



Mid-Term Review of FAO-GEF Regional Project

GCP/RAS/289/GFF

GEF ID-5768

***Enabling Transboundary Cooperation for Sustainable
Management of the Indonesian Sea (ISLME)***

Final Report

MTR conducted in June 2021

**FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS,
Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific - November 2021**

Contents

1	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
2	INTRODUCTION	15
3	PROJECT BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT	19
4	THEORY OF CHANGE	23
5	KEY FINDINGS AND MTR QUESTIONS.....	28
6	LESSONS LEARNED	51
7	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	52
	APPENDICES.....	67

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

Acknowledgements

The MTR team, conducted by TierraMar comprised Anissa Lawrence as lead international consultant covering the technical areas of expertise, e.g. ocean governance, marine protected areas, fisheries and aquaculture and large project evaluation, and two national consultants, Jamaluddin Jompa, Professor in Marine Ecology and Management, Hasanuddin University who covered relevant issues in Indonesia and Lusitania D.C. Lopes who covered relevant issues in Timor-Leste.

The MTR was carried out with the invaluable assistance of FAO staff of the FAO Regional Office as well as Indonesia and Timor-Leste Country Offices. Their insight, knowledge, advice and comments made this MTR possible. The MTR team would like to thank all those who contributed to this MTR, Mr. Richard Trenchard, the FAO Representative a.i. and Budget Holder of the project, Mr. Ageng Herianto, the designated MTR manager, Ms. Susana Siar, the Lead Technical officer, FAO GEF Liaison Officer, Mr. Sameer Karki and Ms. Genevieve Braun and Ms. Ydidiya Abera MTR focal points from OCB GEF.

The MTR benefited from the inputs of many other stakeholders, including government officers, non-governmental organizations, research institutions, private-sector representatives and project beneficiaries. Their contributions were critical to the MTR team's work and are deeply appreciated.

Disclaimer

This report has been commissioned by FAO for the FAO–GEF project mid-term review of *Enabling Transboundary Cooperation for Sustainable Management of the Indonesian Sea (ISLME) Project*. It is solely for the use of the FAO. TierraMar Ltd does not accept any responsibility to any other party to whom this report may be shown or into whose hands it may come. No representation or warranty (express or implied) is given as to the accuracy or completeness of the information contained in this report, and, to the extent permitted by law, TierraMar Ltd, its members, employees and agents accept no liability, and disclaim all responsibility, for the consequences of you or anyone else acting, or refraining to act, in reliance on the information contained in this report or for any decision based on it. The information provided in this report is based on the best information and documentation available at the time of preparation. The views and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the FAO.

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

Acronyms and abbreviations

BH	Budget holder (FAO)
COVID-19	Corona Virus Disease 2019
EAA	Ecosystem Approach to Aquaculture
EAFM	Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management
EBM	Ecosystem based management
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FAO GCU	FAO GEF Coordination Unit
FMA	Fisheries Management Area
FMP	Fisheries Management Plan
GEF	Global Environment Facility
ICZM	Integrated coastal zone management
ISLME	Indonesian Sea Large Marine Ecosystem
IUU	Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing
LME	Large Marine Ecosystem
LTO	Lead technical officer (FAO)
M&E	Monitoring & evaluation
MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Timor-Leste
MMAF	Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, Indonesia
MPA	Marine Protected Area
MR	Mid-term review manager
MTR	Mid-term review
PDO	Project Development Objective
PMU	Project Management Unit
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RM	Mid-term review manager
SAP	Strategic Action Programme
SDG	United Nations Sustainable Development Goal
SO	FAO Strategic Objective
TDA	Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis
ToC	Theory of Change

1 Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

1. The ISLME project undertook an independent Mid-term Review (MTR) to determine progress being made towards achievement of outcomes, to identify corrective actions if necessary and lessons learned relating to project design, implementation and management. The MTR will serve both learning and accountability purposes. The MTR was also undertaken to identify any challenges and make operational and strategic recommendations to improve project implementation for the remaining period of the project's life.
2. The MTR objectives were to analyze the contribution of the Project to national fisheries policies and review the robustness and realism of the results framework, including logic of causal relationship between inputs, activities, expected outputs, outcomes and impact and validity of indicators. The key review questions the MTR sought to answer are:
 - What results, intended and unintended, has the project achieved to date?
 - Is the project on track to achieve its planned results?
 - What can be done to improve project delivery and to increase the likelihood of longer-term sustainability of project results?
 - What are the success stories, good practices, lessons for future implementation?
3. The MTR was undertaken using a combination of a desk review of available project and context-related documentation and stakeholder consultation. The evaluation approach adopted allowed for triangulation of findings, and the combination of sources helped in reducing information gaps. Given COVID-19 travel restrictions, no in-country visits to pilot project sites were undertaken.

1.2 Main findings

4. The ISLME Project is playing a catalytic role in addressing transboundary concerns by assisting Indonesia and Timor-Leste to restore and sustain coastal and marine fish stocks and associated biodiversity and community livelihoods and improve coordination in shared seas. While significant delays have been experienced (in project implementation), primarily due to finalizing implementation arrangements in Indonesia and COVID-19, already the Project has resulted in improved capacity within both countries with respect to EAFM and EAA and opened dialogue on transboundary issues such as IUU fishing. The Project has achieved strong government support in both countries due to its focus on addressing strategic issues of priority to Indonesia and Timor-Leste. It is providing an important opportunity to bridge the gap between high level policies and on-the-ground policy implementation/action in both countries.
5. The Project, prior to the no cost extension being received in July 2021, was not on track to achieve its planned results, across all Components. With the no cost extension recently approved, taking the project completion date out to December 2022, the Project should have sufficient time to complete those activities outstanding, particularly in relation to the SAP development.

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

6. To improve project delivery, it is important that significant focus be given to strengthening project planning and coordination processes, particularly relating to how meetings with senior government staff are conducted to ensure they are outcome focused and action oriented. In addition, regular forward planning meetings should be undertaken both at regional and national levels to ensure all FAO and government implementation staff are aware of upcoming requirements, can plan effectively and foresee issues that may arise and take mitigating steps to reduce impacts. The PSC should also review the current workplan for the Project in the context of the no cost extension and ensure that activities proposed can be coordinated to streamline processes and ensure cost efficiency in delivery within the new timeframe.
7. To increase the likelihood of longer-term sustainability of results an exit strategy should be developed for the Project as soon as possible. Of most importance is ensuring steps are taken to continually build and maintain political support through regular briefings of Ministers across disciplines within each country. Ensuring there is strong political will and support (resources and stakeholder acceptance) to endorse the ISLME approach, collaborate on transboundary issues and adopt and implement the SAP using EBA/EAFM/EAA approaches will improve the likelihood of a lasting legacy from the Project. Political will is imperative to drive any lasting impact, whether at the national or transboundary level, particularly as a key focus will need to be ensuring priorities developed in the SAP are included within departmental workplans and budgets, or actions taken to secure funding for their implementation.
8. Whether long-term institutional and financial sustainability of the ISLME program is possible, through lasting political will and donor support will be key to the implementation of ecosystem approaches (EAFM/EAA/EBA). Having monitoring, post the project to demonstrate that actions are alleviating pressures on marine and coastal ecosystems will also be important. Reliance will be placed on FAO and the governments of Indonesia and Timor-Leste to coordinate these aspects. To the extent possible through the Project, it will be important that the Project ensures the outputs of the pilot projects and other components are shared between the participating countries and disseminated to other LMEs to ensure expansion to a regional transboundary approach.
9. The Project has demonstrated the importance of building flexibility into program design to allow for changes in government priority and capacity to ensure the Project remains relevant and is addressing the needs of government stakeholders - this will provide greater likelihood of longer-term impact. It has clearly demonstrated that it is possible to pivot to changing circumstances to ensure the Project can adapt as required, for example through moving everything to an online approach where while challenging for some has provided opportunity for multistakeholder dialogue to continue. However, it has also shown what can happen when a project is under resourced, particularly in relation to communications and building a project profile internationally.
10. The importance of building relationships and trust between governments, across multiple ministries and the FAO has been fundamental to the success of project results achieved to date and will be critical to ensure transboundary outcome delivery. It has also shown the importance of demonstrating the value the Project can bring at all levels to bring stakeholders along and be enthusiastic to participate. Finally, the Project has been successful in showing the importance of building on what work has already been done to avoid reinventing or duplicating, and ensuring lessons learned from those projects that have come before are reflected in design and implementation approaches.

1.3 Conclusions

11. The Project has been given an overall rating for the MTR of Moderately Satisfactory. A summary of ratings and score for each section is provided in the table below.

Table 1 GEF Ratings Table

GEF criteria	Rating	Summary
A. STRATEGIC RELEVANCE (Section 5.1)		
A1. Overall strategic relevance	HS	The ISLME Project is well aligned to global, regional, FAO and GEF strategic frameworks and is delivering on several Aichi targets and SDGs. The Project is well designed and addresses strategic issues and priorities of the governments of Indonesia and Timor-Leste. It provides an important opportunity to bridge the gap between high level policies and on-the-ground policy implementation/action in both countries.
A1.1. Alignment with GEF and FAO strategic priorities	HS	
A1.2. Relevance to national, regional and global priorities and beneficiary needs	HS	
A1.3. Complementarity with existing interventions	HS	
B. EFFECTIVENESS (Section 5.2)		
B1. Overall assessment of project results	MS	Activities are seen as well integrated with governments, focused on the right priorities and are assisting in strengthening fisheries management and aquaculture in both countries and opening dialogue on transboundary issues such as IUU fishing. The Project is adding value at national and local levels and strengthening capacity of individuals, organisations and the enabling environment. Achievement of project outputs towards outcomes has been impacted by significant delays to the Project. Of most concern is the completion of the SAP under Component 1, which is the centrepiece of the Project and yet to commence. With a no cost extension now in place until December 2022, this will allow additional time for all activities to be completed. While delays have been experienced, with a full-time Regional Coordinator since mid 2019, progress speed has improved considerably, however continues to be impacted by COVID-19. This is likely to continue for the remaining time left for Project implementation so it will be important that careful monitoring of progress, against likely ongoing issues from COVID-19 are adequately planned for. Of most importance is taking steps to build and maintain strong
B1.1 Delivery of project outputs	MS	
B1.2 Progress towards outcomes and project objectives	MS	
- Outcome 1	MS	
- Outcome 2	MS	
- Outcome 3	MS	
- Overall rating of progress towards achieving objectives/outcomes	MS	

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

GEF criteria	Rating	Summary
B1.3 Likelihood of impact	Not rated at MTR	political will and support (resources and stakeholder acceptance) to endorse the ISLME approach, collaborate on transboundary issues and adopt and implement the SAP using EBA/EAFM/EAA approaches. Political will is imperative to drive any lasting impact, whether at the national or transboundary level.
C. EFFICIENCY (Section 5.3)		
C1. Efficiency	MS	<p>The Project is generally being delivered cost effectively by the PMU under FAO internal processes, by a small team with clear activities, deliverables, and reporting requirements in place. A light touch approach within the PMU is placing significant workloads on regional and national project staff, particularly in Indonesia where the level of bureaucracy to comply with government regulations is high. Additional resources to support the National Project Officer as well as a dedicated communications team for the Project would assist in rectifying this. The impact of COVID-19 has placed increased pressure on the project team to pivot the project to a primarily online approach to delivery. It has resulted in an innovative and adaptive use of resources. The timeliness of delivery of some activities has been impacted by the limited capacity of national consultants, which has resulted in reports needing much reworking by the PMU and international consultants. Steps can be taken to strengthen recruitment of national consultants where a priority, and budgets should be allocated accordingly to provide for this. Driving meetings towards outcomes and actions has been a challenge causing delays in reaching agreement on decisions and moving activities forward. Introducing a standard action driven outcome focused approach to meetings will assist in this regard. <i>Improving</i> forward planning and budgetary implications so that there is clear understanding from all project team members at the regional and national levels of the status of planned activities to improve coordination is needed. Regular project task force meetings could be introduced to discuss managerial issues and key technical challenges or substance that effect managerial issues. Forward planning to strengthen project planning and performance and allow the Lead Technical Officer and budget holder to understand upcoming activities and then support technical teams to do the work without delays and review is important. A no cost extension has been approved to provide the Project with additional time for completion of activities to 31 December 2022. With the delays experienced, as a matter of urgency the PSC should review and optimise the workplan to ensure that what is still to be done can be achieved within the revised timeframe and budget.</p>
D. SUSTAINABILITY OF PROJECT OUTCOMES (Section 5.4)		

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

GEF criteria	Rating	Summary
D1. Overall likelihood of risks to sustainability	MU	While the need for an exit strategy is recognised, it is not in place for the Project. An exit strategy should be developed for the Project as a matter of urgency prior to the project completing, so that planning and activities can be amended and adapted as required to ensure transboundary and related national activities in the SAP are included in ministerial/government departmental budgets and programs, ongoing capacity is in place within governments and other stakeholders, and gaps in capacity are understood and can be addressed. It is critical that technical people involved in the TDA process are also involved in the development of the SAP to ensure it is evidence based and grounded in science, actions are at the right scale and there is strong ownership from relevant institutions, and they have an ability to be implemented. In addition, a key mitigation measure will be to develop strategies to ensure the SAP implementation is not delayed, to reduce the risk of memory loss, changes in government priorities and intuitional changes. For example, the timeliness of preparation of the next proposal relating to the funding of the SAP implementation will be important to reduce delays. As a matter of urgency, given the importance of achieving signoff and ongoing national ownership to implement the SAP, and the changes that have occurred at ministerial levels within Indonesia and Timor-Leste, regular ministerial briefings and other actions to strengthen ties between implementing and diplomatic ministries are required to build rapport to secure ongoing ownership of the implementation of the SAP, both at the transboundary and national levels by each country.
D1.1. Financial risks	MU	
D1.2. Socio political risks	MU	
D1.3. Institutional and governance risks	MU	
D1.4. Environmental risks	ML	
D2. Catalysis and replication	S	
E. FACTORS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE (Section 5.5)		
E1. Project design and readiness	S	The ISLME Project had strong stakeholder engagement in its initial design. Its design allowed for considerable flexibility with respect to how the components were implemented, given the time between since its initial design and its implementation. This flexibility has enabled the Project to remain viable and has meant the current priorities of both governments could become the focus of pilot projects in Component 2. Given the significant effort made to ensure the Project aligned to government priorities, its technical and strategic focus is sound and set at a level that meets the readiness of both countries. Given the differences in progress between Timor-Leste and Indonesia in terms of fisheries management, it will be important going forward that as a part of strengthening transboundary cooperation, knowledge transfer occurs to strengthen the capacity of Timor-Leste and that both countries take advantage of the Project to strengthen how each country works together as to increase the frequency of sharing learnings.

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

GEF criteria	Rating	Summary
E2. Quality of project implementation	S	There has been excellent and timely support, technical advice and communication provided by the Regional Coordinator and PMU national staff, staff in the FAO regional office as well as Head Office. No issues were identified. To reduce administrative burdens of the Project in Indonesia, it was suggested that strengthening meeting processes will help to improve progress. A national project assistant for the National Project Officer would allow for improved processes.
E2.1 Quality of project implementation by FAO (BH, LTO, PTF, etc.)	S	
E2.2 Project oversight (PSC, project working group, etc.)	S	
E3. Quality of project execution	S	Project execution for the ISLME project has been challenging, largely due to the complicated management arrangements necessary for all projects within Indonesia. The finalizing of the Implementation Arrangement cause considerable delay to the Project and reporting under both systems is complicated and time consuming. Risk identification and assessment is undertaken by the PSC at a holistic level and by the PMU at a project implementation level, however implementation of mitigation measures has not always occurred in a timely fashion.
E3.1 Project execution and management (PMU and executing partner performance, administration, staffing, etc.)	S	
E4. Financial management and co-financing	MU	There is a significant underspend in funding reflecting the delays incurred by the Project, primarily due to COVID-19. Budget revisions will be required and are proposed with the no cost extension to December 2022. Contact and communication between ISLME Budget Holder, PMU and FAO GEF CU fund liaison officer (FLO) has been effective. Financial management has been challenging for FAO and MMAF with respect to compliance with Ministry of Finance requirements, in accordance with the Implementation Agreement. There is an urgent need for a more streamlined approach and steps have been taken to address this. In both countries there is a lack of coordination and understanding of co-financing commitments within MMAF and MAF. As a result, it is likely reported materialized co-finance is lower than what it actually is.
E5. Project partnerships and stakeholder engagement	S	There has been good engagement with a broad group of stakeholders in the TDA process and good ownership, however participation has largely been limited to consultation and networking. The Project has good engagement with senior officials in the MMAF and MAF. Government ownership and institutional support for the Project from operating partners (MMAF and MAF) is strong. Competing government priorities and projects impact on the availability of staff to participate in ISLME activities in a timely manner at times. Actions are required in Timor-Leste to improve visibility of the project with the Minister.

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

GEF criteria	Rating	Summary
E6. Communication, knowledge management and knowledge products	MU	The ISLME Project would greatly benefit from a dedicated 'communications and knowledge management team – which understands the importance of communicating project activities, results, and also understands tools for project engagement/participation (ie. Facebook, webinars, email lists, 'shared drives' for sharing reports/resources) – and builds a 'community of stakeholders.
E7. Overall quality of M&E	S	There is good and up to date tracking of progress and formal reporting (PIRs/PPRs) being undertaken for the Project. M&E roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. The M&E plan tracks progress on the achievement of project outputs and direct outcomes, longer-term outcomes and objectives. The systems in place are well designed and easy to use as confirmed during the consultation.
E7.1 M&E design	S	
E7.2 M&E plan implementation (including financial and human resources)	S	
E8. Overall assessment of factors affecting performance	MS	
F. CROSS-CUTTING CONCERNS (Section 5.6)		
F1. Gender and other equity dimensions	S	The ISLME project has undergone Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS) screening and is classified as a Category C project under the "Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Guidelines for FAO Field Projects" and a low-risk project. The Project's intended results appear to be contributing to GEF and FAO gender priorities relating to participation and decision making and access to and control over natural resources. The Project has sought to ensure gender and marginalized groups are being adequately represented. Gender aspects have been included in the TDA development process and pilot projects, with good recognition of the importance of empowering women where opportunity arises through pilot projects. Gender segregated data and analysis being undertaken as part of Monitoring and Evaluation and is reported in the PIR/PPRs. A gender strategy should be included in the SAP.
F2. Human rights issues	S	
F2. Environmental and social safeguards	S	
Overall project rating	MS	

1.4 Recommendations

- The following recommendations are provided for the FAO, PMU, project partners and other relevant stakeholders involved in project execution for consideration as a way to strengthen the delivery of the Project, resolve identified challenges affecting the Project's execution and performance and to enhance the sustainability and eventual impact of project results.

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

- **Recommendation 1** It is critical that the TDA and SAP processes are well coupled - ensure technical people are involved in both processes to ensure the SAP is evidence based and grounded in science, actions are at the right scale and there is strong ownership from relevant institutions, and they have an ability to be implemented.
- **Recommendation 2** Going into the SAP development phase steps should be taken to secure significant political will from Ministers in both countries to ensure the value of the Project is clearly understood and that senior officials understand that another project is to follow that will see the implementation of the SAP where the value will be realized, both within communities, at the national level and for transboundary issues. This can be achieved through regular briefings with relevant Ministers, beyond fisheries. Of most importance is ensuring there is strong political will and support (resources and stakeholder acceptance) to endorse the ISLME approach, collaborate on transboundary issues and adopt and implement the SAP using EBA/EAFM/EAA approaches.

The Project should work to ensure transboundary and environmental issues are identified as priorities of fisheries ministries in both countries and linked to diplomatic actions by national ministries and embassies dealing with foreign affairs. Other actions to strengthen ties between implementing and diplomatic ministries are required to build rapport to secure ongoing ownership of the implementation of the SAP, both at the transboundary and national levels by each country.

- **Recommendation 3** The ISLME project would greatly benefit from a dedicated 'communications and knowledge management team' – which understands the importance of communicating project activities, results, and also understands tools for project engagement/ participation (i.e. Facebook, webinars, email lists, 'shared drives' for sharing reports/resources) – and builds a 'community of stakeholders'.
- **Recommendation 4** Increase the frequency of sharing of learnings and take more advantage of the transboundary nature of the Project to allow Timor-Leste to learn more about how Indonesia deals with issues and to work better together rather than working separately. Learning exchanges for government officials could be considered to help increase the capacity of Timor-Leste.
- **Recommendation 5** The most suitable approach to improve visibility of the Project with the Minister in Timor-Leste should be determined. For example, regular briefing and involvement at the Minister's office level with advisors may be sufficient. Steps should be taken to allow for members to remain on the NSAG regardless of when their position changes within the government. This will require approval from the Minister based on a specific internal dispatch order in coordination with Director General of Fisheries at MAF.
- **Recommendation 6** Regular project task force meetings could be introduced by the Budget Holder, Lead Technical Officer and the funding liaison officer in Rome. The purpose would be to discuss managerial issues and key technical challenges or substance that effect managerial issues. This could allow, say quarterly forward planning to strengthen project planning and performance and allow Lead Technical Officer and Budget Holder to understand upcoming activities and then support technical teams to do the work without delays and review processes. This would

also allow all participating in meetings to understand the bigger picture and streamline processes.

- **Recommendation 7** The process for engaging and managing international and national consultants should be reviewed to ensure adequate reference checks are undertaken, the consultants put forward to undertake the work are the ones who do it and contractual obligations are met. Additional 'criteria' should be applied for companies/consultants/individuals, to be classified (and paid) as 'international' consultants, beyond employment history. For e.g. referee reports, recent publications, etc. For 'organisations' which consult, all projects should have a minimum percentage of time (days) performed by 'international consultants' on the project team to provide quality assurance.

It is important to get the balance right between building capacity of national consultants and receiving high quality expert products, particularly where budgets for international consultants have been reduced. If capacity building of national consultants is a priority, then an adequate, separate budget item should be allocated, and it included in the project design as part of standard activities. It is important that the consulting company also ensures that there is quality assurance of the deliverable prior to submission.

- **Recommendation 8** A streamlined approach for collecting co-finance information is required for both countries. Introduce a national Project Management Unit (PMU) within MAF to coordinate program delivery and ensure co-financing commitments are adopted within government budgets and managed accordingly to assist in Timor-Leste. In Indonesia, have the responsibility for recording co-financing allocated to a senior officer within MMAF to provide for a coordinated approach.
- **Recommendation 9** Consideration should be given to employing a project assistant to assist the National Project Officer in Indonesia to allow for improved processes and improve the timeliness of decision making.
- **Recommendation 10** With the delays experienced by the Project, as a matter of urgency the PSC should review and optimise the workplan to ensure that what is still to be done can be achieved within the extended timeframe. It will be important to ensure a strategic and flexible approach to implement a modified workplan to achieve the project goal, leverage adaptations to build sustainability (maximise production of virtual materials/systems), mainstream gender equity and human rights aspects and ensure value (by way of onground outcomes) are seen by governments. It will be important to balance spending the funds provided while maintaining quality outcomes that increase tangible benefits to beneficiaries and stakeholders wanting to participate.
- **Recommendation 11** Leadership and facilitation training should be undertaken for those leading meetings within government to ensure meetings are action oriented and outcome focused, and decisions/actions documented. A formal 'outcome' and 'actions arising' system should be introduced for all meetings to record outcomes and decisions and actions, so that actions are not lost, and progress tracked.

To better balance time spent on substance versus administration issues and improve alignment with departmental priorities (including co-financing),

government officials at all levels need to be more actively engaged. Less reliance needs to be placed on one-on-one informal discussions. Monthly or quarterly meetings should be held for key project team members, led by MMAF in Indonesia and MAF in Timor-Leste, to understand progress, undertake forward planning, discuss budget and logistics implications and identify solutions to address issues effecting implementation. A set standard agenda should be used where administration issues are discussed last.

- **Recommendation 12** An exit strategy should be developed for the Project as a matter of urgency so that planning and activities can be amended and adapted as required to ensure transboundary and related national activities are included in ministerial/ government departmental budgets and programs, ongoing capacity is in place within governments and other stakeholders, and gaps in capacity are understood and can be addressed, such as in preparing proposals for funding to support implementation beyond the Project. Capacity needs and priorities that may affect implementation should also be identified and planned for.
- **Recommendation 13** A gender strategy should be included in the SAP that emphasizes the importance of Indonesia and Timor-Leste Governments engaging national stakeholders in addressing challenges for women arising from the UN SDG 5 on Gender Equality; participation into combating SDG 13 on climate change; and addressing the threats to marine life when meeting SDG 14 on life below waters. Particularly for Timor-Leste and East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) province of Indonesia, it will be important to adopt specific mitigation and adaptation actions that compliment and benefit community initiatives. Sharing of information and resources between countries, strategic cooperation through the Women Leaders Forum of the Coral Triangle and tapping into broader regional cooperation with other women in the maritime sector in Asia will be important.

2 Introduction

2.1 Purpose and scope of the MTR

13. The ISLME project is undertaking an independent Mid-term Review (MTR) to determine progress being made towards achievement of outcomes, to identify corrective actions if necessary and lessons learned relating to project design, implementation and management. The MTR will serve both learning and accountability purposes. The MTR is also being undertaken to identify any challenges and make operational and strategic recommendations to improve project implementation for the remaining period of the project's life. Lessons learnt shall contribute towards national development through the relevant sectors relating to sound environmental management. The MTR will also review and confirm the need for a no cost extension to achieve all the important outcomes considering the various delays in implementation.
14. While ideally, the MTR was planned to be conducted in the second year of the project, as outlined in the ProDoc, the delays in implementation primarily due to COVID-19 and in finalizing implementation arrangements in Indonesia have prevented the MTR from being conducted any earlier.
15. The MTR will critically assess the programme through GEF evaluation criteria, i.e. relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, factors affecting performance, sustainability and cross-cutting issues. Within these criteria, the MTR will analyze the relevance of the initiative according to the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, the GEF 5-International Waters Strategy under which the project was approved, the FAO Strategic Objectives 2 and organizational outcome, country development priorities for Indonesia and Timor-Leste and needs for sustainable management of the ISLME.

2.2 Objective of the MTR

16. The MTR objectives are to analyze the contribution of the Project to the fisheries policies and review the robustness and realism of the results framework, including logic of causal relationship between inputs, activities, expected outputs, outcomes and impact and validity of indicators. The key review questions as set out in the MTR Terms of Reference (refer Appendix A) are as follows:

Box 1: Key review questions

What results, intended and unintended, has the project achieved to date?
Is the project on track to achieve its planned results?
What can be done to improve project delivery and to increase the likelihood of longer-term sustainability of project results?
What are the success stories, good practices, lessons for future implementation?

17. The full list of questions used as the basis for collecting data are detailed in the MTR Matrix in Appendix 3.

2.3 *Intended users*

18. The primary users of the MTR are the project FAO GEF Coordination Unit (FAO GCU) Regional project Coordinator (RC), the National Project Manager/Advisor (NPO/NPA), the FAO Lead Technical Officer, the Budget Holder, the Review Manager (RM), the National Project Coordinator, National Project Steering Committee (NPSC) members and the Regional Project Steering Committee (PSC) members. Other important users include the different relevant directorates under the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries of Indonesia and Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries of Timor-Leste.
19. For the primary users of the MTR, it is intended that it will provide guidance and recommendations to help strengthen project design, implementation and management as it delivers against its goals and objectives.

