Mid-Term Review of the UNEP-GEF Project

Meeting the Challenge of 2020 in The Bahamas

(GEF Project ID: 9791)

07 April 2020 – 30 November 2027

FINAL MAIN MID-TERM REVIEW REPORT



UNEP's GEF Biodiversity and Land Degradation Unit, Ecosystems Division

UNEP Latin American and the Caribbean Office (LACO)

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This report has been prepared by an external consultant as part of a Mid-Term Review, which is a management-led process to assess performance at the project's mid-point. The UNEP Evaluation Office provides templates and tools to support the review process. The findings and conclusions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of Member States or the UN Environment Programme Senior Management.

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Meeting the Challenge of 2020 in The Bahamas

GEF Project ID: 9791

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This Mid-Term Review was prepared for UNEP Latin America and the Caribbean Office by Noel D. Jacobs Sr.

The reviewer would like to express his gratitude to all persons met and who contributed to this review, as listed in Annex II.

The reviewer would like to thank the project team and in particular Task Manager Dr. Christopher Cox for his contribution and collaboration throughout the review process. Sincere appreciation is also expressed to the Project Steering Committee who took time to provide comments to the draft report. The evaluator would also like to thank the Government of The Bahamas.

Special acknowledgements to Rhianna M. Neely-Murphy, Ph.D., Director, DEPP and Brynton L. Johnson, Project Manager, for their commitment and invaluable support during the MTR process.

The review consultant hopes that the findings, conclusions, and recommendations will contribute to the successful finalisation of the current project and to the continuous improvement of similar projects in other countries and regions.

BRIEF EXTERNAL CONSULTANT BIOGRAPHY

Noel Jacobs Sr has 20 years of experience working in more than 30 countries as an International Development Consultant in project design, management, and evaluation primarily in biodiversity, climate change, marine resources, protected areas, land degradation, sustainable tourism, Blue Economy, and policy development. He has successfully designed many international development projects and has conducted numerous Mid-Term Evaluations of GEF and non-GEF projects. He also has extensive experience as an Institutional Development Consultant, focusing on Institutional Assessments, Organizational Re-structuring, Development of Organizational Policies, Strategic Plans, Operational Manuals for Organizations and Projects, Environmental and Social Safeguards policies, and Environmental and Social Management Frameworks. His analytical skills and ability to effectively apply the multi-sector approach in project planning and policy development has proven to be a tremendous asset in the delivery of services to a wide diversity of clients in Latin America and the Caribbean and beyond.

ABOUT THE REVIEW

Joint Review: No

Report Language: English

Review Type: Mid-Term Review

Brief Description: This report is a management-led Mid Term Review of a UNEP/GEF project implemented between 2020 and 2025. The project's overall development goal was to strengthen and integrate Marine Protected Areas management into broader landscape planning to reduce pressures on ecosystem services and biodiversity from competing resource uses. The review sought to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The review has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP, the GEF and the relevant agencies of the project participating country.

Key words: Marine Protected Areas, spatially based decision support system, Integrated Natural Resource Management, ecosystem-wide zoning plans, management effectiveness, infrastructure, Business Plans, priority species, carbon neutral, Renewable Energy, Invasive Alien Species, agricultural chemicals, adoption schemes.

Primary data collection period: 05 May 2025 to 05 July 2025.

Field mission dates: 15-21 June 2025

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AWSNP	Andros West Side National Park
BPNP	Bonefish Pond National Park
BNT	Bahamas National Trust
BD	Biodiversity
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CEAS	Certified Energy Auditing Services
DEPP	Department of Environmental Planning and Protection
ECLSP	Exuma Cays Land and Sea Park
EVCS	Electric Vehicle Charging Station
GEF	Global Environment Facility
HYPR	Half-Year Progress Report
IAS	Invasive Alien Species
IICA	Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture
INRM	Integrated Natural Resource Management
LNP	Lucayan National Park
METT	Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool
MHCNP	Moriah Harbour Cay National Park
MPA	Marine Protected Area
MTR	Mid Term Review
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NDIT	National Design Implementation Team
PA	Protected Area
PCA	Project Cooperation Agreement
PDQ	Project Design Quality
PIMS	Perry Institute for Marine Science
PIR	Project Implementation Review
PMU	Project Management Unit
PSC	Project Steering Committee
SDSS	Spatially Based Decision Support System
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
USD	United States Dollar

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION TABLE

Table 1. Project Summary

UNEP PIMS ID/SMA[1] ID:	9791	Grant ID[2] (if applicable):	
UNEP Management (Division/Branch/Unit):	UNEP's GEF Biodiversity and Land Degradation Unit, Ecosystems Division		
Implementing Partners:	The Department of Environmental Planning and Protection, Bahamas National Trust (BNT), Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)		
Sources of Funding:	Country[3](ies): The Bahamas	Institution[4] Name/Type: The Department of Environmental Planning and Protection, Bahamas National Trust (BNT), Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)	
Relevant SDG(s):	8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15		
MTS (all that apply):	2018-2021 and 2022-2025	UNEP approval date:	14 May 2019
POW Direct Outcome(s) number/reference *(applicable for projects approved from 2022)*:			
Sub-programme:	Number of countries and national, regional and subnational authorities and entities that incorporate, with UNEP support, biodiversity and ecosystem-based approaches into development and sectoral plans, policies and processes for the sustainable management and/or restoration of terrestrial, freshwater and marine	Programme Coordination Project:	

[1] SMA refers to the ID provided by the Integrated Planning, Management and Reporting Solution (IPMR) system, which was introduced by UNEP in July 2023.
[2] For example, ID references from EC, IKI, UNDA, Adaptation Fund, GCF.
[3] Where applicable, list countries who have provided project funds and/or co-finance.
[4] Indicate where funding institutions are any/all of the following: Foundation/NGO; Private Sector; UN Body; Multilateral Fund; Environment Fund; Other.

	areas		
Expected start date:	7 April 2020	Actual start date:	7 April 2020
Planned completion date:	6 May 2025	Actual operational completion date:	30 November 2027
Planned total project budget[5] at approval:	$18,215,310	Actual total expenditures reported as of 14 May 2025:	$1,234,968.66
Planned Extra-budgetary Funds[6]:	*Cash: 6,243,004* *In-kind:*	Secured Extra-budgetary Funds:	*Cash: 11,972,306* *In-kind:*
First disbursement:	13 July 2020	Planned date of financial closure:	*Estimated 1 year after operational completion.*
No. of formal project revisions:	0	Date of last approved project revision:	0
No. of Steering Committee meetings:	5	Date of Last Steering Committee meeting:	20 November 2024
Mid-term Review/ Evaluation *(planned date):*	1 October 2023	Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (actual date):	28 April 2025
Terminal Evaluation *(planned date):*		Terminal Evaluation (actual date):	
Coverage – Implementing Country(ies):	The Bahamas	Coverage – Implementing Region(s):	The Bahamas
Dates of previous project phases:	N/A	Status of future project phases:	N/A

[5] Total budget may include; Regular Budget, Environment Fund, Extra-Budgetary, including 'softly-earmarked' etc.
[6] Extra-budgetary funds may include co-finance (cash/in-kind)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project background

1. The distinct environment of The Bahamas gives rise to numerous irreplaceable habitats and species, including vast expanses of Caribbean pine forest, tidal flats with thriving bonefish populations, extensive barrier reefs, the highest concentration of blue holes in the Western Hemisphere, critical fish nursery habitat believed to contribute significantly to fisheries stocks throughout the Caribbean region, an abundance and diversity of fish, as well as rare, critically endangered, and endemic species. This rich biodiversity, however, is threatened by biological invasions, disease and natural sedimentation; overfishing, development and pollution; and storms, sea level rise, coral bleaching and global climate change. While a network of Marine Protected Areas has been established to protect and manage these marine ecosystems of critical importance to the country's economic development, several barriers exist that must be overcome to achieve the desired level of success. In The Bahamas there is no framework for promoting sustainable development at site level, and there is a lack of successful models of individual Marine Protected Areas that overcome financial and capacity constraints through targeted investment. There is also insufficient knowledge on how Renewable Energy can be integrated to enhance Marine Protected Areas management effectiveness, and there is lack of capacity and inadequate experience in the application of Integrated Natural Resources Management at the local site level in support of sustainable outcomes. To address these challenges, the Government of The Bahamas sought and obtained funding from the Global Environment Facility for the project "Meeting the Challenge of 2020 in The Bahamas" with "GEF ID 9791". The project was approved for implementation by the GEF on 21 February 2020, but with actual start date of 07 April 2020 for a planned duration of 60 months.

This Review

2. This Mid-Term Review covers the implementation of the project "Meeting the Challenge of 2020 in The Bahamas" (GEF ID 9791), for the period 7th April 2020 to 30th April 2025. The Project is funded by the Global Environment Facility, and the Mid-Term Review was carried out in the period May 2025 – July 2025. The review sought to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The review has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among United Nations Environment Programme, the Global Environment Facility, and the relevant agencies of the project participating country. The project is managed from the United Nations Environment Programme's GEF Biodiversity and Land Degradation Unit, Ecosystems Division, via the Latin America and Caribbean Office. Coordination and overall project supervision are the responsibility of the United Nations Environment Programme as Implementing Agency of the Global Environment Facility and the Department of Environmental Planning and Protection, Ministry of the Environment and Housing, The Bahamas is the project's Executing Agency.

3. The project aligns with the Global Environment Facility Biodiversity Focal Areas, Programs 1, 4 and 9, and with the Climate Change Focal Area, Program 1. At the start of the

project, it was aligned with the 2018-2021 Medium Term Strategy of UNEP, contributing to Expected Accomplishment 3 (b) Policymakers in the public and private sectors test and consider the inclusion of the health and productivity of ecosystems in economic decision-making. Since 2022, the project now aligns with the 2022-2025 Medium Term Strategy of the United Nations Environment Programme, contributing to indicator (iii) Number of countries and national, regional and subnational authorities and entities that incorporate, with United Nations Environment Programme's support, biodiversity and ecosystem-based approaches into development and sectoral plans, policies and processes for the sustainable management and/or restoration of terrestrial, freshwater and marine areas.

4. The project "Meeting the Challenge of 2020 in The Bahamas" seeks to strengthen and integrate Marine Protected Areas management into broader landscape planning to reduce pressures on ecosystem services and biodiversity from competing resource uses. The project will strengthen spatially based decision support systems to achieve better and more effective planning for conservation and sustainable development in areas encompassing Marine Protected Areas, Ecosystem-wide Zoning Plans in support of an Integrated Natural Resource Management framework to reduce pressures on biodiversity from competing land uses, improved protected area management effectiveness at five Marine Protected Areas sites and increased financial sustainability at two, Species Conservation and Monitoring Plans for priority protected areas, reduction of Carbon Dioxide emissions from buildings in protected areas through Renewable Energy enhancements, rehabilitation of degraded land and management of Invasive Alien Species, changes in production sector practices, and long-term custodianship of communities of the ecosystems. The project consists of three components, seven outcomes, and eleven outputs.

Key findings

5. At the mid-term, and after delays due to COVID-19, the project has designed and developed the Spatial Biodiversity Information System in partnership with the National Design Implementation Team and engaged more than twenty institutions in the development of a Data Sharing Agreement to guide users on how to access and use the system. The Spatial Biodiversity Information System will enhance conservation efforts by enabling the production of geospatial visualizations, graphics, and maps that inform decision-making and resource allocation. Through a stakeholder engagement process, the project has developed Draft Ecosystem-wide Zoning Plans for five priority areas and has established Advisory Boards for Moriah Harbour Cay and Lucayan National Parks. In close consultations with local communities, management plans for Lucayan and Bonefish Pond National Parks have been developed, and the Bahamas National Trust with the project's support, was able to secure the services of five new protected areas staff, procured equipment, and provided training to support management effectiveness. The project has also developed a Financial Sustainability Scorecard, a Willingness-to-Pay study, and Business Plans to inform financial sustainability strategies for Marine Protected Areas. Species Conservation and Monitoring Plans have been developed for Sponges, Nassau Grouper, Staghorn Coral, Elkhorn Coral, and Juvenile Spiny Lobster. Identification and development of baseline energy and emission data at three project intervention sites have been completed, and architectural plans have been developed for infrastructure works at Andros West Side, Moriah Harbour Cay, and Lucayan National Parks.

6. Notwithstanding the successes described above, there are project implementation and project management issues to be addressed. There are delays and challenges in training and capacity building and in delivery of technical support for transitioning the Spatial Biodiversity Information System to the new platform, as well the need for associated regulatory reform to ensure the system is institutionalized. Further consultation with stakeholders is required for validation of the zoning plans, followed by formal approval by the Bahamas National Trust and initiation of implementation. Operational capacity must be provided to the newly established Advisory Boards for Moriah Harbour Cay and Lucayan National Parks so they can regularly advise park management and there needs to be implementation of activities in the protected areas based on new or updated management plans. The project must engage in an efficient procurement process to address Certificate of Environmental Clearance requirements before park infrastructure works can proceed and expertise to oversee infrastructure works must be secured. Business Plans for Moriah Harbour Cay and Lucayan National Parks must be formally adopted by the Bahamas National Trust and be under implementation as soon as possible to meet the project's sustainability ambitions for prioritized national parks. All Species Conservation and Monitoring Plans must be formally adopted, and implementation initiated to establish a species conservation baseline for prioritized species and continue monitoring to obtain comparable metrics by project's end. Breakdown in communications between the project and the Bahamas National Trust and project management deficiencies have resulted in a stalling of project activities, including the procurement and installation of renewable energy infrastructure at three parks and other infrastructure elsewhere, putting at risk the completion of these works in the time remaining in the project. Also impacted by the strained inter-institutional relationship are the removal of Invasive Alien Species, the restoration of degraded areas, and the engagement of local communities in adoption schemes for protected areas. The project has also been unable to successfully engage farmers in consultations to reduce the use of agricultural chemicals in areas containing sensitive biodiversity and crucial water resources. Not considered in project design, but has become evident, is the need for technical capacity to oversee quality control and legal compliance with required standards for all technical and engineering works related to infrastructure for parks. Neither the Project Management Unit nor the Bahamas National Trust has this expertise. Additionally, because of the volume of procurement still pending to be conducted, the project will have no choice but to employ "bulk procurement" of goods, services, and works if it is to deliver all outstanding outputs by the project's end.

7. The project is deficient in its reporting of project budget by component or outcomes and in the reporting of co-financing by component. While most outcome indicators in the Project Results Framework are appropriate, these are not disaggregated by relevant stakeholder groups including gender and minority/disadvantaged groups and only some gender sensitive indicators are available, even though participation by women in project activities and events is quite visible. The project has no structured communication campaign on mainstream media or social media, and there is no dedicated project website or link. Since estimates of project budget lines were made five years ago, coupled to new across-the-board tariffs being implemented by the United States of America, project principals will be forced to regroup, reprioritize and downscale some activities, retaining

those that are critical to achieving the project's objectives. Of note is the fact that since this project is funded under GEF-6, the preparation of a Stakeholder Engagement Plan and Gender Action Plan were not specific document requirements at the time of project design.

Conclusions

8. The overall performance of the project at the Mid-Term is rated as **'Moderately Satisfactory'** and the likelihood of impact is **'Moderately Likely'**. Drivers to support transition from outcomes to intermediate states are partially in place, while those to transition from intermediate states to impact are not in place as yet. This is primarily due to most planned outcomes, while making progress, are delayed and are directly affecting the enabling conditions for the intermediate states and desired impact to be achieved. Even though the outcomes to achieve Intermediate States have not been fully achieved, Likelihood of Impact is also affected by the fact that consistent with the project's design, planned outcomes including some critical to achieving the project's Intermediate State are not programmed to be fully achieved until the end of the project. The success of the project thus far is attributed to a high level of support from stakeholder institutions, particularly in the development of the Spatial Biodiversity Information System, community support for the Ecosystem-wide Zoning Plans and the Marine Protected Areas Management Plans. However, the project has also suffered from project management deficiencies and breakdown in communications with key project partners, causing significant delay in a substantial amount of project activities. Overall, the mid-term targets defined in the Project Results Framework were not met in this Mid-Term Review.

Lessons Learned

9. Some key **lessons learned** in this Mid-Term Review include those outlined below, the full context of which is presented in Section V:

- Lesson Learned #1: Effective and continuous communication is essential for successful project management.
- Lesson Learned #2: Dedicated project staff indispensable for successful project management.
- Lesson Learned #3: Misinterpretation of project outputs may lead to overestimation of progress in Project Implementation Reviews and at the mid-term.
- Lesson Learned #4: Unforeseen change in government policy can have significant consequences on planned project outputs and outcomes.

Recommendations

10. Some key **recommendations** emanating from in this Mid-Term Review include those outlined below, the full context of which is presented in Section V:

- Recommendation #1: Take urgent steps to improve the quality and frequency of communications with project partners.
- Recommendation #2: Implement expedient administrative processes to urgently review and renew expired contracts for project partners.
- Recommendation #3: Consider cash advances subject to reconciliation of expenses and reporting in the case of infrastructure works.
- Recommendation #4: Secure the services of a technical firm to oversee robustness in design, permitting, delivery, and quality control of all outstanding infrastructure works.
- Recommendation #5: Procure project management support to the Project Management Unit.
- Recommendation #6: Report project budget by component and co-financing by source and component.
- Recommendation #7: Take steps necessary to combine procurement processes and pursue 'bulk procurement'.
- Recommendation #8: Make adjustments to the project's governance arrangements to eliminate conflict of interest and improve efficiency.
- Recommendation #9: Strengthen safeguards compliance, human rights, and gender dimensions.

I. PROJECT OVERVIEW

Institutional Context and Implementation Arrangements

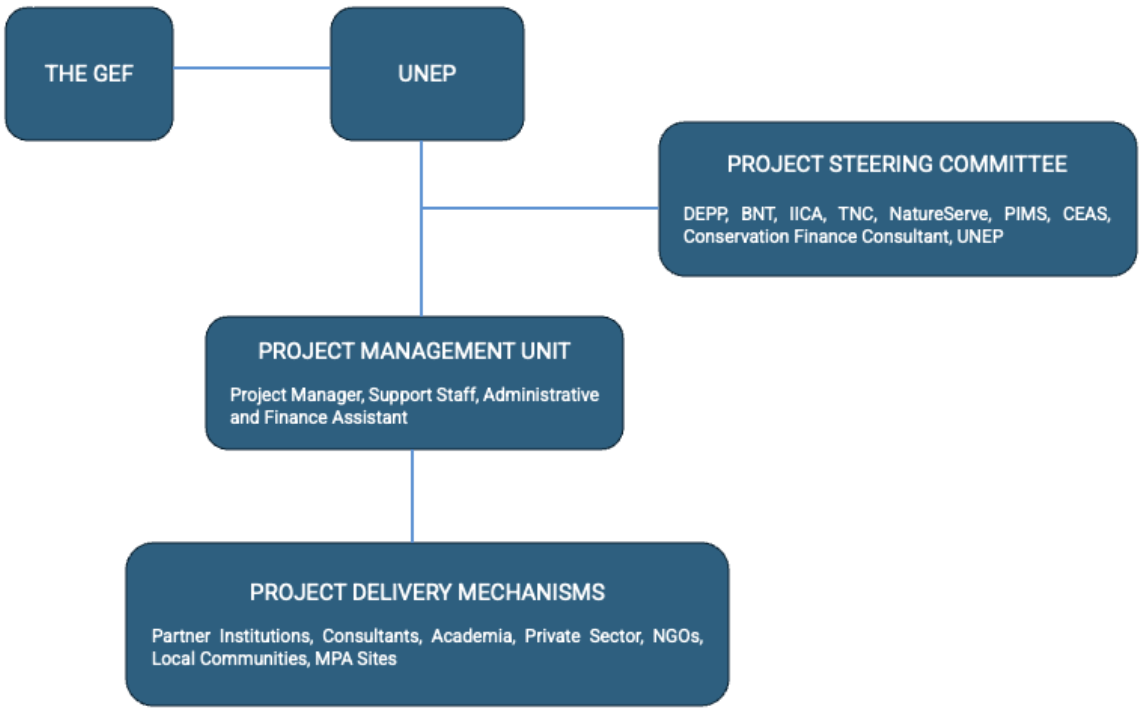
11. This Mid-Term Review (MTR) covers the implementation of the project "Meeting the Challenge of 2020 in The Bahamas" (GEF ID 9791), for the period 7th April 2020 to 30th April 2025. The Project is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Mid-Term Review (MTR) was carried out in the period May 2025 – July 2025. The project is managed from UNEP's GEF Biodiversity and Land Degradation Unit, Ecosystems Division, via the UNEP Latin America and Caribbean Office (LACO). The project aligns with the GEF Biodiversity Focal Area (BD-1 Programs 1, 4 and 9), and with the Climate Change Focal Area (CC-1 Program 1). At the start of the project, it was aligned with the 2018-2021 Medium Term Strategy of UNEP, contributing to Expected Accomplishment 3 (b) Policymakers in the public and private sectors test and consider the inclusion of the health and productivity of ecosystems in economic decision-making. Since 2022, the project now aligns with the 2022-2025 Medium Term Strategy of UNEP, contributing to indicator (iii) Number of countries and national, regional and subnational authorities and entities that incorporate, with UNEP support, biodiversity and ecosystem-based approaches into development and sectoral plans, policies and processes for the sustainable management and/or restoration of terrestrial, freshwater and marine areas.

12. Coordination and overall project supervision is the responsibility of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) as the GEF's Implementing Agency (IA), and The Bahamas Ministry of Environment – Department of Environmental Planning and Protection (DEPP) is the project's Executing Agency (EA). DEPP is responsible for day-to-day project execution through the support of the Project Management Unit and the Project Manager. UNEP's Task Manager provides continuous support and works closely with project personnel in project implementation aspects related to UNEP and the GEF implementation requirements. The Project Steering Committee (PSC) is composed of a Legal Team, Research Team, and the Law Enforcement Team, with representatives from the Department of Environmental Planning and Protection, Bahamas National Trust (BNT), Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) until late 2024, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), NatureServe, Certified Energy Auditing Service Limited (CEAS), Perry Institute for Marine Science (PIMS), the Conservation Finance Consultant, and the UNEP Task Manager. The project's implementation arrangements are presented in Figure 1.

Project Parameters

13. The project was approved as a Full-Sized Project by the GEF on February 21st, 2020, and by UNEP on April 6th, 2020, for a period of 60 months with an intended completion date of May 2025. The project was approved with a total budget of US$18,215,310 that is divided between the GEF contribution of US$6,243,004 and co-financing of US$11,972,306 provided by the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, BNT, Shedd Aquarium, PIMS, TNC, and the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund. The first disbursement of project funds was July 13th, 2020, in the amount of US$936,450. The project took over 15 months to be initiated from its original date of approval due to the impacts from the COVID19 pandemic and the in-country national mitigation response measures. At the time of the MTR the project had no revisions.

Figure 1. Project Implementation Arrangements



Project Objective and Logical Framework

14. The project "Meeting the Challenge of 2020 in The Bahamas" seeks to strengthen and integrate MPA management into broader landscape planning to reduce pressures on ecosystem services and biodiversity from competing resource uses. The project will strengthen spatially based decision support systems to achieve better and more effective planning for conservation and sustainable development in areas encompassing MPAs, Ecosystem-wide Zoning Plans in support of an INRM framework to reduce pressures on biodiversity from competing land uses, improved protected area (PA) management effectiveness at five (5) MPA sites and increased financial sustainability at two (2), Species Conservation and Monitoring Plans for priority MPAs, reduction of Carbon Dioxide (tCO_2-eq) emissions from buildings in protected areas through RE enhancements, rehabilitation of degraded land and management of Invasive Alien Species (IAS), changes in production sector practices, and long-term custodianship of communities of the ecosystems. The project consists of three components, seven outcomes, and eleven outputs.

15. The project's Logical Framework is summarized below in Table 2.

Table 2. Project Logical Framework

Components	Outputs	Outcomes
C1: Integrated Natural Resource Management systems for marine protected areas and adjacent land / seascapes	1.1.**1:** Spatially based decision support systems for INRM are available for use in cross-sectoral landscape planning & management and in policy and regulatory development.	**1.1:** Better effective planning for conservation and sustainable development in areas encompassing MPAs obtained through information on ecosystem conditions and services.
	1.1.2**:** Ecosystem-wide Zoning Plans developed and approved for areas encompassing 5 target MPAs.	**1.2:** Integrated Natural Resource Management (INRM) framework supports the reduction of pressures on biodiversity from competing land uses in the wider landscape.
C2: Effective Protected Area Management	2.1.1: PA Management Advisory Boards for recently established MPAs (Moriah Harbour Cay National Park and Lucayan National Park) established and provided with operational capacity. 2.1.2: Management Plans developed / updated and under implementation at 5 MPA sites. 2.1.3: Infrastructure established, and staff deployed and capacitated at 5 MPA sites.	**2.1**: Improved PA management effectiveness at 5 MPA sites: Andros West Side, Bonefish Pond, Lucayan, Exuma Cays, and Moriah Harbour Cay.
	2.2.1: Business Plans developed and under implementation for Moriah Harbour Cay and Lucayan National Parks.	**2.2:** Increased financial sustainability of the Moriah Harbour Cay and Lucayan National Parks.
	2.3.1: Species Conservation and Monitoring Plans developed and priority actions (e.g. monitoring) under implementation for priority species at 5 MPA sites.	**2.3:** Stable population numbers of the priority species in the targeted project sites.
	2.4.1: Up to 3 carbon neutral Marine Protected Area facilities (photovoltaic substitute for diesel generators (minimum 1,052,769.6 tCO_2-equivalent direct emission reduction over 15 years).	**2.4:** 2,105,539 tCO_2-eq emissions from buildings in protected areas are reduced (indirect and direct impacts).
C3: MPA management integrated with sustainable development in the broader land / seascape	3.1.1: Reduced impacts from adjacent areas on MPAs through Invasive Alien Species (IAS) management and ecosystem restoration (at least 100 ha). 3.1.2: Reduced use of agricultural chemicals in areas containing sensitive biodiversity and crucial water resources. 3.1.3: Pilot communities and/or schools are	**3.1**: Enhanced provision and appreciation of community of services from ecosystems in MPAs and surrounding areas as a result of: 1) rehabilitation of degraded land; 2) changes in production sector practices leading to both development and conservation objectives; and 3) long-term custodianship of communities of the ecosystems.

	supporting management of two MPAs ("adoption schemes").	

