

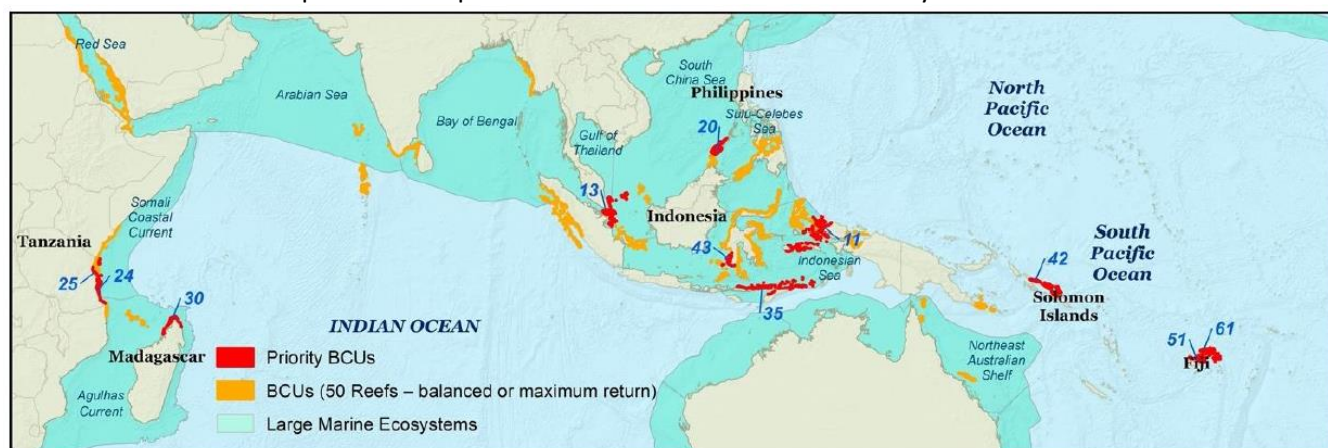
GEF Coral Reef Rescue Mid Term Evaluation

Final Report

January 2026

PROJECT DATA			
Project/Program Title	Coral Reef Rescue: Resilient Coral Reefs, Resilient Communities		
GEF Project ID	10575		
Executing Agency	University of Queensland (UQ) International Development		
Executing Partner(s)	Reef Check Indonesia, Tanzania Marine Parks Unit, Palawan Council for Sustainable Development, Wildlife Conservation Society		
Countries	Fiji, Solomon Islands, Philippines, Indonesia, Madagascar, Tanzania (Australia)		
Focal Area(s)	GEF Operational Program	WWF (Agency) Project ID	Implementing Agency(s)
International Waters	GEF- 7	G0032	WWF US
Total GEF Approved Budget	\$7,648,000	Total Co-financing Approved: Submitted to date	\$71,338,534 \$9,648,571
RELEVANT DATES			
CEO Endorsement/ Approval	1 st June 2022	Agency Approval Date	11 th November 2022
Implementation Start	8 th March 2023	Project Completion Date	31 st March 2027
Period to Be Evaluated	June 1 st , 2022 to October 2025		
Geographic Scope of the project	Bio-Climatic Units (BCUs): 24, 25, 30 – Coastal East Africa Region, 11, 13, 20, 35, 43 - South East Asia Region and 42, 51, 61 – South Pacific Ocean Region		
Evaluators	Dr Karen Lawrence PhD. Johan H van Duijn MSc. Maria Andrea Saleme MSc. Torntara Buranakul BSc.		

Location Map Of the 6 Implementation Countries and the Priority Bio-Climatic Units



Acknowledgements

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Executive Summary

The GEF Coral Reef Rescue: Resilient Coral Reefs, Resilient Communities project (GEF CRR) is being implemented in six countries in three regions¹ (East Africa: Madagascar, Tanzania; SEA: Indonesia, Philippines; and South Pacific: Fiji, Solomon Islands) in international waters, and managed from a seventh Country (Australia).

Project Description (brief)

The goal is to build capacity and solutions that ensure the long-term survival of climate refuge coral reef ecosystems so are able to repopulate other coral reefs damaged by climatic events. Conserving climate refuge coral reefs creates a critical seed bank to support the regeneration of coral reefs globally. It also protects their biodiversity, and supports the blue economies and communities dependent on them. The Project is organized into the following components:

- **Component 1: Creates a global network of tools and knowledge:** It create knowledge sharing through online courses MOOC, ensures coral reef data monitoring tools effectively used through a platform, designs training to ensure its accessibility to communities, decision makers and practitioners
- **Component 2: Creates National multi-sectoral hubs to coordinate planning for climate refuge coral reef rescue at the national level:** Inclusive governance - multi-stakeholder regional and national hubs that collaboratively design national action plans, informed by analyses of threats/opportunities, costs/benefits, traditional knowledge, and community voices
- **Component 3: Creates financial solutions to support climate resilient coral reefs, supporting sustainable livelihoods:** By way of providing technical assistance, it will establish a pipeline of projects that are 'investor ready' to aid in increasing investments in sustainable livelihoods that are coral friendly
- **Component 4: Creates communication strategies to foster social change and raise awareness and adaptively manage the project.** A public awareness and communications strategy targets influential individuals and institutions and the wider public on the value of healthy coral reefs. A series of M&E tools aim to ensure information regularly flows from the six countries and lessons can be learnt, challenges responded to effectively.

Protect Status

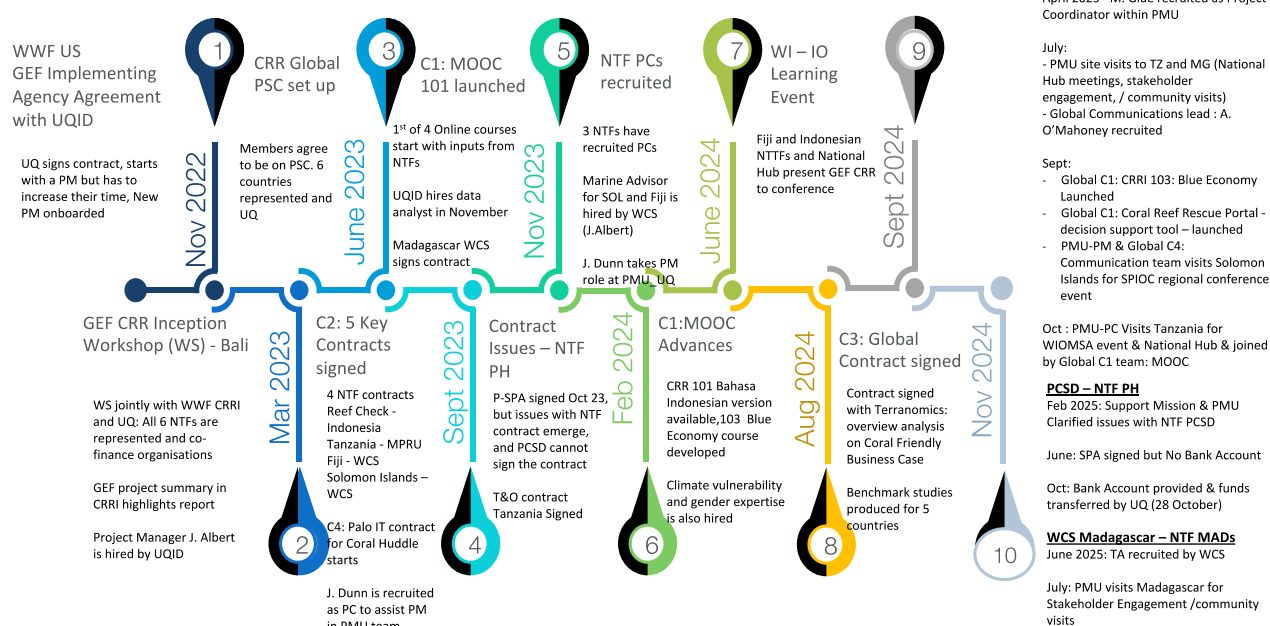
The following identifies clear events during the key stages of the project. A more detailed timeline is presented in figure 1, below.