2.4 *Methodology*

Overall methodological approach

20. The MTR was undertaken using a combination of a desk review of available project and context-related documentation and stakeholder consultation. Appendix 2 provides a summary of key documents reviewed and stakeholders consulted. The evaluation approach adopted allowed for triangulation of findings, and the combination of sources helped in reducing information gaps. Preliminary information on the Project was collected through desktop review, in addition to the information provided through the MTR Terms of Reference, documents via the FAO Dropbox provided and briefing discussions. Where additional documents or secondary data was provided by interviewees, this was incorporated into the review. The reconstructed Theory of Change was used to analyse the structure and causal logic of the project and help identify MTR questions and potential stakeholders and interviewees. Preliminary findings were presented to FAO staff and an opportunity provided for clarification. Given COVID-19 travel restrictions, no in-country visits to pilot project sites were undertaken.
21. TierraMar always uses a transparent, human-rights based approach to consultations and reviews. Consideration of gender equality and marginalized groups was incorporated into the review approach from inception to ensure that bias was minimized. Interviews were semi-structured to allow for open discussion, and while the questions followed the MTR Matrix structure (refer Appendix 3), the MTR team tailored the focus of the interview based on the stakeholder's role. If an interview was not possible interviewees were requested to provide their responses in writing, with follow up by the MTR team via email. Zoom was used as the video call platform given its stability and flexibility. Zoom also allowed for participants to phone in for discussion where needed. Interview participants were provided with the questions in advance, with clear technology instructions attached. The majority of interviews were conducted between April and May 2021, with some completed in June 2021.
22. Both qualitative and quantitative data was collected in the desk review and consultations stage and analyzed by TierraMar to answer the high-level questions identified in the GEF MTR Guidance.
23. Triangulation of answers and identification of common or supporting themes in the interviews was used by TierraMar to guide the evaluation process with all answers presented anonymously in the MTR report. The six evaluation criteria categories were

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

scored using the standard GEF six-point scale¹ from highly satisfactory to highly unsatisfactory.

24. The Terms of Reference for the MTR are found in Appendix 1.

Stakeholder engagement

25. Key stakeholders, being those most involved in the Project to date, were identified through a stakeholder analysis, based on initial discussions, provided documentation and advice of the Project Management Unit (PMU). Key stakeholders were contacted for virtual interviews, via zoom or phone by TierraMar, and our national consultants (Regional/FAO team - 3 male and 4 female; Indonesia 10 male and 1 female; Timor-Leste 7 male). Refer Appendix 2 for a list of those consulted for the MTR. Due to COVID-19 safety restrictions, most interviews were conducted via zoom or telephone in country. The secondary groups such as provincial and local government staff identified as stakeholders, fishers and aquaculture producers, and local communities and small-scale fishers were not involved in the MTR as the Project was not yet at a stage where they are very involved.

26. Particular attention was paid to ensuring disadvantaged and vulnerable groups or individuals that may be affected by the Project had the opportunity to participate in the MTR process. A GESI approach (gender, equality, and social inclusion) was used to avoid bias, and include all perspectives as much as possible, keeping in mind time and budget limitations and the status of the Project. The use of individual interviews allowed stakeholders to safely voice their opinions and concerns to an independent party.

Composition of the MTR team

27. The MTR team consisted of one international consultant and a national consultant in Indonesia and a national consultant in Timor-Leste. Collective experience included:

- Developing, implementing and evaluating large scale and regional/global coastal, marine and fisheries related programs, including using theory of change, participatory learning, open standards (result chains) etc, particularly in Indonesia and Timor-Leste;
- Forging consensus on strategic issues and priorities for multi-faceted, multi-stakeholder based regional programs;
- Building partnerships, supporting and strengthening existing institutions and networks and their capacity across regions and developing and delivering programs related to transformational change as well as on-the-ground conservation outcomes;
- Facilitating national, regional and global consultations with stakeholders on a variety of development and environmental issues, including expediting and scaling up conservation outcomes, climate change adaptation and blue carbon, marine protected areas, gender and women empowerment, protected species conservation, invasive species, biodiversity conservation, ecosystem based fisheries management, sustainability and green/blue economy solutions, cultural heritage, pollution management and natural resource management (NRM) and capacity building; and
- Comprehensive understanding of the key environmental and developmental issues in small island and developing economies across Asia Pacific, including solid technical knowledge of key priorities such as small-scale fisheries, marine protected areas,

¹ Sustainability will be scored using the alternative scale, Likely to Highly Unlikely.

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

coastal ecosystems (including blue carbon) and green/blue economy and sustainability issues.

2.5 Limitations

28. The key limitations to the MTR are outlined in Table 2.

Table 2 Limitations to the MTR

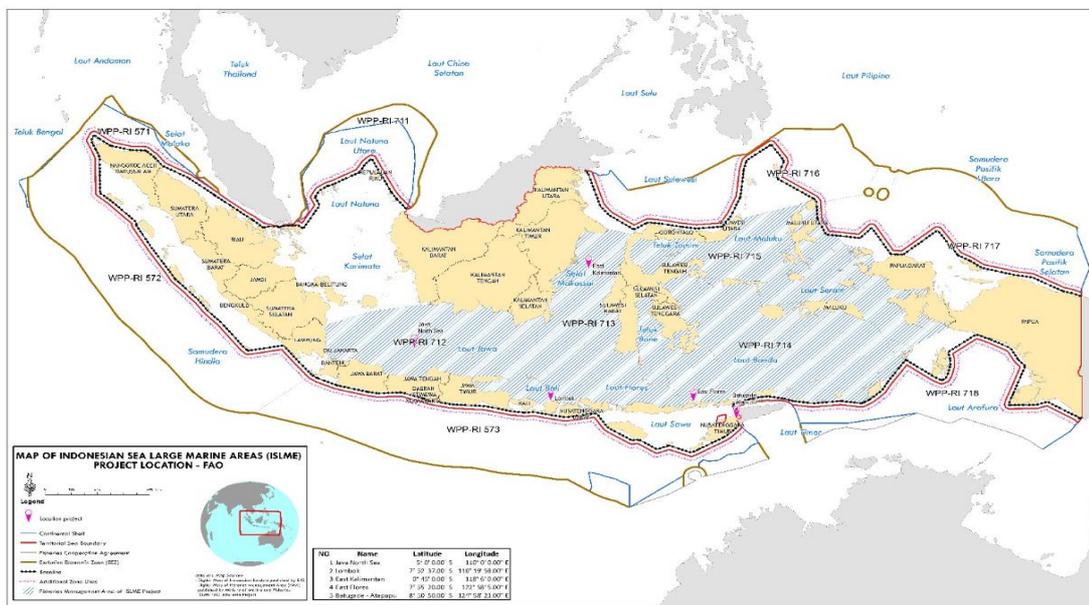
Limitation/Risk	Impact	Mitigation
Budget and time limitations	Due to necessary time limits on the MTR, not all stakeholders can be interviewed.	Stakeholders and data collection methods prioritised to maximise time and budget efficiency. The review used the best available data for desk reviews and analysis.
Covid-19 restrictions and risks	No international travel will be conducted, no internal travel will be conducted due to Covid-19 safety risks, restrictions may change during the Project.	Restrictions and Covid-19 outbreaks were monitored. National consultants conduct data collection interviews online, unless safe to hold face to face interviews. Virtual platforms were used to conduct interviews with key stakeholders. As no internal travel occurred, the PMU facilitated provision of additional data.
Extreme weather risks	Extreme weather events may interrupt telecommunications or travel plans of the interviewees and national consultants, and/or pose a safety risk.	Weather and other risks were monitored. Any activities that compromised the safety of the stakeholders or national consultants was postponed and reorganised or changed to an alternative collection method. Delays due to weather or extreme events were communicated to PMU.
Technology access limitations	Some interviewees may have limited or unreliable access to telecommunications needed to participate in virtual interviews.	Questions and materials were sent in advance with clear instructions for how to access Zoom normally and via a telephone. If needed an alternative location was arranged, or the interview questions submitted in writing.
Language barriers	Some stakeholders may not be fluent in the same language as the interviewer.	Questions and materials were sent in advance, with time for interviewees to ask clarifying questions. National consultants conducted interviews in local languages, where required.
Barriers to inclusion for women, youth, and other groups	Imbalances in power, social status and inclusion may lead to some stakeholders being less able to participate in the review process or having imperfect representation.	Gender and social inclusion considerations were built into the planning of the MTR. Gender disaggregation of stakeholders and individual/private data collection methods were enacted where required.

3 Project background and context

3.1 Context

29. The Indonesian Sea Large Marine Ecosystem (ISLME) is one of 66 Large Marine Ecosystems (LME) globally. The ISLME is situated in the Coral Triangle, at the confluence of the Pacific and Indian Oceans, an area recognised for its mega diversity and high productivity, and responsible for over 1 percent of the global fisheries production. The ISLME extends around 2.13 million square kilometres (213 million hectares), with 98% within Indonesia’s territorial waters, and approximately 2% located within the territorial waters of Timor-Leste (Figure 1).

Figure 1 Map of the ISLME area



30. Approximately 185 million people living in the ISLME region are highly dependent on coastal and marine industries including fisheries, aquaculture, oil and gas production, transportation, and tourism. Whilst the fisheries sector represents a relatively low percentage of total Gross Domestic Product (GDP (Indonesia 3.1%, Timor-Leste 1.25%), it contributes significantly to coastal communities and fishing families in both countries, as well as the populations of many non-coastal communities who are heavily reliant on fish as an affordable source of protein and income. Aquaculture is a major industry in some areas of Indonesia, and an emerging industry for Timor-Leste. Both countries have expectations that aquaculture can provide alternative and improved livelihoods for coastal communities. Marine and coastal tourism are potential economic growth areas for both countries that can provide social and economic benefits through employment and income-generation, as well as sustainable income sources for conserving marine biodiversity. The oil and gas industry is a major contributor to the economies of Indonesia and Timor-Leste. In Timor-Leste, oil production constitutes almost 85% of state revenues and represented

48% of national GDP in 2015². Shipping is extremely important throughout the ISLME for inter-island freight, linking the archipelagic islands with the rest of the region.

31. These important socio-economic and environmental benefits generated by marine and coastal ecosystems in the ISLME are under pressure from a variety of threats. Fishing pressure is increasing rapidly in the region, and several fisheries within the Indonesian area of the ISLME are at the point of significant collapse. Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, including significant transboundary fishing, is a serious threat to fishery resources. The Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (MMAF) estimates losses from IUU fishing in Indonesian waters amounting to USD20 billion per year, and similar estimates for Timor-Leste put the cost at US\$40 million per year. The socio-economic impacts of overexploitation of fisheries and IUU fishing include reduced economic returns and tax revenues, loss of employment of fisher families, conflicts between user groups, and loss of food sources for people and animals (including farmed fish). The use of fish poisons to catch aquarium and food fishes for the live reef fish trade is a serious problem in Indonesia. There is widespread habitat destruction of coral reefs from blast and cyanide fishing including extensive damage to benthic communities from previous trawling in the region, all of which undermine the functioning of ISLME's vital ecosystems.
32. Other significant and on-going degradation and loss of coastal and marine ecosystems in the ISLME region include important areas of biodiversity habitat and fisheries productivity such as mangrove forests, seagrass beds and coral reefs. These come under pressure from coastal development (urbanization, port development, industries, aquaculture, tourism facilities and other infrastructure), deforestation, forest degradation and unsustainable agricultural practices. Downstream impacts from high sediment loadings and suspended solids from erosion run-off and pollution from agricultural fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides, result in the eutrophication and deterioration of coastal water quality. Solid waste pollution and mining activity also produce plastics and toxic runoff and sedimentation into the ISLME. Sea-based sources of marine pollution including abandoned, lost and discarded fishing gear, emissions of oil, chemicals, sewage, discarded plastic waste arise from the thousands of vessels using the major shipping lanes that cross the ISLME.
33. Global climate change has been clearly identified as one of the most serious threats to coastal communities in the ISLME. The ISLME faces a broad range of threats from extreme weather events such increasing and more severe storms and storm surges, increasingly severe coastal erosion, salinization of coastal freshwater resources and soils, damage to ecosystem productivity. These are inevitable results of ocean warming, changing currents and acidification of seawater, sea level rise and other changes to coastal and marine habitats. All these threats will impact to some degree on coastal and fishery natural resources and the livelihoods of those who depend upon them.
34. The ISLME sits at the heart of the Indonesian and Timor-Leste archipelagic waters and is both a crossing point between the Indian and Pacific Oceans and a link between the other archipelagic seas and the seas of East and Southeast Asia. This makes the ISLME region a centrepiece of many trans-boundary issues and challenges within the region. The ISLME Project seeks to strengthen regional cooperation and support the effective and sustainable management of the ISLME. The Project will play a catalytic role in addressing transboundary

² 2015 Timor-Leste EITI Report

concerns by assisting Indonesia and Timor-Leste to restore and sustain coastal and marine fish stocks and associated biodiversity through the collaborative undertaking of a Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) and the development and subsequent implementation of a Strategic Action Programme (SAP). Implementation of the Project will be undertaken through three interlinked components supported by cross-cutting activities on project management, described below.

3.2 Project description

35. The *Enabling transboundary cooperation for sustainable management of the Indonesian Seas (ISLME Project)* [GCP/RAS/289/GFF - GEF ID-5768] is a \$29m (\$4m from GEF and \$25m from co-financing) GEF-FAO project implemented by the Governments of Indonesia and Timor-Leste in partnership with the FAO over a 48-month period. While the project was proposed to commence in 2016, several delays in developing the Implementation Agreement with Indonesia as well as impacts from COVID-19 meant that activity was slow to commence and did not really start until 2018. While originally due for completion in July 2021, the Project has recently had a no cost extension approved to extend the end date to December 2022.
36. The Global Environmental Objective (GEO) of the ISLME Project is to facilitate the implementation of ecosystem approaches to fisheries, aquaculture, and coastal management (EAFM/EAA/EBM) to ensure the sustainable development of ecosystem resources in the ISLME through a TDA/SAP. Working with government, industry, research and NGO partners, the Project Development Objective (PDO) is to improve the capacity of government, industry and community stakeholders within the ISLME to effectively utilize transboundary ecosystem-based approaches to the management of marine and coastal resources and ecosystems and to strengthen the resilience of coastal communities within the ISLME through promotion of responsible fishing practices and livelihood enhancement and diversification, contributing to food security and poverty eradication.
37. The Project has three interlinked components supported by crosscutting activities on project management, as follows:
 - **Component 1 - Identifying and addressing threats to the marine environment including unsustainable fisheries.** This component develops and seeks the endorsement of a SAP that will alleviate the pressures on the marine ecosystem. The development of the SAP is underpinned through a detailed TDA that will identify both transboundary and shared threats to the marine ecosystem within the ISLME. The development of both the TDA and SAP are informed by the information generation, capacity building and monitoring activities under components 2 and 3 and vice versa as is it implemented in parallel.
 - **Component 2 - Strengthening capacity for regional and sub-regional cooperation in marine resources management.** This component supports marine ecosystem management within the ISLME through strengthening capacity and resource management tools at multiple levels within government, local authority and communities. Stakeholders benefit from practical experiences in pilot projects in carrying out marine spatial planning and in implementing EAFM-based fisheries management plans and EAA-based aquaculture management plans. In addition, this component will assist (through institutional assessments and activities to address IUU fishing) with strengthening fishery governance within the ISLME region. The Project also supports strengthening of policies and programs for coastal and marine habitat

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

enhancement; strategies to support innovative alternative livelihoods, policy advice for sustainable small-scale fisheries, identification of options to reduce vulnerability of coastal communities to climate variation; and training in gender mainstreaming.

- **Component 3 - Co-ordination with regional information networks, monitoring of project impacts, and dissemination and exchange of information.** This component develops synergies with information networks in the ISLME region relevant to marine environmental and oceanographic monitoring, and monitors, consolidates and disseminates information on the Project and on management challenges and opportunities in the ISLME region to stakeholders. Dissemination of lessons learned and information exchange of the ISLME Project impacts and outputs supports policy reform and integration into regional and local decision-making.

4 Theory of change

38. A Theory of Change (ToC) was not developed for the Project at the project preparation phase so for the purposes of the MTR was reconstructed, using information from the ProDoc, particularly the results framework and logframe, and discussed and confirmed with stakeholders during MTR interviews.
39. Information is provided on anticipated outputs and outcomes and causal links as well as assumptions which have guided the project design rationale. The intervention logic and the causal links from activities to outputs presented in the ProDoc and logframe are coherent, and therefore remain unchanged in the reconstructed ToC presented. The ToC was assessed for consistency and a clear conceptual understanding of the project impact pathways during the data collection phase to become the TOC at MTR. The reconstructed ToC is presented in Figure 2.
40. The key assumption underlying the entire Project is that regional cooperation will be strengthened to support the effective and sustainable management of the ISLME, to address transboundary concerns by assisting Indonesia and Timor-Lesteto restore and sustain coastal and marine fish stocks and associated biodiversity through the collaborative development and subsequent implementation of the Strategic Action Programme (SAP), combined with strengthened capacity and tools to implement EBA/EAFM/EAA approaches beyond the life of the Project.
41. Several assumptions and risks are identified in the ProDoc's Logical framework (page 137) at the objective/ intermediate state and outcome levels. Where the Project or FAO has an ability to influence these assumptions, these have been classified as "drivers" in the reconstructed ToC. While all assumptions and drivers provided are valid and relevant, there are several assumptions and drivers that were not identified in the logframe – these have been included in the reconstructed ToC. Risks have been reformulated as assumptions (factors the Project or FAO has no control over).

4.1 Outputs to outcomes

42. The Outputs outlined in the ProDoc are logical and coherent for a project aiming to improve the capacity of stakeholders within the ISLME to effectively utilize transboundary ecosystem-based approaches to the management of marine and coastal resources and ecosystems and to strengthen the resilience of coastal communities within the ISLME through promotion of responsible fishing practices and livelihood enhancement and diversification, contributing to food security and poverty eradication. All Project Outputs proposed are considered necessary and are expected to lead to tangible outcomes. The Project is responding to needs common to both countries by working towards delivering on the Project Outputs.
43. For each Output sought, Outcomes are needed and play an important role in delivering the impacts desired. Reaching these Outcomes however, are based on significant drivers and assumptions, as identified in the logframe, and risk assessment of the ProDoc. They are discussed below and were confirmed during the data collection phase of the MTR.
44. To achieve the impacts anticipated, there are a number of significant assumptions, namely that there is political will and support (resources and stakeholder acceptance) to endorse the ISLME approach, collaborate on transboundary issues and adopt and implement the

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

SAP using EBA/EAFM/EAA approaches. In addition, that this approach be expanded beyond those countries involved in the Project to other LMEs and ongoing resources will be available to extend management tools, approaches and support post the Project. These are significant challenges for the Project and should be a part of the Project's exit strategy. The Project will have to provide a strong case to Indonesia and Timor-Leste, as well as adjacent LMEs for there to be strong political will to adopt the outcomes and lessons learned from this project, particularly given the changes in Ministers in both countries. Other factors (drivers) required for success, within the control of the Project include ensuring the human resources required to develop the TDA and SAP as well as other aspects are available and participate, pilot projects are used to inform policy and approaches and additional funding is found to implement the SAP. This is underpinned however by an assumption that there is strong support from all stakeholders for collaborating at all levels to implement the SAP through adopting ecosystem-based approaches to address key threats within the ISLME.

45. Outcomes under Component 1 are focused on the development of a regionally agreed TDA to inform the development and endorsement of the regional SAP. The activities under this component are straightforward, however, to achieve Outcome 1.1, reliance is dependent on having access to available information and that those holding that information are willing to share the data. It also requires the establishment of technical groups to undertake the work and that resource demands created by asking government staff and other experts to serve on many committees, working groups, advisory groups are managed. Also, it will be important that agreement can be reached on priority transboundary issues, causes and actions needed to address them. The linkages between these drivers are fundamental for there to be regional agreement on the transboundary threats and their root causes to the marine environment (including fisheries) in the ISLME. To achieve Outcome 1.2, there is an assumption that the TDA provides a sound basis for collaborative development of the SAP; there will be good stakeholder engagement in its development; there is high level political support; agreement can be reached on the priorities to address and how; there is continuing cooperation within the ISLME governance structure and collaboration; cooperation among personnel from different agencies and sectors, both within and between countries occurs; with EAFM/EAA/EBA being adopted and embedded within government processes.
46. Outcomes under Component 2 focus on strengthening capacity for regional and sub-regional cooperation in marine resources management. For achieving the outcomes sought in relation to capacity building activities and tools around EAFM/EAA/EBA, along with the outcomes of pilot projects and policy development, it will be fundamental for resource demands created by asking government staff and other experts to serve on many committees, working groups, advisory groups are managed, to ensure the relevant officers can engage in project activities at all levels, pilot projects are able to demonstrate positive outcomes to support the ISLME approach and again there is political will to strengthen policy.
47. Outcomes under Component 3 focus on co-ordination with regional information networks, monitoring of project impacts, and dissemination and exchange of information. Strengthened cooperation between fisheries, marine science, and natural resource monitoring networks to contribute to ecosystem-based approaches to management of the ISLME is underpinned by the data and information being available and willing to be shared and there being strong political will to work together. The success of the regional ISLME knowledge platform depends on whether other LMEs engage in the ISLME project

particularly in relation to improving the management of IUU fishing and have the capacity to do so.

4.2 *Project outcome and intermediate state to impact*

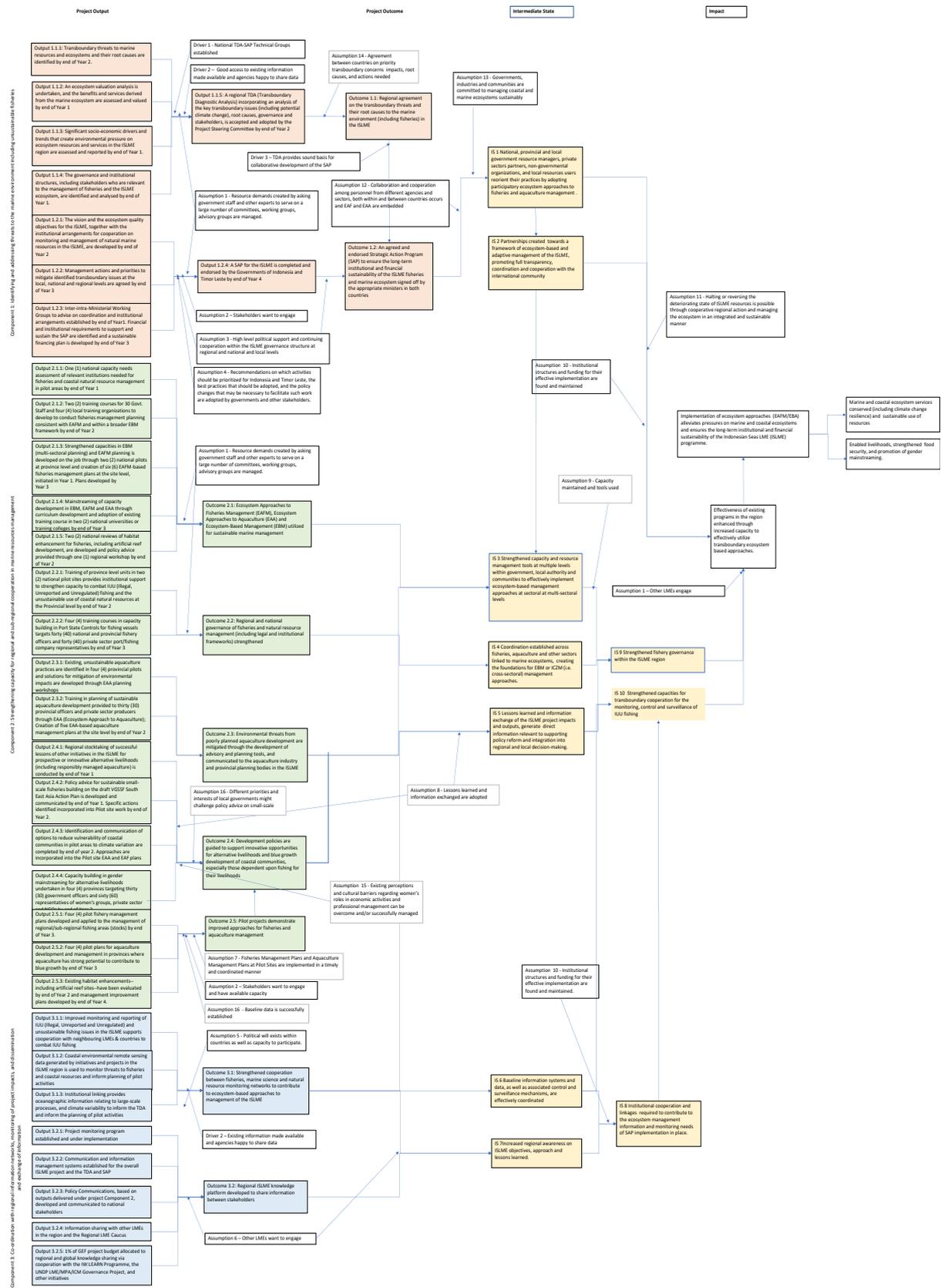
48. It is assumed for all Intermediate States that political and social willingness and resources will exist to engage and support Project initiatives, particularly in relation to implementing the SAP, and that access to and adoption of tools, approaches and policy frameworks compels Indonesia and Timor-Leste and other LMEs to apply EAA/EAFM/EBA approaches at all levels to deal with identified priority transboundary issues.
49. To achieve the impact desired for the Project, i.e the project objective *"to improve the capacity of stakeholders within the ISLME to effectively utilize transboundary ecosystem-based approaches to the management of marine and coastal resources and ecosystems and to strengthen the resilience of coastal communities within the ISLME through promotion of responsible fishing practices and livelihood enhancement and diversification, contributing to food security and poverty eradication"*, there are a number of intermediate states that need to be in place before achieving these impacts via each Outcome. To that end, intermediate states relevant to the Outcomes have been added in the reconstructed ToC, as follows.
- IS 1 National, provincial and local government resource managers, private sectors partners, non-governmental organizations, and local resources users reorient their practices by adopting participatory ecosystem approaches to fisheries and aquaculture management.
 - IS 2 Partnerships created towards a framework of ecosystem-based and adaptive management of the ISLME, promote full transparency, coordination, and cooperation with the international community.
 - IS 3 Strengthened capacity and resource management tools at multiple levels within government, local authority, and communities achieved to effectively implement ecosystem-based management approaches at sectoral at multi-sectoral levels.
 - IS 4 Coordination established across fisheries, aquaculture and other sectors linked to marine ecosystems, creates the foundations for EBM or ICZM (i.e. cross-sectoral) management approaches.
 - IS 5 Lessons learned and information exchange of the ISLME project impacts and outputs, generate direct information relevant to supporting policy reform and integration into regional and local decision-making.
 - IS 6 Baseline information systems and data, as well as associated control and surveillance mechanisms, are effectively coordinated.
 - IS 7 Increased regional awareness on ISLME objectives, approach and lessons learned occurs.
 - IS 8 Institutional cooperation and linkages required to contribute to the ecosystem management information and monitoring needs of SAP implementation is in place.
 - IS 9 Strengthened fishery governance is achieved within the ISLME region.
 - IS 10 Strengthened capacities for transboundary cooperation for the monitoring, control and surveillance of IUU fishing occurs.

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

50. It is also important to note the dependencies between Component 1 and Components 2 and 3 and their outputs/direct outcomes. The development of both the TDA and SAP will be informed by the success and learnings coming out of information generation, capacity building and monitoring activities under Components 2 and 3.
51. To move to the ultimate impact from the Project will take considerable time – something that is not represented well in the reconstructed ToC and is not intended within the Project timeframe. It will require strong political will and support (resources and stakeholder acceptance demonstrated through a strong business case) to ensure the effectiveness of existing programs in the region are enhanced through increased capacity to effectively utilize transboundary ecosystem-based approaches and there is continued regional coordination post the Project. Whether long-term institutional and financial sustainability of the ISLME Project is possible, through lasting political will and donor support will be key to the implementation of ecosystem approaches (EAFM/EAA/EBA). Having monitoring to demonstrate that actions are alleviating pressures on marine and coastal ecosystems will also be important. Reliance will be placed on FAO and the governments of Indonesia and Timor-Leste to coordinate these aspects. To the extent possible through the Project, it will be important that the Project ensures the outputs of the pilot projects and other components are shared between the participating countries and disseminated to other LMEs to ensure expansion to a regional transboundary approach.