16. The project contributes to the following GEF-6 Core Indicators:

Core Indicator 2. Marine protected areas created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use (Hectares). Project Target: 688,046.
Core Indicator 3. Area of land restored **(**Hectares). Project Target: 100.
Core Indicator 4. Area of landscapes under improved practices (excluding protected areas) (Hectares). Project Target: 100.
Core Indicator 5. Total area under improved management (Hectares). Project Target: 688,046.
Core Indicator 6. Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated (metric tons of CO2e). Project Target: 1,052,769.6.
Core Indicator 11. Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment. Project Target: 53 females; 52 males.

Stakeholder Analysis

17. The Project Document contains a stakeholder matrix with potential roles in project implementation. Information in the project document was complemented with information from Project Implementation Reports (PIRs) to develop the stakeholder analysis presented below. Stakeholders were classified as defined below in consideration of the possible impact they may have on project outcomes, and distributed according to Mendelow's Power/Interest Grid (Figure 1). Their influence over project results and roles in project are further developed in Table 3.

Type A: High power highly interested (Manage Closely) - fully engage and make the greatest efforts to satisfy them.
Type B: High power, less interested (Keep Satisfied) - keep them satisfied and effectively engaged.

Type C: Low power highly interested (Keep Informed) - adequately inform and ensure that no major issues are arising.

Type D: Low power, less interested (Monitor) - monitor and engage without excessive communication.

18. Among the stakeholders identified as critical for the achievement of project outcomes is the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, which is the parent ministry of the Project Executing Agency and co-financier, provides policy direction for definition of project priorities, and conducts financial oversight and liaison with central government. The Department of Environmental Planning and Protection is the Project Executing Agency and GEF Operational Focal Point, leads project implementation and primary liaison with all project stakeholders and UNEP, and member of the Project Steering Committee. The Bahamas National Trust manages the countries national parks and is responsible for all project interventions in national parks, and is a member of the Project Steering Committee. UNEP administers the funding sent to the Executing Agency, participates as a member of

the Steering Committee, and undertakes monitoring activities of the project to ensure compliance with technical, fiduciary, and safeguards standards.

Figure 1. Power/Interest Grid of Project Stakeholders

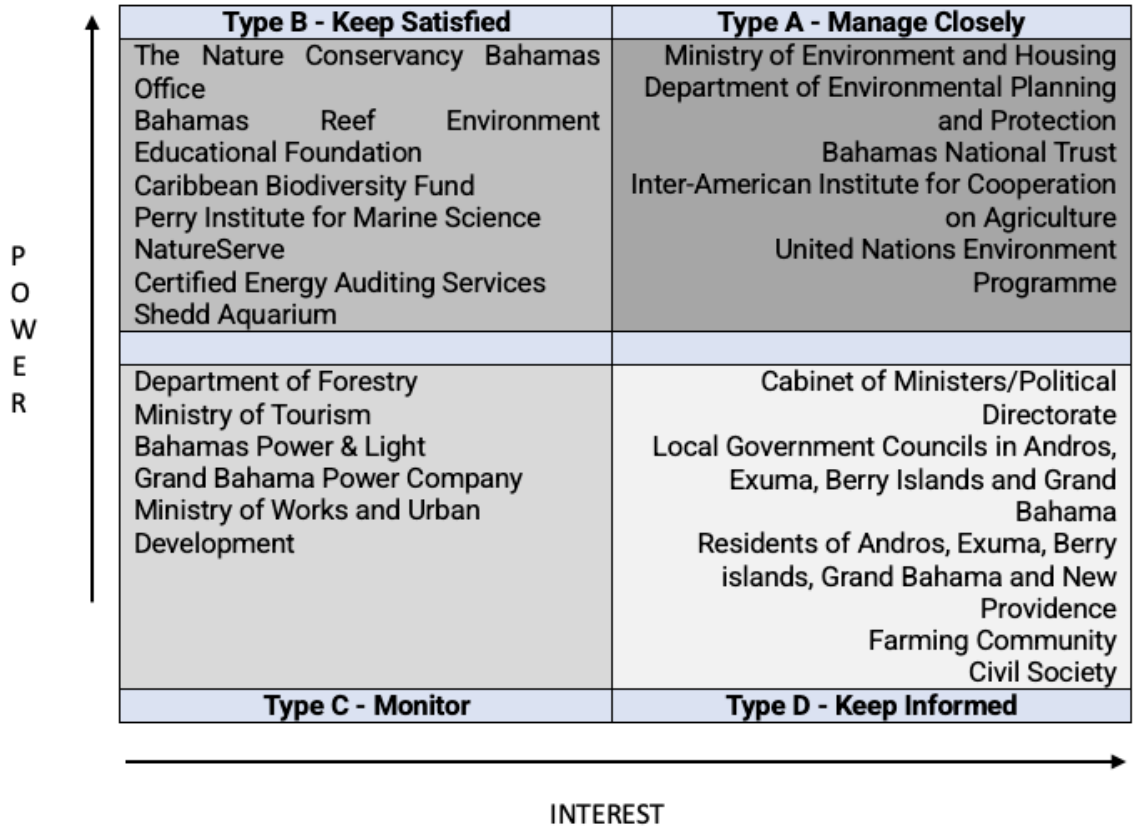


Table 3. Stakeholder Power and Influence

Stakeholders	**Explain the power they hold over the project results/implementation and the level of interest**	**Did they participate in the project design, and how**	**Potential roles and responsibilities in project implementation**	**Changes in their behaviour expected through implementation of the project**
Type A: *High power / high interest = fully engage and make the greatest efforts to satisfy them*				
Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources	Parent ministry of the Project Executing Agency Co-financier	Policy direction for definition of project priorities	Financial oversight and liaison with central government.	Policy advocacy in support of MPAs at Cabinet
Department of Environmental Planning and Protection	Project Executing Agency, GEF Operational Focal Point	Leads project implementation and primary liaison with all project stakeholders and UNEP	Leads project implementation and primary liaison with all project stakeholders and UNEP	Greater assertiveness in policy implementation related to MPA declaration and management

			Project Steering Committee	
Bahamas National Trust	Manages the country's national parks. Co-financier	Participated in Inception Meeting with stakeholders to consult on the project's design. Also participated several subsequent one-on-one meetings with the Project design Consultant.	Responsible for all project interventions in national parks Project Steering Committee	More coherence in management standards across MPAs and national parks
Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture	Development of a global agri-business environment.	No documentary evidence	Guiding all project interventions on farms/consultant Project Steering Committee	Greater influence on sustainable agricultural practices
United Nations Environment Programme	GEF Implementing Agency and fiduciary manager	Provided quality control and compliance with GEF and UNEP requirements for project design	GEF Implementing Agency and fiduciary manager GEF Reporting	Increased efficiency and oversight of project implementation and GEF reporting
Type B: *High power/ low interest over the project = keep them satisfied and effectively engaged*				
The Nature Conservancy Bahamas Office	Consultative partner and co-financier	Participated in Inception Meeting with stakeholders to consult on the project's design. Also participated several subsequent one-on-one meetings with the Project design Consultant.	Expert advice on conservation matters and zonation consultant to the project	Greater financial support for marine conservation and zonation efforts
Bahamas Reef Environment Educational Foundation	Consultative partner	No documentary evidence	Expert advice on marine and education matters	Sustained knowledge management effort on marine conservation issues
Caribbean Biodiversity Fund	Consultative & co-financier	No documentary evidence	Expert advice on conservation matters, particularly as it relates to business planning and sustainable finance	Greater financial support for marine conservation efforts
Perry Institute for Marine Science	Consultative partner & co-financier	Consulted in project design meeting in December 2018.	Species monitoring expertise/consultant to the project	Sustained knowledge management effort on species monitoring
NatureServe	Spatial Biodiversity Information expertise	No documentary evidence	Spatial Biodiversity Information consultant to project	Greater availability of spatial biodiversity data
Certified Energy Auditing Services	Solar Energy expertise	No documentary evidence	Solar Energy Consultant	Greater advocacy for renewables
Shedd Aquarium	Consultative partner & co-financier	No documentary evidence	Dissemination of project's knowledge products	More partnerships to promote marine conservation agenda
Type C: *Low power/ high interest over the project= adequately inform and ensure that no major issues are arising*				
Department of Forestry	Ecosystem monitoring expertise	Participated in Inception Meeting with stakeholders to consult	Expert advice on ecosystem monitoring and engagement with	Continued ecosystems monitoring

		on the project's design.	production sectors	
Ministry of Tourism	Planning and development mechanism expertise	No documentary evidence	Engagement on incorporation of project outputs into planning and development mechanism of the Ministry of Tourism	Uptake of project results into future tourism planning
Bahamas Power & Light	Energy conservation and renewable energy expertise	No documentary evidence	Participation in energy-related project interventions	Greater use of renewables
Grand Bahama Power Company	Energy conservation and renewable energy expertise	No documentary evidence	Participation in energy-related project interventions	Greater use of renewables
Ministry of Works and Urban Development	Consultative partner	No documentary evidence	Involvement in project interventions related to Renewable Energy	Greater use of renewables
Type D: *Low power /low interest over the project= monitor and engage without excessive communication*				
Cabinet of Ministers/Political Directorate	High level policy formulation and approvals that can influence project outcomes	No documentary evidence	Political support for project activities at the highest levels	More assertive policy support for marine conservation and biodiversity protection
Local Government Councils in Andros, Exuma, Berry Islands and Grand Bahama	Local approvals of all planning and zonation attempts	No documentary evidence	Involvement in all project interventions on their respective islands, including management plan development, species conservation and monitoring, and MPA adoption schemes	More local permissions guided by zonation and planning
Residents of Andros, Exuma, Berry islands, Grand Bahama and New Providence	Beneficiaries	No documentary evidence	Beneficiaries of the project through skills gained from project training activities and ecosystem services provided by MPAs	More community-led marine conservation efforts
Farming Community	Beneficiaries	No documentary evidence	Beneficiaries of the project through skills and increased awareness about chemicals and safer alternatives gained from project training activities	Reduced use of chemicals in agriculture
Civil Society	Advocacy and accountability	No documentary evidence	Advocacy in support of project goals Can demand accountability of project activities and actions	Greater advocacy for accountability and transparency in marine conservation efforts

II. REVIEW METHODS

19. This MTR was conducted by an Independent International Evaluation Consultant as per the Terms of Reference developed by the project for this purpose. The MTR Report was structured as per the tools available online at 'UNEP Communities of Practice', UNEP Evaluation Policy, UNEP Programme Manual, and the Guidelines for GEF Agencies.

Data Collection

20. The MTR addressed the following eight review criteria: (A) Strategic Relevance; (B) Quality and Revision of Project Design; (C) Effectiveness; (D) Financial Management; (E) Efficiency; (F) Monitoring and Reporting; (G) Exit Strategy & Sustainability; and (H) Factors Affecting Project Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues.

21. Evaluation questions were developed as per the guidance provided in the Terms of Reference of the MTR, inclusive of addressing the Key Strategic Questions and those required by the GEF Portal as per the GEF's areas of interest: performance against GEF's Core Indicator Targets; engagement of stakeholders; gender-responsive measures and gender result areas; implementation of management measures taken against the Safeguards Plan; and challenges and outcomes regarding the project's completed Knowledge Management Approach, and in consideration of the results of the PDQ assessment (Quality of Project Design) and the Reconstructed TOC. However, the main evaluation questions of the Terms of Reference are generally included under 'effectiveness', but are reinforced by other questions through-out the different categories of the MTR as laid out in the Draft Evaluation Framework in Annex B of the Inception Report. All evaluation indicators were analysed using the project's reporting mechanisms (actual available outputs, PIRs, technical reports, etc.), using where possible quantitative and qualitative data, validated through semi-structured interviews with project staff, partners, beneficiaries and other key stakeholders. The MTR purposefully sought to better understand the circumstances and contexts of the implementation issues being experienced by the project, as outlined in the Terms of Reference developed for the MTR.

22. Stakeholders and project beneficiaries are important sources of information to validate information in project reports, and are instrumental in reviewing the draft MTR report, and as such, are also targeted audiences of the overall MTR process. Stakeholders, project staff, and members of the PSC, were engaged through one-on-one interviews or a targeted questionnaire, and focused on details of the project's performance, challenges, lessons learned, and opportunities for improvement. Persons interviewed and/or engaged during the MTR process are presented in Annex I.

23. The methodological steps for data collection in this MTR were as follows:

(a) A desk review of relevant background documentation, inter alia: Project Document and Appendices, project design documents (including minutes of the

project design review meeting at approval); Annual Work Plans and Budgets revisions to the project, the logical framework and its budget, project reports such as the Half-Yearly Progress Reports, expenditure reports, Project Implementation Reports (PIRs), technical and progress reports from collaborating partners, and evaluations/reviews of similar projects, and public awareness and communication materials produced thus far by the project.

(b) One-on-one interviews and semi-structured questions developed by the evaluator, based on questions in the Evaluation Framework presented in the Inception Report, were used to secure responses and inputs from stakeholders on the project's activities and performance within the framework of the eight review criteria. This guaranteed a more interactive process through which the interviewed respondents had more opportunities to contribute to the MTR process, without limitations to the extent of their responses. Project stakeholders who participated in one-on-one interviews were given the opportunity to provide additional information and/or clarifications where necessary. Stakeholders consulted included the UNEP Task Manager, Senior Programme Management Assistant at UNEP-LACO, UNEP Fund Manager, Director of the Executing Agency, Project Manager, the Forestry Department as Technical Advisor to the project on specific issues, representatives of the Bahamas National Trust, Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture, Perry Institute for Marine Science, NatureServe, The Nature Conservancy, Certified Energy Auditing Services, Dr. Venetia Herrod- Allen, Conservation Finance Consultant (all of whom are members of the Project Steering Committee and key project delivery partners), members of Marine Protected Areas staff and Advisory Boards, and representatives from civil society and specialist groups. The findings derived from the desk review, one-on-interviews with stakeholders, the project team and partners, and UNEP personnel were critically reviewed, assessed, and systematized to identify trends in the responses and perceptions on the project's results, overall performance, and perceived project challenges. This was especially useful in triangulating and validating information presented in the Project PIRs, and in ensuring the proper context for articulating project lessons and recommendations for improving project implementation.

(c) A Preliminary Findings Note was prepared and its presentation in virtual meeting served as an opportunity to share further information and clarify conclusions, lessons learned, and recommendations for the Draft MTR Report. The Draft MTR Report was presented to the UNEP Task Manager, the Executing Agency, and the Project Team for review and validation. Additional discussions, information, and validation of project outputs after the draft report were instrumental in the development of the Final Main MTR Report.

The fact that some key project activities are yet to be substantially developed limited the extent to which respondents in the review process were able to articulate their responses in terms of some outputs and performance of the project to date.

III. THEORY OF CHANGE (TOC)

Theory of Change at Review

24. A project's intervention logic including critical assumptions and a graphic representation of the Theory of Change were developed during project design. This MTR has further developed the TOC, identifying drivers of positive change towards outputs, causal pathways and intermediate states. During the main MTR process, the TOC at design was revisited after a review of project processes, documentary evidence, primarily the PIRs and one-on-one interviews with project stakeholders, to reconstruct the TOC at Evaluation. The findings in the TOC at Evaluation confirm the TOC at Design.

25. The drivers of positive change towards outputs are those activities and processes that the project can potentially and directly sponsor -inputs-, in support of project outputs and outcomes, while the assumptions are those conditions and circumstances that are necessary to achieve the desired project results but are outside the control of the project. The causal or impact pathways are the set of steps, consisting of activities, processes and assumptions that collectively will deliver the desired project objective. Based on assessments conducted during the MTR, the drivers, assumptions, and causal pathways were further developed for the project. Drivers, assumptions, and causal pathways are presented below and in the TOC Diagram in Figure 3.

26. **Drivers of positive change towards outputs and outcomes:**

- Inter-agency participation put in place early in project implementation.
- National agencies participate in the design and development of the SDSS, share data, contribute to data sharing protocols, with documented commitment to use the system.
- Mainstreaming process established toward incorporation within national decision-making framework, and regulatory platform created.
- Restoration activities supported by local communities; full participation in execution of on-ground interventions; commitment to change behaviours to reduce degradation of the environment.
- Marine Protected Areas as prominent visitation sites/revenue generators and sites attractive for marine research.

27. **Assumptions:**

- Full support for zoning plan development from top-level decision-making levels of government, public and other stakeholders.
- National agencies, both public and non-profit, will utilize project outputs to improve ecosystems health in communities and islands where they work; commit to replicate lessons learned and successes.
- Local community/users fully supportive of recommendations for proposed MPA new fee structures; high-level political support.

- Full stakeholder participation in development/upgrade of protected area management plans; participate in critical species assessment; commit active role in conservation plans; and political support is sustained and consistent with the project's overall objectives.

28. **Causal Pathway 1:** This causal pathway proposes that **if** spatially-based decision support systems for INRM is applied in landscape planning and ecosystem-wide Zoning Plans are developed for MPAs, **then** the project would have strengthened national capacities for marine protected areas and adjacent land/seascapes management, **because** the deficiencies and challenges in the management framework for sustainable development at the site level in The Bahamas would have been addressed and policy makers would be better informed to make the right decisions on INRM.

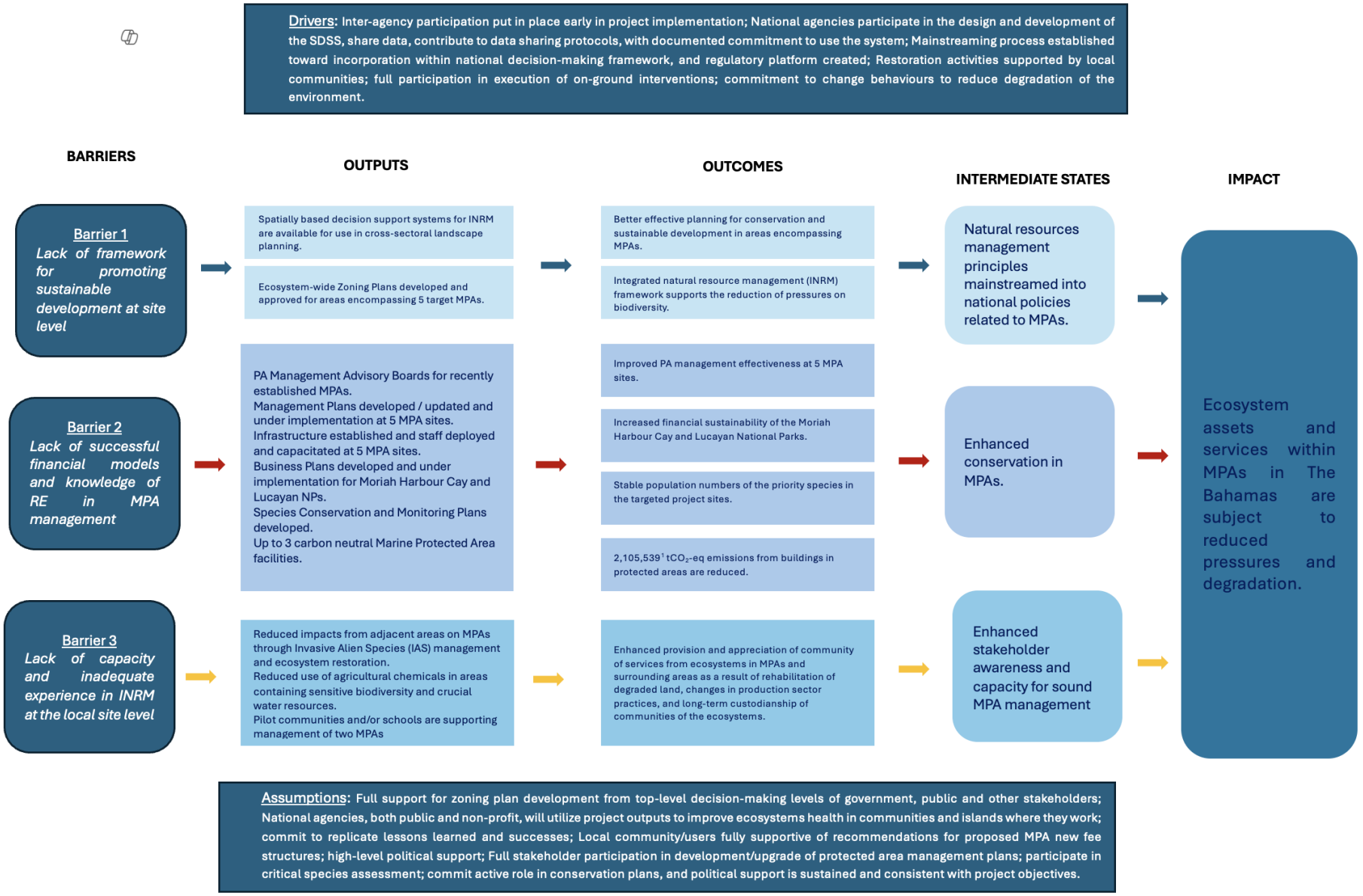
29. **Causal Pathway 2:** This causal pathway advocates that **if the** management framework for MPAs is strengthened, Business Plans are developed and implemented while upgrading infrastructure and facilities and embracing renewable energy technologies at protected area facilities, t**hen** the effectiveness of protected areas management would have been enhanced, **because** financial capacity, and governance constraints of MPAs would have been transformed to produce successful models of financially sustainable and effectively managed MPAs.

30. **Causal Pathway 3:** This causal pathway proposes that **if** there is improved management of Invasive Alien Species, ecosystem restoration, reduction of chemical use in agriculture, and the application of "adoption schemes" for MPAs, **then** MPA management would have been integrated with sustainable development in the broader land/seascape, **because** the lack of capacity and inadequate experience in INRM at the local site level would have been addressed.

31. **Intermediate State:** Each of the three causal pathways converge on a particular Intermediate State, all of which are collectively required before the intended impact of reducing pressures and degradation of ecosystem assets can be achieved. Causal Pathway 1 requires the institutionalization of natural resources management principles into national policies related to MPAs; Causal Pathway 2 must lead to enhanced conservation in MPAs first, and Causal Pathway 3 requires that there be enhanced awareness and capacity for sound MPA management.

32. The causal pathways inferred from the Project Document and Logical Framework for moving from barriers to outputs to outcomes show strong coherence, resulting in a TOC that is likely to lead to desired impacts if all drivers of positive change are delivered and assumptions hold true. There are clear linkages between pathways which connect outputs and outcomes of different components, as well as precursor linkages between outcomes.

Figure 2. Reconstructed TOC Diagram



IV. REVIEW FINDINGS

A. Strategic Relevance

Alignment to UNEP's UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities

33. At the start of the project, it was aligned with the 2018-2021 Medium Term Strategy of UNEP, contributing to Expected Accomplishment 3 (b) Policymakers in the public and private sectors test and consider the inclusion of the health and productivity of ecosystems in economic decision-making. Since 2022, the project now aligns with the 2022-2025 Medium Term Strategy of UNEP, contributing to indicator (iii) Number of countries and national, regional and subnational authorities and entities that incorporate, with UNEP support, biodiversity and ecosystem-based approaches into development and sectoral plans, policies and processes for the sustainable management and/or restoration of terrestrial, freshwater and marine areas.

Alignment to Donor/GEF/Partners Strategic Priorities

34. The project is consistent with the GEF-6 Biodiversity Focal Area BD-1: Improving financial sustainability and effective management of the national ecological infrastructure; BD-4: Prevention, control and management of Invasive Alien species; BD-9: Managing the human-biodiversity interface; and GEF-6 Climate Change Mitigation Focal Area 1 – Promote innovation, technology transfer and supportive policies and strategies, Program 1: Promote the timely development, demonstration and financing of low-carbon technologies and mitigation options.

Relevance to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National Priorities

35. The 2022-2026 United Nations Multi-Country Sustainable Development Framework (UN MSDF) for the Caribbean region cites Outcome 6 'Caribbean countries manage natural resources and ecosystems strengthening their resilience and enhancing the resilience and prosperity of the people and communities that depend on them' which is relevant to the objectives under this project. This project is consistent with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8 – Decent work and economic growth; SDG 9 – Industry, innovation and infrastructure; SDG 11 – Sustainable cities and communities; SDG 12 – Responsible consumption and production; SDG 13 – Climate Action; SDG 14 – Life below water; and SDG 15 Life on Land.