Project Development	Project development started in 2020 as the implementation vehicle for the WWF CRRI. UQID was asked to be the PMU, and although it had experience of managing projects such as those in educational or research, this type of development project offered a new complexity.
Project soft period commenced	Nov 2022 to Mar 2023: Recruitment and on-boarding of core project support by UQID and a part-time project manager was initially hired to lead the project. Safeguarding categorization was low for the project.
Project Plan Implementation by core project support team	Implementation started in April 2023: PMU, GEF Agency PM and potential NTF leads joined the inception workshop in Bali. Contracted Consultancies (Pablo IT) designed a data gathering system to enable remote tracking of project progress - Coral Huddle. First quarter saw several calls for proposals sent out and the global work started in 2024. Due diligence on the NTFs was undertaken and several sub-grants were signed by June 2024. WCS Madagascar was the 5 th NTF to be contracted. The core PMU team (consisting of a PM and PC) changes with a smooth transition Administrative issues with the NTF in the Philippines, this is not solved until after a mission support meeting in February 2025 clarifies what needs to be addressed and contracts can be signed. First funds are sent to the Philippines in late October 2025, but it was still not received by PSCD in December 2025, due to government administrative delays.
MTE	From September to December 2025, the project is assessed at the end of Quarter 2, Year 3 – Oct 2025.
Project set to end	March 2027, with another 3 months of wind up for reporting.

¹ Data analysis will present findings to reflect this pattern

External Factors: The Madagascan National Government was not available following political unrest in September and October 2025². Tanzanian elections in 2025 created a level of civil unrest in certain areas.

Figure 1: Project Timeline and Status



Principle findings and recommendations, organized by core criteria

After consolidation, a total of 27 recommendations have been made, organised according to the core criteria; there are two under Relevance, two under Coherence, three under Efficiency, six under Effectiveness, three under Results/Impact as well as two follow on projects to increase impact, one under Sustainability, five under Adaptive Capacity and six under GEF criteria of Gender and Safeguarding. The five main ones are below.

Overall Project Assessment: The project is well received by stakeholders. The development of National Hubs and National Action Plans is enabling four national governments to convene stakeholders and prioritise coral reef conservation. The remaining two countries are addressing significant challenges and are expected to deliver similar progress, although at a regional government scale. Overall, the project rated satisfactory and aligns strongly with global and national priorities in the six participating countries; Fiji, Solomon Islands, Indonesia, Philippines, Madagascar and Tanzania. Implementation varies across countries; Tanzania and Fiji are the most advanced, followed by Indonesia and Solomon Islands. Madagascar is progressing despite national government challenges. The Philippines has had a disappointing start due to administrative issues, but is expected to start implementation by January 2026.

No cost extension: PMU and GEF WWF US should agree to a no cost extension consisting of six months implementation to compensate for delays and three months for project closure. The additional six-month will allow countries to consolidate their NAPs and obtain National Hub approval, and to strengthen support for Coral Friendly Business to create a potential investment pipeline.

Revise the Results Framework: The PMU and GEF WWF US should revise all 12 indicators in the Results Framework. This includes redefining measurement methods to ensure they reflect project progress, potentially with greater detail at country level, and setting more ambitious targets for Year 4. Seven indicators

² See details from various news outlets at the time: <https://defenceweb.co.za/governance/governance-governance/us-state-department-remains-vigilant-as-madagascar-coup-unfolds/>

were overachieved at the MTE, and adjustments are needed to demonstrate progress over time. This recommendation applies to both core indicators (impact) and outcome indicators.

Creating Learning Opportunities: Four recommendations aim to create learning opportunities for project teams and Hub members. These include; **Cross – Country and Cross Regional Exchange, In-Country and Cross-Country learning, Project Symposium with IW learn and A Blue Economy Journey**. Another recommendation concerns beneficiaries and proposes **Enabling Communities of Practice (CoP)**. This also relates to communication and the need for resources in multiple languages. Several learning activities are planned, but need to start.

In terms of CoPs, PMU should work with the NTFs to assess what a CoP would mean in each national context and at what level it would operate, whether Community or professional. It should be assessed whether the emergence of CoPs might be from the members of the technical working groups, or from training participants. It would be helpful to identify common themes of interest. An exchange involving all NTFs, similar to the inception workshop, could include presentations on the WCS new model for 50 Plus refuge reefs, the PMU data portal and multi-language MOOCs, sustainability plans, coral trust funds experiences and lessons exchanged. More structured learning from regional hubs, such as those in Indonesia, could be valuable. Madagascar and the Philippines may have lessons to share on setting up their regional hubs or may benefit from lessons from Indonesia. Lessons are also expected from engaging with the CTI structures and from any shift in understanding of coral biodiversity to coral reef resilience and effective management interventions from the NAPs that have made a difference.

Greater use should be made of international conferences like the IW:Learn conference and the Ocean Conferences, to enable NTF representatives and key National Hub members to participate in joint workshops and share experiences that can be adopted in their context. In the meantime, more engaging online processes should be developed to encourage deeper reflection, critical thinking and more effective delivery. Panel discussions with external experts and project staff, with questions shared in advance, as well as dragons den or shark tank presentations, role play exercises, could help shift team away from overly optimistic reporting and encourage real learning.

Rescaling Component 3: The PMU with NTFs with support from consultants, need to assess community preparedness and current private sector involvement. This should include a review of best practices before any financing of Coral Friendly Business is considered. Countries should exchange experiences on Coral Friendly Businesses, Livelihoods/CBOs/SMEs and identify the key lessons, including what has not worked. They should also consider inclusiveness, the empowered women leaders and entrepreneurs, eco-tourism experiences and the challenges of scale up from a start up to a registered enterprise. Good Practice in micro-financing, and proposal writing should be shared across countries. This may require revisions to consultant contracts, and the PMU should be involved. The PMU should guide National Steering Committees in setting minimum capacity requirements for community-based organizations and SMEs seeking support and financing. Component 3 should be refocused to support different scales of Coral Friendly Business or social enterprises in each country and lower expectation to more realistic levels such as focusing on livelihoods rather than fully developed enterprises, particularly in remote areas around climate resilient reefs where fewer business operate.

Explore Follow On Projects:

The evaluators were asked to suggest follow on projects that would build on the enabling conditions established by this project. Two types are proposed. The first is an immediate follow on project with a four year timeframe that would embed the enabling conditions set out in the GEF CRR design. The second is a longer term initiative, targeting land based changes that require significant government investment or support from larger investors like development banks. This would aim to reduce sedimentation in rivers and marine pollution through effluent treatment and upgrading waste water systems.

The immediate follow on project, potentially the **GEF CRR Plus**, would use the existing four component framework, to implement the NAPs, develop adaptable MOOCs in local languages that can be completed off-line, build capacity in Coral Reef Businesses and prepare a smaller pipeline of organisations supported by blended finance options. It is suggested that this project consider the findings of the WCS 50 plus research when identifying additional areas to expand the current six country approach and build on existing synergies. In the SEA region, this might include reefs in Singapore, Malaysia; PNG, and East Timor to increase connectivity between SEA and South Pacific reef systems. For East African reefs, this might include reefs in Seychelles, Mauritius, and Mozambique.