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

Figure 2 Reconstructed theory of change for the ISLME Project



5 Key findings and MTR questions

5.1 Relevance

Alignment with FAO Strategic Objectives and higher goals - Highly Satisfactory

52. The ISLME project aligns to the FAO's Strategic Framework as follows:

- *Strategic objective:* SO2 Make agriculture, forests, and fisheries more productive and sustainable. *Organizational Outcome: 201* - Producers and natural resource managers adopt practices that increase and improve agricultural sector production in a sustainable manner. *Organizational Outcome: 202* - Stakeholders in member countries strengthen governance – the policies, laws, management frameworks and institutions that are needed to support producers and resource managers – in the transition to sustainable agricultural sector production systems.
- *Regional Priority Areas:* A & C
- *Regional Blue Growth Initiative:* Achieving more sustainable use of natural resources; strengthening governance over the use of natural resources; ensuring livelihoods and use of marine resources contributes to both human and environmental well-being.
- *Country Programming Framework Outcome:* FAO Country Programming Framework (CPF) for Timor-Leste 2015-2019, Priority Area 3: Smallholder fishery and aquaculture development to improve livelihoods and eradicate hunger and malnutrition; and FAO Country Programming Framework (CPF) for Timor-Leste 2015-2019, Priority Area 2: Sustainable Management of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Systems.

53. At the timing of the project design, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) had not been developed. The Project however clearly demonstrated its relevance to delivering the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. Of most relevance are Targets 2 (Biodiversity values integrated), 4 (Sustainable consumption and production), 5 (Habitat loss halved or reduced), 6 (Sustainable management of marine living resources), 7 (Sustainable agriculture, aquaculture and forestry), 10 (Pressures on vulnerable ecosystems reduced), 14 (Ecosystems and essential services safeguarded) and 15 (Ecosystems restored and resilience enhanced).

54. Regardless, the Project will also contribute to several Sustainable Development Goals including, SDG 1 No Poverty; SDG 2 Zero hunger; SDG 5 Gender Equality, SDG 12 Responsible production and consumption; SDG 13 Climate Change, SDG 14 Life below water; SDG 17 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions.

Alignment with regional, sub-regional and national environmental and development priorities, as well as GEF strategic priorities- Highly Satisfactory

55. The ISLME Project is playing a catalytic role in addressing transboundary concerns by assisting Indonesia and Timor-Leste to restore and sustain coastal and marine fish stocks and associated biodiversity and community livelihoods and improve coordination.

56. The Project is well designed and addresses strategic issues and priorities of the governments of Indonesia and Timor-Leste. It provides an important opportunity to bridge the gap between high level policies and on-the-ground policy implementation/action in both countries. There have been significant changes in the national legislative framework and policy environment in both countries since project

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

development in 2013/2014. The ISME Project however has remained highly relevant to current MAF/MMAF and Timor-Leste/Indonesia government priorities and aligns well with key national development and sector specific strategic plans. How the project is delivered has some flexibility, so strategies and pilot projects have been adapted to meet the changes in government priorities and focus.

57. The Project will contribute to the implementation of the *Coral Triangle Initiative - Coral, Fisheries and Food Security Regional Plan of Action*, particularly Goal 1: "Priority Seascapes" Designated and Effectively Managed; Goal 2: Ecosystem Approach to Management of Fisheries (EAFM) and other marine resources fully applied; and Goal 3 Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) established and effectively managed.
58. The Project will also support the implementation of the International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IPOA-IUU), elaborated within the framework of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.
59. The Project falls under the GEF International Waters (IW) 3 program "*Support foundational capacity building, portfolio learning, and targeted research needs for joint, ecosystem-based management of trans-boundary water systems*", and is relevant to the following IW 3 outcomes:
 - Outcome 3.1: Political commitment, shared vision, and institutional capacity demonstrated for joint, ecosystem-based management of water bodies and local ICM principles;
 - Outcome 3.2: On-the-ground modest actions implemented in water quality, quantity (including basins draining areas of melting ice), fisheries, and coastal habitat demonstrations for "blue forests" to protect carbon; and
 - Outcome 3.3: IW portfolio capacity and performance enhanced from active learning/KM/experience sharing.
60. The Project is likely to generate the following global environment benefits relevant to the GEF IW 3 program:
 - An agreed upon and endorsed TDA and SAP for the ISLME region;
 - Support for Integrated Coastal Management through marine and coastal spatial planning at 7 pilot sites;
 - Demonstrated local action through the implementation of EAFM and the EAA at 7 pilot sites and collaborative habitat enhancement activities at selected sites; and
 - Participation in regional and global (IW:LEARN) communities for sharing knowledge and experience on IW and LME issues.

Complementarity with existing interventions - Highly Satisfactory

61. The Project complements several other GEF projects underway in Indonesia and Timor-Leste, including *Management of Indonesian and Timor-Leste Transboundary Watersheds* (MITLTW) GEF 10679; *Coral Reef Rescue: Resilient Coral Reefs, Resilient Communities* GEF 10575; *IKAN Adapt: Strengthening the adaptive capacity, resilience and biodiversity conservation ability of fisheries and aquaculture-dependent livelihoods in Timor-Leste* GEF 10181, and several plastic and pollution related projects. All are focused in adjacent or similar geographic scopes and in addressing strengthening capacity and onground action

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

in areas such as fisheries management, marine protected area management, climate change resilience for communities.

62. The Project complements other projects such as the USAID *Sustainable Ecosystems Advanced* (SEAS) project in Indonesia and the Accelerating Aquaculture Development Activities in Timor-Leste Project,
63. The ISLME project also complements other regional projects in other adjacent LME areas such as the GEF funded Arafura and Timor Sea Ecosystem Action (ATSEA) Phase 1 and now Phase 2.

Relevance Finding - Highly Satisfactory

1. *The ISLME Project is playing a catalytic role in addressing transboundary concerns by assisting Indonesia and Timor-Leste to restore and sustain coastal and marine fish stocks and associated biodiversity and community livelihoods and improve coordination. It is well aligned to global, regional, FAO and GEF strategic frameworks and is delivering on several Aichi targets and SDGs.*
2. *The Project is well designed and addresses strategic issues and priorities of the governments of Indonesia and Timor-Leste. It provides an important opportunity to bridge the gap between high level policies and on-the-ground policy implementation/action in both countries.*

5.2 Effectiveness

64. The Project's reconstructed ToC (refer Section 4) was confirmed with stakeholders during the MTR consultations to validate its outcomes, intermediate states, causal pathways, impact drivers and assumptions. At this stage, no changes are required, and it holds true on all counts, noting performance has been impacted by a number of factors as discussed in Section 5.5 Factors Affecting Performance.

Achievement of project outputs/progress towards project outcomes - Moderately Satisfactory

65. As part of the assessment of the delivery of project outcomes and outputs, the MTR has assessed progress made towards the mid-term project targets using the Progress Towards Results table in Appendix 4. This table shows achievements at the midterm stage and provides MTR related commentary. Assessment of progress is colour-coded using a "traffic-light system", with a rating assigned to progress on each outcome using the standard GEF six-point rating scale. Recommendations are made for those areas marked as "not on target to be achieved" (red). The latest PPR report has been used (30 June 2021) supplemented with findings from the consultations. A no cost extension has recently been approved for the Project (since consultations were completed) and therefore those activities that may have been classified as not on target to be achieved previously, are now on target to be achieved, hence for outcomes, there are no red classifications.
66. The assessment of achievement should be read in combination with Section 5.5 Factors Affecting Performance as these factors have had significant impacts of the progress both in terms of quality and speed to date. The TDA process is well underway and some pilot activities in Indonesia and Timor-Leste have either been started or are completed.
67. Of most concern is the completion of the SAP under Component 1, which is the centrepiece of the Project. Even with the no cost extension, it is imperative that a streamlined approach is used to develop the SAP. It is critical that the TDA and SAP processes are well coupled -

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

technical people should be involved in both processes to ensure the SAP is evidence based and grounded in science, actions are at the right scale and there is strong ownership from relevant institutions, and they have an ability to be implemented.

68. Many of the national data collection, planning and assessment type activities in Indonesia and Timor-Leste under Component 2 are at an implementation stage, such as EAFM assessments of selected fishery commodities, the EAFM plan review, E- logbook work, post-harvest fisheries training etc. The major activities at pilot sites are yet to commence, as these are still at the planning stage. With a no cost extension now in place until December 2022, this will allow additional time for activities to be completed.
69. Activities under Component 3 are underway, however communication resources within the PMU are under-resourced which will impact on the Project being able to effectively deliver Outcome 3.2 *Regional ISLME knowledge platform developed to share information between stakeholders*. Additional dedicated resources are required to ensure knowledge outputs and communication and the website for the Project are successful in promoting the outcomes achieved.
70. As noted throughout this report, significant delays have meant project implementation did not really start until 2018, primarily as a result of:
 - Administrative challenges of complying with the Indonesia Ministry of Finance (MoF) regulation PMK 99/2017 delayed the signing of the Implementation Arrangement and implementation of all components;
 - COVID-19 pandemic has set most components back by at least a year and forced substantial changes to the way in which most components have been and/or will be implemented; and
 - Delays in appointing a full-time regional coordinator for the project.
71. While delays have been experienced, with a full-time project coordinator coming on board after mid 2019, progress speed has improved considerably, however continues to be impacted by COVID-19. This is likely to continue for the remaining time left for project implementation so it will be important that careful monitoring of progress, against likely ongoing issues from COVID-19 are adequately planned for. There have been some challenges with the quality of outputs produced, particularly by national consultants, and this has placed increased pressure on the PMU and international consultants to assist in rectifying shortcomings and ensuring final outputs are of a high quality.
72. Activities are seen as well integrated with governments, focused on the right priorities and are assisting in strengthening fisheries management and aquaculture in both countries and opening dialogue on transboundary issues such as IUU fishing, as confirmed during consultations. Those consulted indicated the Project is adding value at national and local levels and strengthening capacity of individuals, organisations and the enabling environment. In Timor-Leste, however there is a general perception within government that many of the projects coming into Timor-Leste do not have enough activities giving back to community. This perception exists for ISLME as the consultation with some officials indicated they see nothing tangible on ground with communities that will leave sustainable results. It will be very important going into the SAP development phase that significant political will exists from Ministers in both countries to ensure the value of the Project is clearly understood and that senior officials understand that another project is to follow that will see the implementation of the SAP where the value will be realised, both within communities, at the national level and for transboundary issues.

Degree of attainment of project objectives and higher-level results, including an assessment of the likelihood of longer-term impacts

73. Based on the reconstructed ToC in Section 4 Theory of Change and as shown in Figure 2, the outputs under each Component are logically connected (from cause to effect) to intended outcomes, as are intended outcomes logically connected to the Project's desired impact. As confirmed during the consultations, all essential outputs and outcomes to achieve the project objective were considered in the project design. It is unlikely though, that attainment of the project objective *"to improve the capacity of stakeholders within the ISLME to effectively utilize transboundary ecosystem-based approaches to the management of marine and coastal resources and ecosystems and to strengthen the resilience of coastal communities within the ISLME through promotion of responsible fishing practices and livelihood enhancement and diversification, contributing to food security and poverty eradication"*, will occur within the life of the Project.
74. As noted in Section 4, the key assumption underlying the entire Project is that regional cooperation will be strengthened to support the effective and sustainable management of the ISLME, to address transboundary concerns by assisting Indonesia and Timor-Leste to restore and sustain coastal and marine fish stocks and associated biodiversity through the collaborative development and subsequent implementation of the SAP, combined with strengthened capacity and tools to implement EBA/EAFM/EAA approaches beyond the life of the project. At this stage, it appears that this assumption still holds and the activities being undertaken under each component are designed to work together to ensure this.
75. To achieve the outcomes anticipated, there are a number of significant assumptions. These are significant challenges for the Project and should be a part of the Project's exit strategy. Key strategies to ensure key drivers and risks are acted upon include:
- In particular, that there is political will and support (resources and stakeholder acceptance) to endorse the ISLME approach, collaborate on transboundary issues and adopt and implement the SAP using EBA/EAFM/EAA approaches. Little effort has been made to date to ensure strong political will for the Project, all the more relevant with the changes in Ministers that have occurred in both countries over the lifetime of the project. Political will is imperative to drive any lasting impact, whether at the national or transboundary level, particularly as a key focus will need to be ensuring priorities developed in the SAP are included within departmental workplans and budgets, and actions taken to secure funding for their implementation.
 - Expanded the results of the Project beyond those countries involved in the Project to other LMEs and ensuring ongoing resources will be available to extend management tools, approaches and support post the Project will be fundamental. The Project will also have to provide a strong case to Indonesia and Timor-Leste, as well as adjacent LMEs for there to be strong political will to adopt the outcomes and lessons learned from this Project, particularly given the changes in Ministers in both countries. . While some steps have been taken to date under Component 3, the limited communication and knowledge management capacity in the project, unless addressed will mean that communication is ineffective and does not achieve the reach sought.
 - Other factors (drivers) required for success, within the control of the Project include ensuring the human resources required (both technical and policy) to develop the TDA and SAP as well as other aspects are available and participate, pilot projects are used to inform policy and approaches and additional funding is found to implement the

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

SAP. This is underpinned however by an assumption that there is strong support from all stakeholders for collaborating at all levels to implement the SAP through adopting ecosystem-based approaches to address key threats within the ISLME. Again, effective communication will be key to ensuring collaboration. Also, ensuring there is minimal time between the completion of the SAP and obtaining funding for its implementation will help in reducing risks associated with changes in government priorities, corporate knowledge etc.

- It is also important to note the dependencies between Component 1 and Components 2 and 3 and their outputs/direct outcomes. The development of the TDA and SAP will be informed by the success and learnings coming out of information generation, capacity building and monitoring activities under Components 2 and 3.

76. To achieve the impact desired for the Project, i.e., the project objective, there are a number of intermediate states that will need to be in place before achieving these impacts via each Outcome. It is assumed that to reach the Intermediate States identified in the ToC (Figure 2) that political and social willingness and resources will exist to engage and support Project initiatives, particularly in relation to implementing the SAP, and that access to and adoption of tools, approaches and policy frameworks compels Indonesia and Timor-Leste and other LMEs to apply EAA/EAFM/EBA approaches at all levels to deal with identified priority transboundary issues. An assessment at the midterm for how the Project is tracking against achieving these intermediate states is provided below:

- Partially achieved - *IS 1 National, provincial and local government resource managers, private sectors partners, non-governmental organizations, and local resources users reorient their practices by adopting participatory ecosystem approaches to fisheries and aquaculture management.* There is strong support and commitment in both countries to adopt ecosystem-based approaches.
- Partially achieved - *IS 2 Partnerships created towards a framework of ecosystem-based and adaptive management of the ISLME, promote full transparency, coordination, and cooperation with the international community.* Some discussions have commenced both within and between Indonesia and Timor-Leste with respect to transboundary issues like EAFM, IUU fishing etc.
- Partially achieved - *IS 3 Strengthened capacity and resource management tools at multiple levels within government, local authority, and communities achieved to effectively implement ecosystem-based management approaches at sectoral and multi-sectoral levels.* Training and tool development is occurring as a part of the Project.
- Partially achieved - *IS 4 Coordination established across fisheries, aquaculture and other sectors linked to marine ecosystems, creates the foundations for EBM or ICZM (integrated Coastal Zone management (ICZM) (i.e. cross-sectoral) management approaches.* Training and capacity building both within and between Indonesia and Timor-Leste with respect to ecosystem-based approaches is occurring.
- Partially achieved - *IS 5 Lessons learned and information exchange of the ISLME project impacts and outputs, generate direct information relevant to supporting policy reform and integration into regional and local decision-making.* Some steps have been taken through attending other LME events and through sharing information on the IW:LEARN knowledge platform.
- Partially achieved - *IS 6 Baseline information systems and data, as well as associated control and surveillance mechanisms, are effectively coordinated.* Some steps have been

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

taken to collect baseline data, and discussions on control and surveillance mechanisms are occurring in both countries.

- Not yet achieved - *IS 7 Increased regional awareness on ISLME objectives, approach and lessons learned occurs.* There is very little knowledge and awareness about the ISLME project at the regional level outside of those directly involved in the Project.
 - Partially achieved - *IS 8 Institutional cooperation and linkages required to contribute to the ecosystem management information and monitoring needs of SAP implementation is in place.* Some activities are working towards this, although it will be expanded with the development of the SAP.
 - Partially achieved - *IS 9 Strengthened fishery governance is achieved within the ISLME region.* Both countries have improved regulatory and policy frameworks around fisheries and aquaculture, although onground implementation has been limited at this stage.
 - Partially achieved - *IS 10 Strengthened capacities for transboundary cooperation for the monitoring, control and surveillance of IUU fishing occurs.* Discussions have occurred within and between Indonesia and Timor-Leste and continue.
77. To move to the ultimate impact from the Project will take considerable time – something that is not represented well in the reconstructed ToC and is not intended within the Project timeframe. It will again, require strong political will and support (resources and stakeholder acceptance demonstrated through a strong business case) to ensure the effectiveness of existing programs in the region are enhanced through increased capacity to effectively utilize transboundary ecosystem-based approaches and there is continued regional coordination post the Project. Whether long-term institutional and financial sustainability of the ISLME Project is possible, through lasting political will and donor support will be key to the implementation of ecosystem approaches (EAFM/EAA/EBA). Having monitoring to demonstrate that actions are alleviating pressures on marine and coastal ecosystems will also be key. Reliance will be placed on FAO and the governments of Indonesia and Timor-Leste to coordinate these aspects. To the extent possible through the Project, it will be important that the Project ensures the outputs of the pilot projects and other components are shared between the participating countries and disseminated to other LMEs to ensure expansion to a regional transboundary approach.

Effectiveness Findings - Moderately satisfactory

1. *The Project's reconstructed ToC was confirmed with stakeholders during the MTR consultations to validate its outcomes, intermediate states, causal pathways, impact drivers and assumptions. At this stage, no changes are required, and it holds true on all counts, noting performance has been impacted by a number of factors as discussed in Section 5.5 Factors Affecting Performance.*
2. *Achievement of project outputs towards outcomes has been impacted by significant delays to the Project. Of most concern is the completion of the SAP under Component 1, which is the centrepiece of the Project. Even with the no cost extension, it is imperative that a streamlined approach is used to develop the SAP. It is critical that the TDA and SAP processes are well coupled - technical people should be involved in both processes to ensure the SAP is evidence based and grounded in science, actions are at the right scale and there is strong ownership from relevant institutions, and they have an ability to be implemented.*
3. *With a no cost extension now in place until December 2022, this will allow additional time for all activities to be completed. While delays have been experienced, with a full-time project coordinator since mid 2019, progress speed has improved considerably, however continues to be impacted by COVID-19. This is likely to continue for the remaining time left for Project implementation so it will be important that careful monitoring of progress, against likely ongoing issues from COVID-19 are adequately planned for.*
4. *Activities are seen as well integrated with governments, focused on the right priorities and are assisting in strengthening fisheries management and aquaculture in both countries and opening dialogue on transboundary issues such as IUU fishing, as confirmed during consultations. Those consulted indicated the Project is adding value at national and local levels and strengthening capacity of individuals, organisations and the enabling environment.*
5. *Based on the reconstructed ToC, the outputs under each Component are logically connected (from cause to effect) to intended outcomes, as are intended outcomes logically connected to the Project's desired impact. As confirmed during the consultations, all essential outputs and outcomes to achieve the project objective were considered in the project design.*
6. *To achieve the outcomes anticipated, there are a number of significant assumptions. These pose significant challenges for the Project and should be a part of the Project's exit strategy. Of most importance is ensuring there is strong political will and support (resources and stakeholder acceptance) to endorse the ISLME approach, collaborate on transboundary issues and adopt and implement the SAP using EBA/EAFM/EAA approaches. Little effort has been made to date to ensure strong political will for the Project, all the more relevant with the changes in Ministers that have occurred in both countries over the lifetime of the Project. Political will is imperative to drive any lasting impact, whether at the national or transboundary level, particularly as a key focus will need to be ensuring priorities developed in the SAP are included within departmental workplans and budgets, or actions taken to secure funding for their implementation.*
7. *To move to the ultimate impact from the Project will take considerable time – something that is not intended within the Project timeframe. It will again require strong political will and support (resources and stakeholder acceptance demonstrated through a strong business case) to ensure the effectiveness of existing programs in the region are enhanced through increased capacity to effectively utilize transboundary ecosystem-based approaches and*

there is continued regional coordination post the Project. Whether long-term institutional and financial sustainability of the ISLME program is possible, through lasting political will and donor support will be key to the implementation of ecosystem approaches (EAFM/EAA/EBA). Having monitoring to demonstrate that actions are alleviating pressures on marine and coastal ecosystems will also be important. Reliance will be placed on FAO and the governments of Indonesia and Timor-Leste to coordinate these aspects. To the extent possible through the Project, it will be important that the Project ensures the outputs of the pilot projects and other components are shared between the participating countries and disseminated to other LMEs to ensure expansion to a regional transboundary approach.

5.3 Efficiency

Cost effectiveness of the project - Satisfactory

78. The Project is generally being delivered cost effectively by the PMU under FAO internal processes, by a small team (consisting of regional and national level staff) with clear activities, deliverables, and reporting requirements in place. While having a light touch approach may reduce administrative costs for the Project, it is placing significant workloads on regional and national staff, particularly in Indonesia where the level of bureaucracy to comply with government regulations is high. For example, there are differing reporting systems in FAO and Indonesia and a lack of clarity and understanding of the complexities with respect to financial reporting to satisfy the Indonesia Ministry of Finance (MoF) requirements has posed a major obstacle to timely completion of financial reporting, with significant problems during inception/initial administrative steps, implementation, and reporting. This has placed significant pressure on the Regional Coordinator and National Project Officer.
79. While the PMU is managing the project well, areas for strengthening include improving forward planning and budgetary implications so that there is clear understanding from all project team members of the status of planned activities to improve coordination. It was suggested that regular project task force meetings be introduced by the Budget Holder, Lead Technical Officer (LTO) and the funding liaison officer in Rome. The purpose would be to discuss managerial issues and key technical challenges or substance that effect managerial issues. This could allow, say quarterly forward planning to strengthen project planning and performance and allow the LTO and budget holder to understand upcoming activities and then support technical teams to do the work without delays and review processes. This would also allow all participating in the meeting to understand the bigger picture and streamline processes.
80. The impact of COVID-19 has placed increased pressure on the PMU to pivot the Project to a primarily online approach to delivery given travel restrictions in place in both countries. It has required an adaptive use of resources, for example, through undertaking the TDA consultation process in an 'online' environment the Project has pioneered the use of online, participatory workshop survey and assessment tools (e.g. Mentimeter), which were reported as very popular with the workshop participants as they could see their technical inputs presented graphically, in real-time, and how issues and priorities are identified.
81. However, this adaptive use of resources, to make up time lost from COVID-19 has not always provided the most cost-effective outcomes. While in Indonesia, there are many good consultants that can produce high quality work, in Timor-Leste there is less capacity, particularly with respect to report writing. National consultants can require considerable

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

capacity building, and this can lead to poor quality results, inefficiencies and much reworking by international consultants. In one case for the ISLME project, using national capacity, rather than international consultants to speed up delivery for a significant piece of work, has impacted on quality of outputs. The contract in Indonesia to deliver the Indonesia thematic study, required significant reworking by the International Consultant for the TDA as the national consultant failed to provide a report that met the scope of work. From discussions with international consultants for ISLME and other projects, there is a perceived expectation that international consultants will build capacity of national consultants, without time of budget being allocated for this. In this case, some additional days were added to the international consultant budget to allow for this, although this most likely would have been insufficient given the reworking required.

82. The process for engaging and managing international and national consultants should be reviewed to ensure adequate reference checks are undertaken, the consultants put forward to undertake the work are the ones who do it and contractual obligations are met. Additional 'criteria' should be applied for companies/consultants/individuals, to be classified (and paid) as 'international' consultants, beyond employment history. For e.g. referee reports, recent publications, etc. For 'organisations' which consult, all projects should have a minimum percentage of time (days) performed by 'international consultants' on the project team to provide quality assurance. . It is important that the consulting company also ensures that there is quality assurance of the deliverable prior to submission.
83. It is important to get the balance right between building capacity of national consultants and receiving high quality expert products, particularly where budgets for international consultants have been reduced. If capacity building of national consultants is a priority then an adequate, separate budget item should be allocated and it included in the project design as standard activities. For this project, it is understood the priority for capacity building relates to national institutions and governments
84. Consultation from those stakeholders in Indonesia and Timor-Leste indicated that budgets allocated for activities in most cases were reasonable, however one person consulted indicated the budget allocated for marine protected areas activities was considered too small and should be increased to reflect the importance of MPAs. Regardless, for activities in each component MMAF and MAF has looked for ways to build synergy between activities funded under the ISLME project and other activities as a way to improve cost efficiencies and effectiveness of the ISLME project.
85. In Timor-Leste, when in the field there is a preference to work with local people/CSOs as it is more cost effective. Effort is made to also work with other projects, such as ATSEA 2 to reduce the risk of duplication of effort and synchronise and share costs where it makes sense to do that and objectives for both projects can be met. Effort is also made to use government offices for meetings to keep costs low.

Timeliness of activities - Moderately unsatisfactory

86. Significant delays experienced by the ISLME have meant project implementation did not really start until mid 2018, however the PMU and those involved in the project have worked hard to speed up activities as much as possible to make up for lost time. The delays were primarily because of:
 - Administrative challenges in complying with the Indonesia Ministry of Finance regulation PMK 99/2017 which delayed the signing of the project implementation agreement and commencement of implementation of all components;

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

- The COVID-19 pandemic has set most components back by at least a year and forced substantial changes to the way in which most components have been and/or will be implemented; and
 - A full-time regional coordinator for the project was not appointed until mid 2019, 2 years after the project had started.
87. With the delays experienced to the Project, as a matter of urgency the PSC should review and optimise the workplan to ensure that what is still to be done can be achieved within the timeframe available. It will be important to ensure a strategic and flexible approach to implement a modified workplan to achieve the project goal, leverage adaptations to build sustainability (maximise production of virtual materials/systems), mainstream gender equity and human rights aspects and ensure value (by way of onground outcomes) are seen by governments. It will be important to balance spending the funds provided while maintaining quality outcomes that increase tangible benefits to beneficiaries and stakeholders wanting to participate. It is noted that a no cost extension has recently been approved to provide the Project with additional time for completion of activities. The Project was due to finish on 19 July 2021 but is now extended to 31 December 2022. This was as per the endorsement by Implementation Agreement with Indonesia and also the decision of the second PSC.
88. Competing priorities and business of government officials in Indonesia and Timor-Leste, as well as lack of coordination have impacted on the timeliness of delivery of some activities on occasion. For example, where on ground activities were to be undertaken in Fisheries Management Area 573, in Indonesia, rather than coordinate staff and activities to undertake both activities at once, two trips were required to Lombok, when with a little forward-planning, the one field team could have consisted of the people required to undertake both EAA assessments to save cost. In Timor-Leste, due to conflicting priorities the preferred consultants were not available to undertake the Scoping Study for aquaculture and fisheries. As an alternate, two senior officers in MAF requested to undertake the work however competing priorities and other business meant that there was additional work required on the part of the International Consultant and PMU to strengthen the quality of the outputs and report.
89. Ongoing challenges with capacity, for example in Indonesia relating to facilitation skills in meetings to drive outcomes and a focus on administration issues is also causing delays in agreeing decisions and moving activities forward from concept development to implementation. As a result, it can take many meetings with government officials to achieve an outcome. While the FAO has sought to streamline processes as much as possible it is the responsibility of government officials to run meetings to achieve outcomes. Leadership and facilitation training should be undertaken for those leading meetings within government to ensure meetings are action oriented and outcome focused, and decisions/actions documented. A formal 'outcome' and 'actions arising' system should be introduced for all meetings to record outcomes and decisions and actions, so that actions are not lost, and progress tracked.
90. To better balance time spent on substance versus administration issues and improve alignment with departmental priorities (including co-financing), government officials at all levels need to be more actively engaged. Less reliance needs to be placed on one-on-one informal discussions. Monthly or quarterly meetings should be held, led by MMAF, to understand progress, undertake forward planning, discuss budget and logistics

implications and identify solutions to address issues effecting implementation. A set standard agenda should be used where administration issues are discussed last.