36. The Bahamas signed the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) on the 12th of June 1992, and ratified it on the 2nd of September 1993. The project aligns with The Bahamas' National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan at the time of project design and contributes to efforts to determine the specifics of which species, ecosystems and locations are targeted for conservation, policy development and implementation with respect to bioregions, major ecosystems, and critical species in The Bahamas and the role of the agriculture, fisheries and forestry sectors in conservation of biodiversity, the consolidation of

a system of national parks and protected areas, monitoring and evaluation methodologies, and protection or rehabilitation of threatened or degraded ecosystems and of threatened species. The project also aligns with The Bahamas National Invasive Species Strategy of 2013, and support efforts to include invasive alien species management in any management plans developed for targeted project sites. The project is also aligned with the National Fisheries Strategic Plan and supports efforts to achieve a vibrant fishing sector based on a healthy ecosystem developed for the benefit of current and future generations of Bahamians through ecologically sustainable practices, adequate data collection, research, management and enforcement. Project activities support The Bahamas 2005 National Wetlands Policy which has a goal to conserve, restore and manage wetlands wisely in conjunction with sustainable development practices.

Complementarity with Existing Interventions/Coherence

37. The project complements the recently concluded UNEP/GEF Project "Pine Islands – Forest/Mangrove Innovation and Integration (Grand Bahama, New Providence, Abaco, and Andros)", GEF Project ID: 4847. The Pine Island Project directly complements efforts with education of local communities regarding mangrove systems such as the Andros West Side National Park, and by promoting conservation-compatible economic development and nature-based solutions that benefit both communities in Andros (particularly Red Bays) and other mangroves systems on the island (Davis Creek). As with the 2020 Project, the Pine Island Project also prioritizes engagement with local stakeholders who rely on these natural systems, empowering communities through capacity building, co-management opportunities, and sustainable resource use initiatives. The project also complements the ongoing UNEP/GEF Project "Integrated Landscape Management (ILM) for Addressing Land Degradation, Food Security and Climate Resilience Challenges in The Bahamas", GEF ID: 10694. The ILM project will contribute to the integration of natural resource management within management of MPAs and adjacent landscapes, and the enhancement of protected area management within 5 MPAs. Similar with the ILM project, the Challenge 2020 project will also engage local communities that derive direct economic benefits, in enhanced environmental stewardship of the MPAs and surrounding areas. It must be noted, however, that the The GEF project "Strengthening Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) in The Bahamas" and the resultant passage of the *Biological Resources and Traditional Knowledge Protection and Sustainable Use Act* of 2021 has had implication for access to research permits that were foreseen under this project.

Rating for Strategic Relevance: ***'Highly Satisfactory'***

B. Quality of Project Design

38. While reference is made in terms of alignment of the project with the GEF Strategic Focal Areas, there is no reference to the Programme of Work of UNEP, Bali Strategic Plan or South-South Cooperation in either of the two project documents, except on the cover page of the UNEP PRODOC, where Ecosystems Management and Climate Change are listed as UNEP Priority. However, this issue was subsequently corrected in Project Implementation Reports (PIRs). The project builds upon pre-existing institutions, agreements and

partnerships, particularly in sections addressing consistency with national plans and policies, and with other GEF and non-GEF initiatives. The primary strengths of the project design are in Financial Planning/Budgeting and Efficiency. The budget is tied to outcomes and components by project year and are adequate and no obvious deficiencies could be observed. The resource mobilization strategy seems to be quite balanced for the expectations of the project. The timeline proposed of 60 months is appropriate, however, the project received a no-cost extension during the conduct of this MTR due to substantial delays at start-up due to the impacts of COVID-19, the current low budget execution rate, and due to the fact that the project is at the end of the original implementation period as designed. Barriers are identified, solutions defined, and summary problem statement provided. While there is a graphic representation of the Theory of Change, there is no description of the project's intervention logic linked to the TOC graphic in the CEO Endorsement Request; there was no description of drivers (though can be appreciated in the TOC diagram), causal pathways, or intermediate states in either of the project documents, and assumptions were listed in the UNEP Project Document only. The Project Results Framework has clearly defined indicators and targets for the mid-term and end of project. The Mid-Term targets in the Results Framework, supported by the annual activities identified in the work plan, are appropriate to track progress of outputs towards outcomes. Monitoring responsibilities for day-to-day project implementation is assigned to the Project Management Unit and the UNEP Task Manager. An M&E budget was included, and the project work plan follows a chronogram that is linked to the project's intervention logic.

39. A stakeholder listing is provided with a description of role and involvement in the project. However, the description is generic and non-targeted, except in the cases of 3 members of the PSC. No gender analysis was conducted. One women organization and one government institution dealing with women affairs were identified, but specific role for women in the project was not defined. Details are provided on who were consulted in the Project Design Inception Report. There is no mention of an integrated approach to human/natural systems, gender perspectives, or rights of indigenous people. No Stakeholder Engagement Plan and no Gender Action Plan were prepared for the project; however, it is important to note these were not required under GEF-6. The structured stakeholder analysis, categorization and ranking presented above were prepared during the Inception Phase of this MTR and confirmed during the main MTR process. The final score of Project Design based on the results of the Project Design Quality Assessment is 4.63.

Rating for Quality Design: *'Satisfactory'*

C. Effectiveness

Availability of Outputs

40. This section provides a brief overview of the status of the project's outputs by component at the time of the MTR. The assessment below is based on mid-term targets defined in the Project Results Framework, validated against the results of project implementation to date as reported in the PIRs, as observed during the MTR, and with due consideration of inputs provided by the Project Team and stakeholders during interviews

conducted as part of this MTR process. A summary of the project's performance at the output level for technical components is provided in Table 4.

Component 1: Integrated Natural Resource Management systems for marine protected areas and adjacent land / seascapes.

41. At the time of the MTR and based on assessment of performance at the output level, the overall delivery for this component has been estimated at **70.0%**. The project, through the BNT, successfully compiled required datasets for the Spatial Biodiversity Information System (SBIS), including protected area boundaries, management zones, infrastructure, trails and other data mapped by the BNT. The SBIS has been designed in partnership with the National Design Implementation Team (NDIT) and Data Sharing Agreement compliant with Mutually Agreed Terms (MAT) requirements developed to guide utilization among members of the NDIT. NatureServe has sought to further develop the SBIS, having held five (5) webinars focusing on the design and layout of the Bahamas-wide Dashboard, Individual Protected Area Dashboard, and the Spatial Layer Catalogue for the system. NatureServe has also initiated the integration of existing biodiversity and related data into the SBIS. The University of The Bahamas is working with students to develop forest loss layers for the SBIS. However, there are delays and challenges in training and capacity building and in delivery of technical support for transitioning the SBIS to the new platform. Also of note, while the Data Sharing Agreement can be considered 'policy', there is no evidence of the 'regulatory' aspects having been addressed that will ensure the institutionalization of the system and its sustainability, i.e., the current framework seems to suggest adoption and use of the SBIS will be voluntary, and may not necessarily influence cross-sectoral landscape planning & management and in policy and regulatory development, which is the ultimate goal of Outcome 1.1.

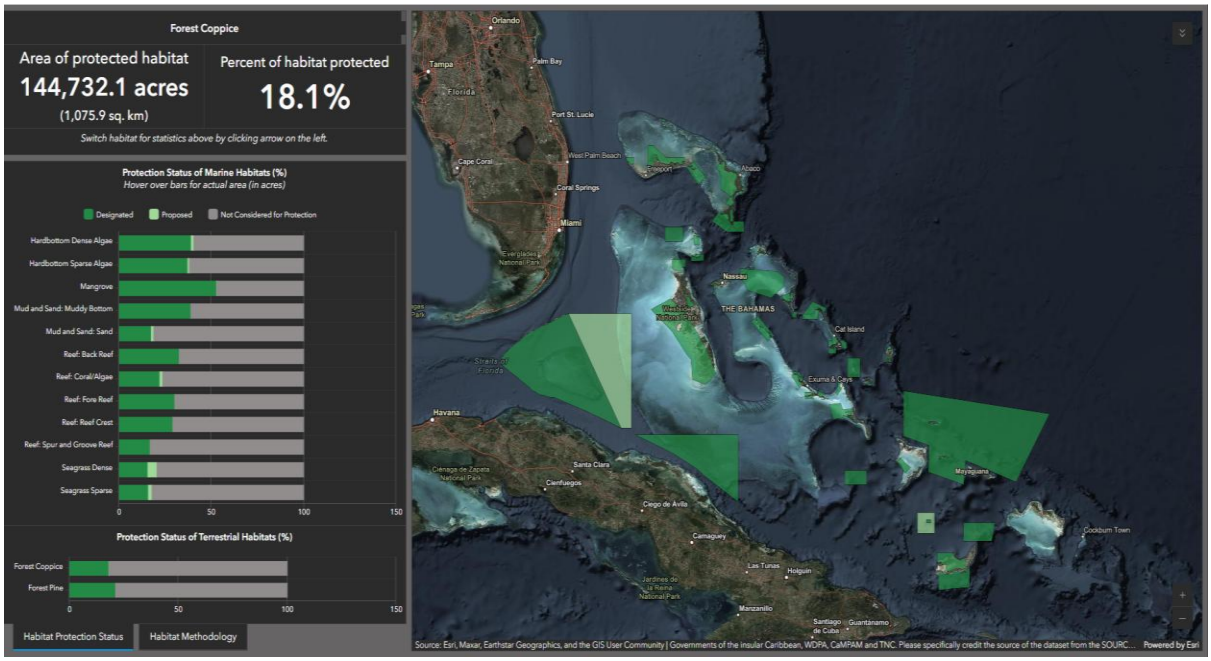


Figure 3. Screenshot of the SBIS Platform

42. The project, through The Nature Conservancy, conducted consultations with more than twenty (20) organizations on the location and sharing of biodiversity baseline data to inform the design of the protected areas zoning plans. The required data has been identified and compiled, and required consultations with stakeholders conducted to inform design of the zoning plans. At the time of the MTR, draft zoning plans have been completed for the five (5) priority protected areas: AWSNP, BPNP, LNP, ECLSP, and MHCNP. Further consultations with stakeholders are required for validation and finalization of the zoning plans, followed by formal approval by the BNT. What the approval process consists of, and the required timeline have not been defined. Critical to the achievement of this output and subsequent outcome is the formal approval and initiation of implementation of the zoning plans in the protected areas.

Component 2: Effective Protected Area Management.

43. At the time of the MTR and based on assessment of performance at the output level, the overall delivery for this component has been estimated at **42.5%.** The BNT has established Advisory Boards for Moriah Harbour Cay National Park and Lucayan National Park. No operational capacity has been provided to the newly established Advisory Boards and even though there have been some meetings, there are no regular scheduled meetings. Fully operational advisory bodies regularly advising on park management activities is the primary delivery of Output 2.1.1, not the establishment of the advisory bodies. The Management plan for LNP has been completed, the BPNP management plan is under final review by the BNT, while that of ECLSP still requires substantial work. There is no implementation of management activities in the protected areas as yet based on new or updated management plans, which is the primary delivery of Output 2.1.2. While staff has been hired for the five (5) priority areas and staff training has been completed under Output 2.1.3, there are delays in the completion of construction drawings for infrastructure in parks, coupled to a new requirement for a Certificate of Environmental Clearance (CEC) introduced in 2021 (no fault of the project) for all works to be conducted, which brings substantial new costs and delays to the project. Once cost implications of this have been established by BNT and the project, there will be a need for reprioritization of some investments and downscaling of some activities. Additionally, since project estimates are 5 years old, these need to be revised upwards to reflect new costs and must also consider new tariffs being introduced by the United States of America. One alternative to consider is the direct importation of materials from the source, for example, from China and Canada. Notwithstanding staff hiring and training, the key and primary deliverable of this output in support of the outcome is the built infrastructure to improve management effectiveness, which has not started yet.

44. A Financial Sustainability Scorecard and a Willingness-to-Pay study have been completed, as baseline for the protected areas business plans. The business plan for MHCNP has been completed while that of LNP is substantially advanced. To effectively deliver this output, once both plans are completed, these must be reviewed and vetted by the BNT, approved and adopted internally by BNT as official policy documents for park management, resourced, then start implementation in the field. Business plans under implementation are the primary deliverables of Output 2.2.1. Species Conservation and

Monitoring Plans are substantially developed for Sponges, Nassau Grouper, Staghorn Coral, Elkhorn Coral, and Juvenile Spiny Lobster, but undeveloped for Smalltooth Sawfish. The AGRRA baseline has not been established for any of the target species, and no field monitoring has initiated, pending completion of the plans. There is no evidence that education, outreach and advocacy for the protection of target species has been conducted by the project, as called for in the project document. The primary deliverable of this output is the field monitoring of the species, not the plans, thus Output 2.3.1 is substantially delayed. Identification & development of baseline energy & emission data at 3 project intervention sites have been completed, and BNT has submitted architectural plans for AWNP, MHCNP, and LNP. Other than meetings between BNT and the consultants hired by the project to provide technical lead in the renewable energy infrastructure at the three (3) parks identified to receive this support, there is no measurable progress in procuring and installing the said infrastructure, which is the primary delivery of Output 2.4.1. This output is also subject to price increases and new tariffs mentioned above. There is also no progress on the development of the long-term energy management plan.



Figure 4. Guided Tour with DEPP and BNT at Bonefish Pond National Park

Component 3: MPA management integrated with sustainable development in the broader land /seascape.

45. At the time of the MTR and based on assessment of performance at the output level, the overall delivery for this component has been estimated at **20.0%.** The degraded areas baseline needed to properly inform restoration efforts is still not complete. Removal of Invasive Alien Species has started on 10 Ha in BPNP and on 15 Ha in LNP, well below the

target of 100 Ha outlined in Output 3.1.1, with actual restoration of degraded areas completed at the MTR being only 5% of target, as reported by BNT staff. The project has been unable to secure sufficient stakeholder interest and participation in the delivery of Output 3.1.2. Though claims have been made by IICA that advances were made on training and demonstration programs for farmers and in groundwater monitoring, there was no documented evidence of this to substantiate any progress made. The contractual arrangement between IICA and the project has been terminated for what the project classifies as “unsatisfactory and poor-quality deliverables”, creating substantial delay in delivering Output 3.1.2. The project has not been able make and sustain any meaningful gains in engaging communities in proximity to AWSNP and BPNP to foster communal-level adoption of protected areas. While there has been hosting of citizen science initiatives with university students, members of the Bird Watching Society and members of the Rotary Club by the BNT, training of stakeholder groups in species and habitat monitoring and ecosystem restoration techniques is still pending. At the MTR, the achievement of Adoption Schemes as outlined in Output 3.1.3 seems unlikely.

46. Consultations held during the MTR revealed delayed and ineffective communications between the project and the BNT have eventually led to functional breakdown in the relationship between the two parties. This, coupled to non-payment to the BNT due to delayed disbursement from UNEP linked to outstanding project auditing issues eventually led to the suspension of project activities by the BNT, drastically affecting project performance across multiple outputs and particularly in components 2 and 3, and in terms of the zoning plans as outlined above.



Figure 5. Mangrove Saplings and BPNP Planting Site

Table 4. Summary Progress of Project Outputs at the MTR

Outputs	Progress at MTR (%)	Summary Evidence of Progress at MTR
Outcome 1.1: Better effective planning for conservation and sustainable development in areas encompassing MPAs obtained through information on ecosystem conditions and services.		
1.1.**1:** Spatially based decision support systems for INRM are available for use in cross-sectoral landscape planning & management and in policy and regulatory development.	75%	Spatial Biodiversity Information System (SBIS) designed in partnership with the National Design Implementation Team (NDIT). Data Sharing Agreement developed to guide utilization among members of the NDIT. The University of The Bahamas is working with students to develop forest loss layers for the SBIS. There are delays and challenges in training and capacity building and in delivery of technical support for transitioning the SBIS to the new platform. While the Data Sharing Agreement can be considered policy, there is no evidence of the 'regulatory' aspects having been addressed that will ensure the institutionalization of the system and its sustainability.

Outputs	Progress at MTR (%)	Summary Evidence of Progress at MTR
Outcome 1.2: Integrated Natural Resource Management (INRM) framework supports the reduction of pressures on biodiversity from competing land uses in the wider landscape.		
1.2.1**:** Ecosystem-wide Zoning Plans developed and approved for areas encompassing 5 target MPAs.	65%	Stakeholders have been consulted to inform zoning plans, the identification and compilation of data has been conducted, and draft zoning plans have been developed for the five (5) priority areas. Further consultation with stakeholders required for validation and finalization of the zoning plans, followed by formal approval by the BNT. TNC has indicated, however, that no further consultations to obtain validation will occur until outstanding payments owed to them have been made. What the approval process consists of, and the required timeline have not been defined. Critical to the achievement of this output and subsequent outcome is the formal approval and initiation of implementation of the zoning plans in protected areas.
Outcome: 2.1: Improved PA management effectiveness at 5 MPA sites: Andros West Side, Bonefish Pond, Lucayan, Exuma Cays, and Moriah Harbour Cay.		
2.1.1: PA Management Advisory Boards for recently established MPAs (Moriah Harbour Cay National Park and Lucayan National Park) established and provided with operational capacity.	40%	Advisory Boards for Moriah Harbour Cay National Park and Lucayan National Park have been established. No operational capacity has been provided to the newly established Advisory Boards and there are no regular meetings. Fully operational advisory bodies regularly advising on park management activities is the primary delivery of the output, not the establishment of the advisory bodies. Delayed and ineffective communications between the project and the BNT, coupled to non-payment to the BNT have eventually led to functional breakdown in the relationship between the two parties and suspension of project activities by the BNT.
2.1.2: Management Plans developed / updated and under implementation at 5 MPA sites.	40%	Management plan for LNP has been completed, the BPNP management plan is under final review, while that of ECLSP still requires substantial work. There is no implementation of management activities in the protected areas as yet based on new or updated management plans, which is the primary delivery of the output. Delayed and ineffective communications between the project and the BNT, coupled to non-payment to the BNT have eventually led to functional breakdown in the relationship between the two parties and suspension of project activities by the BNT.
2.1.3: Infrastructure established, and staff deployed and capacitated at 5 MPA sites.	30%	Staff hired for the five (5) priority areas and staff training has been completed. There are delays in the completion of construction drawings for infrastructure in parks, coupled to a new requirement for a Certificate of Environmental Clearance (CEC) introduced in 2021 for all works to be conducted, which brings substantial new costs to the project, and will demand reprioritization of some investments and downscaling of some activities. Notwithstanding staff hiring and training, the key and primary deliverable of this output is the built infrastructure to improve management effectiveness, which has not started as yet. Added to the above, delayed and ineffective communications

Outputs	Progress at MTR (%)	Summary Evidence of Progress at MTR
		between the project and the BNT, coupled to non-payment to the BNT have eventually led to functional breakdown in the relationship between the two parties and suspension of project activities by the BNT.
Outcome: 2.2: Increased financial sustainability of the Moriah Harbour Cay and Lucayan National Parks.		
2.2.1: Business Plans developed and under implementation for Moriah Harbour Cay and Lucayan National Parks.	50%	A Financial Sustainability Scorecard and a Willingness-to-Pay study have been completed, as baseline for the protected areas business plans. The business plan for MHCNP has been completed while that of LNP is substantially advanced. To effectively deliver this output, once both plans are completed, these must be reviewed and vetted by the BNT, approved and adopted internally by BNT as official policy documents for park management, resourced, then start implementation in the field. Business plans under implementation are the primary deliverables of the output.
Outcome: 2.3: Stable population numbers of the priority species in the targeted project sites.		
2.3.1: Species Conservation and Monitoring Plans developed and priority actions (e.g. monitoring) under implementation for priority species at 5 MPA sites.	50%	Species Conservation and Monitoring Plans are substantially developed for Sponges, Nassau Grouper, Staghorn Coral, Elkhorn Coral, and Juvenile Spiny Lobster, but undeveloped for Smalltooth Sawfish. The AGRRA baseline has not been established for any of the target species, and no field monitoring has initiated, pending completion of the plans. There is no evidence that education, outreach and advocacy for the protection of target species has been conducted by the project, as called for in the project document. The primary deliverable of this output is the field monitoring of the species, not the plans, thus this output is substantially delayed.
Outcome: 2.4: 2,105,539 tCO_2-eq emissions from buildings in protected areas are reduced (indirect and direct impacts).		
2.4.1: Up to 3 carbon neutral Marine Protected Area facilities (photovoltaic substitute for diesel generators (minimum 1,052,769.6 tCO_2-equivalent direct emission reduction over 15 years).	30%	Identification & development of baseline energy & emission data at 3 project intervention sites have been completed, and BNT has submitted architectural plans for AWNP, MHCNP, and LNP. Other than meetings between BNT and the consultants hired by the project to provide technical lead in the renewable energy infrastructure at the three (3) parks, there is no progress in procuring and installing the said infrastructure, which is the primary delivery of this output. There is also no progress on the development of the long-term energy management plan. Further progress of this output suffers from delayed and ineffective communications between the project and the BNT, coupled to non-payment to the BNT which have eventually led to functional breakdown in the relationship between the two parties and suspension of project activities by the BNT.
Outcome 3.1: Enhanced provision and appreciation of community of services from ecosystems in MPAs and surrounding areas as a result of: 1) rehabilitation of degraded land; 2) changes in production sector practices leading to both development and conservation objectives; and 3) long-term custodianship of communities of the ecosystems.		

Outputs	Progress at MTR (%)	Summary Evidence of Progress at MTR
3.1.1: Reduced impacts from adjacent areas on MPAs through Invasive Alien Species (IAS) management and ecosystem restoration (at least 100 ha).	15%	The degraded areas baseline needed to properly inform restoration efforts is still not complete. Removal of invasive species has started on 10 Ha in BPNP and on 15 Ha in LNP, well below the target of 100 Ha, with actual restoration of degraded areas completed at the MTR being only 5% of target, as reported by BNT staff. Delayed and ineffective communications between the project and the BNT, coupled to non-payment to the BNT have eventually led to functional breakdown in the relationship between the two parties and suspension of project activities by the BNT.
3.1.2: Reduced use of agricultural chemicals in areas containing sensitive biodiversity and crucial water resources.	10%	The project has been unable to secure sufficient stakeholder interest and participation in the delivery of this output. Even though documents produced by IICA provide evidence of stakeholder engagement activities, water quality monitoring at 8 strategic locations, farm characterization profiles, and evidence-based training program development, these deliverables were classified by the project as being of "unsatisfactory and poor-quality", leading to the termination of the contractual agreement between the project and IICA, suggesting there was also a breakdown in communications between the parties.
3.1.3: Pilot communities and/or schools are supporting management of two MPAs ("adoption schemes").	35%	The project has not been able make and sustain any meaningful gains in engaging communities in proximity to AWSNP and BPNP to foster communal-level adoption of protected areas. While there has been hosting of citizen science initiatives with university students, members of the Bird Watching Society and members of the Rotary Club by the BNT, training of stakeholder groups in species and habitat monitoring and ecosystem restoration techniques is still pending. Delayed and ineffective communications between the project and the BNT, coupled to non-payment to the BNT have eventually led to functional breakdown in the relationship between the two parties and suspension of project activities by the BNT.

Achievement of Project Outcomes

47. Consistent with the discussion presented in the reconstructed ToC at Evaluation, this section seeks to determine the extent to which the anticipated outcomes of the project are likely to be achieved, thus contributing to the intermediate state identified in the TOC and ultimately to the project's intended impact. The progress of the outputs discussed above, coupled to the discussion and logic of the TOC at Evaluation, form the substantive basis upon which this assessment of achievement of direct outcomes is based. This assessment also considers the fact that some outcomes may rely on the collective delivery of multiple outputs, and that some outputs contribute to the delivery of multiple outcomes and may be across project components. This concept was described in the outputs to impact analysis in the reconstructed TOC. Also, and based on the project's work plan, some outputs may not yet due for complete delivery at the MTR, and therefore should not be assessed as 'delayed' and/or negatively affecting the delivery of the relevant outcome or outcomes.

Outcome 1.1: Better effective planning for conservation and sustainable development in areas encompassing MPAs obtained through information on ecosystem conditions and services.

48. The Spatial Biodiversity Information System has been designed under Output 1.1.1 of the project, is being populated with required biodiversity datasets, and is in the process of transitioning to the new platform. Policy-level Data Sharing Arrangement is in place to guide operations of the system and technical support and training to users of the system will be delivered shortly, with no unforeseen setbacks at the time of the MTR, and is 75% complete. However, as suggested above, questions remain regarding the institutionalization of the SBIS. There is no regulatory provision for the SBIS that will ensure the institutionalization of the system, and its adoption and use by different sector-specific institutions at this stage seems very much voluntary, and thus the question remains as to what extent will the SBIS truly influence cross-sectoral landscape planning & management and policy and regulatory development, which is the ultimate goal of Outcome 1.1. and necessary for achieving the project's intermediate state and to hold true the drivers and assumptions outlined in the TOC. The existence and accessibility of the SBIS does not guarantee its use, however, progress in achieving this outcome is well on track and regulatory reform in support of the SBIS can still be achieved in 24 months remaining of the project.

Outcome: 1.2: Integrated Natural Resource Management (INRM) framework supports the reduction of pressures on biodiversity from competing land uses in the wider landscape.