Key Project Findings

Relevance

The project relevance has a rating of highly satisfactory. The scientific paper that underpinned the theory of change, identifying the Bio-Climatic Units of resilient coral reefs was valid. This paper is in the process of being updated and refined through the work of WCS Global team and is called 50 Reef Plus. The Madagascar government or beneficiaries were not consulted due to political instability at the time of the evaluation. However, all other national government stakeholders in five countries have stated the relevance and importance of Coral Reefs and this project is seen to have elevated their importance on the national agenda. Community beneficiaries (i.e. those in BCU areas) were also positive about the project objectives as they resonated with their own priorities and concerns about the status of their reefs. The Madagascar NTF team identified that the project would be relevant to the regional governments as this aligned with their economic interests relating to reef based tourism.

An area where relevancy is Moderately Satisfactory, is Component 3, as the project design pitched the coral friendly business concept at an economic level that is not aligned with local socio-economic situations in BCU communities in the six countries.

Coherence

This area also scored satisfactory to highly satisfactory for both internal and external coherence. GEF CRR, is very aligned with all of the national priorities of its six implementing countries, whether or not the NTF was a government body or an NGO. The project enables the national governments to meet their global and regional biodiversity conservation and SDG targets, priorities around blue economy, and coral data collection. The project has elevated the importance of Coral Reefs that have been neglected or overlooked compared with forest or land based biodiversity. The Hubs and the National Action Plans for Coral are seen to help fill an important gap.

There is still a gap, in terms of the private sector engagement, especially the ecotourism sector and in more than one country (e.g., Fiji, Indonesia and Madagascar). It is not known where the private sector initiatives are being implemented nor how successfully the coral restoration has been, but this can be addressed going forward with Component 3. Only two Countries have National Hubs that have engaged the private sector (Tanzania and Indonesia), and even Coral huddle was not set up to gather this data (this has now been corrected).

Internal cohesion is very strong between the GEF agency, PMU and the NTFs due to frequent and clear communications via regular monthly catch up meetings. Information was seen to move through the various layers at lightening pace. This was helped by a culture of active listening from WWF GEF Agency to PMU to NTFs that facilitated this. The systems developed by PMU assisted the flow of information between all aspects of the project implementation and key consultants from UQ were not only building on trusted relationships their methodologies were designed foster participation and local ownership.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness was given a Satisfactory rating. The extent of revisions needed for the RF caused by design issues meant it did not have a higher rating. There were good results from PMU facilitating high quality management of the project and for the technical components delivering some initial changes. It is a strength that there is no one model for how to set up and run national hubs; NTFs and their lead government ministries were left to determine their own engagement approach.

The use of compound indicators comparing project progress with expected targets, when combined with a six-month implementation delay left the project unable to demonstrate its progress adequately with the RF. Two countries have experienced significant implementation delays, two countries have experience moderate implementation delays and two others are where they are expected to be. This gives an uneven delivery pattern in the effectiveness across the six countries, and also factored into the rating given for the project.

There are also recommendations for improving specific country operations, namely: Tanzania, in order to improve the quality of the stakeholder engagement processes (i.e. by going slower and deeper for better buy-in and inclusion), Madagascar in terms of facilitating multi-sector dialogue through a regional sustainable coral friendly tourism hub and ensuring a consultant is hired to facilitate dialogue with the private sector and regional governments, and Philippines in terms of getting started and ensuring there is someone hired to facilitate the CTI secretariat and bridge to Palawan regional government and finally for Solomon Islands to increase its the engagement with frequently rotating government officials. The Fiji NTF team seems to have sufficient staffing support, although managing stakeholder fatigue is likely to be required. During the next intense timeline delivery it will be necessary to ensure there is sufficient stakeholder consultation before cabinet approval, which may put more pressure on some stakeholders and will need careful management. There are other country teams that could benefit from third party hiring to support the project delivery (i.e. to improve communications and language e.g.: Indonesia, Madagascar, and Philippines) and there are sufficient funds to do so.

Effective Knowledge Management Systems: Out of 83 documents provided, 74 were considered relevant, some of these were process documentation rather than output products, which demonstrate progress of each team. The project has produced a significant number of reports so far, 50 (67%) of which were either of high or good quality (HS, S or MS). It would be helpful to NTFs and consultants to have guidance on what outputs may contain and critical feedback mechanism to ensure good quality analysis and outputs are produced. Common characteristics of the reports to note:

- **No Executive Summaries to longer reports:**
- **Few Maps:**
- **Lack of Photos in the PPRs:**
- **Lack of overviews or summary conclusions:** and
- **Dominance of English** (although noting that some reports were submitted to PMU in their local language and translated).

The project has a number of online tools and platforms; 3 MOOCs, Data portal, and Coral Huddle as well as a number of more conventional knowledge products; such as a communications strategy and reports and articles. These are of high quality and already have high levels of engagement. Coral Huddle is a good depository across 6 countries – but not all documents are up to date (Indonesia must have dedicated resources to ensure they address this).

The [Project website](#) is very good but was not well publicised, it does not get brought up by google easily and most searches and links go to the WWF CRRI website - even the UQ website does this. WCS makes no reference to it on its own website.

We suggest a guidance document is produced as part of component 4, that guides the use of mobile video (i.e. Vox pop) or a light touch training workshop is provided by the global team using a training the trainers

approach so the NTF teams have basic skills to train local stakeholders in this. It would enable local stakeholders to have more voice and presence when they present at the National Hub meetings and it can be a way that women and youth get heard in forum where they are not always invited. A more indepth approach could be included in a follow on project.

The project is well managed by both GEF WWF US and PMU-UQID, and communication between them and the NTFs is frequent and effective. Both teams have strong active listening skills and are responsive at being realistic about the implementation challenges and actively adaptively managed the project. Both are rated highly satisfactory.

Efficiency

Overall, the project is well managed financially, despite the challenges faced. The project has an efficiency coefficient of 1 due to the careful financial management of PMU. The lowest dispersal has been in the “grants & agreements” category, which has only spent so far 20%, this does not reflect the amount pipelined, but it is noted that this reflects the delays in setting up contracts and getting agreements with the NTFs in the 6 project implementation countries. Only 30% of the total budget has actually been spent whereas 56% is earmarked for spending. There remains sufficient funds for a 6 month extension to project activities and 3 months for a transition phase to wind down the reporting on this project or set up a phase 2.

There is significant underspend in three countries at end of Q2, Year 3 stage: i.e. Philippines, Indonesia and Madagascar, all three countries have spent less than \$200,000; it is predicted to be difficult to spend the remaining component 2 budget without a 6 months extension and reallocation of funds. It should be noted that the budget design was an even allocation of approximately \$900K for each country. Although equal, it was not an equitable distribution as each country has a different level of cost of living, which means an uneven burn rate should have been expected and predicted. The budget design also limited travel of PMU and NTFs within countries and between countries which has limited cross fertilization and learning.

Not all the activities are at 100% delivery, there have been delays, but what is being planned is being spent to deliver the activities in the AWP. The gap between the amount spent and what is expected at this time in the MTE, reflects the 6 month implementation delay. Both Component 2 and 3 still have large amounts left, although not necessarily a large remaining percentage of their budget. Initially Component 2 may need to be reallocated and although component 3 is yet to start in earnest, and there are a significant number of technical analysis planned, there may be room to reallocate budget to other areas that will help deliver on the overall outcomes for the project such as cross country visits and learning.