Efficiency findings - Moderately satisfactory

1. *The Project is generally being delivered cost effectively by the PMU under FAO internal processes, by a small team with clear activities, deliverables, and reporting requirements in place.*
2. *A light touch approach within the PMU is placing significant workloads on regional and national staff, particularly in Indonesia where the level of bureaucracy to comply with government regulations is high.*
3. *The impact of COVID-19 has placed increased pressure on the project team to pivot the project to a primarily online approach to delivery given travel restrictions in place in both countries. It has resulted in an innovative and adaptive use of resources.*
4. *Improving forward planning and budgetary implications so that there is clear understanding from all project team members of the status of planned activities to improve coordination is needed. Regular project task force meetings could be introduced by the Budget Holder, Lead Technical Officer (LTO) and the Funding Liaison Officer in Rome to discuss managerial issues and key technical challenges or substance that effect managerial issues. Forward planning to strengthen project planning and performance and allow LTO budget holders to understand upcoming activities and then support technical teams to do the work without delays and review is important.*
5. *National consultants can require considerable capacity building, and this can lead to poor quality results, inefficiencies and much reworking by international consultants.*
6. *Competing priorities and business of government officials in Indonesia and Timor-Leste, as well as lack of coordination have impacted on the timeliness of delivery of some activities on occasion.*
7. *Ongoing challenges with capacity, for example in Indonesia relating to facilitation skills in meetings to drive outcomes is causing delays to reaching agreement on decisions and moving activities forward from concept development to implementation.*
8. *A no cost extension has been approved to provide the Project with additional time for completion of activities. The Project was due to finish on 19 July 2021 but is now extended to 31 December 2022.*
9. *Significant delays experienced by the ISLME have meant project implementation did not really start until mid 2018. With the delays experienced to the Project, as a matter of urgency the PSC should review and optimise the workplan to ensure that what is still to be done can be achieved within the extended timeframe with a no cost extension now in place.*

5.4 Sustainability - Moderately unlikely

91. In reviewing sustainability, consideration has been given to socio-political, financial and institutional and governance and environmental related risks.
92. Exit strategies have not been developed for the ISLME project.
93. A key lesson from ATSEA 1 was that the TDA and SAP processes were not coupled enough, and there was considerable delay between the development of the SAP and its

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

implementation under ATSEA 2. For ISLME, these lessons should be incorporated in any exit strategy. It is critical that technical people are involved in both processes to ensure the SAP is evidence based and grounded in science, actions are at the right scale and there is strong ownership from relevant institutions, and they have an ability to be implemented. In addition, a key mitigation measure will be to develop strategies to ensure the SAP implementation is not delayed, to reduce the risk of memory loss, changes in government priorities and intuitional changes. For example, the timeliness of preparation of the next proposal relating to the funding of the SAP implementation will be important to reduce delays.

94. A core part of the exit strategy will also need to be ensuring strong political will for the SAP and TDA so as to reduce delays in signoff from both countries. This is also yet to happen, given the focus has been on completing the TDA. With changes in Ministers in both countries, it is imperative that the minister of the day is supportive of the project and understands the value it brings to each country.
95. The activities being supported under Component 2 of ISLME in both countries build on the priorities of current government programs, with a focus on strengthening or progressing processes, for example in relation to the implementation of EBFM/EAA. In most cases, however, pilot projects being introduced through the ISLME project, particularly in Timor-Leste are one off projects that do not have a plan at this stage to ensure continuation through to implementation beyond when the ISLME Project ends. Mechanisms to introduce these projects into MAF and MMAF annual budget preparation programs will be important in this regard. A challenge in Timor-Leste to consider is the ongoing changes in leadership within MAF. At an administration level, these changes can mean delays in senior officials getting up to speed on pilot projects and ensuring that they are included within annual budget programmes. In Indonesia, with greater capacity, it is likely pilot project activities will be built into annual budgetary processes, however it will be important for the ISLME project to ensure capacity needs and priorities that may affect implementation are identified and also planned for.
96. Ongoing participation in both countries will depend on how well the remaining Project activities, particularly the SAP are incorporated in Government planning, eg for continuing transboundary fisheries management cooperation relating to IUU fishing. This will mean, not just engaging with fisheries agencies, but also foreign affairs and other relevant parts of government. Certainly, COVID-19 and the impacts of Tropical Cyclone Seroja have degraded the Timor-Leste Government attention in meeting the co-financing commitment made to the ISLME project as priority has now shifted to the most pressing urgency of the day, so having strong political support and embedding activities into government programs going forward will be key to ensuring priorities do not drop off.
97. An exit strategy should be developed for the Project as a matter of urgency so that planning and activities can be amended and adapted as required to ensure transboundary and related national activities are included in ministerial/government departmental budgets and programs, ongoing capacity is in place within governments and other stakeholders, and gaps in capacity are understood and can be addressed, such as in preparing proposals for funding to support implementation beyond the Project.
98. Transboundary and environmental issues should be a priority of fisheries ministries in both countries and linked to diplomatic actions with national ministries dealing with foreign affairs. As a matter of urgency, given the importance of achieving signoff and ongoing national ownership to implement the SAP, and the changes that have occurred at

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

ministerial levels within Indonesia and Timor-Leste, regular ministerial briefings and other actions to strengthen ties between implementing and diplomatic ministries are required to build rapport to secure ongoing ownership of the implementation of the SAP, both at the transboundary and national levels by each country.

99. It is too early to see any evidence of replication or scaling of project results. However, it is intended that the pilot activities, recently underway will inform the development of the SAP and act as a vehicle for applied capacity building and up-scaling of processes and lessons learned. For example, the Project will upscale lessons learned in implementing EAFM and EAA based management plans at the pilot level with the strengthening of provincial and regional level management plans in both countries. It is intended that the SAP will focus on replicating the successful elements of the pilot activities on EAFM and EAA based resource management throughout the region.

Sustainability findings - Moderately unlikely

- 1. An exit strategy should be developed for the Project as a matter of urgency so that planning and activities can be amended and adapted as required to ensure transboundary and related national activities are included in ministerial/government departmental budgets and programs, ongoing capacity is in place within governments and other stakeholders, and gaps in capacity are understood and can be addressed, such as in preparing proposals for funding to support implementation beyond the Project.*
- 2. Transboundary and environmental issues should be a priority of fisheries ministries in both countries and linked to diplomatic actions with national ministries dealing with foreign affairs. As a matter of urgency, given the importance of achieving signoff and ongoing national ownership to implement the SAP, and the changes that have occurred at ministerial levels within Indonesia and Timor-Leste, regular ministerial briefings and other actions to strengthen ties between implementing and diplomatic ministries are required to build rapport to secure ongoing ownership of the implementation of the SAP, both at the transboundary and national levels by each country.*
- 3. It is critical that technical people involved in the TDA process are also involved in the development of the SAP to ensure it is evidence based and grounded in science, actions are at the right scale and there is strong ownership from relevant institutions, and they have an ability to be implemented. In addition, a key mitigation measure will be to develop strategies to ensure the SAP implementation is not delayed, to reduce the risk of memory loss, changes in government priorities and institutional changes. For example, the timeliness of preparation of the next proposal relating to the funding of the SAP implementation will be important to reduce delays.*

5.5 Factors affecting performance

Project design and readiness - Satisfactory

100. The ISLME Project had strong stakeholder engagement from government, academia, NGOs and industry in its initial design across the three components, based on the priorities of governments and other stakeholders at the time. The Project's design allowed for considerable flexibility with respect to how the three components are implemented (the activities and lower-level targets), given that around five years has passed since its initial design and its implementation. It has allowed for changes in government priorities and also readiness and capacity, particularly in Indonesia where

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

capacity on EBFM had increased significantly since the design phase. This flexibility has enabled the Project to remain viable and has meant the current priorities of both governments could become the focus of pilot projects in Component 2.

101. Given the significant effort made to ensure the Project aligned to government priorities, its technical and strategic focus is sound and set at a level that meets the readiness of both countries.
102. Given the differences in readiness between Timor-Leste and Indonesia in terms of stakeholder, particularly government capacity, it will be important going forward that as a part of strengthening transboundary cooperation, knowledge transfer occurs to strengthen the capacity of Timor-Leste and that both countries take advantage of the Project to strengthen how each country works together as to increase the frequency of sharing learnings. Increasing the frequency of sharing of learnings and taking more advantage of the transboundary nature of the Project will allow Timor-Leste to learn more about how Indonesia deals with issues and to work better together rather than working separately. Learning exchanges could be considered for government officials to help increase the capacity of Timor-Leste.

Quality of project execution and management arrangements (including assessment of risks) - Satisfactory

103. Project execution for the ISLME project has been challenging, largely due to the complicated management arrangements necessary for all projects within Indonesia - to register the project, establish the Implementation Arrangement and then in its execution to ensure Ministry of Finance requirements are followed. As a result, the finalising of the Implementation Arrangement caused considerable delay to the Project and having to report under both the FAO and Indonesian reporting systems, that do not align has also placed administration burdens on the PMU. It is understood steps have been undertaken to streamline processes as much as possible.
104. Risks for the Project were initially identified in the ProDoc. Ongoing risk identification and assessment is undertaken by the PSC at a holistic level and by the PMU at a project implementation level, however implementation of mitigation measures has not always occurred in a timely fashion. For example, while it is well understood of the need for political will for the signoff of the SAP, it is yet to occur, given the focus has been on completing the TDA and trying to make up for lost time because of COVID-19 delays.

Financial management and co-financing - Moderately Unsatisfactory

105. As at 30 June 2021, the project has spent \$1,302,469 or 32.5% of the \$4,000,000 GEF funded budget (refer below table). Financial reporting is not undertaken by component but rather budget line, so the table below shows the total spent to date, by budget line item, as reported in the December PPR. The underspend in funding reflects the delays incurred by the project as discussed previously. Budget revisions will be required and are proposed with the no cost extension to December 2022.

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

Summary of budget utilisation of ISLME project as on 30 Jun 2021 (corrected to actuals leaving out commitments)

	Budget as per project document	Yearwise actual expenses					Total expenses as on 30 Jun 2021
		2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
2017-2021							
5011 Salaries Professional	946,476						
5013 Consultants	1,292,500		91,555	197,209	265,317	140,354	694,436
5014 Contracts	148,000		-	129,690	105,946	42,781	278,416
5020 Locally Contracted Labour	0		1,198	214			1,412
5021 Travel	251,600		24,793	43,099	17,535	3,083	88,509
5023 Training	717,000		16,287	56,903	45,473	27,836	146,499
5024 Expendable Procurement	147,000		243	8,740	3,428	1,202	13,613
5025 Non Expendable Procurement	431,424		3,282	4,762			8,044
5028 General Operating Expenses	66,000	750	4,865	19,814	39,719	6,377	71,525
5040 General Operating Expenses - external common services	0		14	-			14
Grand Total	4,000,000	750	142,238	460,431	477,418	221,632	1,302,469

Notes: * As all the project staff are consultants on contract the salaries are charged under 5013 Consultants and not under 5011 Professional salaries. 5011 is to be merged with 5013. The salary for national Project Managers was only budgeted for 1 year. This needs to be extended to 4 years which means budget adjustment from 5013 Consultants.

** The project is entering into more contracts for the activities rather than hiring consultants. So budget adjustment may be required.

106. A budget revision is currently being approved by the FAO. It has been examined as a part of the MTR and it appears to address the major budget line shifts being proposed in the notes to the table above.
107. Financial management has been challenging for FAO and MMAF (Director General Capture Fisheries) with respect to compliance with Ministry of Finance requirements, especially Deliverable related (BAST) documents (content and timeliness) in accordance with the Revised Implementation Agreement (dated 28 January 2021), as well as ensuring GEF 5 requirements for how funds can be transferred to governments is also met. There is an urgent need for a more streamlined approach, and it is understood steps are being taken to address the challenges. Timor-Leste does not have an Implementation Agreement, so it has been easier for the FAO in working to resolve any issues quickly.
108. Co-financing materialised as of 30 June 2021 was US\$2,986,569, or 11.9% of that proposed in the ProDoc of \$25,114,000 (Governments \$15,184,000, FAO \$2,570,000 and Donor Institutions and NGOs \$7,360,000). A summary of co-finance materialised is presented below, noting that the level of co-financing received to date is much lower than what it is likely to be, given Indonesia is yet to provide their co-financing and Timor-Leste

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

is most likely underreporting as it may not reflect all activities of relevance in the north of the country that are contributing to the project. It is important to note also that there was a long gap between confirming commitments of co-finance from different partners and when the project implementation started. By this time, the priorities of some of the partners such as CSIRO may have changed and levels of co-financing will need to be reconfirmed.

Co-finance consolidation as of 30 June 2021

Sources of Co-financing ³	Name of Co-financer	Type of Co-financing	Amount Confirmed at CEO endorsement / approval	Actual Amount Materialized at 30 June 2021	Actual Amount Materialized at Midterm or closure (confirmed by the review/evaluation team)
National Government	Govt of Indonesia	Inkind	12,550,000	Yet to get details	Yet to get details
National Government	Govt of Indonesia	Grant		Yet to get details	Yet to get details
National Government	Govt of Timor-Leste	Inkind	2,634,000	104,727	104,727
National Government	Govt of Timor-Leste	Grant		269,787	269,787
Bilateral	CSIRO	Grant	2,740,000	0	0
INGO	WorldFish	Grant	1,200,000	1,196,746	1,196,746
Bilateral	NZAID	Grant	3,270,000	105,381	105,381
INGO	Wildlife Conservation Society	Grant	150,000	842,362	842,362
GEF Agency	FAO	Grant	2,450,000	376,666	376,666
GEF Agency	FAO	Inkind	120,000	90,900	90,900
TOTAL			25,114,000	2,986,569	2,986,569*

Notes: *Incomplete as the large proportion of Co -Finance from the Government of Indonesia in not reported yet.

109. In both countries there is a lack of coordination and understanding of co-financing commitments within MMAF and MAF. As a result, it is likely reported materialised co-finance is lower than what it actually is. For example, in MMAF confusion exists with respect to how co-finance is calculated, noting much time has been spent by the regional coordinator to provide explanation and a template. It is most likely, in addition to direct participation in the Project activities, there is investment from the Government of Indonesia in several parallel activities in the pilot areas for the specific FMAs that would count as co-finance, and yet recording these remains an ongoing challenge for the regional coordinator, given this confusion. In Timor-Leste, some Directors within MAF are not aware of the co-financing commitment requirements. A streamlined approach for collecting co-finance information is required for both countries. Introducing a national Project Management Unit (PMU) within MAF to coordinate program delivery and ensure

³ Sources of Co-financing may include: Bilateral Aid Agency(ies), Foundation, GEF Agency, Local Government, National Government, Civil Society Organization, Other Multi-lateral Agency(ies), Private Sector, Beneficiaries, Other.

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

co-financing commitments are adopted within government budgets and managed accordingly may assist in Timor-Leste. In Indonesia, having the responsibility for recording co-financing allocated to a senior officer within MMAF may also assist.

Project oversight by FAO as the GEF Agency and national partners - Satisfactory

110. All those consulted indicated there has been excellent and timely support, technical advice and communication provided by the regional coordinator and PMU national staff, staff in the FAO regional office as well as Head Office. No issues were identified. It has been noted previously that those consulted indicated the PMU and national project officers are overworked and additional support is needed, particularly at the national level in Indonesia to improve timeliness of delivery of activities.
111. To reduce administrative burdens of the Project in Indonesia, it was suggested that strengthening meeting processes through formalising them to use a set agenda and be action and outcome focused will help to improve progress. Those consulted indicated, meetings should occur on a regular basis (monthly or quarterly) with key government and implementing stakeholders to ensure there is clear understanding of progress for the project, what is planned and how best to coordinate activities. In addition, the support of a national project assistant for the National Project Officer would also ensure actions arising could be followed up in a timely fashion. It was also suggested that consideration be given to introducing the same structure in Timor-Leste to ensure consistency.
112. Contact and communication between ISLME Budget Holder, PMU and FAO GEF CU fund liaison officer (FLO) has been effective as confirmed during consultations. All work to resolve issues as they arise.

Project partnerships and stakeholder engagement - Satisfactory

113. All those consulted indicated there has been good engagement with a broad group of stakeholders in the TDA process and good ownership, however participation has largely been limited to consultation and networking. All indicated enthusiasm to increase stakeholder participation for the remainder of the Project, especially in pilot projects. Many non-government stakeholders were keen to be involved in practical activities.
114. The Project has good engagement with senior officials in the MMAF and MAF. Government ownership and institutional support for the Project from operating partners (MMAF and MAF) is strong, as confirmed during the consultations. As indicated however previously, competing government priorities and projects impact on the availability of staff to participate in ISLME activities in a timely manner at times. Also noted, there has been no real focus in the Project on securing political will at the Minister level, particularly given there are new fisheries ministers in both countries.
115. During the consultations, some stakeholders in Timor-Leste indicated that to improve visibility of the Project with the Minister, the National Project Officer should sit directly under the Minister's office, as currently the role sits under the Director General at MAF. For practical reasons the National Project Officer has to work closely on a day-to-day basis with officers of DG Fisheries. Regular briefing and involvement at the Minister's office level could achieve similar outcomes, so the most suitable approach will need to be determined. In Timor-Leste, it was also suggested that, given the disruption caused by changes in membership of the National Strategic Advisory Group (NSAG) for the Project through loss of knowledge and project history, that steps be taken to allow for members to remain on the NSAG regardless of when their position changes within the government.

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

116. The Project has been proactively engaging in the Indonesia Ocean Development Partner Network to share on a quarterly basis what the Project has been doing and explore areas of common interest.
117. Engagement with other LMEs, such as ATSEA 2 occurs on an adhoc basis at a regional level when opportunities arise. As noted previously, where it makes sense, field staff from other projects work together with ISLME Project staff to share costs such as local travel.

Communication, visibility, knowledge management and knowledge products - Moderately Unsatisfactory

118. Communication between FAO and MMAF/MAF, and (3-way) between FAO, MMAF/MAF and the implementing consultants/entities is generally perceived as good. However, as noted previously, there remains room to strengthen communication, for example, by stronger engagement at the Minister level.
119. All consulted indicated a need for better defining knowledge management and outputs in terms of knowledge products from the ISLME project, both regarding completed and proposed activities. While it is understood there is a communication strategy and part time communication officer, it appears this focus area for the Project is under-resourced. While the two newsletters produced to date were informative, they were very long, and it was unclear who the target audience was for these. A key lesson from ATSEA is the need for a higher public profile and visibility of the ISLME Project. A number of stakeholders consulted indicated "We never hear about the FAO project." ATSEA has a strong Facebook presence and a very attractive and engaging newsletter⁴ that is well circulated to a broad group of stakeholders and is well known as a result. It is understood that the website for the ISLME Project has been delayed and the FAO website is currently being used for uploading documents, however this is not an easy website to find your way around unless know what you are looking for. Media for the Project has generally been focused on using local media.
120. The ISLME project would greatly benefit from a dedicated 'communications and knowledge management team' (like ATSEA 2) – which understands the importance of communicating project activities, results, and also understands tools for project engagement/participation (ie. Facebook, webinars, email lists, 'shared drives' for sharing reports/resources) – and builds a 'community of stakeholders.
121. The IW:Learn knowledge platform is being used to share knowledge to stakeholders doing similar things (other LMEs).

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) - M&E design (Satisfactory), implementation (Satisfactory) and budget (Satisfactory)

122. There is good and up to date tracking of progress and formal reporting (PIRs/PPRs) being undertaken for the Project. M&E roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. The M&E plan tracks progress on the achievement of project outputs and direct outcomes, longer-term outcomes and objectives. The systems in place are well designed and easy to use as confirmed during the consultation.

⁴ Refer <https://fliphtml5.com/yrvtz/kgep> for latest newsletter from ATSEA 2.

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

123. The Project's results framework appears effective as a planning and monitoring instrument. Project objective and outcome indicators are generally SMART and appear realistic where mid term and end of project targets are set. The baseline information available varies for each output, depending on the indicator at the design stage. For example, with respect to transboundary issues there was little baseline information, however this has been addressed with the development of the TDA, which is a mid term indicator. A progress rating is being used to track progress for each output using the GEF rating system used for evaluations and then corrective actions are identified, with responsibilities identified, to address any shortcomings identified, as outlined in the 2021 PIR. Gender-disaggregated indicators are included in the project logframe and M&E framework.
124. A budget of \$142,000 had been allocated in the ProDoc towards M&E. Actual spend as at 31 December 2020 on M&E was \$ USD 80,797 + USD 27,750 for MTR = USD 108,547.
125. A Project Steering Committee (PSC) with a clearly defined terms of reference is in place for the Project has met twice since the Project commenced, with the last meeting in 2019. COVID-19 prevented the PSC meeting in 2020. A meeting is proposed in July 2021 once the MTR is finalised to present the findings and management response to addressing recommendations made. National Steering Committees in each country are also in place.
126. There is a lack of knowledge within government stakeholders in both countries about the ISLME Project monitoring and evaluation processes. Forward planning meetings with the budget holder at the regional as well as those at national level responsible for managing activities are needed at least monthly or quarterly to understand what activities are coming up to streamline planning processes.
127. GEF Tracking Tool is being used and was last updated in June 2021. Compared to the baseline, the Project is progressing against the indicators included, and given the delays that have impacted on the Project, it is where you would expect at this stage where the TDA is close to signoff and some pilot projects underway. PMU staff indicated there is some confusion in how to complete the tracking tool. The Regional Coordinator to the project is responsible for completion of the tracking tool, however the whole PMU team should be involved where a challenge is identified requiring intervention so that it can be discussed to find solution for the action.

Factors affecting performance findings

1. **Project design and readiness** - Satisfactory - The ISLME Project had strong stakeholder engagement in its initial design. Its design allowed for considerable flexibility with respect to how the components were implemented, given the time between since its initial design and its implementation. This flexibility has enabled the Project to remain viable and has meant the current priorities of both governments could become the focus of pilot projects in Component 2. Given the significant effort made to ensure the Project aligned to government priorities, its technical and strategic focus is sound and set at a level that meets the readiness of both countries. Given the differences in progress between Timor-Leste and Indonesia in terms of fisheries management, it will be important going forward that as a part of strengthening transboundary cooperation, knowledge transfer occurs to strengthen the capacity of Timor-Leste and that both countries take advantage of the Project to strengthen how each country works together as to increase the frequency of sharing learnings.
2. **Quality of project execution and management arrangements (including assessment of risks)** - Satisfactory - Project execution for the ISLME project has been challenging, largely due to the complicated management arrangements necessary for all projects within Indonesia. The finalising of the Implementation Arrangement cause considerable delay to the Project and reporting under both systems is complicated and time consuming. Risk identification and assessment is undertaken by the PSC at a holistic level and by the PMU at a project implementation level, however implementation of mitigation measures has not always occurred in a timely fashion.
3. **Project oversight by FAO as the GEF Agency and national partners** - Satisfactory - There has been excellent and timely support, technical advice and communication provided by the Regional Coordinator and PMU national staff, staff in the FAO regional office as well as Head Office. No issues were identified. To reduce administrative burdens of the Project in Indonesia, it was suggested that strengthening meeting processes will help to improve progress. A national project assistant for the National Project Officer would allow for improved processes.
4. **Financial management and co-financing** - Moderately unsatisfactory - There is a significant underspend in funding reflecting the delays incurred by the Project, primarily due to COVID-19. Budget revisions will be required and are proposed with the no cost extension to December 2022. Contact and communication between ISLME Budget Holder, PMU and FAO GEF CU fund liaison officer (FLO) has been effective. Financial management has been challenging for FAO and MMAF with respect to compliance with Ministry of Finance requirements, in accordance with the Implementation Agreement. There is an urgent need for a more streamlined approach and steps have been taken to address this. In both countries there is a lack of coordination and understanding of co-financing commitments within MMAF and MAF. As a result, it is likely reported materialised co-finance will be lower than what it actually is.
5. **Project partnerships and stakeholder engagement** - Satisfactory - there has been good engagement with a broad group of stakeholders in the TDA process and good ownership, however participation has largely been limited to consultation and networking. The Project has good engagement with senior officials in the MMAF and MAF. Government ownership and institutional support for the Project from operating partners (MMAF and MAF) is strong. Competing government priorities and projects impact on the availability of staff to

participate in ISLME activities in a timely manner at times. Actions are required in Timor-Leste to improve visibility of the project with the Minister.

6. **Communication, visibility, knowledge management and knowledge products** - *Moderately unsatisfactory - The ISLME Project would greatly benefit from a dedicated 'communications and knowledge management team – which understands the importance of communicating project activities, results, and also understands tools for project engagement/participation (ie. Facebook, webinars, email lists, 'shared drives' for sharing reports/resources) – and builds a 'community of stakeholders.*
7. **Monitoring and evaluation (M&E), including M&E design, implementation and budget** - *Satisfactory for all- There is good and up to date tracking of progress and formal reporting (PIRs/PPRs) being undertaken for the Project, including the use of the GEF tracking tool. M&E roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. The M&E plan tracks progress on the achievement of project outputs and direct outcomes, longer-term outcomes and objectives. The systems in place are well designed and easy to use as confirmed during the consultation.*

5.6 Cross-cutting dimensions - satisfactory

128. The ISLME Project has undergone Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS) screening and is classified as a Category C project under the "Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Guidelines for FAO Field Projects"⁵ and a low risk project. Based on a project or activity, the selection of the environmental category is predicated on the nature and severity of potential environmental and social impacts. The classification was made at the Project's formulation stage, considering the objectives and content of the ISLME Project, with its primary focus on foundational capacity building and information generation addressing trans-boundary environmental concerns.

129. It is acknowledged in the screen processes however that the Project will only have potential impacts relating to the pilot site fishery management and coastal resource planning pilots. It was proposed that related risks identified at project design would be minimized and mitigated by: (i) involving local communities in the identification of project sites during PPG and through the execution of the Project; (ii) the Project being designed to give local stakeholders a greater voice in coastal/fisheries management; project stakeholder awareness building, consultation and participation are measures built into the Project; and (iii) the Project includes forums for establishment of natural resource use agreements, benefit sharing, setting of sustainability parameters and alternative income-generating activities for local communities. It appears from a review of key documents relating to the ESS screening that stakeholder engagement occurred at the Inception, national and validation workshops held for the project in 2014-2015 where ESS risks were discussed. The MTR agrees with this classification for the Project. Subsequent PIR/PPR reports indicate that the mitigation strategies are being followed. On that basis, the Project's intended results appear to be contributing to GEF and FAO gender priorities

⁵Refer <http://www.fao.org/docrep/016/i2802e/i2802e.pdf>

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

relating to participation and decision making and access to and control over natural resources.

130. The Project has sought to ensure gender and marginalized groups are being adequately represented (for example, there is good representation on and engagement in the PSC from women). Gender aspects have been included in the TDA development process and pilot projects, with good recognition of the importance of empowering women where opportunity arises through pilot projects. Where relevant, ie at the pilot project level consideration is being made to ensure engagement of women and youth to allow for their needs and interests to be addressed by the Project. In Timor-Leste, MAF have a Gender Coordinator who works closely with the ISLME National Project Officer in ensuring that all pilot projects have a gender element and equity/human rights issues related to inclusion of disadvantaged groups included. While there may be equal engagement of men and women in onground activities or meetings, women participation is not always forthcoming for a variety of reasons, for example where meetings are not gender specific.
131. Gender segregated data and analysis is being undertaken as part of Monitoring and Evaluation and is reported in the PIR/PPRs. A gender strategy should be included in the SAP.