49. Draft zoning plans which embrace an Integrated Natural Resource Management approach have been developed for the five (5) priority areas, and are pending further stakeholder consultation and validation, and is 65% complete. The achievement of this outcome is dependent on approval of the zoning plans by the BNT, followed by an initiation of their implementation, at least in one prioritized area, to demonstrate feasibility of practical application and not be thwarted by competing policy and political interests, in alignment with Causal Pathway 1 in the project's TOC. The existence of zoning plans as part of an INRM framework will not support the reduction of pressures on biodiversity from competing land uses in the wider landscape, unless they are under practical implementation. The groundwork for achieving this outcome is almost complete, however, expedient adoption and initiation of implementation by the BNT will be crucial, but totally feasible in the time remaining in the project.

Outcome 2.1: Improved PA management effectiveness at 5 MPA sites: Andros West Side, Bonefish Pond, Lucayan, Exuma Cays, and Moriah Harbour Cay.

50. The complete delivery of the three outputs under this outcome is critical for management effectiveness in the five prioritized MPAs is to be achieved. Unfortunately, all three are behind at the MTR with progress of 40% or less. Advisory Boards for Moriah Harbour Cay National Park and Lucayan National Park have been established, but they lack operational capacity, and are thus not providing regular park management advice. The management plan for LNP has been completed, the BPNP management plan is under final

review, while that of ECLSP still requires substantial work. There is no implementation of management activities in the protected areas as yet based on new or updated management plans. Staff have been hired for the five priority areas and staff training has been completed. However, there are delays in the completion of construction drawings for infrastructure in parks, coupled to a new requirement for a Certificate of Environmental Clearance (CEC) introduced in 2021 for all works to be conducted, which brings substantial new costs to the project, and will demand reprioritization of some investments and downscaling of some activities. The reprioritization and downscaling process has not started as yet, which will also cause additional delays. It is important to emphasize, and consistent with the project's TOC, the achievement of this outcome requires fully operational advisory bodies regularly advising on park management activities, implementation of management activities based on new or updated park management plans, and completed and operational built infrastructure to improve management effectiveness. The project has established a good baseline of activities that are in progress to achieve this outcome, but better due diligence and targeted interventions are needed to see them through. Delivery of this outcome is delayed, as defined MTR targets have not been met.

Outcome 2.2: Increased financial sustainability of the Moriah Harbour Cay and Lucayan National Parks.

51. Activities to deliver this outcome are well advanced and 65% complete at the MTR. A Financial Sustainability Scorecard and a Willingness-to-Pay study have been completed, as baseline for the business plans. The business plan for MHCNP has been completed while that of LNP is substantially advanced, reflecting admirable work by the project in delivering this outcome. However, once both plans are completed, these must be reviewed and vetted by the BNT, approved and adopted internally by BNT as official policy documents for park management, resourced, then start implementation in the field. A measurable achievement of increase in financial sustainability (ultimate goal of the outcome) will require implementation of the business plans, even if just partially. This, however, is perfectly achievable in the time remaining for the project.

Outcome 2.3: Stable population numbers of the priority species in the targeted project sites.

52. Activities under Output 2.3.1 required to deliver this outcome are delayed, and are only 50% complete. Species Conservation and Monitoring Plans are substantially developed for Sponges, Nassau Grouper, Staghorn Coral, Elkhorn Coral, and Juvenile Spiny Lobster, but undeveloped for Smalltooth Sawfish. The lack of completion and implementation of the Species Conservation and Monitoring Plans mean the AGRRA baseline has not been established for any of the target species, and no field monitoring has initiated. Also, there is no evidence that education, outreach and advocacy for the protection of target species has been conducted by the project, as called for in the project document. The completion of draft Species Conservation and Monitoring Plans is an important achievement in delivering this outcome; however, this MTR emphasizes the need to determine the status of the

targeted species through the initial implementation of the Species Conservation and Monitoring Plans as a indispensable requirement to deliver the true goal of this outcome. Delivery of this outcome is delayed and defined MTR targets have not been met.

Outcome 2.4: 2,105,539 tCO_2-eq emissions from buildings in protected areas are reduced (indirect and direct impacts).

53. Activities under Output 2.4.1 required to deliver this outcome are substantially delayed and only 30% complete at the MTR. Identification & development of baseline energy & emission data at 3 project intervention sites have been completed, and BNT has submitted architectural plans for AWNP, MHCNP, and LNP. Other than meetings between BNT and the consultants hired by the project to provide technical lead in the renewable energy infrastructure at the three (3) parks, there is no progress in procuring and installing the said infrastructure. There is also no progress on the development of the long-term energy management plan. Under these circumstances, the project is far from demonstrating via pilot installations at three sites, the social, environmental and economic feasibility of climate change mitigation through implementation of innovative carbon-neutral solutions that will contribute to the effective management of marine protected areas and to reduce risks associated with the use of diesel to power facilities, and thus, inconsistent with the project's causal pathways leading to the desired intermediate state. While completion of the architectural plans is admirable, this outcome is totally dependent on carbon-neutral solutions being physically in place and contributing to CO_2 mitigation. Delivery of this outcome is substantially delayed and defined MTR targets have not been met.

Outcome 3.1: Enhanced provision and appreciation of community of services from ecosystems in MPAs and surrounding areas as a result of: 1) rehabilitation of degraded land; 2) changes in production sector practices leading to both development and conservation objectives; and 3) long-term custodianship of communities of the ecosystems.

The three outputs required to collectively deliver this outcome are substantially delayed and only 20% complete overall at the MTR. The degraded areas baseline needed to properly inform restoration efforts is still not complete. Removal of invasive species has started on 10 Ha in BPNP and on 15 Ha in LNP, well below the target of 100 Ha, with actual restoration of degraded areas completed at the MTR being only 5% of target, as reported by BNT staff. The project has been unable to secure sufficient stakeholder interest and participation in the delivery of reduced use of agricultural chemicals in areas containing sensitive biodiversity and crucial water resources, consistent with Causal Pathway 3 of the TOC. Even though documents produced by IICA provide evidence of stakeholder engagement activities, water quality monitoring at 8 strategic locations, farm characterization profiles, and evidence-based training program development, these deliverables were classified by the project as being of "unsatisfactory and poor-quality", leading to the termination of the contractual agreement between the project and IICA, suggesting there was also a breakdown in communications between the parties before the contract was terminated. Steps are being taken by the project to replace IICA, however, the timeliness of this replacement process

may or may not result in further delays. The project has not been able make and sustain any meaningful gains in engaging communities in proximity to AWSNP and BPNP to foster communal-level adoption of protected areas. While there has been hosting of citizen science initiatives with university students, members of the Bird Watching Society and members of the Rotary Club by the BNT, training of stakeholder groups in species and habitat monitoring and ecosystem restoration techniques is still pending. Delivery of this outcome is substantially delayed and defined MTR targets have not been met.

Achievement of Likelihood of Impact

54. Assessment of likelihood of Impact was conducted using the tool provided by the Evaluation Office of UN Environment Programme as updated on July 29th, 2021. At the MTR, the likelihood of impact is **'Moderately Likely'.** The tool for assessing likelihood of impact is based on the drivers and assumptions affecting each step of the causal pathways in the project's TOC leading to achievement of intermediate states, and eventually to intended impact. The project outputs and associated activities (drivers) currently being implemented were designed to achieve the outcomes, leading to intermediate states. Thus, their level of achievement at the MTR coupled to status of assumptions defined in the TOC will directly affect likelihood of impact results. As indicated in the Likelihood of Impact Assessment Results in Table 5, drivers to support transition from outcomes to intermediate states are partially in place, while those to transition from intermediate states to impact are not in place as yet. This is primarily due to most planned outcomes, while making progress, are delayed and are directly affecting the enabling conditions for the intermediate states and desired impact to be achieved. Even though the outcomes to achieve Intermediate States have not been fully achieved, Likelihood of Impact is also affected by the fact that consistent with the project's design, planned outcomes including some critical to achieving the project's Intermediate State is not programmed to be fully achieved until the end of the project.

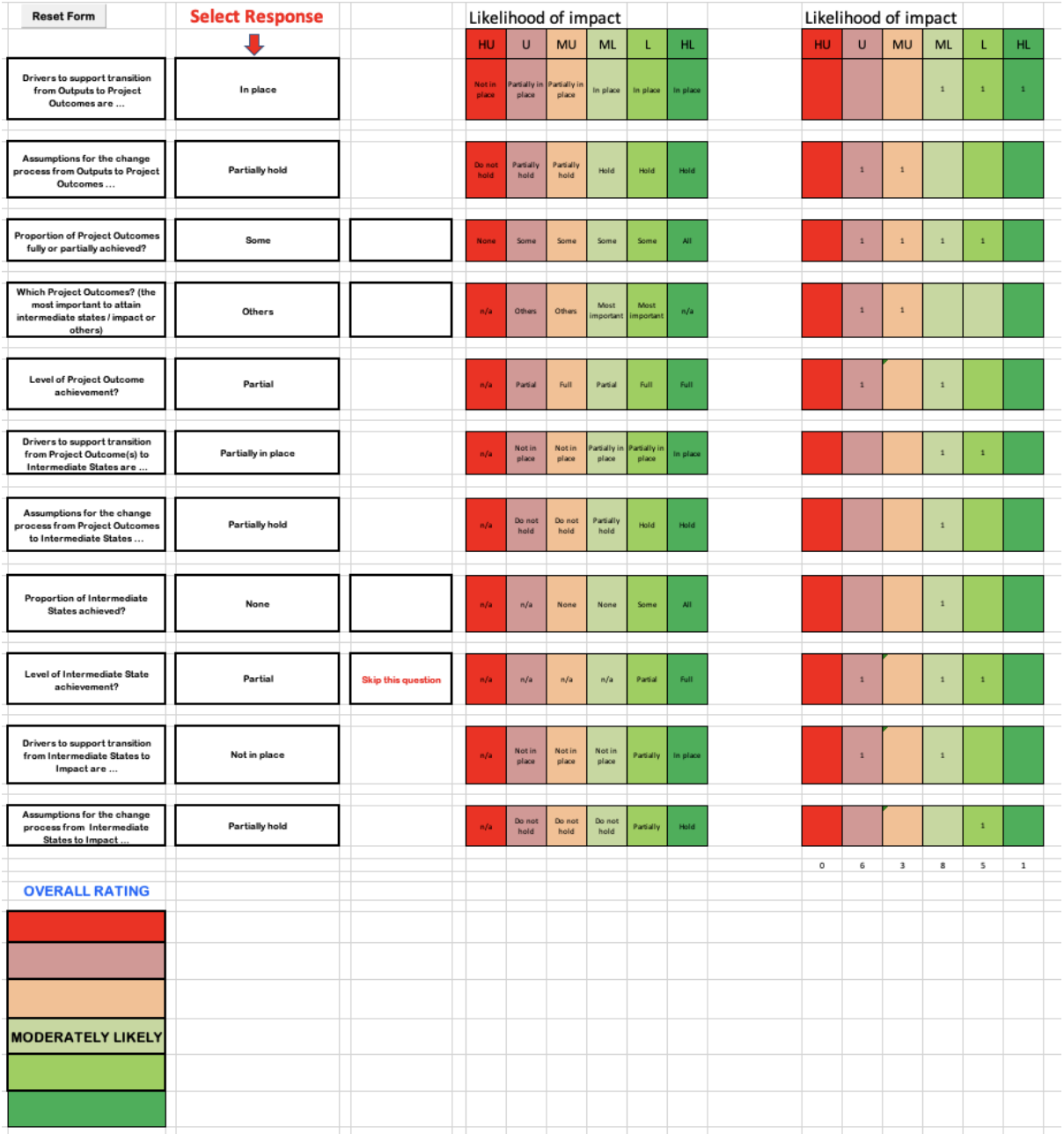
Rating for Effectiveness: '***Moderately Satisfactory***'

D. Financial Management

Adherence to UNEP's Financial Policies and Procedures

55. Besides minor issues with the wrong classification of some expenditures, which have been resolved, evidence from a review of Quarterly Expenditure Reports (QER) and Report of Independent Auditors, there were no material shortcomings in Audit Reports, thus there have been no audit recommendations nor the need for management response, suggesting adherence to UNEP's Financial Policies and Procedures. However, based on a review of documents in Anubis, time transpired between the submission of a QER and receiving the approval from UNEP for said report can be lengthy at times, suggesting the need for clarifications and revisions to reports before approvals are granted.

Table 5. Likelihood of Impact Assessment Results



Completeness of Financial Information

56. The project's financial information at the time of the MTR was complete for the most part, and included Quarterly Expenditure Reports, Half Yearly Reports, Annual Project Implementation Reports, and Annual Audit Reports. An exception to the completeness of reporting is project budget information and co-financing by component; While this is inherent in how the budget reporting in Anubis is captured, project management can however re-construct this using Excel. While the MTR is required to report budget and expenditure by project component, expenditures are recorded and reported according to cost centres of Anubis, not according to project components, thus an expenditure report by component is not available at this time for both GEF and co-financing resources. There is no standardized formula for estimating co-financing. The PCA signed between the Government of The Bahamas and UNEP refers to a Co-finance Report Template in Annex 14, but this

MTR saw no evidence of that reporting, although based on expenditure reporting data in Anubis through the first quarter of 2025, co-financing amounts to **US$5,043,236.46**. Based on information available in Anubis, UNEP has made four (4) Cash Advances to DEPP on behalf of the project, totalling **US$2,516,895.73** or **40.31%** of the total GEF Funding of **US$6,243,004.** As per information provided by the Project Executing Agency, real budget execution at the time of the MTR is **US$1,234,968.66** or **19.78%** of the total GEF Budget**.** This rate of budget execution at the MTR is extremely low, and is consistent with the delayed delivery of outputs described above, and is a scenario that is not desirable by project principals at all levels. However, and in fairness to the project, the bulk of the undisbursed and unspent budget is for infrastructure in MPAs which are substantial amounts and would significantly improve budget execution once infrastructure is procured and erected, most of which would be executed by the BNT. During the MTR it was revealed that one co-financier (Shedd Aquarium) would not be able to provide promised co-financing due to difficulties with obtaining a research permit for work in The Bahamas. Another co-financier (The Nature Conservancy) indicated by email that at the time of project design they were unaware that they would be required to provide details of promised co-financing, and have not done so to date. Cofinancing details from the largest co-financier, The Bahamas National Trust, is not up to date and all reporting suspended due to breakdown in communications between the project and the BNT, and the eventual suspension of project activities by the BNT.

Communication Between Finance and Project Management Staff

57. The Project Manager's level of awareness of the project's financial status is limited to UNEP Budget Lines and work plan as appears in ANUBIS. Communications between the Fund Management Office is satisfactory as evidenced by the approval of financial and audit reports and consecutive disbursements. Of note is the reliance on the financial management support of the DEPP, as opposed to a project-specific and dedicated Finance Director or Accountant. Feedback received during the MTR field visit suggests the pace of advancement of project activities, especially by the BNT, has been affected by this arrangement since feedback on financial reporting has been extremely slow, with the BNT specifically citing having to wait in excess of a year to receive feedback on its reports from the project, during which time all payments from the project are on hold pending clearance/acceptance of the reports.

Rating for Financial Management: *'Moderately Satisfactory'*

Table 6: Financial Management Table

NON-GEF AND GEF PROJECTS		
Financial management components:	**Rating**	**Evidence/ Comments**
1. Adherence to UNEP's policies and procedures:	**S**	
Any evidence that indicates shortcomings in the project's adherence to UNEP or donor policies, procedures, or rules	No	No material shortcomings in Audit Reports.
2. Completeness of project financial information:		

Provision of key documents to the reviewer (based on the responses to A-H below)		MS	
A.	Co-financing and Project Cost's tables at design (by budget lines)	Yes	
B.	Revisions to the budget	Yes	
C.	All relevant project legal agreements (e.g., SSFA, PCA, ICA)	Yes	
D.	Proof of fund transfers	Yes	
E.	Proof of co-financing (cash and in-kind)	No	The PSA refers to a Co-finance Report Template in Annex 14; this MTR saw no evidence of this being done. Co-financing in general is extremely deficient.
F.	A summary report on the project's expenditures during the life of the project (by budget lines, project components and/or annual level)	Yes	Annual budget revisions serve for this purpose.
G.	Copies of any completed audits and management responses *(where applicable)*	Yes	
H.	Any other financial information that was required for this project (list):	N/A	
3. Communication between finance and project management staff		**MS**	
Project Manager and/or Task Manager's level of awareness of the project's financial status.		MS	Expenditure by project component or by outcome not readily available.
Fund Management Officer's knowledge of project progress/status when disbursements are done.		S	
Level of addressing and resolving financial management issues among Fund Management Officer and Project Manager/Task Manager.		MS	While understandable, there are clearly challenges in using DEPP accounting support instead of a dedicated project accountant, with consequences on project execution.
Contact/communication between by Fund Management Officer, Project Manager/Task Manager during the preparation of financial and progress reports.		S	
Project Manager, Task Manager and Fund Management Officer responsiveness to financial requests during the review process		MS	There have been delays in process to provide additional information or clarifications required to clear financial or audit reports.
Overall rating		**MS**	

E. Efficiency

58. The project undergone an almost 2-year delay due to the impacts of COVID-19, followed by change in government administration and transition to the DEPP. To date, the project has had three Project Managers, with this level of turnover at the management level resulting in further delays and challenges. The impacts of COVID-19 demanded an efficient

project management approach to keep the project on track as best as possible during the first 15 months of implementation. The project employed strict health guidelines as mandated by the Government of The Bahamas and carried on project implementation activities to the extent possible under the circumstances, and focused primarily on inception, planning, and coordination activities. Even though the project's implementation pace has picked up over the past two years, it has been slow in delivering outputs critical to the project's success at the level required at the mid-term, even though considerable progress has been made. Many inefficiencies of the project are linked to project management deficiencies. For example, project management has been unable to engage and take partners to task in ensuring timely delivery of project activities in support of outputs. Project management has not kept track of the validity of partners' contracts, cases in point being the contract with the BNT expired April 2025 and that of TNC in March 2025, and at the time of the MTR no efforts had been made to renew them, further complicating the project's financial situation, since payments cannot be made to the BNT and TNC against expired contracts. Apparently, project management is unable to ensure review of financial reports from partners are done expeditiously within the DEPP, to ensure subsequent payments can be done quickly to partners. The current deliverable-based approach used by the project with partners to carry out the project's work will prove inefficient moving forward in the case of infrastructure. It is unlikely the BNT will be able to find the resources to front expenses to construct infrastructure in the MPAs, then claim reimbursement later; project funds will have to be advanced and reconciled against expenditure and reporting. Of note during this MTR was project management's inability to secure attention and participation of three key project partners and PSC members to participate in the MTR process, putting into question the extent to which project management can command commitment and respect from key project partners. It is also apparent that co-financing reporting requirements by partners may not have been explicit at the project's inception, with The Nature Conservancy expressing that they were not aware of the required level of co-financing reporting.

Rating for Efficiency:	**'Moderately *Satisfactory*'**

F. Monitoring and Reporting

Monitoring Design and Budgeting

59. Costed Monitoring & Evaluation Plan was developed for the project and is being followed accordingly and at the MTR the budget seems appropriate. The M&E plan is supported by the Reporting Requirements developed during project design which outlines planning and reporting requirements in support of M&E according to a predetermined timeline during project implementation. While most outcome indicators in the Project Results Framework are appropriate, these are not disaggregated by relevant stakeholder groups including gender and minority/disadvantaged groups, and gender sensitive indicators are not available.

Monitoring of Project Implementation

60. Project monitoring is conducted on a continuous basis by a Project Manager based in the DEPP and by the Project Steering Committee (PSC) which meets to review project progress at least twice per year. UNEP conducts monitoring both remotely and on the

ground by the GEF Task Manager and the Programme Management Assistant. Quarterly Expenditure Reports, Half Yearly Reports, Project Implementation Reports, and independent Audit Reports are generally prepared and submitted to UNEP. Project Implementation Reports provide details of progress and challenges and serve as a powerful monitoring tool. Half Yearly Reports help to identify or anticipate early challenges which may be corrected immediately and not wait until a PIR is prepared at the end of the project year. This MTR and the Terminal Evaluation also form part of the project's monitoring framework. Of note is the decision by DEPP to merge the PSCs of all GEF projects and have integrated PSC meetings. The result is an excessively large group of people deliberating on the needs and challenges of different projects. While this approach may seem to save time and money, it is likely very inefficient with no one project receiving the dedicated attention it deserves. Also, experience and practice has shown that large PSCs rarely ever effective, and smaller executive groups tend to do much better and the governance needs of projects are better served.

Project Reporting

61. Better quality control and agreement of level of completion of outputs and achievement of outcomes as reported in PIRs can benefit from closer scrutiny of those reports by the PSC before they are submitted to UNEP. There is no established guideline for what constitutes 10%, 20%, 30% progress, etc. As has already been indicated above, better reporting of co-financing by source and expenditure by project component and/or outcome will substantially improve reporting. This MTR did not find any significant deficiencies in reporting besides those already mentioned.

Rating for Monitoring and Reporting:	***'Satisfactory'***

G. Exit Strategy & Sustainability

Socio-political Sustainability

62. Currently, political support seems optimum at the national level for project success. The DEPP is fully committed to this project and to the linkages and mutual benefits to be gained among multiple GEF funded projects being implemented by the Government of The Bahamas. Additionally, the Government of the Bahamas is currently negotiating a Debt Swap in support of conservation efforts, and in that process will be building on progress to be made by this project in supporting financial sustainability of MPAs.

Financial Sustainability

63. The BNT is very successful at mobilizing resources for MPAs and marine conservation efforts, as evidenced recently in fundraising for the MHCNP. The Financial Sustainability Scorecard and results of the Willingness to Pay Survey conducted by this project are being used to strengthen and improve financial sustainability of MPAs. A successful Debt Swap will also provide long-term financial support to MPAs and broader marine conservation efforts in The Bahamas.

Institutional Sustainability

64. As the institution mandated by law to manage MPAs, the BNT is leading the key initiatives funded by this project and required to institutionalize improved management effectiveness of MPAs. A remaining challenge is the institutionalization and mainstreaming of the SBIS, which may require regulatory reform, which may have to be led by the DEPP as a multi-sectoral process to benefit not only MAPs, but also the broader land and seascapes.

Rating for Sustainability: ***'Likely'***

H. Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

Preparation and Readiness

65. Barriers are identified, solutions defined, and summary problem statement provided. While there is a graphic representation of the Theory of Change, there is no description of the project's intervention logic linked to the TOC graphic in the CEO Endorsement Request; there was no description of drivers, causal pathways, or intermediate states in either of the project documents, and assumptions were listed in the UNEP Project Document only. The Project Results Framework has clearly defined indicators and targets for the mid-term and end of project. The project builds on UNEP's extensive experience as GEF Implementing Agency and on UNEP's project implementation experience in The Bahamas and elsewhere in the Caribbean and globally.

Quality of Project Management and Supervision

66. Considering the challenges caused by the COVID 19 pandemic, the project in its initial stages showed creativity and adaptive management in its approach to get implementation on track. Project management has demonstrated a high level of commitment in efforts to deliver project activities and engage project stakeholders, and in the development and submission of required project reports. UNEP's supervision has been appropriate as evidenced by the UNEP's participation in the PSC, field visits, and other evidence of feedback and support accessible in PIRs and on Anubis. The PSC, as a project supervision body should provide an opportunity to elevate supervision and buy-in at a higher level within government, that would be crucial for political and financial sustainability. In this regard, this MTR would like to point out the unusual scenario in which by design, this project has its primary contractors/partners as members of the PSC, which essentially places them in a situation of direct 'conflict of interest'. Strictly speaking, institutions and persons on the project's payroll should not be making project governance and policy decisions. The project can and should correct this situation for the remainder of the project.

Stakeholders Participation and Cooperation

67. The project has had some level of success in engaging the primary stakeholders for MPA planning and management purposes, especially in Exuma Cays and the two MPA Advisory Boards. Stakeholders have been consulted on how livelihoods linked to MPAs can be enhanced and on their role in protecting the marine resources. Stakeholders were also engaged via surveys conducted at BPNP and ECLSP, and in the process to develop draft zoning plans for the 5 prioritized MPAs. At the institutional level, the project has been successful at engaging more than 20 institutions in the design and construction of the SBIS and the associated Data Sharing Agreement. However, the project has been less successful

in engaging with farmers to address chemicals use on farms, and in engaging and sustaining interest from local communities to participate in MPA adoption schemes.

Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality

68. Even though no gender analysis was conducted, the project document includes measures to ensure women benefit from project interventions and includes some gender-sensitive indicators in the Project Results Framework, though not to the level required by current GEF and UNEP policies. No Gender Action Plan or Gender Marker were prepared for the project. However, participation by women in project activities is quite visible, with women leading several consulting teams, on MPA Advisory Boards, in project-sponsored trainings, and in top management and leadership positions in both the DEPP and the BNT, the two key institutions overseeing this project. The integrated approach to human/natural systems was not defined in the project document.

Environmental and Social Safeguards

69. The project works to improve planning and management in MPAs and the broader land and seascapes, and to improve the abundance of targeted marine species. In this process, stakeholders are engaged and consulted repeatedly and consistently to ensure their interest and needs are tabled and considered in all project decisions. While an Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS) screening was conducted at project design, it must be noted that the project has no systems in place to monitor compliance with UNEP and GEF's environmental and social safeguards or gender mainstreaming, even though safeguards statements are made in PIRs.