Co-financing commitments at the design phase were unrealistic; 10 times larger than the proposed budget, this was a weakness in the original design. The total commitments made, but not actualised comes to approximately \$44.4 million USD, over half of the co-financing total. From the discussions with WWF CRRI and UQ, it is highly unlikely that Allen Coral Atlas or Blue Ventures are ever going to provide co-financing commitment letters as the former relationships with these organisations has been ruptured due to personnel moving onto other organisations, or have finished. The co-financing target needs to be reduced to \$27 million US to reflect this. Rare may have an opportunity with re-engagement in the Philippines. The new total is still a substantial amount of co-financing to aim for to complement strategically a \$7 Million GEF funded project. Co-financing is not well understood, even by WWF network or other international NGOs. This is a gap.

Results/Impact

Overall, the project rating was Satisfactory for the results. Of the 12 possible outcome indicators, 7 showed demonstrable over performance and score highly satisfactory, The DO rating was 81% with calculation adjustments (i.e. the use of mean average), this is significantly higher than the rating score 6 months ago at the end of year 2. Therefore, the rating of this project of **Satisfactory** is agreed by this evaluation as a fair

reflection of the performance so far. Note that an effectiveness recommendation is that the outcome indicators are revised.

The implementation delays have had an impact on the delivery of results, however, the RF design is also under reporting the results due to how the indicators have been measured/calculated, for all the many tracking tools, output delivery was not being specifically monitored, but was tracked within the AWP. The PMU has addressed this (see the output table in Annex 5.1c) and out of the possible 95 project output documents or products; 20 outputs are complete, another 19 are nearly completed (Year 3) as they have been started and significant progress has been made. They have been drafted and need approval of their National Hub or feedback. For those 60 in the pipeline; 33 are expected by the end of year 3, and 29 in year 4 and another 13 remain with uncertainty. Stakeholders themselves identified key results from the project, listed below.

The top 12 project achievements identified by stakeholders that are leading to changes

1. Increased awareness of the situation of coral reef and their importance
2. Creation of the National Hub and technical working groups
3. More Coordination and collaboration between various stakeholders on Coral Reefs
4. National Action Plan for Coral
5. Coral Reef Network - community of practice - learning & sharing - website
6. Increase in community voice and participation
7. Status of Coral Reefs - data base
8. Improved coral management through training and community participation
9. Research technical reports (Threats, opportunities, cost-benefit)
10. Consultative process with communities and provincial/local government
11. Sustainable financing - trust fund for coral
12. Increase in Political will of government to act in the interests of Coral

We would add the 3 MOOCs and the Data Portal to this list as significant achievements leading to potential impact. The project results overall are on track, but more time will be needed to consolidate these expected results as the results are not evenly spread across the 6 countries; with the following list of countries in order of progress made; Tanzania, Fiji, Indonesia, Solomon Islands, Madagascar and Philippines. With the most successful countries achieving the most items on the AWP list. It should be noted that several Tanzanian government stakeholders tended to only enthusiastically consider the positive achievements when reporting their results and engagement with other stakeholders. Other stakeholders were more measured. This may indicate optimism bias is at play.

There is significant potential for transformational change with the project supporting coral friendly businesses and the resulting guidance could also support a blue economy element. Similarly where there are local or regional trust funds set up to sustain coral conservation work, this could transform the coral reef ecosystem by ensuring sustained management interventions. The MOOCs and Data Portal and awareness raising are going to have indirect effects that will be difficult to predict but it should be noted they are new offerings that provide additional ways to present and direct any professional or student towards an increased understanding of coral reefs, their threats and potential solutions.

Project Impact is measured by the achievement of the three GEF core Indicators (GEF 4.1, 7.4 and 11). For GEF 11 indicator states the project has reached 4959 beneficiaries at the MTE stage, which is 71% of the Year 2 target and of those with a known gender; 46% are Female. The project is on track to achieve its ambitious target of 9850 beneficiaries in year 4 if it has a 6 month extension, although the sources of the beneficiaries will be different than planned. Core indicator 7.4 overachieved, reaching a level 4 engagement in the IW: Learn conference. Core Indicator 4.1 has no target value until Year 4.

Sustainability

Overall the project outcomes are Likely to be sustained. The sustainability risk table considers several factors and 3 of which consider there to be a moderate risk that in terms of severity and effect (Finance, Socio-political, Environmental), with 2 areas assessed (Institutional and Governance and Other risk) as low risk; overall rating being likely because most of the risks can still be mitigated within the planned activities, some countries have already putting mechanisms in place, but more implementation time is required as part of the mitigation. The most concerning risk is the potential disruption from elections to be held in Fiji, a dictatorship in Madagascar and recent elections held in Tanzania. Financially the risks are in terms of funds for NAP implementation and continuation of the National hubs, two countries are already looking at ways to mitigate this. Environmental risks are the potential of floods, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes and typhoons. These can be locally devastating on reefs, but most countries consider more than one BCU site. Other risks category was seen as the lack of cross country learning opportunities, which can still be mitigated.

Four countries are scheduled to develop a sustainability strategy in Year 3. Tanzania has set up a Coral Trust fund to support the implementation of the National Action Plan, but there was not a sustainability strategy draft shared with the MTE. In Fiji there is a potential that the National Hub could develop a Coral Trust Fund to ensure there are resources to support the National Hub going forward. Solomon Islands and Indonesia are both scheduled to complete their strategy by the end of year 3.

There are currently no global resources focusing on sustainability strategies, even for the four MOOCs, that are currently free, nor the Data Platform; both of these activities require a clear exit strategy to be developed, to decide whether they are taken over by UQID as part of its enterprise activities or another part of the University of Queensland agrees to take them on and maintain them.

There is a long-term vision of local ownership via the National Hubs and National Action Plans in all the countries where there is a national government. Local ownership of the MOOCs in their current form is limited, partly because they are not in the local languages and some stakeholders have suggested they have not enough local context material in them. This is acknowledged by the development team, but has arisen because the MOOC content had to be created at a time when the National Hubs and NTFs were not set up or functioning. Note a follow on project has activities designed to addresses this. There is evidence to suggest that the increased awareness of the importance of coral reefs and their climate resilience has increased and may endure as a lasting legacy. However, materials are not in local languages and there are not yet enough video clips to engage with the public interest.

Component 3: Coral Friendly Businesses – This area of work is too emergent to assess. It has a great deal of potential, as long as smaller scale operations are considered, there is significant capacity building in financial management and fewer number of businesses are selected to provide more effective support.

Adaptive Capacity

The project is rated Satisfactory as it has been adaptively managed from the onset as the design has underestimated the time taken to contract all the NTFs. The AWP was adapted as Component 3 activities were delayed a year. There were four other adaptations; Madagascar, Fiji and the Philippines, as well as minor changes to a few RF indicators. As already stated the four-component design is solid, but the implementing countries have challenging conditions for a project starting off, and during implementation, agreements take longer to negotiate and clarify than expected. A project across this number of countries, has to be adaptively managed to ensure delivery.