Cross-cutting dimensions findings - satisfactory

- 1. The ISLME project has undergone Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS) screening and is classified as a Category C project under the "Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Guidelines for FAO Field Projects" and a low risk project.*
- 2. The Project's intended results appear to be contributing to GEF and FAO gender priorities relating to participation and decision making and access to and control over natural resources.*
- 3. The Project has sought to ensure gender and marginalized groups are being adequately represented. Gender aspects have been included in the TDA development process and pilot projects, with good recognition of the importance of empowering women where opportunity arises through pilot projects.*
- 4. Gender segregated data and analysis being undertaken as part of Monitoring and Evaluation and is reported in the PIR/PPRs.*
- 5. A gender strategy should be included in the SAP.*

6 Lessons learned

132. The following lessons learned were identified during consultations with stakeholder for the Project:

- **Building relationships and trust is important** between governments, across multiple ministries and the FAO and fundamental to the success of transboundary outcome delivery. It is important to demonstrate the value at all levels.
- It is important to **be flexible**, focus on substance and deal with administration issues quickly - if the focus is only on administration issues it makes the implementation process difficult.
- Understand the politics and **proactively seek to build political will** to build sustainability.
- **A fine balance is required**, given the delays with COVID-19 between government officials wanting to deliver activities themselves **to build capacity**, but are very pressed for time given so many commitments, **versus engaging consultants** who will speed up the process.
- The PMU/ Regional team needs to **be adequately resourced to deliver** a project of this complexity within a reduced timeframe. Communication is often overlooked as an afterthought but for a project such as ISLME should be a core function.
- It is important for the FAO and governments to **respect each other's systems and reach a consensus or compromise on implementation**. Spending so much time on satisfying reporting system requirements from both ends reduces the time available for implementation within a reduced timeframe.
- **Ensure appropriately qualified/experienced consultants are selected and hired**; to improve the overall professional standard and quality of reports; and the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of major projects such as ISLME.
- **Build on what work has already been done to avoid reinventing or duplicating**, however ensure lessons learned from those projects that have come before are reflected in the current project.

7 Conclusions and recommendations

7.1 Conclusions

133. The ISLME Project is playing a catalytic role in addressing transboundary concerns by assisting Indonesia and Timor-Leste to restore and sustain coastal and marine fish stocks and associated biodiversity and community livelihoods and improve coordination. While significant delays have been experienced, primarily due to finalizing implementation arrangements in Indonesia and COVID-19, already the Project has resulted in improved capacity within both countries with respect to EAFM and EAA and opened dialogue on transboundary issues such as IUU fishing. The Project has achieved strong government support in both countries due to its focus on addressing strategic issues of priority to Indonesia and Timor-Leste. It is providing an important opportunity to bridge the gap between high level policies and on-the-ground policy implementation/action in both countries.
134. The Project, prior to the no cost extension being received in July 2021, was not on track to achieve its planned results, across all Components. With the no cost extension recently approved, taking the project completion date out to December 2022, the Project should have sufficient time to complete those activities outstanding, particularly in relation to the SAP development.
135. To improve project delivery, it is important that significant focus be given to strengthening project planning and coordination processes, particularly relating to how meetings are conducted to ensure they are outcome focused and action oriented. In addition, regular forward planning meetings should be undertaken both at regional and national levels to ensure all FAO and government implementation staff are aware of upcoming requirements, can plan effectively and foresee issues that may arise and take mitigating steps to reduce impacts. The PSC should also review the current workplan for the Project in the context of the no cost extension and ensure that activities proposed can be coordinated to streamline processes and ensure cost efficiency in delivery within the new timeframe.
136. To increase the likelihood of longer-term sustainability of results an exit strategy should be developed for the Project now. Of most importance is ensuring steps are taken to continually build and maintain political through regular briefings of Ministers across disciplines within each country. Ensuring there is strong political will and support (resources and stakeholder acceptance) to endorse the ISLME approach, collaborate on transboundary issues and adopt and implement the SAP using EBA/EAFM/EAA approaches will improve the likelihood of a lasting legacy from the Project. Political will is imperative to drive any lasting impact, whether at the national or transboundary level, particularly as a key focus will need to be ensuring priorities developed in the SAP are included within departmental workplans and budgets, or actions taken to secure funding for their implementation.
137. Whether long-term institutional and financial sustainability of the ISLME program is possible, through lasting political will and donor support will be key to the implementation of ecosystem approaches (EAFM/EAA/EBA). Having monitoring to demonstrate that actions are alleviating pressures on marine and coastal ecosystems will also be important. Reliance will be placed on FAO and the governments of Indonesia and

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

Timor-Leste to coordinate these aspects. To the extent possible through the Project, it will be important that the Project ensures the outputs of the pilot projects and other components are shared between the participating countries and disseminated to other LMEs to ensure expansion to a regional transboundary approach.

138. The Project has demonstrated the importance of building flexibility into program design to allow for changes in government priority and capacity to ensure the Project remains relevant and is addressing the needs of government stakeholders - this will provide greater likelihood of longer-term impact. It has clearly demonstrated that it is possible to pivot to changing circumstances to ensure the Project can adapt as required, for example through moving everything to an online approach where while challenging for some has provided opportunity for multistakeholder dialogue to continue. However, it has also shown what can happen when a project is under resourced, particularly in relation to communications.
139. The importance of building relationships and trust between governments, across multiple ministries and the FAO has been fundamental to the success of project results achieved to date and will be critical to ensure transboundary outcome delivery. It has also shown the importance of demonstrating the value the Project can bring at all levels to bring stakeholders along and be enthusiastic to participate. Finally, the Project has shown the importance of building on what work has already been done to avoid reinventing or duplicating, and ensuring lessons learned from those projects that have come before are reflected in design and implementation approaches.
140. The Project has been given an overall rating for the MTR of Moderately Satisfactory. On that basis the following conclusions are made.

Conclusion 1 – Relevance (Section 5.1) The ISLME Project is well aligned to global, regional, FAO and GEF strategic frameworks and is delivering on several Aichi targets and SDGs. The Project is well designed and addresses strategic issues and priorities of the governments of Indonesia and Timor-Leste. It provides an important opportunity to bridge the gap between high level policies and on-the-ground policy implementation/action in both countries.

Conclusion 2 - Effectiveness (Section 5.2) Activities are seen as well integrated with governments, focused on the right priorities and are assisting in strengthening fisheries management and aquaculture in both countries and opening dialogue on transboundary issues such as IUU fishing. The Project is adding value at national and local levels and strengthening capacity of individuals, organisations and the enabling environment. Achievement of project outputs towards outcomes has been impacted by significant delays to the Project. Of most concern is the completion of the SAP under Component 1, which is the centerpiece of the Project and yet to commence. With a no cost extension now in place until December 2022, this will allow additional time for all activities to be completed. While delays have been experienced, with a full-time Regional Coordinator since mid 2019, progress speed has improved considerably, however continues to be impacted by COVID-19. This is likely to continue for the remaining time left for Project implementation so it will be important that careful monitoring of progress, against likely ongoing issues from COVID-19 are adequately planned for. Of most importance is taking steps to build and maintain strong political will and support (resources and stakeholder acceptance) to endorse the ISLME approach, collaborate on transboundary issues and adopt and implement the SAP using EBA/EAFM/EAA approaches. Political will is imperative to drive any lasting impact, whether at the national or transboundary level.

Conclusion 3 - Efficiency (Section 5.3) The Project is generally being delivered cost effectively by the PMU under FAO internal processes, by a small team with clear activities, deliverables, and reporting requirements in place. A light touch approach within the PMU is placing significant workloads on regional and national staff, particularly in Indonesia where the level of bureaucracy to comply with government regulations is high. Additional resources to support the National Project Officer as well as a dedicated communications team for the Project would assist in rectifying this. The impact of COVID-19 has placed increased pressure on the project team to pivot the project to a primarily online approach to delivery. It has resulted in an innovative and adaptive use of resources. The timeliness of delivery of some activities has been impacted by the limited capacity of national consultants, which has resulted in reports needing much reworking by the PMU and international consultants. Steps can be taken to strengthen recruitment of national consultants where a priority, and budgets should be allocated accordingly to provide for this. Driving meetings towards outcomes and actions has been a challenge causing delays in reaching agreement on decisions and moving activities forward. Introducing a standard action driven outcome focused approach to meetings will assist in this regard. *Improving* forward planning and budgetary implications so that there is clear understanding from all project team members at the regional and national levels of the status of planned activities to improve coordination is needed. Regular project task force meetings could be introduced to discuss managerial issues and key technical challenges or substance that effect managerial issues. Forward planning to strengthen project planning and performance and allow LTO and budget holder to understand upcoming activities and then support technical teams to do the work without delays and review is important. A no cost extension has been approved to provide the Project with additional time for completion of activities to 31 December 2022. With the delays experienced, as a matter of urgency the PSC should review and optimise the workplan to ensure that what is still to be done can be achieved within the revised timeframe and budget.

Conclusion 4 - Sustainability (Section 5.4) While the need for an exit strategy is recognised, it is not in place for the Project. An exit strategy should be developed for the Project as a matter of urgency so that planning and activities can be amended and adapted as required to ensure transboundary and related national activities are included in ministerial/government departmental budgets and programs, ongoing capacity is in place within governments and other stakeholders, and gaps in capacity are understood and can be addressed. It is critical that technical people involved in the TDA process are also involved in the development of the SAP to ensure it is evidence based and grounded in science, actions are at the right scale and there is strong ownership from relevant institutions, and they have an ability to be implemented. In addition, a key mitigation measure will be to develop strategies to ensure the SAP implementation is not delayed, to reduce the risk of memory loss, changes in government priorities and institutional changes. For example, the timeliness of preparation of the next proposal relating to the funding of the SAP implementation will be important to reduce delays. As a matter of urgency, given the importance of achieving signoff and ongoing national ownership to implement the SAP, and the changes that have occurred at ministerial levels within Indonesia and Timor-Leste, regular ministerial briefings and other actions to strengthen ties between implementing and diplomatic ministries are required to build rapport to secure ongoing ownership of the implementation of the SAP, both at the transboundary and national levels by each country.

Conclusion 5 - Factors affecting performance (Section 5.5)

Project design and readiness - The ISLME Project had strong stakeholder engagement in its initial design. Its design allowed for considerable flexibility with respect to how the components were implemented, given the time between since its initial design and its implementation. This flexibility has enabled the Project to remain viable and has meant the current priorities of both governments could become the focus of pilot projects in Component 2. Given the significant effort made to ensure the Project aligned to government priorities, its technical and strategic focus is sound and set at a level that meets the readiness of both countries. Given the differences in progress between Timor-Leste and Indonesia in terms of fisheries management it will be important going forward that as a part of strengthening transboundary cooperation, knowledge transfer occurs to strengthen the capacity of Timor-Leste and that both countries take advantage of the Project to strengthen how each country works together as to increase the frequency of sharing learnings.

Quality of project execution and management arrangements (including assessment of risks) - Project execution for the ISLME project has been challenging, largely due to the complicated management arrangements necessary for all projects within Indonesia. The finalising of the Implementation Arrangement caused considerable delay to the Project and reporting under both systems is complicated and time consuming. Risk identification and assessment is undertaken by the PSC at a holistic level and by the PMU at a project implementation level, however implementation of mitigation measures has not always occurred in a timely fashion.

Project oversight by FAO as the GEF Agency and national partners - There has been excellent and timely support, technical advice and communication provided by the Regional Coordinator and PMU national staff, staff in the FAO regional office as well as Head Office. No issues were identified. To reduce administrative burdens of the Project in Indonesia, it was suggested that strengthening meeting processes will help to improve progress. A national project assistant for the National Project Officer would allow for improved processes.

Financial management and co-financing - There is a significant underspend in funding reflecting the delays incurred by the Project, primarily due to COVID-19. Budget revisions will be required and are proposed with the no cost extension to December 2022. Contact and communication between ISLME Budget Holder, PMU and FAO GEF CU fund liaison officer (FLO) has been effective. Financial management has been challenging for FAO and MMAF with respect to compliance with Ministry of Finance requirements, in accordance with the Implementation Agreement. There is an urgent need for a more streamlined approach and steps have been taken to address this. In both countries there is a lack of coordination and understanding of co-financing commitments within MMAF and MAF. As a result, it is likely reported materialised co-finance is lower than what it is.

Project partnerships and stakeholder engagement - There has been good engagement with a broad group of stakeholders in the TDA process and good ownership, however participation has largely been limited to consultation and networking. The Project has good engagement with senior officials in the MMAF and MAF. Government ownership and institutional support for the Project from operating partners (MMAF and MAF) is strong. Competing government priorities and projects impact on the availability of staff to participate in ISLME activities in a timely manner at times. Actions are required in Timor-Leste to improve visibility of the project with the Minister.

Communication, visibility, knowledge management and knowledge products - The ISLME Project would greatly benefit from a dedicated 'communications and knowledge management team – which understands the importance of communicating project activities, results, and

understands tools for project engagement/participation (ie. Facebook, webinars, email lists, 'shared drives' for sharing reports/resources) – and builds a 'community of stakeholders.

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E), including M&E design, implementation and budget -

There is good and up to date tracking of progress and formal reporting (PIRs/PPRs) being undertaken for the Project. M&E roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. The M&E plan tracks progress on the achievement of project outputs and direct outcomes, longer-term outcomes and objectives. The systems in place are well designed and easy to use as confirmed during the consultation.

Conclusion 6 - Cross cutting dimensions (Section 5.6) The ISLME project has undergone Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS) screening and is classified as a Category C project under the "Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Guidelines for FAO Field Projects" and a low-risk project. The Project's intended results appear to be contributing to GEF and FAO gender priorities relating to participation and decision making and access to and control over natural resources. The Project has sought to ensure gender and marginalized groups are being adequately represented. Gender aspects have been included in the TDA development process and pilot projects, with good recognition of the importance of empowering women where opportunity arises through pilot projects. Gender segregated data and analysis being undertaken as part of Monitoring and Evaluation and is reported in the PIR/PPRs. A gender strategy should be included in the SAP.

7.2 Recommendations

141. The following recommendations are provided for the FAO, PMU, project partners and other relevant stakeholders involved in project execution for consideration as a way to strengthen the delivery of the Project, resolve identified challenges affecting the Project's execution and performance and to enhance the sustainability and eventual impact of project results.

Table 3 Recommendations table

Rec. no.	Rationale for Recommendation	Recommendation	Responsibility	Timing/dates for actions
Effectiveness				
A.1 (Section 5.2 and Section 5.5)	With the delays impacting on the Project, the SAP development is yet to commence. As the centrepiece of the Project, it is imperative that the SAP provides the solid foundation from which its implementation will drive lasting impact in the ISLME. There are many lessons learned coming out of the ATSEA SAP development process, most notably of the need to couple the TDA process with the SAP process.	<p>Recommendation 1</p> <p>It is critical that the TDA and SAP processes are well coupled - ensure technical people are involved in both processes to ensure the SAP is evidence based and grounded in science, actions are at the right scale and there is strong ownership from relevant institutions, and they have an ability to be implemented.</p>	Regional Coordinator and PMU	
A.2 (Section 5.2 and Section 5.5)	<p>In Timor-Leste, there is a general perception within government that many of the projects coming into Timor-Leste do not have enough activities giving back to community. This perception exists for ISLME as the consultation with some officials indicated they see nothing tangible on ground with communities that will leave sustainable results.</p> <p>Little effort has been made to date to ensure strong political will for the Project, all the more relevant with the changes in Ministers that have occurred in both countries over the lifetime of the Project.</p>	<p>Recommendation 2</p> <p>Going into the SAP development phase steps should be taken to secure significant political will from Ministers in both countries to ensure the value of the Project is clearly understood and that senior officials understand that another project is to follow that will see the implementation of the SAP where the value will be realised, both within communities, at the national level and for transboundary issues. This can be achieved through regular briefings with relevant Ministers, beyond fisheries.</p> <p>Of most importance is ensuring there is strong political will and support (resources and stakeholder acceptance) to endorse the ISLME approach, collaborate on transboundary</p>	Shared responsibility between PSC, PMU and MMAF and MAF as lead ministries	

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

Rec. no.	Rationale for Recommendation	Recommendation	Responsibility	Timing/dates for actions
	<p>Political will is imperative to drive any lasting impact, whether at the national or transboundary level,</p> <p>Whether long-term institutional and financial sustainability of the ISLME program is possible, through lasting political will and donor support will be key to the implementation of ecosystem approaches (EAFM/EAA/EBA).</p>	<p>issues and adopt and implement the SAP using EBA/EAFM/EAA approaches.</p> <p>The Project should work to ensure transboundary and environmental issues are identified as priorities of fisheries ministries in both countries and linked to diplomatic actions with national ministries and embassies dealing with foreign affairs. Other actions to strengthen ties between implementing and diplomatic ministries are required to build repour to secure ongoing ownership of the implementation of the SAP, both at the transboundary and national levels by each country.</p>		
A.3 (Section 5.2 and Section 5.5)	<p>All consulted indicated a need for better defining knowledge management and outputs in terms of knowledge products from the ISLME project, both regarding completed and proposed activities. While it is understood there is a communication strategy and part time communication officer, it appears this focus area for the Project is under-resourced. While the two newsletters produced to date were informative, they were very long, and it was unclear who the target audience was for these. A key lesson from ATSEA is the need for a higher public profile and visibility of the ISLME Project. A number of stakeholders consulted indicated “We</p>	<p>Recommendation 3</p> <p>The ISLME project would greatly benefit from a dedicated ‘communications and knowledge management team’ – which understands the importance of communicating project activities, results, and understands tools for project engagement/ participation (ie. Facebook, webinars, email lists, ‘shared drives’ for sharing reports/resources) – and builds a ‘community of stakeholders’.</p>	PMU/PSC	

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

Rec. no.	Rationale for Recommendation	Recommendation	Responsibility	Timing/dates for actions
	never hear about the FAO project." It is understood that the website for the ISLME Project has been delayed and the FAO website is currently being used for uploading documents.			
A.4 (Section 5.2 and Section 5.5)	Given the differences in readiness between Timor-Leste and Indonesia in terms of stakeholder, particularly government capacity, it will be important going forward that as a part of strengthening transboundary cooperation, knowledge transfer occurs to strengthen the capacity of Timor-Leste and that both countries take advantage of the Project to strengthen how each country works together as to increase the frequency of sharing learnings. There is opportunity through the Project for Timor-Leste government officials to look to Indonesia to learn and share knowledge to increase capacity and strengthen processes within Timor-Leste.	Recommendation 4 Increase the frequency of sharing of learnings and take more advantage of the transboundary nature of the Project to allow Timor-Leste to learn more about how Indonesia deals with fisheries management issues and to work better together rather than working separately. Learning exchanges for government officials could be considered to help increase the capacity of Timor-Leste.	PMU	
A.5 (Section 5.2 and Section 5.5)	During the consultations, some stakeholders in Timor-Leste indicated that there is a need to improve visibility of the Project with the Minister, the National Project Officer. It was suggested one option could be having the role sitting	Recommendation 5 The most suitable approach to improve visibility of the Project with the Minister in Timor-Leste should be determined. For example, regular briefing and involvement at the Minister's office level with advisors may be sufficient.	Regional Coordinator	

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

Rec. no.	Rationale for Recommendation	Recommendation	Responsibility	Timing/dates for actions
	<p>directly under the Minister's officer, as currently the role sits under the Director General at MAF. For practical reasons the National Project Officer has to work closely on a day-to-day basis with officers of DG Fisheries.</p> <p>Likewise, changes in membership of the National Strategic Advisory Group (NSAG) are causing disruption for the Project through loss of institutional knowledge and project history, etc.</p>	<p>Steps should be taken to allow for members to remain on the NSAG regardless of when their position changes within the government. This will require approval from the Minister, based on a specific internal dispatch order in coordination with Director General of Fisheries at MAF.</p>		
Efficiency				
B.1 (Section 5.3 and Section 5.5)	<p>While the PMU is managing the project well, areas for strengthening include improving forward planning and budgetary implications so that there is clear understanding from all project team members of the status of planned activities to improve coordination.</p>	<p>Recommendation 6</p> <p>Regular project task force meetings could be introduced by the Budget Holder, Lead Technical Officer (LTO) and the Funding Liaison Officer in Rome. The purpose would be to discuss managerial issues and key technical challenges or substance that effect managerial issues. This could allow, say quarterly forward planning to strengthen project planning and performance and allow LTO and budget holders to understand upcoming activities and then support technical teams to do the work without delays and review processes. This would also allow all participating to understand the bigger picture and streamline processes.</p>	PMU	
B.2 (Section 5.3 and	<p>The adaptive use of resources, to make up time lost from COVID-19 has not always provided the most cost-effective</p>	<p>Recommendation 7</p>	Regional Coordinator	

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

Rec. no.	Rationale for Recommendation	Recommendation	Responsibility	Timing/dates for actions
Section 5.5)	<p>outcomes. While in Indonesia, there are many good consultants that can produce high quality work, in Timor-Leste there is less capacity, particularly with respect to report writing. National consultants can require considerable capacity building, and this can lead to poor quality results, inefficiencies and much reworking by international consultants. In one case for the ISLME project, using national capacity, rather than international consultants to speed up delivery for a significant piece of work, has impacted on quality of outputs. From discussions with international consultants for ISLME and other projects, there is a perceived expectation that international consultants will build capacity of national consultants, and address reporting shortcomings generally, without time of budget being allocated for this. Additional time was added for this project, however most likely was insufficient for the level of rework required.</p>	<p>The process for engaging and managing international and national consultants should be reviewed to ensure adequate reference checks are undertaken, the consultants put forward to undertake the work are the ones who do it and contractual obligations are met. Additional 'criteria' should be applied for companies/consultants/individuals, to be classified (and paid) as 'international' consultants, beyond employment history. For eg. referee reports, recent publications, etc. For 'organisations' which consult, all projects should have a minimum percentage of time (days) performed by 'international consultants' on the project team to provide quality assurance. It is important that the consulting company also ensures that there is quality assurance of the deliverable prior to submission.</p> <p>It is important to get the balance right between building capacity of national consultants and receiving high quality expert products, particularly where budgets for international consultants have been reduced. If capacity building of national consultants is a priority, then an adequate, separate budget item should be allocated, and it included in the project design as a part of standard activities.</p>		
B.3 (Section 5.3 and Section 5.5)	<p>In both countries there is a lack of coordination and understanding of co-financing commitments within MMAF and MAF. As a result, it is likely reported materialised co-finance is lower than what it actually is. It is most likely, in addition to</p>	<p>Recommendation 8</p> <p>A streamlined approach for collecting co-finance information is required for both countries. Introduce a national Project Management Unit (PMU) within MAF to coordinate program delivery and ensure co-financing commitments are adopted</p>	PMU	

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

Rec. no.	Rationale for Recommendation	Recommendation	Responsibility	Timing/dates for actions
	<p>direct participation in the Project activities, there is investment from the Government of Indonesia in a number of parallel activities in the pilot areas for the specific FMAs that would count as co-finance, and yet recording these remains an ongoing challenge for the regional coordinator, given this confusion. In Timor-Leste, some Directors within MAF are not aware of the co-financing commitment requirements.</p>	<p>within government budgets and managed accordingly to assist in Timor-Leste. In Indonesia, have the responsibility for recording co-financing allocated to a senior officer within MMAF to provide for a coordinated approach.</p>		
<p>B.4 (Section 5.3 and Section 5.5)</p>	<p>All those consulted indicated there has been excellent and timely support, technical advice and communication provided by the regional coordinator and PMU national staff, staff in the FAO regional office as well as Head Office. Those consulted indicated the PMU and national project officers are overworked and additional support is needed, particularly at the national level in Indonesia to improve timeliness of delivery of activities.</p>	<p>Recommendation 9 Consideration should be given to employing a project assistant to assist the National Project Officer in Indonesia to allow for improved processes and improve the timeliness of decision making.</p>	<p>BH</p>	
<p>B.5 (Section 5.3 and Section 5.5)</p>	<p>It is noted that a no cost extension has recently been approved to provide the Project with additional time to complete outstanding activities.</p>	<p>Recommendation 10 With the delays experienced by the Project, as a matter of urgency the PSC should review and optimise the workplan to ensure that what is still to be done can be achieved within the extended timeframe. It will be important to ensure a strategic</p>	<p>PSC</p>	

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

Rec. no.	Rationale for Recommendation	Recommendation	Responsibility	Timing/dates for actions
		<p>and flexible approach to implement a modified workplan to achieve the project goal, leverage adaptations to build sustainability (maximise production of virtual materials/systems), mainstream gender equity and human rights aspects and ensure value (by way of onground outcomes) are seen by governments. It will be important to balance spending the funds provided while maintaining quality outcomes that increase tangible benefits to beneficiaries and stakeholders wanting to participate.</p>		
<p>B.6 (Section 5.3 and Section 5.5)</p>	<p>Ongoing challenges with capacity, for example in Indonesia relating to facilitation skills in meetings to drive outcomes and a focus on administration issues is causing delays in agreeing decisions and moving activities forward from concept development to implementation. As a result, it can take many meetings with government officials to achieve an outcome. While the FAO has sought to streamline processes as much as possible it is the responsibility of government officials to run meetings to achieve outcomes.</p>	<p>Recommendation 11</p> <p>Leadership and facilitation training should be undertaken for those leading meetings within government to ensure meetings are action oriented and outcome focused, and decisions/actions documented. A formal 'outcome' and 'actions arising' system should be introduced for all meetings to record outcomes and decisions and actions, so that actions are not lost, and progress tracked.</p> <p>To better balance time spent on substance versus administration issues and improve alignment with departmental priorities (including co-financing), government officials at all levels need to be more actively engaged. Less reliance needs to be placed on one-on-one informal discussions. Monthly or quarterly meetings should be held, led by MMAF in Indonesia and MAF in Timor-Leste, to understand progress, undertake forward planning, discuss budget and logistics implications, and identify solutions to address issues effecting implementation. A set standard</p>		

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

Rec. no.	Rationale for Recommendation	Recommendation	Responsibility	Timing/dates for actions
		agenda should be used where administration issues are discussed last.		
Sustainability				
C.1 (Section 5.4 and Section 5.5)	<p>An exit strategy has not been developed for the Project.</p> <p>The activities being supported under Component 2 of ISLME in both countries build on the priorities of current government programs, with a focus on strengthening or progressing processes. In most cases, however, pilot projects being introduced through the ISLME project, particularly in Timor-Leste are one off projects that do not have a plan at this stage to ensure continuation through to implementation beyond when the ISLME Project ends. Ongoing participation in both countries will depend on how well the remaining Project activities, particularly the SAP are incorporated in Government planning, eg for continuing transboundary fisheries management cooperation relating to IUU fishing. This will mean, not just engaging with fisheries agencies, but also foreign affairs and other relevant parts of government. Certainly, COVID-19 and the impacts of Tropical Cyclone Seroja have degraded the Timor-Leste Government</p>	<p>Recommendation 12</p> <p>An exit strategy should be developed for the Project as a matter of urgency so that planning and activities can be amended and adapted as required to ensure transboundary and related national activities are included in ministerial/ government departmental budgets and programs, ongoing capacity is in place within governments and other stakeholders, and gaps in capacity are understood and can be addressed, such as in preparing proposals for funding to support implementation beyond the Project. Capacity needs and priorities that may affect implementation should also be identified and planned for.</p>	PSC	

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

Rec. no.	Rationale for Recommendation	Recommendation	Responsibility	Timing/dates for actions
	attention in meeting the co-financing commitment made to the ISLME project as priority has now shifted to the most pressing urgency of the day, so having strong political support and embedding activities into government programs going forward will be key to ensuring priorities do not drop off.			
Cross-cutting dimensions				
D.1 (Section 5.6)	The ISLME Project has undergone Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS) screening and is classified as a Category C project under the "Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Guidelines for FAO Field Projects" ⁶ and a low-risk project. The classification was made at the Project's formulation stage, considering the objectives and content of the ISLME Project, with its primary focus on foundational capacity building and information generation addressing trans-boundary environmental concerns. It is likely however that there will be activities prioritized within the SAP that could have direct or indirect impacts on communities,	<p>Recommendation 13</p> <p>A gender strategy should be included in the SAP that emphasizes the importance of Indonesia and Timor-Leste Governments engaging national stakeholders in addressing challenges for women arising from the UN SDG 5 on Gender Equality; participation into combating SDG 13 on climate change; and addressing the threats to marine life when meeting SDG 14 on life below waters. Particularly for Timor-Leste and East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) province of Indonesia, it will be important to adopt specific mitigation and adaptation actions that compliment and benefit community initiatives. Sharing of information and resources between countries, strategic cooperation through the Women Leaders Forum of the Coral Triangle and tapping into broader regional</p>	Regional Coordinator	

⁶Refer <http://www.fao.org/docrep/016/i2802e/i2802e.pdf>

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

Rec. no.	Rationale for Recommendation	Recommendation	Responsibility	Timing/dates for actions
	particularly marginalized and vulnerable groups.	cooperation with other women in the maritime sector in Asia will be important.		