Country Ownership and Driven-ness

70. At the MTR there is certainly country ownership as evidenced by the leadership provided to this project by the DEPP and support from the BNT, two key national institutions. The ability to secure the participation of more than 20 national institutions in the design and construction of the SBIS and in the development of the Data Sharing Agreement is testament to country ownership of project processes and intended objectives. This ownership will need to be strengthened with the institutionalization of the SBIS, either through policy or regulatory reform.

Communication and Public Awareness

71. As outlined in the Project Document, the project's 'Knowledge Management' approach would have embraced the Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) Protocol in its meetings of the Contracting Parties, The Bahamas Clearing House Mechanism for biodiversity, and the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund regional meetings to share project results and lessons learned. However, this MTR did not come across any evidence of this having happened or is being planned. Additionally, this MTR did not come across evidence of a structured communication strategy for the project via mainstream media or social media, and there is no dedicated project website or link. During the MTR consultation process, stakeholders emphatically expressed the need for a structured project communication and awareness campaign, as most of them are unaware of the project's broader objectives and can only speak to the parts they are directly involved in.

Rating for Factors Affecting Performance and Cross Cutting Issues:

'Moderately Satisfactory'

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusions

72. The project "Meeting the Challenge of 2020 in The Bahamas" seeks to strengthen and integrate Marine Protected Area management into broader landscape planning to reduce pressures on ecosystem services and biodiversity from competing resource uses. The project will strengthen spatially based decision support systems to achieve better and more effective planning for conservation and sustainable development in areas encompassing Marine Protected Areas, Ecosystem-wide Zoning Plans in support of an Integrated Natural Resource Management framework to reduce pressures on biodiversity from competing land uses, improved protected area management effectiveness at five Marine Protected Areas sites and increased financial sustainability at two, Species Conservation and Monitoring Plans for priority species, reduction of Carbon Dioxide (tCO_2-eq) emissions from buildings in protected areas through renewable energy enhancements, rehabilitation of degraded land and management of Invasive Alien Species, changes in production sector practices, and long-term custodianship of communities of the ecosystems.

73. At the mid-term, and after delays due to COVID-19, the project has designed and developed the Spatial Biodiversity Information System in partnership with the National Design Implementation Team and engaged more than twenty institutions in the development of a Data Sharing Agreement to guide users on how to access and use the system. The Spatial Biodiversity Information System will enhance conservation efforts by enabling the production of geospatial visualizations, graphics, and maps that inform decision-making and resource allocation. Through a stakeholder engagement process, the project has developed Draft Ecosystem-wide Zoning Plans for five priority areas and has established Advisory Boards for Moriah Harbour Cay and Lucayan National Parks. In close consultations with local communities, management plans for Lucayan and Bonefish Pond National Parks have been developed, and the Bahamas National Trust with the project's support, was able to secure the services of five new protected areas staff, procured equipment, and provided training to support management effectiveness. The project has also developed a Financial Sustainability Scorecard, a Willingness-to-Pay study, and Business Plans to inform financial sustainability strategies for Marine Protected Areas. Species Conservation and Monitoring Plans have been developed for Sponges, Nassau Grouper, Staghorn Coral, Elkhorn Coral, and Juvenile Spiny Lobster. Identification and development of baseline energy and emission data at three project intervention sites have been completed, and architectural plans have been developed for infrastructure works at Andros West Side, Moriah Harbour Cay, and Lucayan National Parks.

74. Notwithstanding the successes described above, there are project implementation and project management issues to be addressed. There are delays and challenges in training and capacity building and in delivery of technical support for transitioning the Spatial Biodiversity Information System to the new platform, as well the need for associated regulatory reform to ensure the system is institutionalized. Further consultation with stakeholders is required for validation of the zoning plans, followed by formal approval by the BNT and initiation of implementation. Operational capacity must be provided to the newly established Advisory Boards for Moriah Harbour Cay and Lucayan National Parks so

they can regularly advise park management and there needs to be implementation of activities in the protected areas based on new or updated management plans. The project must engage in an efficient procurement process to address Certificate of Environmental Clearance requirements before park infrastructure works can proceed and expertise to oversee infrastructure works must be secured. Business Plans for Moriah Harbour Cay and Lucayan National Parks must be formally adopted by the Bahamas National Trust and be under implementation as soon as possible to meet the project's sustainability ambitions for prioritized national parks. All Species Conservation and Monitoring Plans must be formally adopted, and implementation initiated to establish a species conservation baseline for prioritized species and continue monitoring to obtain comparable metrics by project's end. Breakdown in communications between the project and the Bahamas National Trust and project management deficiencies have resulted in a stalling of project activities, including the procurement and installation of renewable energy infrastructure at three parks and elsewhere, putting at risk the completion of these works in the time remaining in the project. Also impacted by the strained inter-institutional relationship are the removal of Invasive Alien Species, the restoration of degraded areas, and the engagement of local communities in adoption schemes for protected areas. The project has also been unable to successfully engage farmers in consultations to reduce the use of agricultural chemicals in areas containing sensitive biodiversity and crucial water resources. Not considered in project design, but has become evident, is the need for technical capacity to oversee quality control and legal compliance with required standards for all technical and engineering works related to infrastructure for parks. Neither the Project Management Unit nor the Bahamas National Trust has this expertise. Additionally, because of the volume of procurement still pending to be conducted, the project will have no choice but to employ "bulk procurement" of goods, services, and works if it is to deliver all outstanding outputs by the project's end.

75. The project is deficient in its reporting of project budget by component or outcomes and in the reporting of co-financing by component. While most outcome indicators in the Project Results Framework are appropriate, these are not disaggregated by relevant stakeholder groups including gender and minority/disadvantaged groups and only some gender sensitive indicators are available, even though participation by women in project activities and events is quite visible. The project has no structured communication campaign on mainstream media or social media, and there is no dedicated project website or link. Since estimates of project budget lines were made five years ago, coupled to new across-the-board tariffs being implemented by the United States of America, project principals will be forced to regroup, reprioritize and downscale some activities, retaining those that are critical to achieving the project's objectives. Overall, the mid-term targets defined in the Project Results Framework were not met in this Mid-Term Review.

76. The project's performance at the mid-term in response to the GEF-6 Core Indicator Targets, stakeholder engagement, gender responsiveness, safeguards, and Knowledge Management are summarized below in Table 7.

Table 7. Project Performance in Response to Strategic Review Questions

Strategic Question	Project Performance at the Mid-Term

What is the performance at the project's mid-point against Core Indicator Targets?	The project has had some success with efforts towards improving management effectiveness of MPAs, through new or updated management plans, hiring of new protected areas staff, and enhanced staff capacity through training, resulting in an increase in METT scores when compared to the baseline at project design. However, substantial work is still needed to meet GEF Core Indicator Targets defined at PPG stage.
What has been the progress, challenges, and outcomes regarding engagement of stakeholders in the project/program?	A Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) was not developed for the project, as such, the project's approach has been to target stakeholders in accordance with those identified in the Project Document, as well as new ones that present opportunities for partnerships that may be useful in supporting project objectives and sustainability of project outcomes. As this is a GEF-6 project, a SEP was not a requirement at the time of design.
What has been the progress, challenges, and outcomes regarding gender-responsive measures and any intermediate gender result areas?	Even though no gender analysis was conducted, the project document includes measures to ensure women benefit from project interventions and includes some gender-sensitive indicators in the Project Results Framework, though not to the level required by GEF and UNEP policies. As this is a GEF-6 project, no Gender Action Plan or Gender Marker were prepared for the project, even though participation by women in project activities is quite evident.
What has been the experience at the project's mid-point against the Safeguards Plan submitted at CEO Approval?	The safeguards risk identified at CEO Approval has not changed. The project is being implemented to protect biodiversity and enhance planning and management, with extensive consultations with communities. A recommendation is being made for the project to implement a protocol to monitor Environmental and Social Safeguards compliance.
What has been the progress, challenges, and outcomes regarding the implementation of the project's Knowledge Management (KM) Approach, including: Knowledge and Learning Deliverables	This MTR did not come across evidence of a structured communication strategy for the project implemented via mainstream media or social media, and there is no dedicated project website or link. The PPG phase identified regional and global meetings as the primary spaces for sharing results and lessons learned by the project, in addition to The Bahamas Biodiversity Clearing House. In the time left in the project, regional meetings can still be identified to make project presentations.

77. The Reconstructed TOC confirms that the project is following a robust theory of change with appropriately formulated outputs, direct outcomes, intermediate state, and long-term results. The outcome indicators are verifiable and appropriate for recording progress towards the achievement of the development objectives. Assessment of the drivers, assumptions for the change processes, delivery of the most significant outcomes, and the proportion of intermediate state achieved at the MTR all suggest that the likelihood of impact is **'Moderately Likely'.** A Summary Assessment and Rating is presented in Table 8, with an overall performance rating of **'Moderately Satisfactory'**.

Table 8. Summary Assessment and Rating

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Rating
A. Strategic Relevance		**HS**
1. Alignment to UNEP's MTS, POW and strategic priorities	At the start of the project, it was aligned with the 2018-2021 Medium Term Strategy of UNEP, contributing to Expected Accomplishment 3 (b); since 2022, the project now aligns with the 2022-2025 Medium Term Strategy of UNEP, contributing to indicator (iii).	HS
2. Alignment to Donor/Partner strategic priorities	The project is consistent with the GEF-6 Biodiversity Focal Area BD-1; BD-4; BD-9; and GEF-6 Climate Change Mitigation Focal Area 1, Program 1.	HS
3. Relevance to regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities	The project aligns with the 2022-2026 United Nations Multi-Country Sustainable Development Framework (UN MSDF) for the Caribbean region cites Outcome 6; the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8, SDG 9, SDG 11, SDG 12, SDG 13, SDG 14, and SDG 15. It also aligns with The Bahamas' National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan; The Bahamas National Invasive Species Strategy; and The Bahamas 2005 National Wetlands Policy.	HS
4. Complementarity with relevant existing interventions	The project complements the recently concluded UNEP/GEF Project "Pine Islands – Forest/Mangrove Innovation and Integration (Grand Bahama, New Providence, Abaco, and Andros)", GEF Project ID: 4847; and the ongoing UNEP/GEF Project "Integrated Landscape Management (ILM) for Addressing Land Degradation, Food Security and Climate Resilience Challenges in The Bahamas", GEF ID: 10694.	HS
B. Quality of Project Design	Barriers are identified, solutions defined, and summary problem statement provided. While there is a graphic representation of the Theory of Change, there is no description of the project's intervention logic linked to the TOC graphic in the CEO Endorsement Request; there was no description of drivers, causal pathways, or intermediate states in either of the project documents, and assumptions were listed in the UNEP Project Document only. The Project Results Framework has clearly defined indicators and targets for the mid-term and end of project.	**S**
C. Effectiveness		**MS**
1. Availability of outputs	Of the 11 outputs of the project, at the mid-term only 5 were at 50% delivery or higher, with 4 outputs at only 30% delivery or less. There is one output at 75% and another at 65% delivery.	MS
2. Achievement of project outcomes	Only the outcomes for Component 1 (1.1 and 1.2) are on track for complete delivery at the end of the project. Outcome 2.2 can easily be achieved, while the MTR targets for all outcomes have not been met, except for increase in METT scores. The delivery of 4 outcomes is substantially delayed.	MS
3. Likelihood of impact	Drivers to support transition from outcomes to intermediate states are partially in place, while those to transition from intermediate states to impact are not in place as yet. This is primarily due to most planned outcomes, while making progress, are delayed and are directly affecting the enabling conditions for the intermediate states and desired impact to be achieved. Even though the outcomes to achieve Intermediate States have not been fully achieved, Likelihood of Impact is also affected by the fact that consistent with the project's design, planned outcomes including some critical to achieving the project's Intermediate State is not programmed to be fully achieved until the end of the project.	ML

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Rating
D. Financial Management		**MS**
1.Adherence to UNEP's policies and procedures	As evidenced from a review of Quarterly Expenditure Reports (QER) and Report of Independent Auditors, there were no material shortcomings in Audit Reports, thus there have been no audit recommendations nor the need for management response, suggesting adherence to UNEP's Financial Policies and Procedures. However, based on a review of documents in Anubis, time transpired between the submission of a QER and receiving the approval from UNEP for said report can be lengthy at times, suggesting the need for clarifications and revisions to reports before approvals are granted	S
2.Completeness of project financial information	The project's financial information at the time of the MTR was complete for the most part, and included Quarterly Expenditure Reports, Half Yearly Reports, Annual Project Implementation Reports, and Annual Audit Reports. An exception to the completeness of reporting is project budget information and co-financing by component.	MS
3.Communication between finance and project management staff	Communications between the Fund Management Office is satisfactory as evidenced by the approval of financial and audit reports and consecutive disbursements. Of note is the reliance on the financial management support of the DEPP, as opposed to a project-specific and dedicated Finance Director or Accountant, affecting the pace of advancement of project activities.	MS
E. Efficiency	Even though the project's implementation pace has picked up over the past two years, it has been slow in delivering outputs critical to the project's success at the level required at the mid-term, even though considerable progress has been made. Many inefficiencies of the project are linked to project management deficiencies: unable to engage and take partners to task in ensuring timely delivery of project activities in support of outputs; not kept track of the validity of partners' contracts; unable to ensure review of financial reports from partners are done expeditiously within the DEPP; inability to secure attention and participation of three key project partners and PSC members to participate in the MTR process, etc.	**MS**
F. Monitoring and Reporting		**S**
1. Monitoring design and budgeting	The M&E plan is supported by the Reporting Requirements developed during project design which outlines planning and reporting requirements in support of M&E according to a predetermined timeline during project implementation. While most outcome indicators in the Project Results Framework are appropriate, these are not disaggregated by relevant stakeholder groups including gender and minority/disadvantaged groups, and gender sensitive indicators are not available.	S
2. Monitoring of project implementation	Project monitoring is conducted on a continuous basis by a Project Manager based in DEPP and by the Project Steering Committee which meets to review project progress at least twice per year. UNEP conducts monitoring both remotely and on the ground by the GEF Task Manager and the Programme Management Assistant.	S
3.Project reporting	Better quality control and agreement of level of completion of outputs and achievement of outcomes as reported in PIRs can benefit from closer scrutiny of those reports by the PSC before they are submitted to UNEP. There is no established guideline for what constitutes 10%, 20%, 30% progress, etc. Better reporting of co-financing by source and expenditure by project component and/or outcome will substantially improve reporting.	MS
G. Sustainability		**L**
1. Socio-political sustainability	Currently, political support seems optimum at the national level for project success. The DEPP is fully committed to this project and to the linkages and mutual benefits to be gained among multiple GEF funded projects being implemented by the Government of The Bahamas. Additionally, the Government of the Bahamas is currently negotiating a Debt Swap in	L

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Rating
	support of conservation efforts, and in that process will be building on progress to be made by this project in supporting financial sustainability of MPAs.	
2. Financial sustainability	The BNT is very successful at mobilizing resources for MPAs and marine conservation efforts, as evidenced recently in fundraising for the MHCNP. The Financial Sustainability Scorecard and results of the Willingness to Pay Survey conducted by this project are being used to strengthen and improve financial sustainability of MPAs. A successful Debt Swap will also provide long-term financial support to MPAs and broader marine conservation efforts in The Bahamas.	L
3. Institutional sustainability	As the institution mandated by law to manage MPAs, the BNT is leading the key initiatives funded by this project and required to institutionalize improved management effectiveness of MPAs. A remaining challenge is the institutionalization and mainstreaming of the SBIS, which may require regulatory reform, which may have to be led by the DEPP as a multi-sectoral process to benefit not only MAPs, but also the broader land and seascape.	L
H. Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues		**MS**
1. Preparation and readiness	Barriers are identified, solutions defined, and summary problem statement provided. While there is a graphic representation of the Theory of Change, there is no description of the project's intervention logic linked to the TOC graphic in the CEO Endorsement Request; there was no description of drivers, causal pathways, or intermediate states in either of the project documents, and assumptions were listed in the UNEP Project Document only. The Project Results Framework has clearly defined indicators and targets for the mid-term and end of project. The project builds on UNEP's experience as GEF Implementing Agency in the Bahamas and globally, and on DEPP's experience in executing various GEF-funded projects.	S
2. Quality of project management and supervision	The three Project Managers to date have had a high level of commitment in efforts to deliver project activities and engage project stakeholders, and in the development and submission of required project reports. UNEP's supervision has been appropriate as evidenced by the UNEP's participation in the PSC, field visits, and other evidence of feedback and support accessible in PIRs and on Anubis. The PSC, as a project supervision body should provide an opportunity to elevate supervision and buy-in at a higher level within government, that would be crucial for political and financial sustainability. In this regard, this MTR would like to point out the unusual scenario in which by design, this project has its primary contractors/partners as members of the PSC, which essentially places them in a situation of direct **'conflict of interest'**.	MS
2.1 UNEP/Implementing Agency:	UNEP's supervision has been appropriate as evidenced by the UNEP's participation in the PSC, field visits, and other evidence of feedback and support accessible in PIRs and on Anubis.	HS
2.2 Partners/Executing Agency:	The Executing Agency, which includes Project Management, face challenges in getting project outputs delivered on time in support of outcomes. Relationships with key project partners have broken down with dire consequences for the successful completion of the project, unless remedied urgently. The conflict-of-interest situation of the PSC, as a project supervision body, must be remedied as soon as possible, and the use of an integrated PSC must be reconsidered to allow for project-specific governance and support.	MS
3. Stakeholders participation and cooperation	The project has had some level of success in engaging the primary stakeholders for MPA planning and management purposes, especially in Exuma Cays and the two MPA Advisory Boards. Stakeholders have been consulted on how livelihoods linked to MPAs can be enhanced and on their role in protecting the marine resources. Stakeholders were also engaged via surveys conducted at BPNP and ECLSP, and in the process to develop	MS

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Rating
	draft zoning plans for the 5 prioritized MPAs. At the institutional level, the project has been successful at engaging more than 20 institutions in the design and construction of the SBIS and the associated Data Sharing Agreement. However, the project has been less successful in engaging with farmers to address chemicals use on farms, and in engaging and sustaining interest from local communities to participate in MPA adoption schemes.	
4. Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality	Even though no gender analysis was conducted, the project document includes measures to ensure women benefit from project interventions and includes some gender-sensitive indicators in the Project Results Framework, though not to the level required by current GEF and UNEP policies. No Gender Action Plan or Gender Marker were prepared for the project. However, participation by women in project activities is quite visible, with women leading several consulting teams, on MPA Advisory Boards, in project-sponsored trainings, and in top management and leadership positions in both the DEPP and the BNT, the two key institutions overseeing this project. The integrated approach to human/natural systems was not defined in the project document	S
5. Environmental, social and economic safeguards	The project works to improve planning and management in MPAs and the broader land and seascapes, and to improve the abundance of targeted marine species. In this process, stakeholders are engaged and consulted repeatedly and consistently to ensure their interest and needs are tabled and considered in all project decisions. The project has no systems in place to monitor compliance with UNEP and GEF's environmental and social safeguards, even though safeguards statements are made in PIRs.	MS
6. Country ownership and driven-ness	At the MTR there is certainly country ownership as evidenced by the leadership provided to this project by the DEPP and support from the BNT, two key national institutions. The ability to secure the participation of more than 20 national institutions in the design and construction of the SBIS and in the development of the Data Sharing Agreement is testament to country ownership of project processes and intended objectives. This ownership will need to be strengthened with the institutionalization of the SBIS, either through policy or regulatory reform.	S
7. Communication and public awareness	This MTR did not come across evidence of a structured communication strategy for the project via mainstream media or social media, and there is no dedicated project website or link. During the MTR consultation process, stakeholders emphatically expressed the need for a structured project communication and awareness campaign, as most of them are unaware of the project's broader objectives and can only speak to the parts they are directly involved in.	MS
Overall Project Rating		**MS**

B. Lessons learned.

Lesson Learned #1:	**Effective and continuous communication is essential for successful project management.**
Context/comment:	This project has demonstrated how avoidable, delayed and ineffective communications can alienate key project partners, leading to further communication breakdown and eventual withdrawal from project activities, putting the achievement of the project's intended outcomes and impact at substantial risk.

Lesson Learned #2:	**Dedicated project staff indispensable for successful project management.**
Context/comment:	While many governments are experimenting with utilizing full-time government staff to provide project management and administrative services instead of full-time project staff, this more and more is demonstrating to be inefficient across many GEF funded projects. Under such arrangements the project is deprived of project-specific attention, and required administrative processes are placed in a queue with those of other projects and those of the ministry, inevitably resulting in avoidable delays and negative trickle-down effects. This is especially critical when financial reports require administrative review before reimbursements or payments can be made. This has to be an expedient process, if the contrary, the project suffers and can lead to strained relationships between the project and its partners that it relies on for its success, as is the case with this project and the BNT.

Lesson Learned #3:	**Misinterpretation of project outputs may lead to overestimation of progress in PIRs and at the mid-term.**
Context/comment:	A close examination of the project's PIRs revealed estimated progress of delivery of outputs are sometimes based on delivery of supporting activities, as opposed to focusing on what elements of the output have been delivered that will actually lead to achievement of the outcome, and eventually the intermediate states. For example, the output "management plans developed and under implementation to enhance management effectiveness" clearly requires that implementation be underway; so, plans are 90% developed is not synonymous to 90% achievement of the output, since plan implementation has not started as yet, which is the element of the output that will really influence achievement of the outcome.

Lesson Learned #4:	**Unforeseen change in government policy can have significant consequences on planned project outputs and outcomes.**
Context/comment:	This project has unfortunately been subjected to newly introduced policy by the Government of The Bahamas after project inception. The project is now required to obtain a Certificate of Environmental Clearance (CEC) for each site where infrastructure works will be erected. The CEC requires site-specific studies which may include geothermal assessments, ecosystems analysis, biodiversity inventories, socio-economic assessments, among others, at significant financial cost to the project. A budget line does not exist for these costs, and this is coupled to new tariffs being introduced by the U.S.A. that will increase cost of materials and equipment for infrastructure. This scenario will require project principals to reprioritize and downscale some project activities. This unfortunate scenario can happen to any project, and begs the question if GEF projects should be allowed to include a contingency budget line for these situations, and if not used, is returned to the GEF or used on a related activity in support of the sustainability and upscaling of project outcomes.

C. Recommendations

78. Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:

- Section IV C, Table 4.

Recommendation #1:	**Take urgent steps to improve the quality and frequency of communications with project partners.**
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	Ineffective communications between the project and partners have led to further breakdown in communications and inter-institutional relationships, resulting in significant delays in project implementation. One partner indicated having to wait in excess of a year to get clarity and feedback on a financial report submitted to the project, during which payments/reimbursements were on hold pending acceptance of the report.
Priority Level:	High (critical)
Type of Recommendation	Partner
Responsibility:	Project Management Unit
Proposed implementation timeframe:	Immediately

79. Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:

- Section IV.E paragraph 59.

Recommendation #2:	**Implement expedient administrative processes to urgently review and renew expired contracts for project partners.**
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The contract with the project's primary partner, the BNT, expired in April 2025 and no efforts have been made to renew it, even though the majority of the project's outstanding outputs rest on BNT's delivery. Additionally, outstanding monies owed by the project to the BNT cannot be paid against an expired contract. The contract renewal process should be used as an opportunity to tighten aspects of the contract which may have also contributed to breakdown in communications, for example, further clarity on the approval process by the project for technical and financial reports, against which payments are to be made. It is the understanding of the MTR Consultant that contracts of other partners are either expired or approaching the expiration date. These should also be subject close scrutiny tightening up to improve timeliness in delivery.
Priority Level:	High (critical)
Type of Recommendation	Partner
Responsibility:	Project Management Unit, with approval by UNEP
Proposed implementation	Immediately

timeframe:	

80. Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:

- Section IV.E Paragraph 59.

Recommendation #3:	**Consider cash advances subject to reconciliation of expenses and reporting in the case of infrastructure works.**
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	**The current deliverable-based approach used by the project with partners to carry out the project's work will prove inefficient moving forward in the case of infrastructure. It is unlikely the BNT will be able to front resources for infrastructure. In this regard, cash advances subject to reconciliation of expenses and reporting may be considered.**
Priority Level:	High (critical)
Type of Recommendation	Partner
Responsibility:	Project Management Unit and UNEP
Proposed implementation timeframe:	Immediately

81. Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:

- Section V.A Paragraph 75.

Recommendation #4:	**Secure the services of a technical firm to oversee robustness in design, permitting, delivery, and quality control of all outstanding infrastructure works.**
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	Neither the project nor the BNT possess the technical expertise required to ensure architectural plans meet all requirements for obtaining government permits, overseeing of works to ensure infrastructure meet building codes quality standards for structural integrity and safety.
Priority Level:	High (critical)
Type of Recommendation	Partner
Responsibility:	Project Management Unit
Proposed implementation timeframe:	Within 3 months of the MTR Report.

82. Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:

- Section IV.C Paragraph 59.

Recommendation #5:	**Procure project management support to the Project Management Unit.**
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	It is very evident that the project suffers from project management deficiencies. Clearly, the project will benefit from dedicated financial management support (within the DEPP) to speed up review, feedback, and approval of financial reports from partners so payments can be made expeditiously. Besides the financial aspects, and overall, project management needs programmed and frequent external support in the form of strategic guidance, advice, and quality control of project processes, decisions, and outputs. If possible, the Project Manager should also be given the opportunity strengthen his project management skills, and should be seen as a strengthening of project management skills within the DEPP. The project has only 24 months remaining, so this must be acted upon immediately.
Priority Level:	High (critical)
Type of Recommendation	Partner
Responsibility:	Project Management Unit and UNEP
Proposed implementation timeframe:	Immediately

83. Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:

- Section V.A Paragraph 76.