Proposed RF Indicator changes: Core Indicator 7.4 cannot change its Year 4 target. However, we would like to encourage greater engagement of all country representatives through IW:Learn conferences and other international ocean symposiums or conferences, even if is only able to be reported via the PPR. The project has already achieved the Year 4 target in Year 2. Core indicator, 4.1, needs to be replaced with Core indicator

5: defined as the Area of Marine ecosystem under improved management. This would better reflect the stories and analysis that can be drawn out of activity 4.1.2.4 in the AWP, while allowing the Year 4 target value to remain unchanged. Indicator 4.1 was intended to prioritize the “Ridge to Reef” approach. However, the NAPs so far developed, have focused on prioritising “Reef to Ridge” activities as the National Hub members have initially prioritised stopping damage, restoring, and protecting coral reefs. Consequently, indicator 4.1 is no longer valid within this project timeframe and needs to be amended. Further details are in the description of the second proposed follow on project.

All RF indicators have all been reviewed (see Tables 24, and 25) and recommendations made (see Table 26) to measure progress using the mean average achievement of these milestones, or by adjusting expectations in Year 4. In several cases the Year 4 target should be increased because the project has exceeded the Year 2 target and is likely to do the same in Year 4 and is likely to continue outperforming.

The project requires effective M&E systems. The M&E design was rated Moderately Satisfactory due to issues with the RF indicators. However, implementation of M&E system is rated as Highly Satisfactory due to the additional tools developed and used across the project. Five monitoring and data collection tools have been created. Regular remote meetings between PMU and the NTF teams complement these tools, and provide frequent project updates. Regional meetings also take place, but time zone differences make it difficult to gather all six project NTFs at the same time. The only meeting attended by representatives of all six NTFs, PMU and WWF GEF US, was at the inception workshop in Bali in March 2023. From an M&E perspective, and to ensure effective data gathering, validation and verification, we would recommend another meeting of all parties six months before project closure. Even more could be achieved if this were held before any project extension begins.

The project uses a range of tools, extending significantly beyond just using the AWP, RF and PPRs these include:

1. M&E system and reporting: Coral Huddle: **2. Kobo Survey Tools** for gathering additional data across all RF indicators: **3. Disaggregation activity mapping:** which tracks every activity contributing to the RF indicators in an Excel file to show what data each NTF is delivering. **4. Activities Status Tracking tool,** **5. [Spatial site mapping](#):** In which Bio-Climatic Units (BCUs), project communities and their economic zones are mapped using ArcGIS.

Project Progress reports are completed six months, and AWP, RF and PPRs are completed annually as planned. An annual reflection meeting is also facilitated remotely by the PMU, although results have been mixed because NTFs often treat it as an additional reporting opportunity. Although the reports give good insight into completed activities and current challenges, they lack reflection on the significance of achievements and do not provide a cross-country synthesis of progress or a summary of results from the technical reports. Although photos are provided, these are not always embedded into the PPRs, which would help provide context. There is regular reporting to WWF GEF US through remote meetings with PMU that helps fill these gaps. However, it would be beneficial for future reports to include these reflections, especially as project activities are begin to deliver on outcomes and more significant results.

GEF Related Criteria

Gender

The GAP provides ten guiding rules for the CRR project and generally, the PMU and NTFs comply with the them. However, full implementation would require guidance of the NTFs on how best to incorporate them in the projects, although the communications strategy has a section on understanding gender and voice. Gender is disaggregated in the Results Framework inconsistently. No rationale is given in the GAP for the different targets. It's mathematically challenging to have lower percentages cascade into a higher percentage, which needs to be reconsidered. Overall, the NTFs are promoting the inclusion of women in the project activities, but there is no detail on the quality of their participation. Gender and vulnerability mainstreaming may remain superficial and needs deeper integration. In their activity reports the NTFs apply different age categories

hampering a unified analysis and presentation of the participation of youth or young people in project activities. GESI reports have been produced for Fiji and Solomon Islands, but they do not include analysis. Although Indonesia does not have a report, the National Hub does have a GESI task force.

Gender inclusion is still a challenge for patriarchal cultures, for example Tanzania is yet to adopt separate consultations for women to encourage their participation. This approach has been successful in Indonesia. All genders indicated that activities with communities would increase the participation of women. Other stakeholders suggested including women or youth associations that can represent them. Without deliberate strategies for women, vulnerable groups, and remote communities, the hub risks reinforcing existing silos and power imbalances. The quality of participation will be crucial in Component 3, the support to coral reef friendly businesses, in which women are identified as primary beneficiaries.

The MOOCs have been very successfully at embedding gender and local voice concepts, especially CRR104 due to the inputs from Care's gender mainstreaming expert. Similarly the Communications strategy has a section on the use of language, gender and inclusion. However, this document is only available in English.

Safeguards

The assignment of **"C" categorization** for the CRR project appears correct for the implementation to date. However, caution may be required going forward. The NTF in Tanzania, MPRU, is taking the opportunity of CRR to introduce an MPA in one of the Districts. There is some confusion and concern on how an MPA will affect the livelihood of communities. Caution needs to be taken and simple mitigation by awareness raising should be done. This may be a lesson for Component 3 in which the NTFs will work with selected groups of community members or businesses. Without clear equity and gender guidance, this activity could create mistrust and conflict among communities. The implementation of small, on the ground projects with businesses and communities are within the examples of the Category "Medium" in WWF's ESSF.

Local and traditional voices are being included in the NAP processes and the extent that communities recognise the inclusion of their voice is being monitored through the RF. There are established grievance/complaints mechanisms in place and on the UQ website, but they can be forgotten during workshops and their access is not explained in the local languages. This grievance mechanism is in addition to that provided by GEF WWF US team. However, stakeholders were not able to describe any of the grievance processes available.

Stakeholder Engagement

The SEP does not provide examples of strategies and approaches on how to improve participation and quality of consultations, for example Participatory Rural Appraisal techniques or workshop facilitation skills. The National Hubs and technical working groups are the key stakeholder engagement mechanisms so far. Without exception all of the countries aim to work with the relevant government agencies. It's perceived to be easier for a government agency as the NTF to engage other colleagues and ministers. It was noted that an NGO as the National Hub secretariat took away the administrative burden that comes with the role, allowing government to lead the engagement process. Key ministries are involved in all countries (excluding Philippines and Madagascar), but none of the National Hubs have representation of the Ministry of Women, or an equivalent agency. National women networks or those representing other vulnerable groups also do not have a fixed seat on the national Hubs. With the possible exception of Tanzania, the countries do not seem to have tapped into the list of stakeholders in the SEP, or the reason behind their exclusion (by choice or by design) is not documented.

Only two of the National Hubs (Tanzania and Indonesia) include members from the private sector beyond environmental consultants, and none include regular engagement with tourism sector. The Ministry of Tourism did attend the last Fijian National Hub meeting. Stakeholders that may be missing from some of the Hubs are: Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Women, FLMMA Network (Fijian Locally Managed

Marine Areas), the religious groups, Navy and BMKG (National Climate Agency), Tourism, and Fisheries, as well as sanitation and waste engineers. Some of these stakeholders will be engaged in the future, as future iterations of the NAP are developed, but each Hub may need to check with the design document stakeholder lists to clarify whether they have gaps.