Appendices

APPENDIX 1 Terms of reference for the MTR

Extracted from full TOR document.

MTR purpose and scope

1. In accordance with the Project Document, an independent Mid-term Review will be undertaken at the end of the second year of project implementation. The Mid-term Review will determine progress being made towards achievement of outcomes and will identify corrective actions if necessary. It will, inter alia:
 - **Assess progress** made towards achievement of project's planned results in terms of its relevance, effectiveness and efficiency, timeliness, sustainability and impact.
 - To identify any **problems or challenges** the project is encountering, understand the causes of any underperformance and leverage project strengths and good practices to overcome them. The MTR makes recommendations for corrective measures, if needed, to overcome challenges and ensure the expected deliverables and results are achieved by the end of the project. Analyse effectiveness of implementation and partnership arrangements;
 - Identify issues requiring decisions and remedial actions;
 - Identify lessons learned about project design, implementation and management;
 - Highlight technical achievements, success stories, key contribution, good practices, lessons learned and areas with potential for upscaling and replication, and to promote knowledge-sharing and learning between FAO and project stakeholders, including the identification of lessons to improve future project formulation and implementation.;
 - Analyse whether the project has achieved any of the benchmarks for moving towards Phase 2 of the ISLME; and
 - Propose any mid-course corrections and/or adjustments to the Work Plan and Implementation arrangement as necessary.
 - Review and confirm the need of extending the project period beyond the current NTE of July 2021 to achieve all the important outcomes considering the various delays in implementation
2. The MTR is planned to take place in the period January- February 2021; this will allow the presentation of the findings to the ISLME PSC in late February 2021 or early March 2021.
3. The evaluation will critically assess the programme through GEF evaluation criteria, i.e. relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, factors affecting performance, sustainability and cross-cutting issues. Within these criteria, the MTR will analyse the following features of the programme, as appropriate.
 - Relevance of the initiative according to: the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries; the GEF 5-International Waters Strategy under which the project was approved; The FAO Strategic Objectives 2 and Organizational outcome; Country development priorities of Indonesia and Timor-Leste and needs for sustainable management of the ISLME.
4. The Mid-Term Review (MTR) will serve both learning and accountability purposes. It will seek to identify any problems and constraints and formulate appropriate recommendations for corrective actions for the effective implementation of the remaining part of the planned project intervention.

5. The MTR will review the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, sustainability, cross-cutting priorities and impact, as well as factors that have affected the performance and delivery of the project to date. The MTR will contribute through operational and strategic recommendations to improve implementation for the remaining period of the project's life. Lessons learnt shall contribute towards national development through the relevant sectors relating to sound environmental management.
6. The mid-term review will assess the implementation period of the project from 2018 to December 2020. The review will cover all activities undertaken within the framework of the project as described in the project document and the Implementation arrangement signed with Indonesia and agreed works with Timor-Leste along with the regional programmes.
7. Planned project targets will be compared with actual results and an assessment will be undertaken to determine the likelihood of sustainability and impact of the project, providing any information relevant to the future decision-making and project implementation.
8. The primary users of the MTR would be the project FAO GEF Coordination Unit (FAO GCU) Regional Project Coordinator (RC), the National Project Manager/Advisor (NPO/NPA), the FAO Lead Technical Officer, the Budget Holder, the Review Manager (RM), the National Project Coordinator, National Project Steering Committee members and the Regional Project Steering Committee members. Other important users will be the different relevant directorates under the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries of Indonesia and Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries of Timor-Leste.
9. The scope of the MTR covers all three components to the Outcome level and to the output level to the extent required.
10. The stakeholders to be discussed with may also cover the key service providers and key consultants who have been contributing to the project.

MTR objectives and key questions

MTR Objectives

11. The MTR objectives are to analyse the contribution of the project to the fisheries policies and review the robustness and realism of the results framework, including logic of causal relationship between inputs, activities, expected outputs, outcomes and impact and validity of indicators.

12. It will address and rate the following criteria:

Relevance – the extent to which the intervention's design and intended results are consistent with local, national, sub-regional and regional environmental and development priorities and policies and to GEF and FAO strategic priorities and objectives; its complementarity with existing interventions and relevance to project stakeholders and beneficiaries; its suitability to the context of the intervention over time.

Effectiveness – the degree to which the intervention has achieved or expects to achieve results (project outputs, outcomes, objectives and impacts, including Global Environmental Benefits) (GEF, 2019c) taking into account key factors influencing the results, including an assessment of whether sufficient capacity has been built to ensure the delivery of results by the end of project and beyond and the likelihood of mid- and longer-term impacts.

Efficiency – the cost-effectiveness of the project and timeliness of activities; the extent to which the intervention has achieved value for resources by converting inputs (funds, personnel, expertise, equipment, etc.) into results in the timeliest and least costly way compared with alternatives.

Sustainability – the (likely) continuation of positive effects from the intervention after it has ended and the potential for scale-up and/or replication; any financial, socio-political, institutional and governance, or environmental risks to sustainability of project results and benefits; any evidence of replication or catalysis of project results.

Factors affecting performance – the main factors to be considered are:

- project design and readiness for implementation (e.g. sufficient partner capacity to begin operations, changes in context between formulation and operational start);
- project execution, including project management (execution modality as well as the involvement of counterparts and different stakeholders);
- project implementation, including supervision by FAO (BH, LTO and FLO), backstopping, and general PTF input;
- financial management and mobilization of expected co-financing;
- project partnerships and stakeholder involvement (including the degree of ownership of project results by stakeholders), political support from government, institutional support from operating partners (such as regional branches of fisheries extension services or fisheries/environment authorities);
- communication, public awareness and knowledge management; and
- application of an M&E system, including M&E design, implementation and budget.

Cross-cutting dimensions – considerations such as gender, indigenous-peoples and minority-group concerns and human rights; the environmental and social safeguards applied to a project require, among other things, a review of the Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS) risk classification and risk-mitigation provisions identified at the project's formulation stage⁷.

MTR questions

13. MTR questions incorporating GEF evaluation criteria will guide the MTR. The MTR will look at indications of the potential impact of project activities on beneficiaries and sustainability of results, including the contribution to capacity development. They will be refined later by the MTR team and validated in the inception report phase.
14. The MTR will be guided by the following questions
 - Relevance:
 - To what extent are the project outcomes congruent with the GEF focal areas/operational program strategies (in this case International Waters /IW 1strategic objective country and regional priorities and FAO Country Programming Framework?
 - Has there been any change in the relevance of the project since its formulation, such as the adoption of new national policies, plans or programmes that affect the relevance of the project's objectives and goals? If so, were there any changes made or are there any changes that need to be made to the project to make it more relevant?
 - Effectiveness
 - To what extent is the project on track towards achieving the planned results under each of the outputs?
 - How much progress towards project outcomes can be measured, and to what degree is the project on track towards the attainment of project objectives and higher-level results, including assessment of the likelihood of impact? What results, intended and unintended, has the project achieved to date?
 - To what extent has the project delivered on its outputs, outcomes and objectives? What broader results (if any) has the project had at national, regional and global level to date?

⁷ FAO applies an online screening system during the project design phase. This is mandatory, even if the project was approved before FAO adopted the GEF Policy on Agency Minimum Standards on Environmental and Social Safeguards (GEF, 2011) in February 2015, as FAO had already applied the Environmental Impact Assessment Guidelines in 2011 (FAO, 2012a) to screen and rate the risks of every FAO project. Consequently, the MTR team should review and confirm the ESS assessments and risk status at mid-term and any changes suggested, if needed. The most recent GEF guidance can be found in GEF (2019b). A GEF project should not cause any harm to the environment or to any stakeholder and, where applicable, will take measures to prevent and/or mitigate any adverse effects.

Were there any unintended consequences? Is there any evidence of setting direction for environmental stress reduction (for example, in direct threats to biodiversity) or environmental status change (such as an improvement in the populations of target species), reflecting global environmental benefits or any change in policy, legal or regulatory frameworks? To what extent can the achievement of results be attributed to the GEF-funded component?

- Are there any barriers or other risks that may prevent future progress towards and the achievement of the project's longer-term objectives? What can be done to increase the likelihood of positive impacts from the project? To what extent can the progress towards long-term impacts be attributed to the project?
- Efficiency:
 - To what extent has the project been implemented efficiently and cost effectively? To what extent has project management been able to adapt to any changing conditions to improve the efficiency of project implementation?
 - To what extent has the project built on existing agreements, initiatives, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other projects, partnerships, etc. and avoided duplication of similar activities by other groups and initiatives?
- Sustainability:
 - What is the likelihood that the project results will be useful or persist after the end of the project? What are the key risks that may affect the sustainability of the project results and its benefits (consider financial, socioeconomic, institutional and governance, and environmental aspects)? What can be done to improve project delivery and to increase the likelihood of longer-term sustainability of project results?"
 - What results, lessons or experiences are likely to be replicated or scaled up in the near future?
- Factors affecting performance:
 - Project design: Is the project design suited to delivering the expected outcomes? To what extent are the project's objectives and components clear, practical and feasible within the timeframe allowed?
 - Project execution: To what extent did the executing agency effectively discharge its role and responsibilities in managing and administering the project? What have been the main challenges in terms of project management and administration? How well have risks been identified and managed? What changes are needed to improve delivery in the latter half of the project?
 - Financial management: What have been the financial-management challenges of the project? To what extent has pledged co-financing been delivered? Has any additional leveraged co-financing been provided since implementation? How has any shortfall in co-financing or unexpected additional funding affected project results?
 - Project implementation: To what extent has FAO delivered oversight and supervision and backstopping (technical, administrative and operational) during project identification, formulation, approval, start-up and execution?
 - Stakeholder engagement: To what extent have stakeholders, such as government agencies, civil society, the community including indigenous populations (to extent it is relevant this being a facilitating and planning project, been involved in project formulation and implementation? What has been the effect of their involvement or non-involvement on project results? How do the various stakeholder groups see their own engagement with the project? What are the mechanisms of their involvement and how could these be improved?

What are the strengths and challenges of the project's partnerships?

- Communication: How effective has the project been in communicating and promoting its key messages and results to partners, stakeholders and general audience? How can this be improved? To what extent are communication products and activities likely to support the sustainability and scaling up of project results?
- Knowledge management: How is the project assessing, documenting and sharing its results and lessons learned and experiences?
- Monitoring and evaluation: Is the project's M&E system practical and sufficient? How has stakeholder engagement and gender assessment been integrated? How could this be improved? Does the M&E system operate per the M&E plan? Has information been gathered in a systematic manner, using appropriate methodologies? To what extent has information generated by the M&E system during project implementation been used to adapt and improve project planning and execution, achieve outcomes and ensure sustainability? Are there gender-disaggregated targets and indicators? How can the M&E system be improved?
- Cross cutting issues: To what extent were gender considerations taken into account in designing and implementing the project? Has the project been designed and implemented in a manner that ensures gender-equitable participation and benefits? Was a gender analysis done? To what extent was gender integrated into the project's objectives and results framework? Were other actors – civil society, indigenous peoples or private sector – involved in project design or implementation and what was the effect on project results?
- Environmental and social safeguards: To what extent were environmental and social concerns taken into consideration in the design and implementation of the project? Has the project been implemented in a manner that ensures the ESS Mitigation Plan (if one exists) has been adhered to?

15. See Annex 9 of the MTR Guide for an MTR matrix template.

Methodology

16. The MTR should adhere to the UNEG Norms & Standards (UNEG, 2016) and align with the FAO–GEF MTR Guide and annexes detailing methodological guidelines and practices. The MTR will adopt a consultative and transparent approach, keeping internal and external stakeholders informed throughout the MTR process. The evidence and information gathered will be triangulated to underpin its validity and analysis and to support its conclusions and recommendations.
17. The first question on relevance relies on data collected through key informant interviews and desk reviews. Regarding the question on effectiveness, field observation (refer to point #35), desk review, key informant interviews, focus groups (separated by gender), and results from the survey of institutional engagement and capacity development will be used. To gather data related to efficiency and sustainability, the MTR will conduct desk review and interviews with key informants such as project management team, government partners and project steering committee and, whenever possible, focus group discussions.
18. The MTR will be led by an International consultant and supported by one national consultant each in Indonesia and Timor-Leste.
19. Due to COVID 19 Pandemic and travel restriction, field observation will be conducted in line with three scenarios:
 - i. No international/national travel restriction; all field observations for both international and national consultant are available
 - ii. International travel restriction but no national travel restriction in either of the country; National Consultant will conduct field survey under supervision of International Consultant

- iii. International/national travel restriction; all field observation/field level discussions will change to online mode. PMU of respective countries with cooperation of the Government agencies or the service providers will facilitate the arrangement of online observation based on the availability of the stakeholders and beneficiaries.
20. As per the current conditions it is likely to be the mix of scenarios 2 and 3.
21. In the event that the travel restrictions are still in place, to assess stakeholder engagement, commitment to co-financing and capacity development, the MTR will rely on the desk review, interviews, as well as a survey instrument. The concept for the survey instrument is to measure engagement, which for these purposes is defined as participation, alignment and integration of project activities into national-led initiatives. Capacity development, drawing from the FAO corporate approach to capacity development, is defined as improved skills and knowledge that contribute to enhanced organizational effectiveness.
22. To review co-financing, the MTR team will rely on the validation of the initial estimates, drawing from data and information made available and collected during the project implementation. The final question related to a gender analysis will benefit from desk review, key informant interviews and focus group discussions, and draw heavily from the recent GEF guidance and the guidance provided in OED's framework to evaluate gender results.⁴
23. However, the above methodology is only a guide and the final methodology will be agreed and finalized by the MTR team during the inception phase but will be according with FAO-GEF guidelines.

Roles and responsibilities

24. This section briefly describes the different roles that key stakeholders play in the design and implementation of the MTR.
25. The Budget Holder (BH) is accountable for the MTR process and report and is responsible for the initiation, management and finalization of the MTR. To fast track the MTR Process, the BH has designated an MTR Manager (RM) who will act on his behalf.
26. The GEF Coordination Unit (GCU), BH and Lead Technical Officer (LTO) will provide support to the RM in drafting the ToR, in the identification of the consultants and in the organization of the mission. RM is responsible for the finalization of the ToR and of the identification of the MTR team members, with the support of the GCU. RM shall brief the MTR team on the MTR methodology and process and will review the final draft report for Quality Assurance purposes in terms of presentation, compliance with the ToR and timely delivery, quality, clarity and soundness of evidence provided and of the analysis supporting conclusions and recommendations in the MTR report. The RM will also organize briefing sessions before and after the main data collection mission with the FAO-GEF Coordination Unit.
27. The GCU will appoint a focal point to provide technical backstopping throughout the MTR process, including guidance and punctual support to the BH/RM and MTR team on technical issues related to the GEF and the MTR, as well as quality assurance for all the products. This includes support in identifying potential MTR team members, reviewing candidate qualifications and participating in the selection of consultants, as well as briefing the MTR team on the MTR process, relevant methodology and tools. The FAO GEF CU also follows up with the BH to ensure the timely preparation of the Management Response. GCU provides backstopping for the planning and the implementation of an MTR, undertakes quality assurance on the inception report, the draft and final MTR reports, and clears the final MTR report for BHs to make the final payment to MTR consultants. A specific FAO GEF CU MTR focal point is appointed as the point of contact for an MTR.
28. Project Task Force (PTF) members, including the BH, are required to participate in meetings with the MTR team, make all necessary information and documentation available and comment on the terms of reference and MTR report. However, their level of involvement will depend on team

members' individual roles and level of participation in the project.

29. The Regional Project Coordinator along with National Project Officer (NPO), Indonesia and National Project Adviser (NPA), Timor-Leste facilitate the participation of government partners in the MTR process and support the PMU in ensuring good communication across government. The Project Steering Committee (PSC) will also be kept updated and their support sought for taking forward the MTR recommendations.
30. The relevant GEF Operational Focal Point (OFP) must be involved in any GEF project or programme evaluation process, in accordance with the GEF Evaluation Policy (2019). The BH should inform the OFP of the MTR process and the MTR team is encouraged to consult with him/her during the review process. The team should also keep the OFP informed of progress and send him/her a copy of the draft and final MTR reports.
31. The MTR Team is responsible for further developing and applying the MTR methodology, producing a brief MTR inception report, conducting the MTR, and for producing the MTR report. All team members will participate in briefing and debriefing meetings, discussions, field visits, and will contribute to the MTR with written inputs to both the draft and final versions of the MTR report (the MTR Team Leader has overall responsibility for delivering the MTR report). The MTR team will agree with the GCU MTR focal point on the outline of the report early in the MTR process. The MTR Team is free to expand the scope, criteria, questions and issues listed above, as well as develop its own MTR tools and framework, within time and resources available and based on discussions with the BH/RM, consults the BH and PTF where necessary. The MTR Team Leader is fully responsible for the MTR report, which may not reflect the views of the Government or of FAO. Although an MTR report is not subject to technical clearance by FAO, the BH/RM and GCU do provide Quality Assurance of all MTR reports.
32. The MTR Team Leader guides and coordinates the MTR Team members in their specific work, discusses their findings, conclusions and recommendations and leads on the preparation of the draft and the final report, consolidation

MTR team composition and profile

33. The MTR Team will be composed of three consultants, a Lead International Consultant and a National consultant each in Indonesia and Timor-Leste. The International Consultant will be the MTR Team Leader and will be expected to have expertise in Large Marine Ecosystem Approach, transboundary waters and ecosystem approach to fisheries management. The National Consultant will be expected to have experience in marine fisheries / marine ecosystem programmes and review, to support the International Consultant in collection of data in the project areas. The detailed TORs area annexed in this document.
34. The MTR consultants will be independent of any organizations that have been involved in designing, executing or advising on any aspect of the project being evaluated in the MTR and will not have been involved in any aspect of the project previously.
35. The international consultant/team leader will have extensive evaluation experience, especially under the theme of LME and ecosystem approach to fisheries management. In addition, the candidate is expected to have the following:
 - At least a master's degree in fisheries science, Marine Sciences, Social Sciences or related field
 - Familiarity with the objectives of the GEF International waters and biodiversity programme, particularly as it relates to Large Marine Ecosystem initiatives or transboundary waters
 - Understanding of governance, political, economic and institutional issues associated with transboundary water issues in the South East Asia region.

- Familiarity with integrated coastal resource management, understanding of large marine ecosystem approach
 - Familiarity with FAO's execution modality, rules and procedures will be an advantage.
36. The national consultant should be knowledgeable of the Indonesian and Timor-Leste contexts respectively, within which the project is being implemented; Understanding of marine natural resources and marine fisheries management; Demonstrated experience in monitoring and evaluation of technical assistance projects;
37. All consultants are expected to demonstrate the following competencies:
- Results focus
 - Solution oriented
 - Teamwork
 - Excellent communication skills (both written and oral) in English
 - Building effective relationships
 - Knowledge sharing and continuous improvement

MTR products (deliverables)

38. This section describes the key deliverables the MTR team is expected to produce. At a minimum, these products should include the following:
- MTR inception report. An inception report should be prepared by the MTR team before beginning the fully-fledged data collection exercise that details the MTR Team's understanding of what is being assessed and why. The inception report will serve as a roadmap and reference in planning and conducting an MTR. It also serves as a useful tool for summarizing and visually presenting the MTR design and methodology for discussions with stakeholders. It details the GEF evaluation criteria/questions that the MTR seeks to answer (in the form of an MTR Matrix); data sources and data collection methods; analysis tools or methods appropriate for each data source and data collection method; and the standard or measure by which each question will be evaluated. The inception report should include a proposed schedule of tasks, activities and deliverables, designating a team member with the lead responsibility for each task or product. The inception report will also include the evaluation matrix.
 - Draft MTR report. The project team, BH/RM, GCU and key stakeholders in the MTR should review the draft MTR report to ensure accuracy and that it meets the required quality criteria through two rounds of review, one internal to the project and FAO followed by a review by key external partners and stakeholders.
 - Final MTR report. This should include an executive summary and be written in English. Supporting data and analysis should be annexed to the report when considered important to complement the main report. Translations in other languages of the Organization, if required, will be FAO's responsibility.
 - A two-page summary of key findings, lessons, recommendations and messages from the MTR report, produced by the RM and PMU, in consultation with the MTR team, that can be disseminated to the wider public for general information on the project's results and performance to date. This can be posted as a briefing paper on the project's website but more creative and innovative multimedia approaches, such as video, photos, sound recordings, social media, short stories (for suitable cases or country studies), infographics or even comic or cartoon format, may be more effective depending on the circumstances.
39. Further guidance on the development of the MTR inception report and the full MTR report is given

in the Guide for Planning and Conducting Mid-term Reviews of FAO-GEF projects and Programmes and annexes.

MTR timeframe

40. This section lists the due date or timeframe of the MTR and describes all tasks and deliverables (such as briefings, the draft report and final report), as well as the associated roles and responsibilities of the key MTR individuals and groups.

Task	Duration/Date	Responsibility
ToR Finalization	15 Dec 2020	BH/RM with support from RC, LTO, FLO PSC and GCU MTR focal point
Team Identification	25 Dec 5 Dec 2020 2020	BH/RM, LTO, FLO and GCU MTR focal point
Team Recruitment	1- 8 Jan 2021	BH
Organization of the agenda and online meeting arrangement	8-10 Jan 2021	BH/RM, Project Team and MTR Team
MTR inception Report	15 Jan 2021	MTR Team
Clearance of the MTR inception report	25 Jan 2021	BH/RM and the GCU MTR focal point
MTR missions – confirmation of interviews, meetings via online or phone call	26 Jan to 10 Feb 2021	MTR Team with the support of PMU
Briefing on preliminary findings of the MTR following the field mission(s)	18 Feb 2021	MTR Team and PMU via online meeting
Production of the first draft for circulation	25 Feb 2021	MTR Team
Circulation and review of first (zero) draft	6-10 Feb 2021	BH/RM, PMU, GCU MTR focal point, LTO for comments and quality control (organised by BH/RM)
Production of the second draft	20 Feb 2020	MTR Team
Circulation of the second draft	20-25 Feb 2021	BH/RM and key external stakeholders (organised by BH/RM)
Production of a final report	5 Mar 2021	MTR team
Management Response (MR)	15 March 2020	BH
A follow-up report in PSC Meeting	17 Mar 2021	RC and BH

6 Note that FAO rules require all travel authorization to be approved at least 15 days before travel.

APPENDIX 2. Stakeholders interviewed and documents reviewed for the MTR

The following interviews were conducted for the MTR

FAO Interviewees

Name, Position	Method	Interview Date
Mr. Muralidharan Chavakat Manghat, ISLME Regional Coordinator	Zoom	29/04/2021 and 30/04/21
Ms. Susana V. Siar, Fishery and Aquaculture Officer, FAORAP	Zoom	28/4/21
Mr Ageng Herianto, Asst FAO Representative (Programme), Indonesia	Zoom	29/4/21
Ms. Paula Lopes da Cruz, Assistant FAO Rep in TL	Zoom	6/4/21
Mr Lukman Muhammad, National Project Officer, ISLME project Indonesia	Zoom	30/4/21
Ms. Joana Belo, ISLME National Project Adviser	Zoom	28/4/21

Government interviews - Indonesia

Name, Position, Organisation	Method	Interview Date
Ms. Dr. Besweni, Deputy Director for Marine Fish Resources of the Coastal Waters, Technical Coordinator for MMAF Team,	Zoom	11-May-21
Mr. Amehr Hakim, Deputy Director for Management of Marine Protected Areas, MMAF Technical Team	Zoom	11-May-21
Mr. Rokhmad M. Rofiq S.Pi, Deputy Director for Seedling of Brackish Water Fishes, MMAF Technical Team	Zoom	11-May-21
Mr. Iman Indrawarman Barizi, Deputy Director for Management of Aquaculture Area, MMAF Technical Team	Zoom	11-May-21
Mr. Didik Agus Suwarsono, Head of Sub-division of Cooperation and Public Relations, MMAF Technical Team	Zoom	11-May-21
Mr. Hedhi Sugrito Kuncoro, Head of Section of Surveillance in the ZEEI and High Seas, MMAF Technical Team	Zoom	11-May-21
Mr. Trian Yunanda, Stakeholder group 1, NPC for the ISLME project	Zoom	11-May-21
Mr. Agung Tri Prasetyo, Head of Bureau, Public Relation and International Cooperation	Zoom	11-May-21
Mu'in - UPT Perikanan Payau DKP Kutai Kertanegara	Zoom	21-May-21

Government Interviewees – Timor-Leste

Name, Position, Organisation	Method	Interview Date
Mr. Celestino da Cunha Barreto, National director of Fishery management, Timor-Leste	in person & Zoom	28-Apr-21
Mr. Horacio Guterres, Dir National of Fisheries Research & Development, Timor-Leste	Zoom & in person	28-Apr-21
Mr. Acacio Guterres, DG Fishery	In person & Zoom	28-Apr-21
Mr. Joao Carlos Soares, DG Environment	Zoom & email	8-Jun-21
Sr. Mario Tilman, Head of Department of Fishery University of Timor-Leste(UNTL)	in person & Zoom	11-May-21
Mr. Julio da Cruz, National Director of Aquaculture, Timor-Leste	in person & Zoom	26-Apr-21
Mr. Lourenco Amaral, National Director of Fisheries Inspection	via phone call	8 June 2021

Industry Associations - Indonesia

Name, Position, Organisation	Method	Interview Date
Andi Daud Yusuf (Rere), Leader of Balikpapan Mud Crab Entrepreneurs Association (ASKIB)	Zoom	21-May-21
Dr. rer. nat. Hawis H. Madduppa, S.Pi., M.Si. Executive Director of APRI (Indonesian Blue Swimming Crab Management Association)	Zoom	31-May-21

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

Academic and NGO Interviewees

Name, Position	Method	Interview Date
Ms. Karen Edyvane. Charles Darwin University based in Darwin Australia	Zoom	14-May-21

The following documents were consulted as a part of the MTR:

- GEF PIF with technical clearance
- FAO/GEF Project Document (ISLME ProDoc)
- GEF International Waters Tracking Tool document at baseline as well as at Dec 2020
- Indonesia Implementation Arrangement
- Report of the Regional Inception Workshop July 2018
- Regional Project Steering Committee Reports - July 2018 and Sept 2019
- ISLME PPR Jul-Dec 2019 and PPR Jul-Dec 2020
- Annual workplans and budgets (including budget revisions)
- FAO-GEF PIR report 2019, FAO-GEF PIR report 2020 and FAO-GEF PIR report 2021
- Back-to-Office reports from C. M. Muralidharan; Suci Haryati; and Muhammad Lukman
- Report on Post-harvest training to women and fisher groups in Beacau, Batugade and Metinaro, Dili and Bobonaro Municipalities June 2020 (TL)
- Follow up Guidelines for pilot site EAFM Planning in Timor-Leste Dec 2019
- Course report on Essential EAFM and Training of Trainers Dec 2019 (TL)
- Guidelines for EAFM Module Development for Timor-Leste Universities Dec 2019
- Report on the First ISLME TDA Regional Technical workshop
- Report on the First National TDA Workshop – Technical & Key Stakeholder Consultation (Timor-Leste)
- Workshop Report National Stakeholder Consultation (Indonesia)
- Report on national focus group discussion on bilateral and regional cooperation to prevent, deter and combat IUU Fishing Sept 2019
- Activity report on EAFM Advance training for EAFM Planner Nov 2020 (IN)
- Report on the technical workshop of Blue Swimmer Crab Fisheries Feb 2020 (IN)
- Report on the stakeholder meeting of Blue Swimming Crab, Snapper and Grouper Fisheries at Fisheries Management Areas, March 2020 (IN)
- FAO Project Newsletter 1 and FAO Project Newsletter 2
- ISLME Project Poster and ISLME Project Brochure
- Financial management information - up-to-date co-financing table, a summary report on the project's financial management and expenditures to date, financial revisions made to the project and their purpose.
- GEF Gender Policy (GEF, 2017), GEF Gender Implementation Strategy (GEF, 2018a), GEF

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

Guidance on Gender Equality (GEF, 2018b) and the GEF Guide to Advance Gender Equality in GEF Projects and Programmes (GEF, 2018c)

- Environment and Social Screening Assessment documentation- Risk Classification Certification Form signed 28 Sept 2016, Appendix 6 Environment and Social Assessment, and PIF ESS Checklist for the project.
- GEF International Waters Tracking Tool at baseline and as at 30 June 2021.