Recommendation #6:	**Report project budget by component and co-financing by source and component.**
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	To comply with requirements of United Nations Environment Programme Evaluation Office and the requirements of the Project Cooperation Agreement (Annex 14).
Priority Level:	High (critical)
Type of Recommendation	Partner
Responsibility:	Project Management Unit
Proposed implementation timeframe:	Immediately.

84. Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:

- Section V.A Paragraph 75

Recommendation #7:	**Take steps necessary to combine procurement processes and pursue 'bulk procurement'.**
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the	Because of the volume of procurement still pending to be conducted, the project will have no choice but to employ "bulk procurement" of goods,

recommendation:	services, and works if it is to deliver all outstanding outputs by the project's end. This is an efficient and time-saving approach.
Priority Level:	Medium (important)
Type of Recommendation	Partner
Responsibility:	Project Management Unit and The BNT
Proposed implementation timeframe:	Immediately

85. Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:

- Section IV.H Paragraph 67

Recommendation #8:	**Make adjustments to the project's governance arrangements to eliminate conflict of interest and improve efficiency.**
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	This project has its primary contractors/partners as members of the PSC, which essentially places them in a situation of direct 'conflict of interest'. Strictly speaking, institutions and persons on the project's payroll should not be making project governance and policy decisions. It is recommended that the PSC be reconstituted with key policy makers from institutions of relevance to the project's objectives plus the UNEP Task Manager. Project partners, NGOs, and academia can be placed on a project Technical Advisory Committee. PSC best practice suggests a maximum of 6 members. There is also a need to increase the frequency of PSC meetings.
Priority Level:	Medium (important)
Type of Recommendation	Partner
Responsibility:	Project Management Unit
Proposed implementation timeframe:	Within 2 months of this MTR

86. Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:

- Section IV.H Paragraph 70

Recommendation #9:	**Strengthen safeguards compliance, human rights, and gender dimensions.**
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	While it is understood that when this GEF-6 project was designed a SEP and a GAP were not required documents, the project, however, has not implemented any structured approach to ensure gender mainstreaming or the monitoring of compliance with safeguards. It is recommended

	that protocols for mainstreaming gender and safeguards be incorporated into the daily decision-making processes, activities, and events of the project.
Priority Level:	Medium (important)
Type of Recommendation	Partner
Responsibility:	Project Management Unit
Proposed implementation timeframe:	Within 3 months of the MTR Report.

ANNEX I. PEOPLE CONSULTED DURING THE REVIEW

Table 9: People consulted during the Review.

Project Stakeholder	Title/Post	Institution
Rhianna M. Neely-Murphy, Ph.D.	Director	Department of Environmental Planning and Protection
Brynton L. Johnson	Project Manager, Path to 2020	Department of Environmental Planning and Protection
Cecille B. Colarina	Project Manager, ILM Project	Department of Environmental Planning and Protection
Lakiesha Anderson-Rolle	Director	Bahamas National Trust
Kim Roberts	Grants Manager	Bahamas National Trust
Gareth Jackson	Project Manager	Bahamas National Trust
Kendyce Ferguson	Finance Manager	Bahamas National Trust
Eboni Adderley	National Technical Coordinator	Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture
Stephen Issacs	Land & Agriculture Consultant	Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture
Vinamra Mathur	Director, Biodiversity Indicators Program	Colorado State University for NatureServe
Danielle Hanik	Director, Forestry Unit	Department of Environmental Planning and Protection
Arnold Hamilton	Project Manager, Bahamas Pine Island Project	Department of Environmental Planning and Protection
Ellsworth Weir	Director of Parks	Bahamas National Trust
Delores Kellman	Grand Bahama Island Birders	Member, LNP Advisory Committee
Marcus Cooper	NA	Member, LNP Advisory Committee
Cory Cartwright	Lucaya Service Company	Member, LNP Advisory Committee
Nakira Wilchombe	Grand Bahama Port authority	Member, LNP Advisory Committee
Lehron Rolle	Deputy Park Warden	West Side National Park
Katherine Booker	Manager	Moriah Cay Harbour National

		Park
Steven Cole	Park Advisory Chairman	Moriah Cay Harbour National Park
Bradley Charlton	Deputy Park Warden	Moriah Cay Harbour National Park
Chantal Curtis	Parks Planner & NP Parks Manager	Bahamas National Trust
Lindy Knowles	Senior Science Officer	Bahamas National Trust
UNEP		
Christopher Cox	Task Manager	UNEP's GEF Biodiversity and Land Degradation Unit, Ecosystems Division UNEP Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean
Gloritzel Frangakis Cano	Senior Programme Management Assistant	UNEP's GEF Biodiversity and Land Degradation Unit, Ecosystems Division UNEP Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean
George Saddimbah	Fund Management Officer	Ecosystems Division, UNEP

ANNEX II. KEY DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

- **Project planning and reporting documents**

  - GEF Project Information Form
  - UNEP Project Review Committee comments and checklist
  - GEF Secretariat Review Sheet and Agency Response
  - UNEP Environmental and Social Safeguards Screening report
  - GEF CEO Endorsement Request Document
  - UNEP Project Budget
  - Project Co-financing Budget
  - Project Cooperation Agreement between UNEP and Government of The Bahamas
  - Project Implementation Review, June 2022
  - Project Implementation Review, June 2023
  - Project Implementation Review, June 2024
  - Audit Reconciliation September 2024
  - Audit Reconciliation February 2025
  - Auditor's Report 2020 - 2021
  - Auditor's Report for Period 1 January to 31 December 2022
  - Auditor's Report for Period 1 January to 31 December 2023
  - Project Work Plan 2023
  - Project Work Plan 2024
  - Project Work Plan 2025
  - BNT End of Yer Report – December 2023

- **Project outputs – Overall**

  - Spatial Biodiversity Information System (SBIS) designed in partnership with the National Design Implementation Team (NDIT)
  - Data Sharing Agreement developed to guide utilization among members of the NDIT
  - Draft zoning plans have been developed for the five (5) priority areas
  - Advisory Boards for Moriah Harbour Cay National Park and Lucayan National Park have been established
  - Management plan for LNP completed and the BPNP management plan is under final review
  - Staff hired for the five (5) priority areas and staff training has been completed
  - Financial Sustainability Scorecard
  - Willingness-to-Pay study
  - Species Conservation and Monitoring Plans are substantially developed for Sponges, Nassau Grouper, Staghorn Coral, Elkhorn Coral, and Juvenile Spiny Lobster
  - Identification & development of baseline energy & emission data at 3 project intervention sites have been completed

- Architectural plans for AWNP, MHCNP, and LNP
- Removal of invasive species has started on 10 Ha in BPNP and on 15 Ha in LNP

- **Previous reviews/evaluations of GEF Funded Projects**

  - Mid-Term Review Report: Creation of Additional Biosafety Capacities that Lead to a Full Implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety in Cuba (GEF Project ID 9860), 2024
  - Mid-Term Review Report: Advancing Conservation in the Eastern Caribbean (GEF Project ID: 9860), 2023
  - Mid-Term Review Report: The Path to 2020 – Antigua and Barbuda, (GEF Project ID: 9402/UNEP Project ID: 01405), 2022
  - Mid-Term Review Report: Strengthening Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) in The Bahamas, (GEF Project ID: 5744/UNEP Project ID: 01262), 2021
  - Mid-Term Review Report: Effective Implementation of the Access and Benefit sharing and Traditional Knowledge Regime in Peru in accordance with the Nagoya Protocol, (GEF Project ID: 8025/UNEP Project ID: 01345), 2021
  - Mid-Term Review Report: Sustainable Pathways – Protected Areas and Renewable Energy in Antigua and Barbuda (GFL/5060-2711-4E04), UNEP/GEF, 2018
  - Mid-Term Review Report: Management and Protection of Key Biodiversity Areas -KBA (GEF Project ID 4605), 2018
  - Mid-Term Review Report: Advancing the Nagoya Protocol in Countries of the Caribbean Region, (GFL/5060-2711-4E67), UNEP/GEF, 2017

- **Reference documents**

  - UNEP Evaluation Office MTR Tools Package including Guidance on the preparation of the MTR Inception Report and Guidance on the preparation of the MTR Main Report
  - UNEP Evaluation Policy, Revised October 2022
  - UNEP Evaluation Manual, Revised June 2022
  - Biennial Programme of Work 2018-2019
  - UNEP Medium-Term Strategy 2018-2021
  - UNEP Medium Term Strategy 2022-2025
  - Bali Strategic Plan for Technology and Capacity Building
  - GEF-6 Biodiversity Strategy
  - Theory of Change Primer – GEF STAP
  - Guidelines on the GEF Project and Program Cycle Policy (2020 Update)
  - GEF ROTI Handbook, August 2005, OPS4 – Progress Towards Impact

ANNEX III. BRIEF CV OF THE REVIEWER

Name	Noel Devany Jacobs Sr
Profession	Project Development and M&E Specialist Institutional Development & Management Consultants Limited
Nationality	Belizean
Country experience	**Africa:** Kenya, Madagascar **Americas:** Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guyana, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay **Caribbean:** Antigua & Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Saint Lucia, Trinidad & Tobago **Asia:** Indonesia, Georgia
Education	Master's degree in marine biology (1996), National Polytechnic Institute (CINVESTAV), Merida, Yucatan, Mexico Bachelor's Degree in Aquaculture Engineering (1992), Technical Institute of the Sea, Guaymas, Sonora, Mexico March 2017 – The Strategy Consultant; Chartered Management Institute (CMI)/Institute of Consulting (IC)/Advanced Management Skills (AMS); London, England, United Kingdom. March 2017 – The Lean Operations Consultant; Chartered Management Institute (CMI)/Institute of Consulting (IC)/Advanced Management Skills (AMS); London, England, United Kingdom. March 2017 – The Professional Consultant; Chartered Management Institute (CMI)/Institute of Consulting (IC)/Advanced Management Skills (AMS), London, England, United Kingdom. May 2012 – Advanced Level Organizational Development Certified Consultant Program (ODCC); Institute of Organization Development (IOD), Fort Lauderdale, Florida, U.S.A. March 2009 - Practitioner's Program in the Critical Components of Effective Governance; BoardSource, Arlington, Virginia, U.S.A. June 2007 – Certified Fund-Raising Manager (CFRM); Centre on Philanthropy, Indiana University, Indianapolis, U.S.A. November 2003 – Certificate in Negotiation and Decision-Making Strategies; Columbia University Graduate School of Business, New York, U.S.A June 2002 - Leaders in Development: Managing Political & Economic Reform; John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, U.S.A.

- **Short biography**

Mr. Jacobs has 20 years of experience working as an International Development Consultant in project design, management, and evaluation primarily in biodiversity, climate change, marine resources and Blue Economy, protected areas, land degradation, sustainable tourism, and policy development. He has successfully designed many GEF projects and has conducted numerous Mid-Term Evaluations of GEF and non-GEF projects. He also

has extensive experience as an Institutional Development Consultant, focusing on Institutional Assessments, Organizational Re-structuring, Development of Organizational Policies, Strategic Plans, and Operational Guidelines and Manuals for Organizations and Projects. Mr. Jacobs has worked extensively as a consultant in more than 30 countries in a multitude of sectors including Tourism, Marine Fisheries, Coastal Zone Management, Environment, Climate Change, Aviation, Cultural Heritage, Health, among others. His analytical skills and ability to effectively apply the multi-sector approach in planning and policy development has proven to be a tremendous asset in the delivery of services to a wide diversity of clients primarily in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Key specialties and capabilities cover:

- Design of International Development Projects
- Evaluations and reviews of International Development Projects
- Institutional Assessments
- Organizational Governance
- Strategic Planning
- Policy Development

- **Selected assignments and experiences**
  - GEF-8 Project Document: Strengthening the System of Protected Areas and Improvement of its Financial Sustainability
  - GEF-8 Project Document: Conserving the Paraguayan Chaco for the benefit of jaguars and for people
  - GEF-8 Project Document: Valuing Nature and Nature-based Solutions for Sustainable Blue and Green Pathways for the Tourism, Food, and Urban Sectors in Saint Lucia
  - GEF-7 Project Document: Energy Efficiency for the Transition to Carbon Neutral Cities in Colombia (ongoing)
  - GEF-7 Project Document: Enhancing Political Will for Sustainable Protected Areas Financing
  - GEF-7 Project Document: Promoting sustainability in the agave-mezcal value chain through restoration and integrated management of biocultural landscapes in Oaxaca, Mexico
  - GEF-7 Project Document: Implementing Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE) Site Conservation and Preventing Global Extinctions
  - GEF-7 Project Document: Mainstreaming biodiversity conservation in the tourism sector of the protected areas and strategic ecosystems of San Andres, Old Providence, and Santa Catalina islands.
  - GEF-7 Project Document: Promoting National Blue Economy Priorities Through Marine Spatial Planning in the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem
  - GEF-7 Project Document: UAVs/Drones for Equitable Climate Change Adaptation: Participatory Risk Management through Landslide and Debris Flow Monitoring in Mocoa, Colombia
  - GEF-7 Project Document: Conservation of wildcats and prey species through public-private partnerships and human-jaguar conflict management in Panama.
  - GEF-6 Project Document: Improving Environmental Management through Sustainable Land Management in St. Kitts and Nevis
  - GEF-6 Project Document: Ecosystem-based biodiversity friendly cattle production framework for the Darien Region of Panama
  - GEF-6 Project Document: 'Transformation of the Panela (sugar cane) Sub-Sector in Colombia Through Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMA) to the Impacts of Climate Change'
  - GEF-5 Project Document: Andes Adaptation to the Impacts of Climate Change on Water Resources (AICCA)'
  - M&E Specialist: Development of an Institutional Monitoring & Evaluation Framework for the Protected Areas Conservation Trust (PACT) with Alignment to the National Protected Areas System (NPAS)
  - M&E Specialist: Design of a Monitoring & Evaluation System for the Portfolio of GEF Projects in the Development Bank of Latin America

Independent reviews/evaluations:

- Mid-Term Review of the Project "Creation of Additional Biosafety Capacities that Lead to a Full Implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety in Cuba" (UNEP/GEF)
- Mid-Term Review of the Project "Advancing Conservation in the Eastern Caribbean" (UNEP/GEF)
- Mid-Term Review of the Project "Path to 2020 – Antigua & Barbuda" (UNEP/GEF)
- Mid-Term Review of the Project "Strengthening access and benefit sharing (ABS) in the Bahamas" (UNEP/GEF)
- Mid-Term Review of the Project "Effective Implementation of the Access and Benefit Sharing and Traditional Knowledge Regime in Peru in accordance with the Nagoya Protocol" (UNEP/GEF)
- Mid-Term Evaluation of the Project "Sustainable Pathways -- Protected Areas and Renewable Energy" (UNEP/GEF).

- Mid-Term Evaluation of the project “Management and Protection of Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA)” (World Bank/GEF)
- Mid-Term Evaluation of the Project “Marine Conservation and Climate Adaptation Project (MCCAP)” (World Bank/Adaptation Fund)
- Mid-Term Evaluation of Project “Advancing the Nagoya Protocol in Countries of the Caribbean Region” (UNEP/GEF)
- Final Evaluation of Project “Making Tourism Benefit Communities Adjacent to Archaeological Sites” (MTBCAAS)” (European Union)
- Mid-Term Evaluation of Project “Making Tourism Benefit Communities Adjacent to Archaeological Sites” (MTBCAAS)” (European Union)

ANNEX IV. REVIEW TORS

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Mid-Term Review of the UNEP/GEF project

"Meeting the Challenge of 2020 in The Bahamas" and "GEF ID Number 9791"

Section 1: PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

1. Project General Information

Table 1. Project Summary

UNEP PIMS ID/SMA[7] ID:	9791	Grant ID[8] (if applicable):	
UNEP Management (Division/Branch/Unit):	UNEP's GEF Biodiversity and Land Degradation Unit, Ecosystems Division		
Implementing Partners:	The Department of Environmental Planning and Protection, Bahamas National Trust (BNT), Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)		
Sources of Funding:	Country[9](ies): The Bahamas	Institution[10] Name/Type: The Department of Environmental Planning and Protection, Bahamas National Trust (BNT), Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)	
Relevant SDG(s):	8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15		
MTS (all that apply):		UNEP approval date:	14 May 2019
POW Direct Outcome(s) number/reference *(applicable for projects approved from 2022):*			
Sub-programme:	Number of countries and national, regional and subnational authorities and entities that incorporate, with UNEP support,	Programme Coordination Project:	

[7] SMA refers to the ID provided by the Integrated Planning, Management and Reporting Solution (IPMR) system, which was introduced by UNEP in July 2023.
[8] For example, ID references from EC, IKI, UNDA, Adaptation Fund, GCF.
[9] Where applicable, list countries who have provided project funds and/or co-finance.
[10] Indicate where funding institutions are any/all of the following: Foundation/NGO; Private Sector; UN Body; Multilateral Fund; Environment Fund; Other.

	biodiversity and ecosystem-based approaches into development and sectoral plans, policies and processes for the sustainable management and/or restoration of terrestrial, freshwater and marine areas		
Expected start date:	7 April 2020	Actual start date:	7 April 2020
Planned completion date:	6 May 2025	Actual operational completion date:	1 November 2025
Planned total project budget[11] at approval:	$18,215,310	Actual total expenditures reported as of [date]:	
Planned Extra-budgetary Funds[12]:	*Cash: 6,243,004* *In-kind:*	Secured Extra-budgetary Funds:	*Cash: 11,972,306* *In-kind:*
First disbursement:	13 June 2020	Planned date of financial closure:	*Estimated 1 year after operational completion.*
No. of formal project revisions:	0	Date of last approved project revision:	0
No. of Steering Committee meetings:	5	Date of Last Steering Committee meeting:	6 February 2024
Mid-term Review/ Evaluation *(planned date):*	1 October 2023	Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (actual date):	
Terminal Evaluation *(planned date):*	1 November 2025	Terminal Evaluation (actual date):	1 November 2025
Coverage – Implementing Country(ies):	The Bahamas	Coverage – Implementing Region(s):	The Bahamas
Dates of previous project phases:	N/A	Status of future project phases:	N/A

[11] Total budget may include; Regular Budget, Environment Fund, Extra-Budgetary, including 'softly-earmarked' etc.
[12] Extra-budgetary funds may include co-finance (cash/in-kind)

2. Project Rationale

GEF 2020 - Meeting the Challenges of 2020 in The Bahamas. GEF 2020 is a large-scale project executed across 5 project sites, including Andros West Side National Park, Exuma Cays Land and Sea Park, Moriah Harbor Cay National Park, Bonefish Pond National Park, and Lucayan National Park. These MPAs were selected due to their significant ecological diversity and the important role they play in economically important species. The lack of effective management of marine protected areas, integration of MPAs into broader land planning, and integration of natural ecosystem services into general land planning were significant issues that drove the establishment of this project.

3. Project Results Framework

Project Overview:

The primary goals of the project are:

- To mainstream Integrated Natural Resource Management systems in the management of marine protected areas and adjacent land/seascapes.
- To foster improved and more effective protected areas management approaches in five priority MPAs through demonstration and application of management and technology innovation; and
- To better integrate sustainable development considerations in MPA management through strengthened community engagement and enhanced custodianship across broader land and seascape

Project Objective:

The project objective is for the management of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in The Bahamas to be strengthened and integrated into broader landscape planning in order to reduce pressures on ecosystem services and biodiversity from competing resource uses.

Component 1: Integrated Natural Resource Management systems for marine protected areas and adjacent land/seascapes - Integrated Natural Resource Management Systems for Marine Protected Areas and Adjacent Land/Seascapes: This component will result in the development of a spatially based decision support system populated with data on protected areas. This data will be made available for use in cross-sectoral planning and management, as well as in policy and regulatory development. Ecosystem zoning plans will also be developed for all five sites to assist in planning for not just the protected areas, but also the larger ecosystems they represent.

Outcome 1.1: Better effective planning for conservation and sustainable development in areas encompassing MPA's obtained through information on ecosystem conditions and services

Output 1.1.1: Spatially based decision support system for INRM is available for use in cross-sectorial landscape planning & management and in policy and regulatory development

The project aims to address the fragmented approach to natural resource management in The Bahamas by developing and installing a spatially based decision support system (SDSS). This system will provide a centralized platform for stakeholders to access and share information, allowing for more informed decision making. The SDSS will be built around a multi-user geographic information system (GIS) and will have three main components: data acquisition and integration tools, a data management system, and data visualization and decision-support tools. The system will contribute to improved decision making by allowing users to access and analyse spatial data on species populations, protected areas, and other relevant factors.

Outcome 1.2: Integrated natural resources management framework supports the reduction of pressures on biodiversity from competing land uses in the wider landscape

Output 1.2.1: Ecosystem-wide Zoning plans developed and approved for areas encompassing 5 target MPA's

The project will develop comprehensive zoning plans for five sites, providing clear definitions for Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). These plans will help manage natural resources, resolve conflicts between users and the environment, and support proactive decision-making. Developed alongside the Spatial Decision Support System (SDSS), the plans will integrate data on marine resources, usage patterns, and conservation status. Stakeholder engagement, including input from the Bahamas National Trust and BNGIS Centre, will be a key component of the planning process. The zoning plans will ultimately be adopted and implemented by the Bahamas National Trust.

Component 2: Effective Protected Area Management - Effective management of protected areas will result in increased participation of local communities in the management of Lucayan National Park (LNP) and Moriah Harbour Cay National Park (MHCNP) through the establishment of protected area advisory boards. Management plans will be updated for Andros West Side National Park (AWSNP), Exuma Cays Land and Sea Park (ECLSP), and MHCNP, and developed for Bonefish Pond National Park (BPNP) and LNP. Targeted implementation activities, including the provision of infrastructure, staffing, and equipment, will also be completed for all five MPAs. Species conservation and monitoring plans will be developed and implemented for AWSNP, ECLSP, LNP, and MHCNP. Renewable energy installations and energy efficiency measures will be implemented as pilots at BPNP, ECLSP, and LNP.

Outcome 2.1: Improved PA management effectiveness at 5 MPA sites

Output 2.1.1: PA Management Advisory Boards for recently established MPAs (Moriah Harbour Cay National Park and Lucayan National Park) established and provided with operational capacity

The project aims to enhance community involvement and ownership in managing two Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), Lucayan National Park and Moriah Harbour Cay National Park, by establishing Participatory PA Management Advisory Boards. These boards will include representatives from various stakeholder groups and will operate under the Bahamas National Trust's (BNT) Parks Division. The project will develop the boards' management structure, including legal context, stakeholder representation, and terms of reference. Board members will receive training on MPA management, conflict resolution, stakeholder engagement, communication, and fundraising. Additionally, the project will launch community awareness and education campaigns to inform the public about the parks, the role of the boards, and how they can get involved.

Output 2.1.2: Management Plans developed / updated and under implementation at 5 MPA sites

The project will update and strengthen the management plans for five Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) by addressing evolving threats and developing a strategy for carbon-neutral infrastructure management. It will complete management plans for Bonefish Pond National Park and Lucayan National Park, which currently lack them, and update the Exuma Cays Land and Sea Park's plan, which is over 10 years old. Priority activities include enhancing enforcement of park bylaws, establishing management zones, conducting a visitation carrying capacity assessment, and implementing a user fee collection system.

Output 2.1.3: Infrastructure established, and staff deployed and capacitated at 5 MPA sites

The project will establish essential infrastructure for Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), including offices, staff quarters, visitor facilities, and docking stations, with an emphasis on "green infrastructure" like renewable energy systems and energy-efficient appliances. The goal is to achieve carbon neutrality for Bonefish Pond National Park (BPNP), Exuma Cays Land and Sea Park (ECLSP), and Lucayan National Park (LNP). The parks currently suffer from inadequate financing and infrastructure, limiting their ability to support critical management activities. To address this, the project identifies specific needs for each park, including staffing, equipment, and training. Infrastructure improvements could also help generate revenue from tourist facilities, making the MPAs more self-sufficient.

Outcome 2.2: Increased financial sustainability of the Moriah Harbour Cay and Lucayan National Parks

Output 2.2.1: Business Plans developed and under implementation for Moriah Harbour Cay and Lucayan National Parks

The project will support the sustainable operations of Moriah Harbour Cay National Park (MHCNP) and Lucayan National Park (LNP) by conducting cost analyses, assessing the feasibility of user fees, and developing business plans for each park. These plans will focus on necessary investments, cost reduction strategies, and sustainable financing mechanisms. The project will also explore potential revenue sources such as entrance fees, merchandise sales, and partnerships with local businesses. For LNP, a fee structure could include admission fees, equipment rentals, and special service charges. For MHCNP, potential fees could include mooring and anchorage charges, with a focus on establishing a voluntary surcharge on hotel bills. The goal is to make these parks financially self-sufficient by addressing their current infrastructure limitations and implementing effective financial management and cost-recovery measures.

Outcome 2.3: Stable population numbers of the priority species in targeted project sites

Output 2.3.1: Species Conservation and Monitoring Plans developed and priority actions (e.g. monitoring) under implementation for priority species at 5 MPA

The project will develop conservation and monitoring plans for priority species across five Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). The focus is on 5 key species: Small-toothed sawfish, Sponge, Nassau Grouper, Staghorn/ Elkhorn coral, and Spiny lobster. The plans will include species-specific monitoring activities, such as tagging, population assessments, and genetic studies, as well as conservation efforts like habitat restoration and public education. These activities will be conducted in collaboration with partners like P.I.M.S, under the Bahamas National Trust's supervision. Data collected will be integrated into the Spatial Decision Support System to inform future conservation efforts.