Overview of the Evaluation Ratings

Table 1.: GEF Assessment Scores Summary Table For GEF CRR Project (see the rating scales in Annex 5.9)

Evaluation Ratings			
1. Progress Towards Results		2. Overall Assessment of Project Outcomes	
GEF Core Indicator 4.1 – NA	NA	Relevant	HS
GEF Core Indicator 7– Level 4 – 100% Highly Satisfactory	HS	Coherent	S-HS
GEF Core Indicator 11 – 71%; 63% of Female target – Av. 67% Moderately Satisfactory	MS	Effectiveness	S
Outcome 1.1 – 100% Highly Satisfactory		Cost Efficiency	MS
Outcome 1.1a – 100% Highly Satisfactory	HS	Overall Rating of Project Outcomes	S
Outcome 1.1b – 100% Highly Satisfactory		3. Sustainability Risks	
Outcome 1.2a– 100% Highly Satisfactory	HS	Financial – Moderate Risk	
Outcome 2.1 – – 100% Highly Satisfactory		Socio-political – Moderate Risk	
Outcome 2.1a – 100% Highly Satisfactory	HS	Institutional Framework and Governance - Low Risk	
Outcome 2.1b – NA		Environmental – Moderate Risk	
Outcome 2.2a – 42% Moderately Unsatisfactory	MU	Other – Low Risk	
Outcome 3.1a - 67%, Moderately Satisfactory	MS	Overall Rating of Sustainability of Outcomes	L
Outcome 4.1a – 100% Highly Satisfactory	HS	4. Monitoring And Evaluation	
Outcome 4.2 – 100% Highly Satisfactory	HS	M&E Design	MS
Overall Outcome Rating – reported 62% MTE value 81% - Satisfactory	S	M&E Implementation	HS
		Overall M&E Rating	S
		5. Implementation and Execution	
		WWF GEF Agency Implementation	HS
		Executing Agency Execution (CI)	HS

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Glossary

Acronyms and Abbreviations

Term	Meaning
ACA	Allen Coral Atlas
AWP	Annual Workplan
AWP&B	Annual Workplan and Budget
ACA	Allen Coral Atlas
BCU	Bio-Climatic Unit
BMU	Beach Management Unit
C	Component (of the project, usually accompanied by number 1, 2, 3 or 4)
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBO	Community Based Organizations
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CF	Coral Friendly
CFB	Coral Friendly Business
CI	Conservation International
COVID	Covid 19 virus causing large scale lock downs
CRR	Coral Reef Rescue
CRR-NTF	Coral Reef Rescue - National Technical Facilitator
CRRI	Coral Reef Rescue Initiative – WWF programme of WWF International
CSR	Corporate and Social Responsibility
CTI	Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security
DENR	Department of Environment and Natural Resources Philippines
DO	Development Objective
EA	Executing Agency
ESSF	Environmental and Social Safeguards Framework
EDx	Educational Platform that used to be run by UQ but is now closed
F	Female
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GEB	Global Environmental Benefits
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEF IEO	GEF Independent Evaluation Office
GEF SEC	GEF Secretariat
GFCR	Global Fund for Coral Reefs
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
GL	Global - in reference to the scope of a project activity
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
Ha	Hectare
IND	Indonesia
IP	Internet Protocol (address)
IW	International Waters
KM	Knowledge Management
KU	Knowledge Unit
LEARN	Learning Exchange & Resource Network
LGA	Local Government Authority
LME	Large Marine Ecosystem

M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MAD	Madagascar
MECC	Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Fiji
MMAF	Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries Indonesia
MME	Moderately Medium scale Enterprise
MOOC	Massive Open Online Courses – or online courses
MPA	Marine Protected Area
MPRU	Marine Parks and Reserves Unit (under Ministry of Fisheries Tanzania)
MSP	Marine Spatial Planning
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
MTR	Mid Term Report
NA	Not Applicable
NAP	National Action Plan
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NCRH	National Coral Reef Hub
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NH	National Hub
NP	National Park
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NPSC	National Project Steering Committee
NROC	National Resource Owners Committee (in Fiji)
NTF	National Technical Facilitator
PA	Protected Area
PC	Project Coordinator
PCO	Provincial Coordinating Office – ITAWAKI Ministry Fiji
PCR	Project Cofinance Report
PCSD	Palawan Council for Sustainable Development
PEMSEA	Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia
PH	Philippines
PEUMP	Pacific-European Union Marine Partnership Programme
PIR	Project Implementation Report
PM	Project Manager or Project Coordinator (equivalent terms)
PMC	Project Management Cost
PMU	Project Management Unit (includes; PM and PC roles for UQID)
PRA	Participatory Rapid Rural Appraisal
PPR	Project Progress Report
PrISM	Project Supervision Mission Report
PRODOC	Project Document
PSC	Project Steering Committee
QFR	Quarterly Financial Report
QR code	Quick Response Code
RF	Results Framework
SEA	South East Asia
SEP	Stakeholder Engagement Plan
SFC	Shehia Fisheries Committee (on Zanzibar)
SI or SOL	Solomon Islands
SIPP	Safeguards Integrated Policies and Procedures
SMART	M&E term: Specific, Measurable, Ambitious/Achievable, Relevant and Timebound
SHE	Stakeholder Engagement
SIPP	Safeguards Integrated Policies and Procedures
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises

SPA	Special Presidential Approval
SPC	Pacific Community
TBD	To Be Determined
TE	Terminal Evaluation
The Project	GEF Coral Reef Rescue Project
TNZ	Tanzania
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
TWG	Technical Working Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UQ	University of Queensland
UQID	University of Queensland - International Development
US	United States
USD	US Dollar
WCS	Wildlife Conservation Society
WIO	Western Indian Ocean
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature
WWF CRRI	WWF Coral Reef Rescue Initiative – programme of WWF International
WWF US GEF	Executing Agency of the GEF hosted by WWF US
Yr or Y	Year

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1. Introduction to Evaluation

1.1. Purpose of the evaluation

The objective of this midterm evaluation is: to examine the extent, magnitude, sustainability and potential for project impacts to date; identify any project design problems; assess progress towards project outcomes and outputs; and draw lessons that can improve the project effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of project benefits. The evaluation seeks to:

- 1.) Assess the results of the project achieved so far under the four components of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Coral Reef Rescue (CRR) implemented in the seven participating countries (PMU, 6 National Technical Facilitators), using WWF guidelines and GEF evaluation tools and approaches.
- 2.) Identify any potential gaps that may affect project implementation in the remaining implementation period.
- 3.) Make feasible recommendations to increase the effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the project outcomes for its remaining implementation duration.
- 4.) Make recommendations on potential follow-on areas that could inform the design of a phase 2.

This evaluation will seek to deliver the following objectives.

- **Results/Impact:** Assess what has been achieved so far across the four components of the project in each of the 7 area/country teams in terms of results leading to impacts and how does this compare with the changes that were envisioned in the design? How extensively intended or unforeseen effects that project interventions or strategies will have on the project objective, conservation targets and GEF global environmental benefits, whether positive or negative. How robust has been the project's logic or theory of change and how much potential does it have to scale up or replicate the project outcomes and impact?
- **Effectiveness:** How extensively outputs, outcomes and project objectives have been or are likely to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance and identifying the major factors that have facilitated or impeded this achievement? How well management structures of the project and the organizational structures, the resources, the distribution of responsibilities and coordination mechanisms are appropriate for achieving progress towards project outcomes? What is the potential for achieving transformational changes at scale?
- **Coherence:** How compatible the project interventions are with other interventions (particularly policies) in a country, sector or institution? Internally, how well the theory of change, project components, activities, and M&E system are aligned with the project objectives and considers good practices and previous GEF/Non-GEF interventions? Externally how consistent and compatible are the project interventions among other activities and strategies implemented in the project country, plus how compatible is it with targeted sectors, institutions and other organizations by reviewing the synergies and trade-offs involved in the project?
- **Relevance:** How extensively the project design, outcomes, indicators and targets remain valid and consistent with local and national development priorities and organizational policies, including the context of the changing circumstances of the country (e.g. political context)? How extensively the project objectives and design respond to the needs and priorities of the intended beneficiaries, and how well the project responds to the mandates of the GEF Agency and GEF partners?
- **Efficiency:** How extensively are inputs converted into results in an economic and timely way? How efficient has co-financing funding been, as well as spending patterns, project management and human resources, coordination and information flow among the project partners?
- **Sustainability:** what's the likely ability of the project to continue to deliver benefits, progress and continue to have an impact after the external support has ended? How resilient are the project benefits? How will the probability and magnitude of the key risks influence the continuation of the net benefits of the project? What is the degree of institutional capacity, support and buy-in given to the project at the national and local levels?
- **Adaptive capacity:** How extensively does the project use its M&E systems, lessons learned and adaptive management to meet indicator targets and mitigate project issues (such as design flaws or any adverse impacts of the project)?
- **GEF Priorities:** How well have GEF gender and safeguarding interests been considered by the project?