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

APPENDIX 3. MTR matrix (review questions and sub-questions)

Evaluative questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
	Relationships established, coherence of project design and implementation approach, specific activities conducted, quality of risk mitigation strategies, etc	Project documents, national policies or strategies, websites, project staff, project partners, data collected throughout the MTR mission, etc.	Document analysis, data analysis, interviews with project staff, interviews with stakeholders, etc.
1. Strategic relevance			
1.a) To what extent are the project outcomes congruent with the GEF focal areas/operational program strategies (in this case International Waters /IW 1strategic objective country and regional priorities and FAO Country Programming Framework?)	Coherence of project design	Prodoc and relevant GEF strategy and FAO strategy documents	Document analysis
1.b) Has there been any change in the relevance of the project since its formulation, such as the adoption of new national policies, plans or programmes that affect the relevance of the project's objectives and goals?	Coherence of project design	Prodoc and relevant GEF strategy and FAO strategy documents Interviews with FAO	Document analysis / discussions with PMU
1.c) If so, were there any changes made or are there any changes that need to be made to the project to make it more relevant?	Coherence of project design	Prodoc and relevant GEF strategy and FAO strategy documents Interviews with FAO	Document analysis / discussions with PMU
2. Effectiveness – progress towards results			
2.a) To what extent is the project on track towards achieving the planned results under each of the outputs?	Implementation approach, specific activities conducted	Project documents, national policies or strategies, websites, project staff, project partners, data collected throughout the MTR mission	Document analysis, data analysis, interviews with project staff, interviews with stakeholders, etc
2.b) How much progress towards project outcomes can be measured, and to what degree is the project on track towards the attainment of project objectives and higher-level results, including assessment of the likelihood of impact?	Implementation approach, specific activities conducted	Project documents, national policies or strategies, websites, project staff, project partners, data collected throughout the MTR mission	Document analysis, data analysis, interviews with project staff, interviews with stakeholders, etc
2.c) What results, intended and unintended, has the project achieved to date?	Implementation approach, specific activities conducted	Project documents, national policies or strategies, websites, project staff, project partners, data collected throughout the MTR mission	Document analysis, data analysis, interviews with project staff, interviews with stakeholders, etc
2.d) To what extent has the project delivered on its outputs, outcomes and objectives?	Implementation approach, specific activities conducted	Project documents, national policies or strategies, websites, project staff, project partners, data collected throughout the MTR mission	Document analysis, data analysis, interviews with project staff, interviews with stakeholders, etc
2.e) What broader results (if any) has the project had at national, regional and global level to date?	Implementation approach, specific activities conducted	Project documents, national policies or strategies, websites, project staff, project partners, data collected throughout the MTR mission	Document analysis, data analysis, interviews with project staff, interviews with stakeholders, etc
2.f) Were there any unintended consequences?	Implementation approach, specific activities conducted	Project documents, national policies or strategies, websites, project staff, project partners, data collected throughout the MTR mission	Document analysis, data analysis, interviews with project staff, interviews with stakeholders, etc

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

Evaluative questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
	Relationships established, coherence of project design and implementation approach, specific activities conducted, quality of risk mitigation strategies, etc	Project documents, national policies or strategies, websites, project staff, project partners, data collected throughout the MTR mission, etc.	Document analysis, data analysis, interviews with project staff, interviews with stakeholders, etc.
2.g) Is there any evidence of setting direction for environmental stress reduction (for example, in direct threats to biodiversity) or environmental status change (such as an improvement in the populations of target species), reflecting global environmental benefits or any change in policy, legal or regulatory frameworks?	Implementation approach, specific activities conducted	Project documents, national policies or strategies, websites, project staff, project partners, data collected throughout the MTR mission	Document analysis, data analysis, interviews with project staff, interviews with stakeholders, etc
2.h) To what extent can the achievement of results be attributed to the GEF-funded component?	Implementation approach, specific activities conducted	Project documents, national policies or strategies, websites, project staff, project partners, data collected throughout the MTR mission	Document analysis, data analysis, interviews with project staff, interviews with stakeholders, etc
2.i) Are there any barriers or other risks that may prevent future progress towards and the achievement of the project's longer-term objectives?	Implementation approach, specific activities conducted	Project documents, national policies or strategies, websites, project staff, project partners, data collected throughout the MTR mission	Document analysis, data analysis, interviews with project staff, interviews with stakeholders, etc
2.j) What can be done to increase the likelihood of positive impacts from the project?	Implementation approach, specific activities conducted	Project documents, national policies or strategies, websites, project staff, project partners, data collected throughout the MTR mission	Document analysis, data analysis, interviews with project staff, interviews with stakeholders, etc
2.k) To what extent can the progress towards long-term impacts be attributed to the project?	Implementation approach, specific activities conducted	Project documents, national policies or strategies, websites, project staff, project partners, data collected throughout the MTR mission	Document analysis, data analysis, interviews with project staff, interviews with stakeholders, etc
3. Efficiency			
3.a) To what extent has the project been implemented efficiently and cost effectively?	Implementation approach, specific activities conducted	Project documents, national policies or strategies, websites, project staff, project partners, data collected throughout the MTR mission	Document analysis, data analysis, interviews with project staff, interviews with stakeholders, etc
3.b) To what extent has project management been able to adapt to any changing conditions to improve the efficiency of project implementation?	Implementation approach, specific activities conducted	Project documents, national policies or strategies, websites, project staff, project partners, data collected throughout the MTR mission	Document analysis, data analysis, interviews with project staff, interviews with stakeholders, etc
3.c) To what extent has the project built on existing agreements, initiatives, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other projects, partnerships, etc. and avoided duplication of similar activities by other groups and initiatives?	Implementation approach, specific activities conducted	Project documents, national policies or strategies, websites, project staff, project partners, data collected throughout the MTR mission	Document analysis, data analysis, interviews with project staff, interviews with stakeholders, etc
4. Factors affecting performance			
4.a. Project design: 4.a.i) Is the project design suited to delivering the expected outcomes? 4.a.ii) To what extent are the project's objectives and components clear, practical and feasible within the	Coherence of project design	Prodoc Data collected throughout the MTR mission	Document analysis, data analysis, interviews with project staff, interviews with stakeholders, etc

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

Evaluative questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
timeframe allowed?			
<p>4.b. Project execution:</p> <p>4.b.i) To what extent did the executing agency effectively discharge its role and responsibilities in managing and administering the project?</p> <p>4.b.ii) What have been the main challenges in terms of project management and administration?</p> <p>4.b.iii) How well have risks been identified and managed?</p> <p>4.b.iv) What changes are needed to improve delivery in the latter half of the project?</p>	Implementation approach, specific activities conducted	Project documents, national policies or strategies, websites, project staff, project partners, data collected throughout the MTR mission, etc.	Document analysis, data analysis, interviews with project staff, interviews with stakeholders, etc.
<p>4.c. Financial management:</p> <p>4.c.i) What have been the financial-management challenges of the project?</p> <p>4.c.ii) To what extent has pledged co-financing been delivered?</p> <p>4.c.iii) Has any additional leveraged co-financing been provided since implementation?</p> <p>4.c.iv) How has any shortfall in co-financing or unexpected additional funding affected project results?</p>	Implementation approach, specific activities conducted	Project documents, national policies or strategies, websites, project staff, project partners, data collected throughout the MTR mission	Document analysis, data analysis, interviews with project staff, interviews with stakeholders, etc
<p>4.d. Project implementation:</p> <p>To what extent has FAO delivered oversight and supervision and backstopping (technical, administrative and operational) during project identification, formulation, approval, start-up and execution?</p>	Implementation approach, specific activities conducted	Project documents, national policies or strategies, websites, project staff, project partners, data collected throughout the MTR mission	Document analysis, data analysis, interviews with project staff, interviews with stakeholders, etc
<p>4.e. Stakeholder engagement:</p> <p>4.e.i) To what extent have stakeholders, such as government agencies, civil society, the community including indigenous populations (to extent it is relevant this being a facilitating and planning project, been involved in project formulation and implementation?</p> <p>4.e.ii) What has been the effect of their involvement or non-involvement on project results?</p> <p>4.e.iii) How do the various stakeholder groups see their own engagement with the project?</p> <p>4.e.iv) What are the mechanisms of their involvement and how could these be improved?</p> <p>4.e.v) What are the strengths and challenges of the project's partnerships?</p>	Implementation approach, specific activities conducted	Project documents, national policies or strategies, websites, project staff, project partners, data collected throughout the MTR mission	Document analysis, data analysis, interviews with project staff, interviews with stakeholders, etc
<p>4.f. Communication:</p> <p>4.f.i) How effective has the project been in communicating and promoting its key messages and results to partners, stakeholders and general audience?</p> <p>4.f.ii) How can this be improved?</p> <p>4.f.iii) To what extent are communication products and activities likely to support the sustainability and scaling up of project results?</p>	Implementation approach, specific activities conducted	Project documents, national policies or strategies, websites, project staff, project partners, data collected throughout the MTR mission	Document analysis, data analysis, interviews with project staff, interviews with stakeholders, etc
<p>4.g. Knowledge management:</p> <p>How is the project assessing, documenting and sharing its results and lessons learned and experiences?</p>	Implementation approach, specific activities conducted	Project documents, national policies or strategies, websites, project staff, project partners, data collected throughout the MTR mission	Document analysis, data analysis, interviews with project staff, interviews with stakeholders, etc

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

Evaluative questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
<p>4.h. Monitoring and evaluation:</p> <p>4.h.i) Is the project's M&E system practical and sufficient?</p> <p>4.h.ii) How has stakeholder engagement and gender assessment been integrated?</p> <p>4.h.iii) How could this be improved?</p> <p>4.h.iv) Does the M&E system operate per the M&E plan?</p> <p>4.h.v) Has information been gathered in a systematic manner, using appropriate methodologies?</p> <p>4.h.vi) To what extent has information generated by the M&E system during project implementation been used to adapt and improve project planning and execution, achieve outcomes and ensure sustainability?</p> <p>4.h.vii) Are there gender-disaggregated targets and indicators?</p> <p>4.h.viii) How can the M&E system be improved?</p>	<p>Relationships established, coherence of project design and implementation approach, specific activities conducted, quality of risk mitigation strategies, etc</p> <p>Implementation approach, specific activities conducted</p> <p>Risk mitigation strategy</p>	<p>Project documents, national policies or strategies, websites, project staff, project partners, data collected throughout the MTR mission, etc.</p> <p>Project documents, national policies or strategies, websites, project staff, project partners, data collected throughout the MTR mission</p>	<p>Document analysis, data analysis, interviews with project staff, interviews with stakeholders, etc.</p> <p>Document analysis, data analysis, interviews with project staff, interviews with stakeholders, etc</p>
5. Sustainability of project results			
<p>5.a. What is the likelihood that the project results will be useful or persist after the end of the project?</p>	<p>Implementation approach, specific activities conducted</p>	<p>Project documents, national policies or strategies, websites, project staff, project partners, data collected throughout the MTR mission</p>	<p>Document analysis, data analysis, interviews with project staff, interviews with stakeholders, etc</p>
<p>5.b. What are the key risks that may affect the sustainability of the project results and its benefits (consider financial, socioeconomic, institutional and governance, and environmental aspects)?</p>	<p>Implementation approach, specific activities conducted</p>	<p>Project documents, national policies or strategies, websites, project staff, project partners, data collected throughout the MTR mission</p>	<p>Document analysis, data analysis, interviews with project staff, interviews with stakeholders, etc</p>
<p>5.c. What can be done to improve project delivery and to increase the likelihood of longer-term sustainability of project results?</p>	<p>Implementation approach, specific activities conducted</p>	<p>Project documents, national policies or strategies, websites, project staff, project partners, data collected throughout the MTR mission</p>	<p>Document analysis, data analysis, interviews with project staff, interviews with stakeholders, etc</p>
<p>5 d. Has the project developed an exit strategy?</p>	<p>Risk mitigation strategy</p>	<p>Project documents, national policies or strategies, websites, project staff, project partners, data collected throughout the MTR mission</p>	<p>Document analysis, data analysis, interviews with project staff, interviews with stakeholders, etc</p>
6. Cross-cutting issues – equity issues (e.g. gender, youth, vulnerable groups) and environmental and social safeguards (ESS)			
<p>6.a. To what extent were gender considerations taken into account in designing and implementing the project?</p>	<p>Implementation approach, specific activities conducted</p>	<p>Project documents, national policies or strategies, websites, project staff, project partners, data collected throughout the MTR mission</p>	<p>Document analysis, data analysis, interviews with project staff, interviews with stakeholders, etc</p>
<p>6.b. Has the project been designed and implemented in a manner that ensures gender-equitable participation and benefits?</p>	<p>Implementation approach, specific activities conducted</p>	<p>Project documents, national policies or strategies, websites, project staff, project partners, data collected throughout the MTR mission</p>	<p>Document analysis, data analysis, interviews with project staff, interviews with stakeholders, etc</p>
<p>6.c. To what extent was gender integrated into the project's objectives and results framework?</p>	<p>Coherence of project design</p>	<p>Project documents, national policies or strategies,</p>	<p>Document analysis, data</p>

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

Evaluative questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
	Relationships established, coherence of project design and implementation approach, specific activities conducted, quality of risk mitigation strategies, etc	Project documents, national policies or strategies, websites, project staff, project partners, data collected throughout the MTR mission, etc.	Document analysis, data analysis, interviews with project staff, interviews with stakeholders, etc.
		websites, project staff, project partners, data collected throughout the MTR mission	analysis, interviews with project staff, interviews with stakeholders, etc
6.d. Were other actors – civil society, indigenous peoples or private sector – involved in project design or implementation and what was the effect on project results?	Coherence of project design Implementation approach, specific activities conducted	Project documents, national policies or strategies, websites, project staff, project partners, data collected throughout the MTR mission	Document analysis, data analysis, interviews with project staff, interviews with stakeholders, etc
6.e. To what extent were environmental and social concerns taken into consideration in the design and implementation of the project? Note it will be important to review the initial ESS Screening if done at project formulation stage and indicate if the risk rating is still the same at MTR stage	Coherence of project design Implementation approach, specific activities conducted	Project documents, national policies or strategies, websites, project staff, project partners, data collected throughout the MTR mission	Document analysis, data analysis, interviews with project staff, interviews with stakeholders, etc
6.f. Has the project been implemented in a manner that ensures the ESS Mitigation Plan (if one exists) has been adhered to?	Implementation approach, specific activities conducted	Project documents, national policies or strategies, websites, project staff, project partners, data collected throughout the MTR mission	Document analysis, data analysis, interviews with project staff, interviews with stakeholders, etc
6.g. What are the lessons learned from the project? What is the key message you have about the project?	Implementation approach, specific activities conducted	Project documents, national policies or strategies, websites, project staff, project partners, data collected throughout the MTR mission	Document analysis, data analysis, interviews with project staff, interviews with stakeholders, etc

APPENDIX 4. Results matrix showing achievements at mid-term and MTR observations

As part of the assessment of the delivery of project outcomes and outputs, the MTR has assessed progress made towards the mid-term project targets using the matrix below. Assessment of progress is colour-coded using a “traffic-light system”, with a rating assigned to progress on each outcome only using the standard GEF six-point rating scale. The latest PPR report has been used (30 June 2021) supplemented with findings from the consultations. Note a no cost extension has recently been approved for the project (since consultations were completed) and therefore those outcomes that may have been classified as not on target to be achieved, for example 2.1 SAP, are now on target to be achieved.

= Achieved	Yellow = On target to be achieved	Red = Not on target to be achieved
------------	-----------------------------------	------------------------------------

Progress-towards-results matrix showing the degree of achievement of project outcomes and outputs (against mid-term targets)

Project target	Indicator	Baseline level	Level at 31 Dec 2020	Mid-term target	End-of-project target	Mid-term level & assessment	Achievement rating	Justification for rating
Objective(s): The Global Environmental Objective (GEO) of the ISLME project is to facilitate the implementation of ecosystem approaches to fisheries and coastal management (EAFM/EBM) to ensure the sustainable development of ecosystem resources in the Indonesian Seas Large Marine Ecosystem (ISLME) through a TDA/SAP The Project Development Objective (PDO) of the ISLME project is to improve the capacity of stakeholders within the ISLME to effectively utilize transboundary ecosystem-based approaches to the management of marine and coastal resources and ecosystems and to strengthen the resilience of coastal communities within the ISLME through promotion of responsible fishing practices and livelihood enhancement and diversification, contributing to food security and poverty eradication.								
Outcomes								
Component 1: Identifying and addressing threats to the marine environment including unsustainable fisheries								
Outcome 1.1: Regional agreement on the transboundary threats and their root causes to marine environment (including fisheries) in the ISLME	Regional agreement (TDA) endorsed by stakeholders	Limited information on transboundary issues and their root causes, and limited analysis of Provincial level management capacity and processes	COVID - 19 caused delays to the speed at which the TDA process has been undertaken. Thematic studies for the TDA are complete. The initially identified primary environment concerns were reflected in the Regional TDA workshop and two national TDA stakeholder consultations which fed into the thematic reports for each country. The National Scientific Advisory Group members are actively involved and contributing to the TDA process.	TDA completed and approved by two national TDA-SAP Technical Groups, and then the Project Steering Committee (by end of Year 2)	NA		On target to be achieved	MS Signoff of the TDA by countries and PSC is planned in July 2021. The TDA is going through finalisation currently. It is unclear whether the July 2021 date for signoff will occur however given the delays to date from COVID. With the no cost extension recently approved, there is some flexibility now with the

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

Project target	Indicator	Baseline level	Level at 31 Dec 2020	Mid-term target	End-of-project target	Mid-term level & assessment	Achievement rating	Justification for rating
								timeframes so should it take another month and signoff occur in August, that should not impact on the delivery of the SAP.
Outcome 1.2: An agreed and endorsed Strategic Action Program (SAP) to ensure the long-term institutional and financial sustainability of the ISLME fisheries and marine ecosystem signed off by the appropriate ministers in both countries.	SAP endorsed by stakeholders	No plans or strategies for transboundary management of the ISLME, including a regional SAP or harmonized NAPS, have ever been developed, and to date interventions have been fragmented, site specific and largely uncoordinated	Delay in TDA due to COVID 19 and other factors have delayed the start of the SAP process. The SAP process is to commence once the TDA has been signed off - expected July 2021.	National Action Plans are completed and endorsed nationally by the end of year 2 and include gender sensitive targets and actions (GEF 6 gender indicator, 2).	By the end of year 4: The ISLME SAP is completed and signed off by the appropriate ministers in both countries. A strategy is developed for ISLME SAP implementation (post-project), including for sustainable financing and a system to monitor the performance of SAP implementation over the medium and long-terms	On target to be achieved	MS	Under the original timeframes for the project timeline, and considering potential further impacts from COVID-19, completing the SAP is the time allocated is not feasible. This would have resulted in a classification of not on target to be achieved. However, a no cost extension has recently been approved which provides sufficient time for the SAP to be delivered within the remaining time of the project, by Dec 2022.
Component 2: Strengthening capacity for regional and sub-regional cooperation in marine resources management								
Outcome 2.1: Ecosystem Approaches to Fisheries Management (EAFM) and Ecosystem-Based Management (EBM) utilized for sustainable marine management	Number of Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs) based on EAFM under implementation, and that incorporate gender dimensions (GEF 6 gender indicator 4)	FMPs based on EAFM exist for lobster, mud crab, blue swimming crab, live bait fish in Indonesia	Activities underway or completed: IN - EAFM assessment for selected commodities - BSC, lobster, snapper and grouper and mud crab completed. Developing strategies for implementation of the EAFM and synchronising MCS across levels, IUU discussions ongoing. EAA preassessment for pilot project completed, EAFM training completed, review of marine habitat management completed.	Initiated in Year 1.	6 FMPs based on EAFM prepared and approved in consultation with stakeholders at project pilot sites by the end of year 3	On target to be achieved	MS	Both countries had revised the activities and outputs of this component to reflect progress before project start up. These changes reflect the progress made by Indonesia in implementing the EAFM and other policies. The revised work under each output was approved in Indonesia through an

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

Project target	Indicator	Baseline level	Level at 31 Dec 2020	Mid-term target	End-of-project target	Mid-term level & assessment	Achievement rating	Justification for rating
			TL - 2 scoping studies completed on interventions for 3 pilots for aquaculture (EAA) and EAFM. Post harvest training of women in 3 pilot areas completed, IUU discussions ongoing. Detailed EAFM training and a Train the trainer on EAFM completed.					Implementation Arrangement signed on 17 January 2019 and subsequently updated in 2021. The revised work plan for Indonesia and Timor-Lestewere approved in the respective National Project Steering committees and the Regional Project steering committee held on 30 Sep 2019. Activities did not commence until towards end of 2019. Data collection and consultation have progressed, this target is achievable if coordination is strengthened and adherence to timeline is promoted.
Outcome 2.2: Regional and national governance of fisheries and natural resource management (including legal and institutional frameworks) strengthened	Programs to control IUU fishing and management of fishing ports implemented	Existing systems for control of IUU fishing and management of fishing ports are ineffective (Indonesia) or virtually non-existent (Timor Leste)	A review and capacity building on use of e-log book completed in Indonesia. A manual developed. Timor-Lesteofficers were supported in participation in RPOA- IUU (The Regional Plan of Action to Promote Responsible Fishing Practices including Combating Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing in the Region) meeting and one officer was supported to participate in a training in Australia. (MS)	None	Training programs and enhanced institutional cooperation results in strengthened Port State controls and IUU monitoring by year three of the project	On target to be achieved	S	Activities well underway and on track.

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

Project target	Indicator	Baseline level	Level at 31 Dec 2020	Mid-term target	End-of-project target	Mid-term level & assessment	Achievement rating	Justification for rating
Outcome 2.3: Environmental threats from poorly planned aquaculture development are mitigated through the development of advisory and planning tools, and communicated to the aquaculture industry and provincial planning bodies in the ISLME	EAA-based Aquaculture Management Plans (AMPs) implemented.	0 Indonesian and 0 Timor Leste nationals trained as trainers.	The aquaculture decree of Timor-Lestewas assessed and revised in discussion with Government and stakeholders to make it comprehensive, also address EAA requirements. Pre-assessment for EAA pilot project in Indonesia competed and feasibility study and ToR to be completed prior to implementation.	30 Indonesian and Timor Leste nationals trained as trainers in 'Essential EAA' specific to Indonesia and Timor Leste by the end of year 3	5 AMPs based on EAA prepared and approved in consultation with stakeholders at project pilot sites by the end of year 2	On target to be achieved	S	Activities well underway and on track.
Outcome 2.4: Development policies are guided to support innovative opportunities for alternative livelihoods and blue growth development of coastal communities, especially those dependent upon fishing for their livelihoods	Revised policy framework developed.	Existing policies related to blue growth, sustainable small-scale fisheries, climate change resilience and gender mainstreaming are insufficient and do not take account of transboundary issues or regional collaboration	ToR for multi-trophic aquaculture being developed in Indonesia. Initial site visit completed. In Timor-Lestefish processing training to women and fisher groups in Beacau, Batugade and Metinaro as enhanced and alternative livelihoods and food security provided. Intervention on small- scale fisheries being discussed with FAO HQ colleagues and MMAF/MAF.	None	Policies to promote blue growth, sustainable small-scale fisheries, climate change resilience and gender mainstreaming for coastal and fishery dependent stakeholders are included in endorsed SAP	On target to be achieved	S	Activities to ensure revised policy framework is included in endorsed SAP are on track.
Outcome 2.5: Pilot projects demonstrate improved approaches for fisheries and aquaculture management	Ability of local level fisheries management to sustain fish stocks and fisheries operations, as measured by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catch Per Unit Effort • Compliance levels • Fisher income • Fishing effort/capacity Ability of local level aquaculture management to preserve coastal ecosystems and	Fisheries activities at project pilot sites are ecologically unsustainable and producing declining levels of income for local residents (baseline to be determined during project inception) Aquaculture activities at project pilot sites are ecologically unsustainable and producing declining levels of income for local residents (baseline	The activities under this outcome in Indonesia are integrated under component 2.1, where the EAFM assessments are being done before substantial planning for pilot fisheries. Also EAA pilots being worked out. Timor-Lestehas undertaken fisheries survey work in the ISLME to inform the development and implementation of their fishery management plans. The EAFM training organized had trained officers from the two pilot sites on EAFM plan development. The same officers are involved in development plans in Metinaro and Bobonaro. The scoping studies for EAFM and EAA are being initiated. (MS)	None None	1. By end of project, approved FMPs are producing positive effects on key fishery indicators (targets to be determined during project inception) 2. By end of project, approved AMPs are producing positive effects on key aquaculture indicators (targets to be determined during project inception)	On target to be achieved.	MS	With two pilot projects completed and two scoping studies close to completion (drafts submitted), FMP and AMP completion are feasible within the timeframe.