Outcome 2.4: 2,105,539 tCO-eq emissions from buildings in protected areas are reduced Exuma Cays Land and Sea Park; Lucayan NP; and Bonefish Pond NP

Output 2.4.1: Up to 3 carbon neutral Marine Protected Areas facilities (photovoltaic substitute for diesel generators (minimum 1,052,769.6 tCO,- Equivalent direct emission reduction over 15 years)

The project aims to pilot carbon-neutral solutions at three sites to demonstrate the social, environmental, and economic feasibility of reducing reliance on diesel fuel in Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). This will mitigate the risks associated with diesel storage and transfer, which pose a high risk of oil spills in sensitive environments. The proposed solutions include solar PV systems, energy-efficient lighting, and green infrastructure. Specific installations include:

- Exuma Cays Land and Sea Park (ECLSP): Two solar PV systems (3.6kW and 25kW) to fully meet the site's energy demands, with diesel backup only for emergencies.
- Lucayan National Park (LNP): A 3.6kW solar PV system to cover daily energy needs, with the main power grid as a backup.
- Bonefish Pond National Park (BPNP): A 6.6kW system to power the Welcome Centre and an Electric Vehicle Charging Station (EVCS), along with solar lighting and surveillance equipment.

The project will conduct quarterly consumption audits and quantify carbon emission reductions as part of its operational reports. These pilot installations are intended to serve as scalable models for other MPAs across the country.

Component 3 MPA management integrated with sustainable development in the broader land / seascape:

MPA management, integrated with sustainable development in the broader land and seascape, will involve the removal of invasive alien species (IAS) impacting BPNP and LNP, as well as the restoration of degraded ecosystems spanning at least 100 hectares. This component will also include engaging with farmers who have agricultural lands bordering MPAs, in an effort to reduce the use and impact of chemicals on sensitive biodiversity and water resources. Engagement of community organizations and schools in monitoring and restoration activities will be achieved through adoption schemes at AWSNP and BPNP.

Outcome 3.1: Enhanced provision and appreciation of community of services from ecosystems in MPA and surrounding areas

Output 3.1.1 Reduced impacts from adjacent areas on MPAs through Invasive Alien Species *IAS) management and ecosystem restoration (at least 100 ha)

The project aims to restore sensitive landscapes within the Bonefish Pond National Park and Lucayan National Park by removing invasive species that threaten ecosystem services, especially in areas near marine protected areas. The primary invasive species targeted for removal include Australian Pine, Brazilian Pepper, Hawaiian Inkberry, and Paperbark Tree.

In Bonefish Pond National Park, the project will involve removing these invasives over 10 hectares of mangroves, followed by restoration activities such as debris removal, enrichment planting of mangroves, and installing educational signage.

At Lucayan National Park, the focus will be on restoring 90 hectares of sand dune habitat by reestablishing native species and controlling invasive plants. The project will follow the 2003 Green Sweep Manual for invasive species removal and will include community awareness efforts to ensure long-term sustainability, addressing issues like lack of awareness and regulations.

Output 3.1.2 Reduced use of agricultural chemicals in areas containing sensitive biodiversity and crucial water resources

The project aims to promote and adopt good agricultural practices (GAPs) to mitigate land degradation and environmental pollution on the islands of Andros and New Providence, particularly in AWSNP and BPNP. It focuses on reducing reliance on agro chemicals, promoting safer use of necessary chemicals, and encouraging environmentally friendly soil and water conservation practices.

Key activities include building the technical capacities of farmers, technicians, and extension officers through training and on-farm demonstrations. The project will involve 60-80 farmers managing approximately 1,618 hectares, with ongoing monitoring of agro-chemical use and the adoption of improved practices.

Key stakeholders include local farmers, various government departments, and agricultural institutions. The project will be led by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), which has extensive experience in supporting agricultural development in the region.

Output 3.1.3: Pilot communities and/or schools are supporting management of two MPA's (adoption schemes)

The project aims to support national organizations like the Bahamas National Trust (BNT) by engaging local communities in managing MPAs. This will involve establishing community support groups and enhancing youth environmental programs near Andros West Side National Park (AWSNP) and Bonefish Pond National Park (BPNP).

Community engagement will focus on two main goals: enabling citizen science approaches for species and habitat monitoring, and promoting community adoption of protected areas to foster

environmental stewardship. Community members will be trained in species identification, survey methodologies, and data recording by BNT and the Perry Institute for Marine Science (PIMS).

Key stakeholders include flyfishing lodge owners and BAMSI interns at AWSNP, and the Bahamas National Trust Collegiate Chapter and local high schools at BPNP. The project will use an "adoption scheme" to build community support for conservation efforts, with the potential for scaling up these initiatives to other protected areas based on lessons learned.

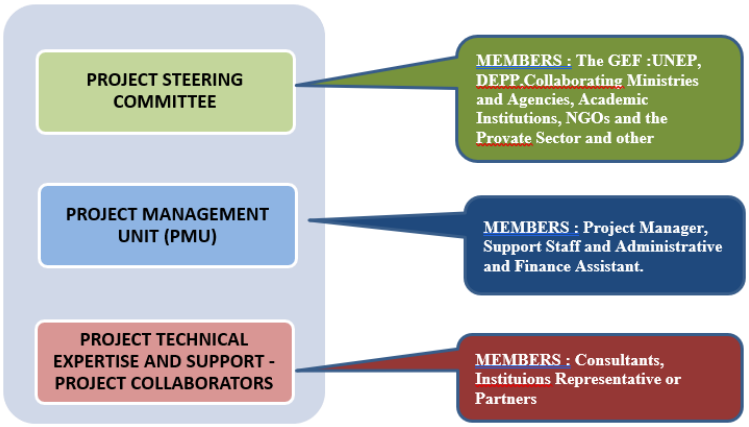
4. Executing Arrangements

The Bahamas Ministry of Environment – Department of Environmental Planning and Protection (DEPP) is the project`s Executing Agency (EA). UNEP`s Task Manager (TM) provides support and works closely with EA's personnel, who carry out all project management related issues within the Project Management Unit or the PMU.

The Task Manager for this project is stationed in Panama and remains in constant communication with the Project Manager and the project team during its execution period. Moreover, the UNEP TM is also in contact with other project partners through steering committee meetings. The PMU is based in Nassau office, Bahamas. The PMU is composed of a Project Manager or a National Project Coordinator, a Support Staff, and an Administrative and Finance Officer.

The Bahamas 2020 project has an established/ functional Project Steering Committee (PSC). In practical terms the PSC is responsible for ensuring that the project meets goals announced in the Project Result Framework by helping to balance conflicting priorities and resources. Conclusions and recommendations produced by the PSC are taken into consideration by UNEP and the PM to improve implementation strategies, annual work plans and resources allocation budget and, when necessary, to adjust the project's Result Framework. The Committee comprise of three teams namely: The Legal Team, Research Team and the Law Enforcement Team. These team regularly meet as needs arise, but the PSC meet on a quarterly basis.

As the need arises, the EA notifies the IA, in writing, of its intention to modify the agreed implementation plan and budget, and seeks approval from UNEP, and the Project Steering Committee. It will also rectify any issues raised by IA with respect to project execution in a timely manner.



Project Partner/ Consultant	Job Title/ Role	Contact Person
The Bahamas National Trust	Project Partner	Kim Roberts
Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture	Project Partner/ Land & Agriculture Consultant	Mari Dunleavy, Eboni Adderley, Stephen Issacs

Perry Institute for Marine Science	Species Monitoring and Conservation Consultant	Craig Dahlgren
NatureServe	Spatial Biodiversity Information Consultant	Mike Gill
The Nature Conservancy	Zonation Consultant	Trueranda Cox
CEAS	Solar Energy Consultant	Robert Hall and Jermaine Clak

5. Project Cost and Financing

Project Objective: Management of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in The Bahamas strengthened and integrated into broader landscape planning in order to reduce pressures on ecosystem services and biodiversity from competing resource uses

Project Components / Programs	**Financing Type**[13]	**Project Outcomes**	**Project Outputs**	**Trust Fund**	**(in $)**	
					GEF Project Financing	**Confirmed Co-financing**
1. Integrated Natural Resource Management systems for marine protected areas and adjacent land / seascapes	TA	1.1 Better effective planning for conservation and sustainable development in areas encompassing MPAs obtained through information on ecosystem conditions and services *Indicator: Number of institutions using the SDSS for cross-sectoral planning through input and data access (at least 4)* 1.2. Integrated natural resource management (INRM) framework supports the	1.1.1: Spatially based decision support systems for INRM are available for use in cross-sectoral landscape planning & management and in policy and regulatory development 1.2.1: Ecosystem-wide Zoning Plans developed and approved for areas encompassing 5 target MPAs	GEF TF	1,312,500	250,000

[13] Financing type can be either investment or technical assistance.

		reduction of pressures on biodiversity from competing land uses in the wider landscape *Indicators: Number of approved zoning plans for MPAs (5)* *Number of hectares of protected areas covered by ecosystem zoning plans (688,046 ha)*				
2. Effective Protected Area Management	TA	2.1. Improved PA management effectiveness at 5 MPA sites: Andros West Side, Bonefish Pond, Lucayan, Exuma Cays, and Moriah Harbour Cay (covering 688,046 ha) *Indicators: 15% increase in PA Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) scores in each of the five sites over project period* *Number of new-updated management plans that incorporate landscape-level planning and finance strategies and are being implemented (5)* 2.2. Increased financial sustainability of the Moriah Harbour Cay and Lucayan National Parks *Indicators: Number of online payment systems operational to receive payments (at least 1)* *Percentage increase in annual*	2.1.1: PA Management Advisory Boards for recently established MPAs (Moriah Harbour Cay National Park and Lucayan National Park) established and provided with operational capacity 2.1.2: Management Plans developed / updated and under implementation at 5 MPA sites 2.1.3: Infrastructure established, and staff deployed and capacitated at 5 MPA sites 2.2.1: Business Plans developed and under implementation for Moriah Harbour Cay and Lucayan NPs	GEFTF	4,297,623	10,852,639

		income from user fees (25% increase for LNP and 50% increase for MHCNP) 2.3. Stable population numbers of the priority species in the targeted project sites *Indicator: 10% increase in AGRRA assessment index for coral over baseline (live coral and sponges) and 10% increase for AGRRA assessment index for indicator fish species over baseline (grouper, spiny lobster and sawfish)* 2.4. 2,105,539[14] tCO_2-eq emissions from buildings in protected areas are reduced (indirect and direct impacts) *Indicator: 30% decrease in carbon emissions from building facilities in Exuma Cays, Lucayan and Bonefish Pond National Parks.*	2.3.1: Species Conservation and Monitoring Plans developed and priority actions (e.g. monitoring) under implementation for priority species at 5 MPA sites 2.4.1: Up to 3 carbon neutral Marine Protected Area facilities (photovoltaic substitute for diesel generators (minimum 1,052,769.6 tCO_2-equivalent direct emission reduction over 15 years)			
3. MPA management integrated with sustainable development in the broader land / seascape	TA	3.1 Enhanced provision and appreciation of community of services from ecosystems in MPAs and surrounding areas as a result of: 1) rehabilitation of degraded land 2) changes in production sector	3.1.1: Reduced impacts from adjacent areas on MPAs through Invasive Alien Species (IAS) management and ecosystem restoration (at least 100 ha) 3.1.2: Reduced use of agricultural chemicals in areas containing sensitive biodiversity and crucial	GEF TF	335,600	300,000

[14] Estimate confirmed during PPG

		practices leading to both development and conservation objectives 3) long-term custodianship of communities of the ecosystems *Indicators: 20% increase in Biodiversity Barometer survey score* *10 ha of land restores at BPNP and 90 ha at LNP* *100 ha under good agricultural practices (GAP)* *2 adoption schemes established with at least 30 participants*	water resources 3.1.3: Pilot communities and/or schools are supporting management of two MPAs ("adoption schemes")			
			M&E	GEFTF	90,000	21,000
			Subtotal		6,035,723	11,423,639
			Project Management Cost (PMC)[15]	GEFTF	207,281	548,667
			Total project costs		**6,243,004**	**11,972,306**

6. Implementation Issues

PIF Text	CEO ER Text	Explanation for changes
Outcome 2.1 Improved PA management effectiveness at 5 MPA sites: Joulter Cays, Lucayan, Exuma Cays, Andros West Side, and Conception Island (covering 723,631 ha)	Outcome 2.1: Improved PA management effectiveness at 5 MPA sites: Moriah Harbour Cay National Park, Lucayan National Park, Exuma Cays Land and Sea Park, Andros West Side National Park and Bonefish Pond National Park	After concerns expressed by stakeholders during the Inception Meeting about suitability of sites identified in the Project Identification Form (PIF), a site selection meeting was held in December 2018 to confirm the priority sites for project interventions. During that meeting, stakeholders agreed that the following changes to targeted sites would be the best approach for identified priorities in MPA management - Conception Island

[15] For GEF Project Financing up to $2 million, PMC could be up to10% of the subtotal; above $2 million, PMC could be up to 5% of the subtotal. PMC should be charged proportionately to focal areas based on focal area project financing amount in Table D below.

		National Park would be removed and Joulter Cays National Park would be replaced by Moriah Harbour Cay National Park. Moriah Harbour Cay is of national and global significance due to its high post-larval recruitment rates for Caribbean spiny lobster and Nassau grouper, the highest rates in The Bahamas. Designation of this site (and Bonefish Pond National Park) as a KBA in ongoing under collaboration between the Bahamas National Trust and Birdlife International
Outcome 2.2. Increased financial sustainability of the Joulter Cays and Lucayan National Parks	Outcome 2.2: Increased financial sustainability of the Moriah Harbour Cay and Lucayan National Parks	Moriah Harbour Cay replaced Joulter Cays as a priority site as indicated in explanation above. Moriah Harbour Cay does not currently have any sustainable finance mechanisms in place.
Output 2.2.1: Business Plans developed and under implementation for Joulter Cays and Lucayan NPs	Output 2.2.1: Business Plans developed and under implementation for Moriah Harbour Cay and Lucayan National Parks	Moriah Harbour Cay replaced Joulter Cays as a priority site as indicated in explanation above. Moriah Harbour Cay does not currently have a business plan; such a plan would assist in achieving financial sustainability for this park.
2.3. Stable population numbers of the Northern Rock Iguana in the Andros West Side National Park and Exuma Cays Land and Seas Park	Outcome 2.3: Stable population numbers of the priority species in targeted project sites	Concerns were expressed by stakeholders during the Inception Meeting over the species listed in the PIF; one species identified was not even found in the protected area listed. During the Validation Workshop, discussions with staff from BNT and DMR along with scientific experts resulted in identification of priority species for each park. These are provided in Table 11 below.
2.4.1: Up to 5 carbon neutral Marine Protected Area facilities (photovoltaic substitute for diesel generators (minimum 1,052,769.6 tCO2-equivalent direct emission reduction over 15 years): -Exuma park´s visitor's centre -Andros West´s fee collection booth -Bonefish Pond´s visitors centre -2 more facilities to be determined during PPG	Output 2.4.1: 3 carbon neutral Marine Protected Area facilities (photovoltaic substitute for diesel generators (minimum 1,052,769.6 tCO2-equivalent direct emission reduction over 15 years) for the ECLSP´s visitors centre, Lucayan visitors centre, and Bonefish Pond´s visitors centre	Following assessments by the Renewable Energy Specialist during the PPG phase, these sites were deemed feasible in terms of logistics and costs within the timeframe and budget of the project. The original intent of the project was always a minimum of three sites to achieve the emission reduction indicated. During the PPG phase, other sites were to be explored, but none were identified that would not require significant financial investment to build infrastructure to make carbon neutral facilities feasible.
Co-financing was estimated at $11,963,000.	Co-financing secured is $11,972,306.	There has been changes in respect to partner co-financing commitments; in the partners themselves and the amounts committed. This has led to a small positive change in co-

		financing secured over what was originally expected.
Budget for Component 2 was estimated at $4,075,915 and Component 3 at $669,808.	Budget for Component 2 has been costed at $4,410,123 and Component 3 at $335,600.	Quotes obtained for project interventions provided more refined costs than were obtained in development of the PIF. In order to not exceed the overall GEF allocation to the project budget, a reallocation of resources from Component 3 were made to Component 2 and determined not to compromise the project ambition. All objectives for both components can be achieved with these adjustments due to support provided by partners with grant and in-kind co-financing.
Budget for PMC was $231,781 and for M&E was $65,000.	Budget for PMC has been reduced to $196,781 and budget for M&E has been increased to $100,500.	The estimates for M&E have increased since the PIF was completed. Therefore, the PMC costs were reduced and considered still feasible in an effort to stay within the project budget. Project management support will be provided by the BEST Commission and executing partners.

COVID 19 Global Pandemic: The situation is now presenting a massive challenge as the Government of The Bahamas enforced a countrywide lockdown order from March 24- June 1, 2020, and from August 24- November 3, 2020. Given the restriction on physical assemblies, innovation with respect to the conduct of virtual meetings and trainings was required. Deliverables not requiring field travels are accomplished in virtual manner. Unfortunately, the Pilot 3 (development of a population model) activities that required field visits and area-based observations and analysis by the Perry Institute of Marine Science (PIMS) were affected. As a result, the Institute advised that they could not accomplish the target on time, hence an extension was requested.

Section 2. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF THE MID-TERM REVIEW

7. Objective of the Review

In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy[16] and the UNEP Programme and Project Management Manual[17], the Mid-Term Review (MTR) is undertaken approximately half-way through project implementation to analyse whether the project is on-track, what problems or challenges the project is encountering, and what corrective actions are required.

8. Key Review Principles

Mid-Term review findings and judgements will be based on sound evidence and analysis, clearly documented in the Review Report. Information will be triangulated (i.e. verified from different sources) as far as possible, and when verification is not possible, the single source will be mentioned (whilst anonymity is still protected). Analysis leading to evaluative judgements should always be clearly spelled out.

[16] https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/41114
[17] https://wedocs.unep.org/20.500.11822/42752

Possible questions to be considered include, *(MTR Review Framework Questions available from UNEP Project Manager):*

- Does the TOC properly reflect the project's intended change process?
- Is the stakeholder analysis still appropriate and adequate to support the project's ambitions?
- Are results statements in keeping with UNEP definitions (e.g. outcomes are expressed as the uptake or use of outputs)
- Are roles and responsibilities commonly understood and playing out effectively?
- Is there an effective monitoring mechanism for the project's implementation (this is separate from, and supports, reporting)?
- Is the rate of expenditure appropriate for the mid-point?
- Have plans for inclusivity, equality and/or equity been implemented as planned, or does more need to be done?
- Are safeguard identification and mitigation plans being monitored and steps taken to minimize negative effects?
- Is there an exit strategy in place and are the elements needed for the project's benefits to be sustained after the project end being incorporated in the project implementation?
- (Where relevant) Have recommendations from previous learning exercises/performance assessments been appropriately addressed
- (Where relevant) What changes were made to adapt to the effects of COVID-19 and how might any changes affect the project's performance?

A Mid-Term Review is a *formative assessment*, which requires that the consultant(s) go beyond the assessment of "*what*" the project performance is and make a serious effort to provide a deeper understanding of "*why*" the performance is as it is.

Attribution, Contribution and Credible Association: In order to *attribute* any outcomes and impacts to a project intervention, one needs to consider the difference between what has happened with, and what would have happened without, the project (i.e. take account of changes over time and between contexts in order to isolate the effects of an intervention). This requires appropriate baseline data and the identification of a relevant counterfactual, both of which are frequently not available for reviews. Establishing the *contribution* made by a project in a complex change process relies heavily on prior intentionality (e.g. approved project design documentation, logical framework) and the articulation of causality (e.g. narrative and/or illustration of the Theory of Change). Robust evidence that a project was delivered as designed and that the expected causal pathways developed supports claims of contribution and this is strengthened where an alternative theory of change can be excluded. A *credible association* between the implementation of a project and observed positive effects can be made where a strong causal narrative, although not explicitly articulated, can be inferred by the chronological sequence of events, active involvement of key actors and engagement in critical processes.

Partners and Key Project Stakeholders. A key aim of the Mid-Term Review is to encourage reflection and learning by UNEP staff, the implementing partners and key project stakeholders The Review Consultant should consider how reflection and learning can be promoted, both through the review process and in the communication of review findings and key lessons.

9. Review Criteria

All review criteria will be rated on a six-point scale as follows: Highly Satisfactory[18] (HS = 6); Satisfactory (S = 5); Moderately Satisfactory (MS = 4); Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU =3); Unsatisfactory (U = 2); Highly Unsatisfactory (HU =1). A Criteria Ratings Matrix is available, within the

[18] *Sustainabilit*y is similarly rated on a six-point scale but labelled from Highly **Likely** (HL) down to Highly **Unlikely** (HU).

suite of tools, to support a common interpretation of points on the scale for each review criterion. The Overall Performance Rating is calculated as a simple average of the ratings for each criterion (A-H). **Any criterion assessed as being in the 'Unsatisfactory' range should trigger corrective action in the Management Response.**

For GEF-funded projects there are a series of questions that need to be uploaded to the GEF Portal. The consultant should complete the table in Annex 5 of these TOR and append it to the Final Review report.

A. Strategic Relevance

The Mid Term Review (MTR) will assess the extent to which the activity is suited to the priorities and policies of UNEP, the donors, implementing regions/countries and target beneficiaries and is operating in a way that is complementary to other ongoing interventions.

The MTR will assess whether there have been any changes in priorities since the project was designed and whether the project has/should adapt to address the changing policy/strategy context.

This criterion comprises two elements:

i. Alignment to UNEP's, Donors and Country (global, regional, sub-regional and national) strategic priorities

The Review should assess the project's alignment with the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS) and Programme Of Work (POW)[19] under which the project was approved and include, in its narrative, reflections on the scale and scope of any contributions made to the planned results reflected in the relevant MTS and POW. UNEP strategic priorities include the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building[20] (BSP) and South-South Cooperation (S-SC). The MTR will assess the extent to which the project is suited to, or responding to, donor priorities as well as alignment of the project with global priorities such as the SDGs and Agenda 2030. The extent to which the project is suited, or responding to, the stated environmental concerns and needs of the countries, sub-regions or regions where it is being implemented will also be considered. Examples may include UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (Cooperation Framework) or, national or sub-national development plans, poverty reduction strategies or Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action (NAMA) plans or regional agreements etc. Within this section consideration will be given to whether the needs of all beneficiary groups are being met and reflects the current policy priority to leave no-one behind.

ii. Complementarity/Coherence[21] with Relevant Existing Interventions

An assessment will be made of how well the project is taking account of ongoing and planned initiatives (under the same sub-programme, other UNEP sub-programmes, or being implemented by other agencies within the same country, sector or institution) that address similar needs of the same target groups.

The MTR will consider if the project team, in collaboration with all partners, is fulfilling any commitments to collaborate made at project design and is working to ensure their own intervention is complementary to other interventions. Examples may include work within UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCF) or One UN programming. Linkages with other interventions should be described and instances where UNEP's comparative advantage has been particularly well applied should be highlighted.

[19] UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) is a document that guides UNEP's programme planning over a four-year period. It identifies UNEP's thematic priorities, known as Sub-programmes (SP), and sets out the desired outcomes, known as POW Outcomes and POW Direct Outcomes of the Sub-programmes. https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/evaluation-office/our-evaluation-approach/un-environment-documents.

[20] http://www.unep.fr/ozonaction/about/bsp.htm

[21] This sub-category is consistent with the new criterion of 'Coherence' introduced by the OECD-DAC in 2019.

Adaptation Fund	To encourage utilization, each review should optimize relevance by ensuring (i) that the primary intended users of the evaluation and their intended uses are clearly identified and engaged at the beginning of the evaluation process; (ii) that "intended users" include funding, implementing, and beneficiary stakeholders; and (iii) that evaluators ensure these intended users contribute to decisions about the evaluation process.
Green Climate Fund	Coherence in climate finance delivery with other multilateral entities.

B. Quality & Revision of Project Design

The MTR should provide a brief overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the project design and assess whether all elements of the project design have been initiated and/or are still planned for. Based on a review of the project design document, regular reports and meeting minutes, the Review Consultant will confirm whether any amendments[22] have been made to the activities and/or results of the project. This includes changes to the formulation of results statements as well as changes in results indicators and/or project targets and the associated budget. Where revisions have been made the Consultant should confirm that formal documentation for these amendments is available and that UNEP/donor policies for revisions have been followed. In the absence of such formalisation the Review Consultant will make appropriate recommendations.