1.2. Evaluation Scope & Methodology

Evaluation Scope

The primary audience for this evaluation is WWF-US GEF as the implementing agency, and University of Queensland who are executing the project with local partners and consultants. The other important audience is the executing partners of the project namely; PMU-UQID, Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) (Fiji, Solomon Islands (SI) and Madagascar), Reef Check Indonesia, Marine Parks and Reserves Unit (MPRU) Tanzania, and University of Queensland (UQ) as well as Palawan Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD) in the Philippines, the Project Steering Committee (PSC) members, and Local Governments/Agencies. This mid-term evaluation is a requirement of GEF funding and therefore another audience is the GEF SEC and IEO. The results from this report will also be of interest to International Waters Learning Platform and WWF CRRI.

Since April 2023 the project has started implementing the 4 components of the project in five of the 6 key sites, which are geographically in three regions; namely SP: Fiji, Solomon Islands, SEA: Indonesia, EA: Tanzania and Madagascar. Work has been initiated in the Philippines due to lengthy bureaucratic delays and complex systems³ within the Philippine government that were not anticipated. Funds have only just been transferred to DENR, but, the new workplan has still not been implemented, although administrative staff have been recruited. The seventh country the study⁴ identified, Cuba, was considered in the design documents, but recognised to be outside the scope and was not included in the GEF application beyond that. It is therefore excluded from this evaluation.

Methodology

A mixed method approach is used to explore the experiences of the various stakeholders, understand what the project has achieved as well as examine project governance and operational management and the context that the project and staff operate in.

Desk Analysis of Existing Documentation

An analysis of key design documents developed by the executing team was conducted, as well as annual reviews and reports for the donor, stakeholders and publicly available on the various project websites.

- Project Document and CEO Endorsement Letter;
- Relevant safeguards documents, including the Safeguards Screen and Categorization memo, and the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP);
- Annual Work Plans (AWP) and Budgets;
- Project Progress Reports (PPR) including Results Framework and AWP Tracking;
- GEF Agency reports, including Project Implementation Reports (PIRs) and Supervision Mission Reports (PrISM) and back to office reports;
- Relevant financial documents, including financial progress reports; co-financing monitoring tables and co-financing letters;
- Meeting minutes (Project Steering Committee (PSC)) and relevant virtual meetings with the WWF- GEF Agency and support team; and
- WWF-GEF Agency back to office reports
- Coral Huddle information
- Technical consultancy reports supporting the implementation of the 4 components

Particular attention was paid to the theory of change, Results Framework (RF) and M&E data/evidence (Coral Huddle Portal) that is reported to GEF WWF US, including the Theory of Change (ToC) and project design tools Desktop analysis also includes a review of key project outputs (relevant background documents, assessments, reviews and guidance) and social media impacts (where the data analytics exist). Top line analysis of project funding is assessed in terms of resource flow clarification and broad value for money considerations.

³ Signing of an Operational Partnership Agreement and a Special Order Bank Account.

⁴ Beyer HL, Kennedy EV, Beger M, et al. Risk-sensitive planning for conserving coral reefs under rapid climate change. *Conservation Letters*. 2018;e12587. <https://doi.org/10.1111/conl.12587>

The documents or reports were assessed whether they were considered Highly Satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S), Moderately Satisfactory (MS), Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), Unsatisfactory (U) or Highly Unsatisfactory (HS), see the GEF rating tables and definitions in Annex 5.9.

Data Analysis of New Information from Stakeholders

The following qualitative data collection techniques were used: E-surveys, Semi-structured interviews (either by phone, MS Teams or in-country face-to-face), and in field face-to-face participant observation at project events (working with the staff). The face to face collection techniques were used for the activities in the following locations:

- Queensland
- Tanzania
- Fiji and
- The Philippines; in a light touch manner.

Stakeholders in other countries were interviewed remotely (e.g. Indonesia, and Global stakeholders such as WWFUS GEF Agency, WWF CRRI and WSC). Only NTF staff were interviewed remotely in the Solomon Islands and Madagascar. Two short e-surveys or questionnaires (designed for mobile phone use) were prepared and one was sent to NTFs project coordinators, see the Annex 5.8 below, and they were asked to send the link onto a select number of their external stakeholders of their choosing. The evaluators also sent the other e-survey directly (via their mobile phone) to NTF project management staff that focused on understanding the challenges of implementing the project. Each NTF from Tanzania and Fiji and later Indonesia and the Philippines, were asked to choose external stakeholders that could have a follow up face to face conversations with the evaluators. In the surveys, stakeholders were told to skip the questions that they felt did not resonate with their context. Two sets of semi-structured interview questions were also prepared and used to guide the conversations with stakeholders that were either face to face or remote. More details on the various methods are in Annex 5.1c. The following table that shows which tool was used for stakeholders, their type and country.

Table 2.: Summary of the Various Tools Used: where and when they were used

Tool	Global - PMU	Fiji	Solomon Islands	Tanzania	Madagascar	Indonesia	Philippines
Partner e-survey: EA- WWF US PMU – UQ TCs – Terranomics, UQ NTF https://ee.kobotoolbox.org/single/Xlvafxon	3 staff, PMU UQ C1, C3 and C4 leads (2)	2 WCS staff	3 WCS staff, including Marine adviser shared with Fiji	3 staff	3 staff	3 staff	3 staff
Sent Via the 6 NTF PMs External Stakeholder Questionnaire Survey https://ee.kobotoolbox.org/single/Rfo63hrH	Sent directly to UQ, PMU and WWF US GEF 4 completed	Asked WCS PM to send to: 47 NH & TWG members 4 completed	Asked WCS PM to send to: Selected NH & TWG members	Asked PM to send to: Selected NH & TWG members	Asked PM to send to: Selected NH & TWG members	Asked REEF Check PM to send to: selected NH & TWG members 10 completed NTF and 4 completed	Asked PCSD Pm to send to: Selected NH members
KII Project Staff (NTFs)	3 Interviews and PMU	3 WCS	1 staff WCS 1 tech advisor	1 staff - MPRU	1 staff WCS	2 staff Reef Check	3 staff 2 PCSD staff
KII External Stakeholders	2 interviews	12 in 4 interviews	zero	13 interviews	zero	6 interviews	3 interviews
Participant Observation Tool for Observing National Hub events – Field Visit See Annex 5.1c for details on the areas assessed.	14 th -16 th October	24th & 25th September, 5 days total	Cancelled (see limitations) Recommended for Final Evaluation	8 days; October	Not Possible and not planned	Not possible – Recommended for Final Evaluation Visit	Last week Oct
MOOC assessment	Assessed CRRI101, 103 and Lightly 104	not known, flyer shared	not known	not known	not known but unlikely as the course is not in French	Translated - 4 Participants invited to take questionnaire No response	not known

Sampling Interviews and Stakeholders

Stratified Sampling

Each project country has its own set of stakeholders within similar sector types (i.e. government, NGO, and community) being engaged within the component activities, but mainly engaged in Component 2 activities. A small and select number of stakeholders were chosen to represent Government, Companies, Academia, Civil Society and regional bodies, relevant to the project process, NGOs, as well as local stakeholders, including from local communities that have been engaged by the project

During the two month period, 56 Surveys were completed in 3 languages, 46 interview sessions (including groups of participants), three Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) were completed and assessed, and four Country visits were undertaken. See Table 3 for the details per country and Annex 5.5b for the list of stakeholders interviewed and where it was possible an indication whether they also completed the e-survey.