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

Project target	Indicator	Baseline level	Level at 31 Dec 2020	Mid-term target	End-of-project target	Mid-term level & assessment	Achievement rating	Justification for rating
	sustain local livelihoods, as measured by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of new aquaculture operations implementing Blue Growth production techniques • % of existing aquaculture operations transitioned to Blue Growth production techniques No. of persons employed in Blue Growth aquaculture operations	to be determined during project inception)						
Component 3: Co-ordination with regional information networks, monitoring of project impacts, and dissemination and exchange of information								
Outcome 3.1: Strengthened cooperation between fisheries, marine science and natural resource monitoring networks to contribute to ecosystem-based approaches to management of the ISLME	Effective integration of information and monitoring networks in both countries to enable better management of marine and coastal resources	No existing collaboration / information sharing on IUU fishing within the ISLME, and limited collaboration on oceanographic and climate data	Indonesia conducted a detailed focus group discussion on addressing IUU fishing including on bilateral relationship with Timor-Leste, actions required within RPOA on combating IUU fishing including mechanisms for data sharing. They also recalled the commitment of member countries of RPOA-IUU to strengthen the Secretariat. In Indonesia a workshop involving provinces covering FMA 713 developed strategies for better coordination between the federal government and the provincial Governments and strategies on fisheries management and surveillance including combating IUU fishing.	Coordination and information sharing networks strengthened by end of year 2	Cooperation arrangements in place by end of project	On target to be achieved	S	Disruptions to face-to-face meetings, changes to ministry positions and ministry workloads are a barrier to maximising co-ordination and implementing information sharing agreements, however lessons learned from successful workshops can be applied.
Outcome 3.2: Regional ISLME knowledge	Information and scientific (natural	No information sharing mechanisms exist	Indonesia had organized one NPSC meeting and Timor-Leste had organized	Initial sharing of information and a	Increased regional awareness about the	On target to be achieved	MU	Operations and communications

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

Project target	Indicator	Baseline level	Level at 31 Dec 2020	Mid-term target	End-of-project target	Mid-term level & assessment	Achievement rating	Justification for rating
platform developed to share information between stakeholders	and social) data sharing with other regional LME programs		<p>two NPSC meetings in Timor-Leste. The second regional PSC meeting in 2019 reviewed the work progress and approved work plan for 2019-2020. Periodical review meeting being held with MMAF Indonesia and MAF Timor-Leste. The Implementation Arrangement (IA) signed by FAO with MMAF Indonesia revised for better reporting of handover reports (BAST).</p> <p>A regional communication strategy workshop was organized and the communication strategy developed. Good media coverage of activities and the project also had an interview with Radio Indonesia. Two newsletters circulated to stakeholders.</p> <p>Contacts were made with ATSEA and BOBLME projects and will continue to share information. Participated in the inception workshop of the 2nd phase of ATSEA project. Also networking with Indonesia Oceans Development Partners.</p> <p>The project participated in the LME Data and Information Management workshop in Paris and Bali and participated in selected webinars. (MS)</p>	regional workshop with other LMEs convened by the end of year 2	objectives of, approach to, and "lessons-learned" derived from the ISLME project by the end of the project			improvements have improved the likelihood of achieving knowledge sharing targets before end-of-project, however the is significant under resourcing in this area. Additional resources dedicated to communications and knowledge would greatly improve visibility of the project.
Outputs								
A no cost extension has recently been approved for the project (since consultations were completed) and therefore those outcomes that may have been classified as not on target to be achieved are now on target to be achieved, hence for outcomes, there are no red classifications. At the output level however, those activities requiring attention have been left as red "not on target" so as to direct attention towards where action is needed by the PMU and PSC in revising the workplan under the new no cost extension.								
Outcome 1.1 Regional agreement on the transboundary threats and their root causes to marine environment (including fisheries) in the ISLME								
Output 1.1.1: Transboundary threats to marine resources and ecosystems and their root causes are identified	Review of transboundary threats to marine resources and ecosystems in the ISLME.	Inadequate understanding of transboundary problems and their root causes and impacts	The TDA lead writer and other consultants have progressed well in developing thematic studies for the TDA. The initially identified primary environment concerns are reflected in a	Causal chain analysis on unsustainable exploitation of fisheries conducted and options to	NA	Achieved	N/A	N/A

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

Project target	Indicator	Baseline level	Level at 31 Dec 2020	Mid-term target	End-of-project target	Mid-term level & assessment	Achievement rating	Justification for rating
			Regional TDA workshop and two national TDA stakeholder consultations which are now being finalised into thematic reports. The National Scientific Advisory Group members are nominated and involved and contributing to the TDA process.	address national and transboundary problems proposed by the end of year 1				
Output 1.1.2: An ecosystem valuation analysis is undertaken and the benefits and services derived from the marine ecosystem are assessed and valued	Ecosystem services valuation in ISLME. Levels of contribution to knowledge of marine ecosystem benefits and services in the ISLME	Data on the value of ecosystem benefits and services is limited to a few habitats and resources at specific locations	The thematic study on Ecosystem Valuation by two international consultants well in working draft report form, discussed in the regional TDA workshop.	Completed report on values of ecosystem benefits and services, and identification of data gaps, by end of year 1	Governments, industry and communities more strongly committed to conservation & sustainable management of the ISLME based on improved understanding of the economic value of ecosystem services	On target to be achieved	N/A	N/A
Output 1.1.3: Significant socio-economic drivers and trends that create environmental pressure on ecosystem resources and services in the ISLME region are assessed.	Review of socio economic drivers in TL and INS (ISLME) ecosystems completed, including gender analysis (GEF 6 gender indicator 1)	Out-dated and incomplete and socio-economic information on the ISLME region	The first draft of the thematic study covering the following four areas are under review process by NSAG <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oceanography, marine environment/ecosystems, ecosystem status/impacts • Fisheries & aquaculture (resources, production, impacts, trends) • Socio-economics, livelihoods & gender • Governance, legal frameworks, institutions (EAFM/EAA, EBM, ICM) The Timor-Leste TDA thematic study is near completion by a consultant and the TDA lead and writer.	Completed socio-economic profile of the ISLME and resource user groups, market networks, productive value chains, and market access opportunities by the end of year 1	NA	Achieved	N/A	N/A
Output 1.1.4: The governance and institutional structures, including stakeholders who are relevant to the management of fisheries and the ISLME	Governance and institutional assessment (in the ISLME ecosystems).	Institutional assessments carried out by ADB CTI Pacific Project, and thematic reports on governance produced by ATSEA project	The first draft of the thematic study covering the following four areas are under review process by NSAG <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oceanography, marine environment/ecosystems, ecosystem status/impacts • Fisheries & aquaculture (resources, production, impacts, trends) 	Completed analysis of governance and institutional structures by the end of year 1 2 (1 each for TL and INS)	NA	Achieved	N/A	N/A

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

Project target	Indicator	Baseline level	Level at 31 Dec 2020	Mid-term target	End-of-project target	Mid-term level & assessment	Achievement rating	Justification for rating
ecosystem, are identified and analysed			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Socio-economics, livelihoods & gender Governance, legal frameworks, institutions (EAFM/EAA, EBM, ICM) The Timor-Leste TDA thematic study is near completion by a consultant and the TDA lead and writer.					
Output 1.1.5: A regional TDA (Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis) incorporating an analysis of the key transboundary issues (including potential climate change), root causes, governance and stakeholders, is accepted and adopted by the Project Steering Committee	TDA signed (endorsed) by PSC.	NO TDA exists	Delayed	Drafted TDA elements reviewed.	1 TDA completed	On target to be achieved	N/A	N/A
Outcome 1.2 An agreed and endorsed Strategic Action Program (SAP) to ensure the long-term institutional and financial sustainability of the ISLME fisheries and marine ecosystem signed off by the appropriate ministers in both countries								
Output 1.2.1: The vision and the ecosystem quality objectives for the ISLME, together with the institutional arrangements for cooperation on monitoring and management of natural marine resources in the ISLME, are developed	Plan for monitoring and management of natural marine resources in the ISLME including transboundary areas.	No shared vision or transboundary cooperation arrangements exist for the ISLME region (although the ATSEA SAP provides a relevant model to be updated/adapted for the ISLME)	Delayed	Clear, long-term vision and ecosystem quality objectives, together with clear institutional arrangements to achieve these, are established as part of overall SAP completed by end of year 2	NA	On target to be achieved	N/A	N/A
Output 1.2.2: Management actions and priorities to mitigate identified transboundary	Strategy for effective management of transboundary	No strategies exist for transboundary management of ISLME resources	Delayed	Proposal for Management actions and priorities as part of	NA	On target to be achieved	N/A	N/A

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

Project target	Indicator	Baseline level	Level at 31 Dec 2020	Mid-term target	End-of-project target	Mid-term level & assessment	Achievement rating	Justification for rating
issues at the local, national and regional levels are agreed	issues at local, national and regional levels			overall SAP completed by end of year 3				
Output 1.2.3: Inter-intra-Ministerial Working Groups to advise on coordination and institutional arrangements established. Financial and institutional requirements to support and sustain the SAP are identified and a sustainable financing plan developed	Inter and Intra-Ministerial Working Groups.	No coordinated institutional arrangements or financing exists for ISLME-level approaches; existing programs for marine and coastal resource management are heavily reliant on external donors and/or highly project dependent, rather than institutionalized, regular processes	Delayed	Inter-intra-Ministerial Working Groups to advise on coordination and institutional arrangements established by end of Year1, meeting bi-annually thereafter Proposal for Financial and Institutional requirements as part of overall SAP completed by end of year 3	Bi-annual meetings of the inter-intra-Ministerial working groups provide advice on institutionalization and coordination needs for the SAP National sustainable financing plans developed and approved to contribute to SAP implementation post-project	On target to be achieved	N/A	N/A
Output 1.2.4: A SAP for the ISLME is completed and endorsed by the Governments of Indonesia and Timor Leste	SAP document endorsed.	No SAP exists			SAP endorsed.	On target to be achieved	N/A	N/A
Outcome 2.1 Ecosystem Approaches to Fisheries Management (EAFM) and Ecosystem-Based Management (EBM) utilized for sustainable marine management.								
Output 2.1.1: One (1) national capacity needs assessment of relevant institutions needed for fisheries and coastal natural resource management in pilot areas	Institutional assessment completed in INS and TL.	Outline and out-dated understanding of local level capacities for management of marine and coastal resources	The capacity needs assessment completed in Indonesia and the report used for follow up on EAFM/EAA/MPA/MSP planning. A service provider is completing the EAFM assessment of blue swimming crab in FMA 712. A workshop on developing harvest strategy for blue swimming crab carried out. ISLME project also supported a mega national level harvest strategy	Completed Capacity Gaps Analysis by end of year 1	NA	Achieved	N/A	N/A

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

Project target	Indicator	Baseline level	Level at 31 Dec 2020	Mid-term target	End-of-project target	Mid-term level & assessment	Achievement rating	Justification for rating
			stakeholders' consultation for blue swimming crab, snapper, and grouper fisheries. In Timor-Leste capacity needs assessment just completed and the draft report presented in a workshop.					
Output 2.1.2: Two (2) training courses for 30 Govt. Staff and four (4) local training organizations to develop to conduct fisheries management planning consistent with EAFM and within a broader EBM framework	Number of fisheries management plans developed by target institutions.	Approx. 30 Indonesian and 0 Timor Leste nationals trained in EAFM	In Timor-Leste, a detailed Essential EAFM training was conducted and 26 participants (10 women) trained. In addition 6 selected trainees were provided training of trainers in 2019. In Indonesia, a workshop to develop tailor-made training modules for EAFM planners completed and a training of trainers for 30 planners also completed. The EAFM assessment of mud crab and demersal fisheries of FMA 713 completed. The EAFM assessment of demersal fisheries in FMA 712 in the final stages.	Additional 50 Indonesian and 10 Timor Leste nationals trained in EAFM by end of year 2	NA	Achieved	N/A	N/A
Output 2.1.3: Strengthened capacities in EBM (multi-sectoral planning) and EAFM planning is developed on the job through two (2) national pilots at province level and creation of six (6) EAFM-based fisheries management plans at the site level	Number of Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs) based on EAFM under implementation, and that incorporate gender dimensions (GEF 6 gender indicator 4)		An EAFM assessment of the lobster fisheries in FMA 713 and 573 is completed. Developing FIP is the next step. In Timor-Leste as a follow up of the EAFM training, EAFM orientation organized in Batugade and draft EAFM plan developed. Similar orientation and EAFM plan development is also taken up for Beacau.			On target to be achieved	N/A	N/A
Output 2.1.4: Mainstreaming of capacity development in EBM, EAFM and EAA through curriculum development and adoption of existing	Courses and curricula for training on EAFM and EBM in Indonesia and Timor Leste	An EAFM training course currently being developed by WWF and BPSDM (in Indonesia)	In Timor-Leste the EAFM training completed in 2019 included participants from the two universities. The resource persons with experience in developing such curriculum in Sri Lanka and Indonesia have guided them on next steps to develop the university	By end of year 3.	At least 6 universities or learning centres in Indonesia running EBM training courses by the end of the project	On target to be achieved	N/A	N/A

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

Project target	Indicator	Baseline level	Level at 31 Dec 2020	Mid-term target	End-of-project target	Mid-term level & assessment	Achievement rating	Justification for rating
training course in two (2) national universities or training colleges			curriculum. UNTL to develop a curriculum. Being followed up.					
Output 2.1.5: Two (2) national reviews of habitat enhancement for fisheries, including artificial reef development, are developed and policy advice provided through one (1) regional workshop	Policy guidelines for coastal and marine habitat restoration and enhancement in Indonesia and Timor Leste	Coastal and marine habitat restoration and enhancement is undertaken without any strategy, policy or regulatory framework and little coordination of effort	In Indonesia, the review of policy, regulatory, coordination, management, and monitoring framework for coastal and marine habitat protection, restoration and enhancement in the ISLME region of Indonesia just completed with specific focus on two pilot areas. Report under finalization.	By the end of year 2, a coastal & marine habitat restoration & enhancement review is completed, with recommendations on priority actions and best practices presented at regional workshop	None	Achieved	N/A	N/A
Outcome 2.2 Regional and national governance of fisheries and natural resource management (including legal and institutional frameworks) strengthened								
Output 2.2.1: Training of province level units in two (2) national pilot sites provides institutional support to strengthen capacity to combat IUU (Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated) fishing and the unsustainable use of coastal natural resources at the Provincial level	Plans to combat IUU fishing among provincial and port-based DG Surveillance staff in Indonesia and relevant Govt. staff in Timor Leste	Some limited IUU capacity-building has been undertaken (e.g. surveillance training at the local level) in Indonesia	Under planning: Indonesia is preparing a TOR, planned to be implemented in Q2 2021. The MAF Timor-Leste team were supported by ISLME to actively participate in the RPOA-IUU online meeting on 16 Nov 2020 so that they can also pick up follow up actions under ISLME. Timor- Leste is now planning for pilot site level training on addressing IUU fishing.	Training commences by end of Year 2	By the end of the project, 30 staff in Indonesia and 10 staff in Timor Leste provided with training in combatting IUU fishing by the end of project	On target to be achieved	N/A	N/A
Output 2.2.2: Four (4) training courses in capacity building in Port State Controls for fishing vessels targets forty (40) national and provincial fishery officers and forty (40) private sector	Plans to implement Port State Controls / Measures for fishing	view training given by AFMA	Planning to tie up the capacity building on combating IUU fishing with another FAO HQ programme.	None	By the end of Year 3: Training courses on Port State Controls delivered	On target to be achieved	N/A	N/A

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

Project target	Indicator	Baseline level	Level at 31 Dec 2020	Mid-term target	End-of-project target	Mid-term level & assessment	Achievement rating	Justification for rating
port/fishing company representatives								
Indonesia adds two outputs 2.2.3 and 2.2.4								
Output 2.2.3. Improved capacity of fisher in combatting IUUF			This will be a follow up of the activity under 2.2.1.			On target to be achieved	N/A	N/A
Output 2.2.4. Improved the use of e-log book or log book by small-scale fishers (<10 GT)Implementation of Capture Fisheries Logbook for small scale fisheries (<10 GT)			In 2020 a service provider had done a review and capacity building on use of e-log book. 226 fisher members including 40 women were trained from six locations and a manual was developed.			Achieved	N/A	N/A
Outcome 2.3 Environmental threats from poorly planned aquaculture development are mitigated through the development of advisory and planning tools, and communicated to the aquaculture industry and provincial planning bodies in the ISLME								
Output 2.3.1: Existing, unsustainable aquaculture practices are identified in four (4) provincial pilots and solutions for mitigation of environmental impacts are developed through EAA planning workshops	EAA plans to address unsustainable aquaculture practices developed.	Low levels of understanding or policy recognition in both countries	ToRs developed and visit and identification of pilot sites in East Lombok regency of West Nusa Tenggara province carried out for seaweed aquaculture. Planning for pre-assessment in pilot sites and implementation of the EAA work (seaweed/snapper/grouper). An international consultant engaged to review the Timor-Lestedraft Aquaculture Decree and had helped revise and redraft it to make it comprehensive, also addressing the EAA requirements. Report under revision after review of FAO Legal Division.	Threats Analysis and Mitigation Strategy developed and communicated by end of year 1	None	On target to be achieved	N/A	N/A
Output 2.3.2: Training in planning of sustainable aquaculture development provided to thirty (30) provincial officers and private sector producers through EAA	EAA-based aquaculture management plans	No plans exist	For MMAF, EAA (Ecosystem Approach to Aquaculture) Training for participants at 3 pilot sites (NTB, NTT, East Kalimantan) being planned. Planning stage. EAA training module developed by FAO Myanmar being reviewed for adaptation to Indonesia condition.	2 plans implemented	5 plans implemented	On target to be achieved	N/A	N/A

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

Project target	Indicator	Baseline level	Level at 31 Dec 2020	Mid-term target	End-of-project target	Mid-term level & assessment	Achievement rating	Justification for rating
(Ecosystem Approach to Aquaculture); Creation of five EAA-based aquaculture management plans at the site level			Timor-Leste planning for EAA at its basic level, after a scoping study.					
Outcome 2.4 Development policies are guided to support innovative opportunities for alternative livelihoods and blue growth development of coastal communities, especially those dependent upon fishing for their livelihoods								
Output 2.4.1: Regional stocktaking of successful lessons of other initiatives in the ISLME for prospective or innovative alternative livelihoods (including responsibly managed aquaculture)	Lessons learned reports and information	Lessons learned are not easily available; there is a need to compile lessons learned	ToR for integrated multi-trophic aquaculture (IMTA) being developed in Indonesia. Initial site visit completed. TOR for IMTA feasibility study is being prepared. Timor-Leste plans to review livelihoods activities in the ISLME area and document and disseminate the lessons learnt.	Lessons learned documented One regional lessons learned workshop is conducted by the end of year 1	None	On target to be achieved	N/A	N/A
Output 2.4.2: Policy advice for sustainable small-scale fisheries building on the draft VGSSF South East Asia Action Plan is developed and communicated	Existence and effectiveness of policies for small-scale fisheries	National policies need to be translated into technical and implementable language; coordination between MAF and economic ministries in regulating market place and prices needs improvement	This output remains important for both countries and an assessment report on small-scale fisheries policies in Indonesia and Timor-Leste will be prepared. Increased involvement of women in fishery economy will be looked into. Under planning stage. Discussions initiated with SSF experts in FAO HQ.	Assessment of policy/guidance on small-scale fisheries completed by the end of year 1 One workshop each in Indonesia and Timor Leste by the end of year 2	None	On target to be achieved	N/A	N/A
Output 2.4.3: Identification and communication of options to reduce vulnerability of coastal communities in pilot areas to climate variation	Climate Change Adaptation plans developed with communities.	Coastal communities are highly vulnerable to climate change impacts and have very limited information or resources to increase resilience or implement adaptation measures	For MMAF the priority is Blue Growth for small-scale fisheries. Timor-Leste are planning climate change (CC) vulnerability assessment in Metinaro and Bobonaro, also considering work done so far. Brochures and pamphlets to be produced.	Protocols for participatory vulnerability assessment at project pilot sites completed by end of year 2	Assessments of potential climate change threats and opportunities to increase resilience and enhance livelihoods at pilot sites completed by end of project. Approaches are incorporated into the Pilot site EAA and EAF plans.	On target to be achieved	N/A	N/A

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

Project target	Indicator	Baseline level	Level at 31 Dec 2020	Mid-term target	End-of-project target	Mid-term level & assessment	Achievement rating	Justification for rating
Output 2.4.4: Capacity building in gender mainstreaming for alternative livelihoods undertaken in four (4) provinces targeting thirty (30) government officers and sixty (60) representatives of womens groups, private sector and NGOs.	Degree of participation and benefit sharing for women in the management of fisheries and other coastal resources, and to include GEF 6 gender indicators (3 and 4): 1. % Share of women and men as direct beneficiaries of project. 2. Number of national/regional policies, legislation, plan, and strategies that incorporate gender dimensions.	Some very limited training on gender for fisheries / aquaculture managers, and training for women on fish processing under the ATSEA Project	A gender strategy for the project to be developed including integration to the TDA/SAP. More being addressed under the thematic study under 1.1.3. Under planning.	Gender assessment completed and recommendations incorporated into year 2 workplan	6 training sessions on gender mainstreaming in fisheries and aquaculture will be conducted by end of year 3	Not on target to be achieved	N/A	N/A
Additional output 2.4.5 developed for Indonesia								
Output 2.4.5: Improved management of fishing port for plastic and marine debris			Additional output by Indonesia. This is under planning stage.			On target to be achieved		
Outcome 2.5 Pilot projects demonstrate improved approaches for fisheries and aquaculture management (<i>Indonesia has integrated out puts 2.5.1 to 2.5.3 under outcome 2.1 and its outputs.</i>)								
Output 2.5.1: Four (4) pilot fishery management plans developed and applied to the management of regional/sub-regional fishing areas (stocks)	Marine Spatial Plans in place for fisheries and fisheries-aquaculture pilot sites EAFM plans / FMPs under implementation within the ISLME	0 MSPs or EAFM plans / FMPs under implementation within the ISLME	In Timor–Leste, a marine fisheries survey of Northern waters carried out. In Timor–Leste as already reported under 2.1.3 Batugade and draft EAFM plan under development. Similar orientation and EAFM plan development is planned for Beacau and Metinaro. A scoping study to plan the actual pilot level intervention to start in early 2021.	Marine Spatial Plans completed for 2 fisheries and 4 joint fisheries-aquaculture pilot sites by end of year 2	Marine Spatial Plan completed for northern coast of Timor Leste by end of project 4 site-level EAFM-based management plans (created under 2.1.3) under implementation by the end of year 3	On target to be achieved	N/A	N/A

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

Project target	Indicator	Baseline level	Level at 31 Dec 2020	Mid-term target	End-of-project target	Mid-term level & assessment	Achievement rating	Justification for rating
Output 2.5.2: Four (4) pilot plans for aquaculture development and management in provinces where aquaculture has strong potential to contribute to blue growth	Aquaculture Management Plans (AMPs) based on EAA under implementation within the ISLME	0 AMPs under implementation within the ISLME	A scoping study to plan the actual pilot level intervention to start in early 2021. Based on this, appropriate pilot level intervention will be planned and implemented.	Marine Spatial Plan completed for 1 aquaculture-only site by the end of year 2	4 Site-level EAA-based AMPs (created under 2.3.2) under implementation by the end of year 3	On target to be achieved	N/A	N/A
Output 2.5.3: Existing habitat enhancements, including artificial reef sites, evaluated and subject to management improvement plans developed	Effective models / management plans for enhancement of coastal and marine habitats within the ISLME	Habitat enhancement has been attempted at numerous sites within the ISLME, but is frequently ineffective and overly costly	Under planning in Timor-Leste. And to be integrated into the 3 plot site interventions. In Indonesia the habitat management review completed and follow up dissemination planned under 2.1.5.	Technical report on decision-making tools to improve the ecological and socio-economic effectiveness of habitat enhancement activities by end of year 2	At least 3 technologically appropriate habitat enhancement projects supported with technical guidelines and management plans by end of year 4.	On target to be achieved	N/A	N/A
Outcome 3.1 Strengthened cooperation between fisheries, marine science and natural resource monitoring networks to contribute to ecosystem-based approaches to management of the ISLME								
Output 3.1.1: Improved monitoring and reporting of IUU (Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated) and unsustainable fishing issues in the ISLME supports cooperation with neighbouring LMEs & countries to combat IUU fishing	IUU fishing monitoring reports shared. Effective transboundary cooperation within the ISLME on IUU fishing issues	No cooperation exists at present	Indonesia conducted a detailed focus group discussion on addressing IUU fishing. The discussions were on bilateral relationship with Timor-Leste, actions required within RPOA on combating IUUF including mechanisms for data sharing. This need to be taken up as a joint meeting with Timor-Leste. Another workshop organized in Balikpapan (East Kalimantan) came out with Integrated framework for monitoring, control and surveillance mechanisms of snapper/groupers and mud crab fisheries at WPP 713 were formulized. They also recalled the commitment of member countries of RPOA-IUU to strengthen the Secretariat.	Convene annual meetings of NDFA and MMAF transboundary working group on planning and exchange of information for IUU and management of protected areas Standard Operating Protocols (SOPs) established for joint cooperation in IUU risk analysis, detection, monitoring and enforcement by the end of year 2	Formal joint IUU fishing management plan for the Batugade-Atapupu site under implementation by the end of the project Timor Leste produces two fishery status reports on principal fishery resources,	On target to be achieved	N/A	N/A

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

Project target	Indicator	Baseline level	Level at 31 Dec 2020	Mid-term target	End-of-project target	Mid-term level & assessment	Achievement rating	Justification for rating
				Preliminary assessment of shark IUU catch developed (CSIRO) Support to ASEAN inter-Ministerial meeting on IUU	informed by field level information collection system, by end of project			
Output 3.1.2: Coastal environmental remote sensing data generated by initiatives and projects in the ISLME region is used to monitor threats to fisheries and coastal resources and inform planning of pilot activities	Ecosystem based management of fisheries and coastal resources in the ISLME is enhanced and supported by remote sensing	The INDES0 system supports management of IUU fishing in Indonesian waters	Planning stage.	A report on options for long-term funding for INDES0 by the end of year 1 7 databases and maps on the coastal and marine resources of the project pilot areas by end of year 2	None	Not on target to be achieved	N/A	N/A
Output 3.1.3: Institutional linking provides oceanographic information relating to large scale processes, and climate variability to inform the TDA and inform the planning of pilot activities	Oceanographic information available to support sustainable management of marine ecosystems and fisheries in the ISLME region	Various oceanographic monitoring programs exist in the ISLME region	This is partially being addressed under the TDA thematic studies and analysis under Component 1.	Linkages with existing oceanographic monitoring programs have been established and provided data for the TDA and design of project pilot activities by the end of year 1	None	Achieved	N/A	N/A
Outcome 3.2 Regional ISLME knowledge platform developed to share information between stakeholders								
Output 3.2.1: Project monitoring program established and under implementation	Monitoring of project activities enables timely decisions to support adaptive project management	No monitoring program exists	Periodical review meeting being held with MMAF Indonesia and MAF Timor-Leste. The Implementation Arrangement (IA) signed by FAO with MMAF Indonesia revised for better reporting of handover reports (BAST). Preparations done for the project mid-term Review to early 2021. NPSC and PSC meeting to be held early 2021.	Accurate and transparent monitoring programme established in year 1 of project	Completed Terminal Evaluation within 3 months of end of project	On target to be achieved	N/A	N/A

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

Project target	Indicator	Baseline level	Level at 31 Dec 2020	Mid-term target	End-of-project target	Mid-term level & assessment	Achievement rating	Justification for rating
				Completed Mid-Term Review early in year 3 of the project				
Output 3.2.2: Communication and information management systems established for the overall ISLME project and the TDA and SAP	<p>Communications and information management systems in place to support the objectives of ISLME project, including assessment of gender equality and women's empowerment results/progress (GEF indicator 5).</p> <p>Scientific (natural and social) data contributed to MMAF architecture and NDFA Peskador website</p>	No dedicated ISLME communications or information systems exist, however MMAF has an information system which could accommodate relevant natural and socio-economic information and data. Similar, but less well developed, the NDFA has the Peskador website.	One newsletter released and disseminated and second newsletter at final stage. Good local media coverage on activities.	<p>Project website containing relevant natural resource and socio-economic information linked to the websites of participating government agencies, FAO, IWLEARN.net and others is operational by end of year 1</p> <p>Project brochures, policy briefs and other publications developed and shared starting in year 2 of the project</p>	Project website and publications are updated and disseminated throughout the term of the project	On target to be achieved	N/A	N/A
Output 3.2.3: Policy Communications, based on outputs delivered under project Component 2, developed and communicated to national stakeholders	Policy communications regarding key outputs of the ISLME project are widely available	No policy communications relating to project activities exist	Policy communication will be developed as the reports on the key studies and pilot interventions are completed.	2 Policy communications based on TDA information developed	8 policy communications completed and disseminated by the end of the project	On target to be achieved	N/A	N/A
Output 3.2.4: Information sharing with other LMEs in the region and the Regional LME Regional Caucus	See Outcome level indicator		Contacts are made with ATSEA and BOBLME projects and will continue to share information. Participated in the inception workshop of the 2nd phase of ATSEA project.			On target to be achieved	N/A	N/A
Output 3.2.5: 1% of GEF project budget allocated to regional and global knowledge sharing via	Information sharing and joint training with global LME programs	No information sharing or joint training mechanisms exist	The project participated in the LME Data and Information management workshop in Paris and Bali and participated in selected webinars.	By the end of year 2:	Increased global awareness of the ISLME project by the end of the project	On target to be achieved	N/A	N/A

Mid-term Review ISLME Project

Project target	Indicator	Baseline level	Level at 31 Dec 2020	Mid-term target	End-of-project target	Mid-term level & assessment	Achievement rating	Justification for rating
cooperation with the IW:LEARN Programme, the UNDP "LME / MPA / ICM Governance Project", and other initiatives				Participation in IW:LEARN international programs Project progress is regularly uploaded in IWLEARN.net				

Rating	Description
Highly satisfactory (HS)	Level of outcomes achieved clearly exceeds expectations and/or there were no shortcomings
Satisfactory (S)	Level of outcomes achieved was as expected and/or there were no or minor shortcomings
Moderately satisfactory (MS)	Level of outcomes achieved more or less as expected and/or there were moderate shortcomings
Moderately unsatisfactory (MU)	Level of outcomes achieved somewhat lower than expected and/or there were significant shortcomings
Unsatisfactory (U)	Level of outcomes achieved substantially lower than expected and/or there were major shortcomings
Highly unsatisfactory (HU)	Only a negligible level of outcomes achieved and/or there were severe shortcomings
Unable to assess (UA)	The available information does not allow an assessment of the level of outcome achievements