C. Effectiveness

The Review will assess effectiveness across four dimensions: availability of outputs, progress towards project outcomes and adaptive management. The Review Consultant will confirm that all results statements conform to UNEP's definitions[23] and make recommendations for adjustments where necessary. At the project's mid-point emphasis is placed on the timeliness, quality and ownership of outputs and whether the project is adopting approaches or delivering activities to support the uptake of outputs (i.e. outcome level results).

i. Theory of Change

The Review will assess whether the Theory of Change/Results Framework represents a coherent and realistic change process from a cause-and-effect perspective. Considerations will be given to whether the causal pathways are effectively shown/articulated and supported by a full set of contributing conditions (('drivers' are external factors largely under the influence of the project; 'assumptions' are external factors largely outside the influence of the project). The TOC should also reflect[24] UNEP's commitment to increasing equality in line with the UN's commitment to human rights. If adjustments are needed, they should be clearly presented and justified during the MTR process and a recommendation made on how any revisions could be formally approved.

ii. Availability of Outputs[25]

The Review will assess the project's success in producing the planned outputs and making them available to the intended beneficiaries as well as its success in achieving milestones as per the project design document or any formal revisions. The availability of outputs will be assessed in terms of both quantity and quality, and the assessment will consider their ownership by, and usefulness to, intended beneficiaries and the timeliness of their provision. It is noted that emphasis is placed on the performance of those outputs that are most important to achieve outcomes. The Review will briefly

[22] The conditions and processes for amendments should abide by the terms of the funding agreement. For example, the GEF has specific requirements for the approval/reporting of 'minor' and 'major' amendments. This includes the provision that any minor and major (approved) amendments should be reflected in the PIR report of the same year.
[23] UNEP, 2023, Glossary of Results Definitions.
[24] This can be as a driver or assumption if there is no specific equality results statement.
[25] Outputs are the availability (for intended beneficiaries/users) of new products and services and/or gains in knowledge, abilities and awareness of individuals or within institutions (UNEP, 2023)

explain the reasons behind the success or shortcomings of the project in delivering its planned outputs and recommend corrective action as appropriate.

iii. Progress towards Project Outcomes[26]

At the project mid-point, the Review Consultant will focus on the links between the provision of outputs and their adoption at the outcome level. The MTR will explore whether the assumptions and drivers that need to be in place to support the uptake of outputs are evident/emerging and consider whether sufficient effort and attention is being directed towards reaching outcome levels.

The Review Consultant will review the project Theory of Change (TOC) and confirm that is properly reflects all levels (outputs, outcomes, intermediate states and long-lasting impact) of results included in the project design. Where necessary, the TOC should be reconstructed, in discussion with the project team, to better guide and strengthen project implementation.

iv. Likelihood of Impact

Based on the articulation of long-lasting effects in the reconstructed TOC (i.e. from project outcomes, via intermediate states, to impact), the Review will assess the likelihood of the intended, positive impacts becoming a reality.

The Review will consider the extent to which the project has played a catalytic role27 or has promoted scaling up and/or replication as part of its Theory of Change (either explicitly as in a project with a demonstration component or implicitly as expressed in the drivers required to move to outcome levels) and as factors that are likely to contribute to greater or long-lasting impact.

v. Adaptive Management

The Review will assess whether any adaptive management[28] is evident, possibly reflected in annual reports or reports from field missions etc. The Review Consultant will consider the project's performance to-date from a risk perspective considering a) the likelihood of any non/late delivery of the project's workplan; b) likelihood of any negative effects, including reputational risks and safeguard issues and c) factors undermining the endurance of project achievements.

During the MTR, forward plans should be reviewed and adaptive management strategies discussed such that the project's effectiveness and efficiency are maximized. Actions for adaptive management should be reflected in the MTR recommendations, which may include recommendations on governance structures, implementation arrangements, project design elements, monitoring and/or exit strategies etc.

Adaptation Fund	The Review should consider, under Effectiveness, the extent to which the evaluand is reaching Strategic Results Framework indicator targets.
Adaptation Fund	The Review should consider, under Effectiveness, the extent to which the intervention demonstrates that Climate Change Adaptation can be increased or replicated at a broader

[26] An outcome is a change at institutional level, or changes in behaviors, attitudes or conditions achieved from the use (i.e., uptake, adoption, application) of outputs by intended beneficiaries (UNEP, 2023).

[27] The terms catalytic effect, scaling up and replication are inter-related and generally refer to extending the coverage or magnitude of the effects of a project. Catalytic effect is associated with triggering additional actions that are not directly funded by the project – these effects can be both concrete or less tangible, can be intentionally caused by the project or implied in the design and reflected in the TOC drivers, or can be unintentional and can rely on funding from another source or have no financial requirements. Scaling up and Replication require more intentionality for projects, or individual components and approaches, to be reproduced in other similar contexts. Scaling up suggests a substantive increase in the number of new beneficiaries reached/involved and may require adapted delivery mechanisms while Replication suggests the repetition of an approach or component at a similar scale but among different beneficiaries. Even with highly technical work, where scaling up or replication involves working with a new community, some consideration of the new context should take place and adjustments made as necessary.

[28] Adaptive management is an **iterative process** in which practitioners test hypotheses and adjust behavior, decisions, and actions based on experience and actual changes (Stankey et al., 2005).

	scale, as well as in other contexts.
Green Climate Fund	The Review should consider, under Effectiveness, the project's Innovativeness in result areas – the extent to which interventions may lead to paradigm shift towards low-emission and climate-resilient development pathways.
Global Environment Facility	The Review should consider, under Effectiveness, the extent to which the evaluand is reaching Core Indicator targets (from GEF-6 onwards).
Global Environment Facility	The Review will determine, under Effectiveness, the project's additionality by comparing the benefits of GEF support to a scenario without GEF support. It will identify specific areas where GEF support has contributed additional results and what these additional results were. It will provide quantitative and qualitative evidence to support the findings.

D. Financial Management

Under financial management the Mid-Term Review will assess a) whether the rate of spend is consistent with the project's length of implementation to-date, the agreed workplan and the delivery of outputs and b) whether financial reporting and/or auditing requirements are being met consistently and to adequate standards by all parties. Any financial management issues that are affecting the timely delivery of the project or the quality of its performance will be highlighted. Expenditure should be reported, where possible, at output/component level and will be compared with the approved budget.

Ratings should be provided for two sub-categories (*adherence to policies and completeness of financial information*), as assessed at the mid-point: i) the Review will verify the application of proper financial management standards and adherence to UNEP's financial management policies; ii) the Review will record where standard financial documentation is missing, inaccurate, incomplete or unavailable in a timely manner. The Review may comment on the level of communication between the UNEP Project Manager[29] and the Fund Management Officer as it relates to the effective delivery of the planned project and the needs of a responsive, adaptive management approach.

Global Environment Facility	The Review will determine, under Financial Management, i) time from CEO endorsement (FSP) / CEO approval (MSP) to first disbursement; ii) disbursement balance; iii) whether the project has secured co-financing higher than 35% and iv) time between CEO Endorsement and (likely) end of MTR.

E. Efficiency

Under the efficiency criterion, the Review will assess the extent to which the project delivered maximum results from the given resources. The Review will assess the *cost-effectiveness and timeliness* of project execution.

Focusing on the translation of inputs into outputs, *cost-effectiveness* is the extent to which an intervention has achieved, or is expected to achieve, its results at the lowest possible cost. *Timeliness* refers to whether planned activities have been/are being delivered according to expected timeframes as well as whether events are being sequenced efficiently. The Review will give special attention to efforts being made by the project teams during project implementation to make use of/build upon pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and

[29] For GEF funded projects the UNEP Project Manager refers to the Task Manager.

complementarities[30] with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. to increase project efficiency.

The Review will also assess ways in which potential project extensions can be avoided through stronger project management.

F. Monitoring and Reporting

The Review will assess monitoring and reporting across two sub-categories: monitoring of project implementation and project reporting.

vi. Monitoring of Project Implementation

Each project should be supported by a sound monitoring plan that is designed to track progress against SMART[31] results towards the provision of the project's outputs and the achievement of the project outcomes, including at a level disaggregated by gender, marginalisation or vulnerability, including those living with disabilities. In particular, the Review will assess the relevance and appropriateness of the project indicators as well as the methods used for tracking progress against them as part of conscious results-based management.

The Review will assess whether the monitoring system is operational and facilitates the timely tracking of results and progress towards project milestones and targets throughout the project implementation period. This assessment will include consideration of whether the project gathered relevant and good quality baseline data that is accurately and appropriately documented. This should include monitoring the representation and participation of disaggregated groups, including gendered, marginalised or vulnerable groups, such as those living with disabilities, in project activities. It will also consider how quality monitoring data are being used to adapt and improve project execution, achievement of outcomes and ensure sustainability. The Review should confirm that funds allocated for monitoring are being used to support this activity.

vii. Project Reporting

UNEP has a centralised information management system[32] in which project managers upload six-monthly progress reports against agreed project milestones. This information will be provided to the Review Consultant by the UNEP Project Manager. Donors may have specific reporting requirements and copies of reports will be made available by the UNEP Project Manager. The Review will assess the extent to which both UNEP and Donor reporting commitments have been fulfilled. This should include confirmation that meeting and field mission reports are being written and centrally stored.

Where the need for any corrective action has been indicated in any project reports (e.g. as an identified risk), the Review Consultant will record whether this action has been taken. This may include responses made during the COVID-19 pandemic or other unpredictable external events of a disruptive or crisis nature. The Review Consultant will also confirm whether formal reports have been appropriately authorised by both the author and the relevant supervisor.

Global	For internally executed projects the Review Consultant should review the quality of regular

[30] Complementarity with other interventions during project design, inception or mobilization is considered under Strategic Relevance above.
[31] SMART refers to results that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time oriented. Indicators help to make results measurable.
[32] Project Information Management System (PIMS) or, from 2022, Integrated Planning Monitoring and Reporting (IPMR)

Environment Facility	reports and confirm they have been submitted on a timely basis.

G. Exit Strategy & Sustainability (for Adaptation Fund, read Human and Ecological Sustainability and Security)

Sustainability[33] is understood as the probability of the benefits derived from the achievement of the project outcomes being maintained and developed after the close of the intervention. It may be considered from the perspectives of socio-political, institutional and/or financial sustainability. The Review will identify and assess the key conditions or factors that *are likely* to undermine or contribute to the endurance of benefits at the outcome level. Some factors of sustainability may be embedded in the project design and implementation approaches while others may be contextual circumstances or conditions that evolve over the life of the intervention. It is assumed that environmental sustainability is central to any UNEP project design but where applicable an assessment of bio-physical factors that may affect the sustainability of project outcomes may also be included.

The Review will ascertain that the project has put in place *an appropriate exit strategy* and measures to mitigate risks to sustainability. The Review Consultant will consider a) the level of ownership, interest and commitment among government and other stakeholders to take the project achievements forwards; b) the extent to which the sustainability of project outcomes is dependent on issues relating to institutional frameworks and governance and c) the extent to which project outcomes are dependent on future funding for the benefits they bring to be sustained. It will consider whether institutional achievements such as governance structures and processes, policies, sub-regional agreements, legal and accountability frameworks etc. are robust enough to continue delivering the benefits associated with the project outcomes after project closure.

Adaptation Fund	The Review should consider, under Human and ecological sustainability and security – the extent to which the intervention is likely to generate continued positive or negative, intended and unintended impacts beyond its lifetime, taking into consideration, social, institutional, economic, and environmental systems. Is the intervention sensitive to conflict and fragility, i.e., to what extent does it consider the political context and the sharing of natural resources? Is it contributing towards targeted communities' livelihoods and to the health or well-being of the ecosystems on which they depend?

H. Factors and Processes Affecting Project Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

viii. Project Inception

This criterion focuses on the inception or mobilisation stage of the project. The Review will assess whether appropriate measures were taken to either address weaknesses in the project design, fill information gaps or respond to changes that took place between project approval, the securing of funds and project mobilisation. In particular, the Review will consider the nature and quality of engagement with stakeholder groups by the project team, the confirmation of partner capacity[34] and

[33] As used here, 'sustainability' means the long-term maintenance of outcomes and consequent impacts, whether environmental or not. This is distinct from the concept of sustainability in the terms 'environmental sustainability' or 'sustainable development', which imply 'not living beyond our means' or 'not diminishing global environmental benefits' (GEF STAP Paper, 2019, Achieving More Enduring Outcomes from GEF Investment)

[34] During 2023 UNEP is reviewing its Partnership Policy and Procedures and a future version is expected to include a requirement for risk mitigation against weak performance among partners.

development of partnership agreements as well as initial staffing and financing arrangements. The Review Consultant will confirm whether appropriate inception meetings were held and whether an inception report is available on file.

ix. Quality of Project Management and Supervision

During the MTR the consultant will review the planned implementation structure and the roles and responsibilities assigned to each partner or party. Where roles are not being played as planned, an appropriate recommendation to formalise correction action and/or a change in the implementation structure, should be made.

In some cases, 'project management and supervision' may refer to the supervision and guidance provided by UNEP to partners and national governments while in others it may refer to the project management performance of an implementing partner and the technical backstopping and supervision provided by UNEP. The performance of parties playing different roles should be discussed and a rating provided for both types of supervision (UNEP/Implementing Agency; Partner/Executing Agency) and the overall rating for this sub-category is established as a simple average of the two.

The Review will assess the effectiveness of project management to-date with regard to: providing leadership towards achieving the planned outcomes; managing team structures; maintaining productive partner relationships (including Steering Groups etc.); maintaining project relevance within changing external and strategic contexts; communication and collaboration with UNEP colleagues; risk management; use of problem-solving; project adaptation and overall project execution. Evidence of adaptive project management should be highlighted.

Adaptation Fund	The Review should consider the extent to which the evaluand is being adapted in response to lessons and reflections during implementation; and the extent to which the intervention supports the use, development, or diffusion of innovative practices, tools, or technologies to improve or accelerate Climate Change Adaptation.
Global Environment Facility	For internally executed projects the Review Consultant should review whether the segregation of responsibilities meets the GEF requirements[35] (the GEF Agency must separate its project implementation and execution duties and establish each of the following: (a) A satisfactory institutional arrangement for the separation of implementation and executing functions in different departments of the GEF Agency; and (b) Clear lines of responsibility, reporting and accountability within the GEF Agency between the project implementation and execution functions.

Here the term 'stakeholder' should be considered in a broad sense, encompassing all project partners; duty bearers with a role in delivering project outputs; target users of project outputs and any other collaborating agents external to UNEP and the implementing partner(s). The assessment will consider the quality and effectiveness of all forms of communication and consultation with stakeholders throughout the project life to-date and the support given to maximise collaboration and coherence between various stakeholders, including sharing plans, pooling resources and exchanging learning and expertise. The inclusion and participation of all differentiated groups, including gender groups, should be considered.

x. Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality (for Adaptation Fund, read 'Equity'; for GCF, read 'Gender Equity')

The Review will ascertain to what extent the project has applied the UN Common Understanding on the human rights-based approach (HRBA) and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People.

[35] GEF Minimum Fiduciary Standards: Separation of Implementation and Execution Functions in GEF Partner Agencies (2019).

Within this human rights context the Review will assess to what extent the intervention adheres to UNEP's Policy and Strategy for Gender Equality and the Environment[36].

The report should present the extent to which the intervention, following an adequate gender analysis at design stage, has implemented the identified actions and/or applied adaptive management to ensure that Gender Equality and Human Rights are adequately taken into account. In particular, the Review will consider the extent to which project implementation has taken into consideration: (i) possible gender inequalities in access to, and the control over, natural resources; (ii) specific vulnerabilities of disadvantaged groups (especially women, youth and children and those living with disabilities) to environmental degradation or disasters; (iii) the role of women in mitigating or adapting to environmental changes and engaging in environmental protection and rehabilitation.

Adaptation Fund	The Review should consider the extent to which the project's design and implementation includes input of the designated authority (DA) and vulnerable groups such as women, youth, persons with disability, Indigenous Peoples, minorities, and other potentially marginalized groups or locations. It also encompasses the degree to which the intervention reduced or perpetuated inequalities, and how equitably benefits were accrued to vulnerable groups.

xi. Environmental and Social Safeguards (for Adaptation Fund, read Human and ecological sustainability and security ')

UNEP projects address environmental and social safeguards primarily through the process of environmental and social screening, risk assessment and management (avoidance or mitigation) of potential environmental and social risks and impacts associated with project and programme activities. The Review will confirm whether UNEP requirements[37] were met to: screen proposed projects for any safeguarding issues; conduct sound environmental and social risk assessments; identify and avoid, or where avoidance is not possible, mitigate, environmental, social and economic risks; apply appropriate environmental and social measures to minimize any potential risks and harm to intended beneficiaries and report on the implementation of safeguard management measures taken.

The Review will also consider the extent to which the management of the project is minimising UNEP's environmental footprint.

xii. Country Ownership and Driven-ness

The Review will assess the quality and degree of engagement of government / public sector agencies in the project to-date. While there is some overlap between Country Ownership and Institutional Sustainability, this criterion focuses primarily on the forward momentum of the intended projects results, i.e. either: a) moving forwards from outputs to project outcomes or b) moving forward from project outcomes towards intermediate states. The Review will consider the involvement not only of those directly involved in project execution and those participating in technical or leadership groups, but also those official representatives whose cooperation is needed for change to be embedded in their respective institutions and offices (e.g. representatives from multiple sectors or relevant ministries beyond Ministry of Environment). This factor is concerned with the level of ownership generated by the project over outputs and outcomes and that is necessary for long term impact to be

[36]The Evaluation Office notes that Gender Equality was first introduced in the UNEP Project Review Committee Checklist in 2010 and, therefore, provides a criterion rating on gender for projects approved from 2010 onwards. Equally, it is noted that policy documents, operational guidelines and other capacity building efforts have only been developed since then and have evolved over time. https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/7655/-Gender_equality_and_the_environment_Policy_and_strategy-2015Gender_equality_and_the_environment_policy_and_strategy.pdf.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y

[37] For the review of project concepts and proposals, the Safeguard Risk Identification Form (SRIF) was introduced in 2019 and replaced the Environmental, Social and Economic Review note (ESERN), which had been in place since 2016. In GEF projects safeguards have been considered in project designs since 2011.

realised. This ownership should adequately represent the needs and interests of all gender and marginalised groups.

xiii. Communication and Public Awareness

The Review will assess the effectiveness of a) communication of learning and experience sharing between project partners and interested groups arising from the project during its life and b) public awareness activities that were undertaken during the implementation of the project to influence attitudes or shape behaviour among wider communities and civil society at large. The Review should consider whether existing communication channels and networks were used effectively, including meeting the differentiated needs of gender or marginalised groups, and whether any feedback channels were established. Where knowledge sharing platforms have been established under a project the Review will comment on the plans to sustain, handover or decommission the communication channel at the end of the project.

Section 3. REVIEW APPROACH, METHODS AND DELIVERABLES

The Mid-Term Review will use a participatory approach whereby key stakeholders are kept informed and consulted throughout the review process. Both quantitative and qualitative review methods will be used as appropriate to determine project achievements against the expected outputs, outcomes and impacts. It is highly recommended that the Review Consultant maintains close communication with the project team and promotes information exchange throughout the review implementation phase in order to increase their (and other stakeholder) ownership of the review findings.

The findings of the Review will be based on the following **desk review** of:

Relevant background documentation, inter alia:
Project Document and Appendices
Project design documents (including minutes of the project design review meeting at approval); Annual Work Plans and Budgets or equivalent, revisions to the project (Project Document Supplement), the logical framework and its budget.
Project reports such as six-monthly progress and financial reports, progress reports from collaborating partners, meeting minutes, relevant correspondence etc.
Evaluations/Reviews of similar projects.

(a) **Interviews** (individual or in group) with:

- UNEP Project Manager[38] and team members
- Representatives of Implementing Agencies and National Governments etc; Project Manager (PM) and team members with the Department of Environmental Planning and Protection (DEPP)
- UNEP Fund Management Officer (FMO);
- Representatives from civil society and specialist groups (such as women's, farmers and trade associations etc).

(b) **Field visits:** 5 MPA sites: Moriah Harbour Cay National Park, Lucayan National Park, Exuma Cays Land and Sea Park, Andros West Side National Park and Bonefish Pond National Park **Other data collection tools**: If needed, to be decided by the Review Consultant at the inception phase

[38] For GEF funded projects, UNEP Project Manager refers to the Task Manager.

10. Review Deliverables and Review Procedures

See Annex 1 of these TOR for a list of tools and guidance available, see Annex 2 for a list of review criteria and sub-categories to be assessed. The Review Consultant will prepare:

Inception Report: (see Annex 3 of these TOR for guidance on structure and content) containing confirmation of the results framework and Theory of Change of the project, project stakeholder analysis, review framework and a tentative review schedule.

Preliminary Findings Note: typically, in the form of a PowerPoint presentation, the sharing of preliminary findings is intended to support the participation of the project team, act as a means to ensure all information sources have been accessed and provide an opportunity to verify emerging findings.

Draft and Final Review Reports: (see Annex 4 for guidance on structure and content) containing an Executive Summary that can act as a stand-alone document; detailed analysis of the review findings organised by review criteria and supported with evidence; lessons learned and recommendations and an annotated ratings table.

Review of the draft Review Report. The Review Consultant will submit a draft report to the UNEP Project Manager and revise the draft in response to their comments and suggestions. Once a draft of adequate quality has been peer-reviewed and accepted, the Project Manager will share the cleared draft report with key project stakeholders for their review and comments. Stakeholders may provide feedback on any errors of fact and may highlight the significance of such errors in any conclusions as well as providing feedback on the proposed recommendations and lessons. Any comments or responses to draft reports will be sent to the Project Manager for consolidation. The Project Manager will provide all comments to the Review Consultant for consideration in preparing the final report, along with guidance on areas of contradiction or issues requiring an institutional response.

At the end of the review process and based on the findings in the Review Report, the UNEP Project Manager will prepare a **Recommendations Implementation Plan** in the format of a table, to be completed and updated at regular intervals, and circulate **Lessons Learned**.

11. The Review Consultant

The Review Consultant who will work under the overall responsibility of the UNEP Project Manager Brynton Johnson of the Department of Environmental Planning and Protection (DEPP) in consultation with the Head of Branch/Unit Christopher Cox and Team Assistant Gloritzel Frangakis, Fund Management Officer Shenik Thompson. The consultant will liaise with the Project Manager on any procedural and methodological matters related to the Review. It is, however, the consultant's individual responsibility (where applicable) to arrange for their travel, visa, obtain documentary evidence, plan meetings with stakeholders (with assistance from the Partners), organize online surveys, and any other logistical matters related to the assignment. The Project Manager and project team will, where possible, provide logistical support (introductions, meetings etc.) allowing the Review Consultants to conduct the review as efficiently and independently as possible.

The Review Consultant will be hired over a period of X months [00 Month/Year to 00 Month/Year] and should have the following: a university degree in environmental sciences, international development or other relevant political or social sciences area is required and an advanced degree in the same areas is desirable; a minimum of X years of technical / evaluation experience is required, preferably including evaluating large, regional or global programmes and using a Theory of Change approach; and a good/broad understanding of [add technical experience] is desired. English and French are the working languages of the United Nations Secretariat. For this consultancy, fluency in oral and written English is a requirement and proficiency in X/knowledge of [language] is desirable. Working knowledge of the UN system and specifically the work of UNEP is an added advantage. The work will be home-based with possible field visits.

The Review Consultant will be responsible, in close consultation with the UNEP Project Manager, for overall management of the Review and timely delivery of its outputs, described above in Section 10 Review Deliverables, above. The Review Consultant will ensure that all review criteria and questions are adequately covered.

12. Schedule of the Review

The table below presents the tentative schedule for the Review.

Table 3. Tentative schedule for the Review

Milestone	**Tentative Dates**
Inception Report	
Review Mission	
E-based interviews, surveys etc.	
PowerPoint/presentation on preliminary findings and recommendations	
Draft Report to UNEP Project Manager	
Draft Report shared with the wider group of stakeholders	
Final Main Review Report	
Final Main Review Report shared with all respondents	

13. Contractual Arrangements

The Review Consultant will be selected and recruited by the UNEP Project Manager under an individual Special Service Agreement (SSA) on a "fees only" basis (see below). By signing the service contract with UNEP/UNON, the consultant certifies that they have not been associated with the design and implementation of the project in any way which may jeopardize their independence and impartiality towards project achievements and project partner performance. Consultants who carry out a Mid-Term Review may not be contracted for a Terminal Review of the same evaluand. All consultants are required to sigh the Code of Conduct Agreement Form.

Fees will be paid on an instalment basis, paid on acceptance by the UNEP Project Manager of expected key deliverables. The schedule of payment is as follows:

Schedule of Payment for the Consultant:

Deliverable	**Percentage Payment**
Approved Inception Report ***(as per Guidance Note)***	30%
Approved Draft Main Review Report ***(as per Guidance Note)***	30%
Approved Final Main Review Report ***(as per Report Template)***	40%

Fees only contracts: Where applicable, air tickets will be purchased by UNEP and 75% of the Daily Subsistence Allowance for each authorised travel mission will be paid up front. Local in-country travel will only be reimbursed where agreed in advance with the UNEP Project Manager and on the production of acceptable receipts. Terminal expenses and residual DSA entitlements (25%) will be paid after mission completion.

The consultants may be provided with access to UNEP's information management systems (e.g. PIMS, IPMR, Anubis, SharePoint etc) and if such access is granted, the consultants agree not to disclose information from that system to third parties beyond information required for, and included in, the Review Report.

In case the consultant is not able to provide the deliverables in accordance with these guidelines, and in line with the expected quality standards by the UNEP Project Manager, payment may be withheld at the discretion of the Head of Branch/Unit until the consultants have improved the deliverables to meet UNEP's quality standards.

If the consultant fails to submit a satisfactory final product to the UNEP Project Manager in a timely manner, i.e. before the end date of their contract, UNEP reserves the right to employ additional human resources to finalize the report, and to reduce the consultants' fees by an amount equal to the additional costs borne by the project team to bring the report up to standard or completion.