaluator found that, respondents were generally not extremely knowledgeable of the history of the project, its larger objectives, or even the project Components and Outputs in which they were directly involved.

The list of generic questions included in interviews and general discussion included:

Were the project assumptions and risks well articulated in the PIF and project document?

Was the Project design clear, logical and commensurate with the time and resources available?

How successful was project implementation toward meeting indicators, assumptions and risks specified in the logical framework matrix and the Project Document? What are some of the specific factors underlying any shortcomings that you might identify?

What is your assessment of the functionality of the institutional structure that was established and the role and effectiveness of the Project Steering Committee?

Were the partnership arrangements properly identified and roles and responsibilities negotiated prior to project approval?

Were the capacities of the executing institution(s) and its counterparts properly considered when the project was designed?

Were counterpart resources (funding, staff, and facilities), enabling legislation, and adequate project management arrangements in place at project entry?

Were there additional outputs and outcomes (or other products generated or successes) beyond those specified in the Project Document?

Can you identify specific programmatic and financial variance and/or adjustments made during the first 2.5 years of the Project (or during your tenure), their effectiveness, and an assessment of their conformity with decisions of the PSC, and their appropriateness in terms of the overall objectives of the Project?

What is your evaluation of Project coordination, management and administration with specific reference to:

How effective/useful are (were) the organizational/institutional arrangements for collaboration among the various agencies and institutions involved in project

arrangements and execution?

The effectiveness of the monitoring mechanisms currently employed by the PCU in monitoring, on a day-to-day basis, progress in Project execution?

What do you see as administrative, operational and/or technical problems and constraints that influenced the effective implementation of the Project?

What is your view of the financial management of the project, including the balance between expenditures on administrative and overhead charges in relation to those on the achievement of substantive outputs?

What is your assessment of the effectiveness of UNOPS as the Executing Agency?

What is your assessment of the effectiveness of UNDP as the Implementing Agency?

What would you describe as lessons learned and best practices during Project implementation that would benefit the GEF IW portfolio?

What would be your recommendations regarding any necessary corrections and adjustments to the overall Project workplan and timetable for purposes of enhancing the achievement of Project objectives and outcomes?

What you think can be done, can be achieved, over the next 14 months to maximize the extent to which the project can deliver a good and useful product for the three countries?

Would you like to make any other comments/observations/recommendations with regard to this evaluation?

Other generic questions developed by the evaluator included:

Could you please briefly describe your background (training and experience, including your current position), and your history of, and current connection to the PEMSEA project?

Could you please identify what you believe to be the two or three most significant accomplishments of the project to date?

What do you see as principal weaknesses and/or constraints to progress, if any, regarding project implementation to date?

What would you see as the most significant challenges to the future success of the project, particularly, although not exclusively, with regard to the long-term sustainability of project results.

Annex 8: Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form

The Evaluator was not asked to sign a Consultant Agreement form. The only signature required of the Evaluator was acceptance of the contract offer and the Terms of Reference.