Table 3.: Summary of the Stakeholders Interviewed/taking questionnaires or e-surveys

	UQ – PMU (3days) (5 Interview events, 3 Surveys, several open discussions with PMU)				Fiji (6 days) (6 Interview events, 6 Surveys, Open discussions with National Hub Members)				Tanzania (8 days), (16 Interview events, 19 Surveys)			
Method	Who	Total	F	M	Who	Total People	F	M	Who	Total People	F	M
Group/ Individual Interviews	PMU CI: MOOC team Communication strategy team UQID- Director Research	2 2 2 1 1	1 2 2 1 1	1 1 1 1 1	Community leaders Provincial Liaison Officers NTF - WCS Government NGO- WWF Fiji, CI Private Sector	3 2 3 3 4 0	0 2 2 2 2 2	3 2 1 1 2 2	Community Leaders NTF Government NGO Private Sector/donor Research/Academe	30 1 6 3 2 5	10 1 2 3 1 2	20 1 4 3 1 3
Participant Observation	NA				Nat Hub Participants (Excluding WCS)	31	15	16	Participant Observation	109	34	75
Site Visits	UQ campus				Maula Village	3	2	1	Site Visits	1		2
E- Surveys completed	UQ Consultancy Partners	3			All stakeholders	6			All stakeholders	19		

	Global Stakeholders (3 remote interviews, 1 Surveys)				Philippines (5 Interview events, 1 Survey)				Indonesia (7 Remote Interview events, 16 Surveys)				MAD, SOL (Mad: 1 Remote Interviews, 2 Surveys; Sol: 2 remote interviews and 6 surveys)			
Method	Who	total	F	M	Who	Total People	F	M	Who	Total People	F	M	who	Total	F	M
Group/ Individual Interviews	WWF CRRI	2	2		CTI - DENR DENR Admin	3 6	1 2	2 4	Community Leaders Government NGO Private Sector Research/ Academe	1 1 3 1 1	1 1 1 1 1		Marine Advisor – Fiji & Solomon Islands WCS	1	1	
Face to face or Remote	WCS Regional Director	1	1		NGO- WCS, NGO- RARE	1 1	1 1	1 1								
Interviews Partner	WWF US GEF PM WWF US support mission remote observation	1 1 1	1 1 1		NTF- PCSD	5	2	3	NTF – Reef Check	2		2	NTF Madagascar NTF Solomon Islands	1 1	1 1	1 1
E-Surveys completed	Global	1			Staff - PCSD	1		1	Total (6 completed NTF E-survey)	16			MAD SOL	2 6		

Field Visits & Participant Observation

Two field visits were scheduled to coincide with the National Hub and Technical Working Group (TWF) meetings. During those meetings the evaluators were both passive and active in their engagement with the meeting. Notes were taken during the meeting and the Participant Observation tool was completed after the event, see Annex 5.1a for details of the themes assessed by the tool.

Tanzania: As part of the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) Conference the UQ GEF CRR team were in Zanzibar and Dar Es Salaam, from 4th to 8th October, a member of the evaluation team joined them and observed in-country the CRR activities led by the NTF from 7th and 8th October, observed UQ and NTF led activities, and then stayed

on for further group discussions and interviews with NH, academic, Non-Government Organizations (NGO) and community stakeholders.

Fiji: The Fiji National Hub meeting was attended by one of the evaluators to observe the National Hub dynamics on the 22nd to 25th of September. The NTF (WSC) combined a number of CRR project activities with the National Hub participants. After these meetings the evaluator stayed at the venue to interview groups of participants (community representatives) or individuals (NGO). Other stakeholder interviews were arranged in the days following this meeting in their offices in Suva. To get a sense of how Fijians work the land, a bus was taken on the return journey and a local village was visited living on the Nadi River to understand local resources management issues faced by communities and to understand village dynamics.

Philippines: 3 days were spent talking with key stakeholders to understand the current situation and gain insights into planned catch up strategy.

Australia: To facilitate engagement and conduct face to face meetings with the Brisbane based team for Components 1, 3 and 4, one of the evaluators was based in Australia from 13th September to 21st October. Three days were spent talking with PMU to understand what has worked and what has not worked in terms of the design and implementation management, as well as get a sense of the M&E tools. Consultant specialists for Component 1, and 4 were met to understand how the delivery of their workplan had proceeded from their perspective, understand the current status as well as the adaptive management steps taken to overcome various unforeseen and anticipated challenges.

GEF WWF US: The support mission reflection meetings with WWF US GEF were held online during the same period that the evaluation was conducted, so the evaluators joined two meetings and conducted a remote interview with the project manager.

Semi- Structured Interviews

Indonesia: Due to budget constraints a field visit was not possible so seven stakeholders were interviewed remotely to understand how the project is being implemented, what has been achieved and what are the perceived results so far.

Madagascar and Solomon Islands: Only NTFs were interviewed remotely for different reasons. Madagascar was still politically unstable and therefore it was considered prudent not to try to arrange remote interviews with external stakeholders, given there was no longer a national government system in place. Analysing documents and reports on project implementation, and although implementation is delayed, did not bring up particular issues that needed to be explored further. It is expected that more remote meetings and interviews can be carried out during the final evaluation process and by this time national government would have returned. Due to time constraints and concerns around stakeholder fatigue due to Solomon Island hosting 3 regional conferences in one month, it was felt that trying to arrange a series of external stakeholder interviews would be an unnecessary burden on both the team and the stakeholders themselves. Solomon Islands is to be recommended as a country to focus on during the final evaluation, either through a face to face visit or via a series of remote interviews with participant stakeholders.

External Stakeholders: Two remote interviews were undertaken with external stakeholders that we felt were insightful to gain an understanding this project; Coral Reef Rescue Initiative (CRRRI) team and WCS Regional Director for Southeast Asia - Pacific.

Notes and recordings were taken during all interviews. The interview questions were numbered in accordance with the evaluation matrix. Once extracted, these questions were reordered for logical flow, with their original numbers indicated in brackets if changed. Details of the data processing steps are discussed in Annex 5.1a, the evaluation matrix and questions guiding the interviews are presented in Annex 5.7 and 5.8.

MOOC Assessment

The MOOC online courses were tested and assessed by a recent graduate from South East Asia, who completed two of the courses fully as a participant, with another in a lighter touch way. Three separate assessments were provided based on the 5 criteria used to assess the documents. These courses took many more hours to complete than claimed by the development team. A learning questionnaire was developed for CRR1 101 course participants and sent to the four that agreed on further follow-up engagement. These questionnaires were not returned. There were only four stakeholders that had given their permission to follow up contact, so this response is unsurprising.

Note that the interviews of each country were processed separately using a data visualisation tool and the three most frequently mentioned themes selected for each group of interviews responses using the 8 criteria framework. The results for each country have been presented in the Annex 5.1e.

1.3. Limitations of the evaluation

Note on analysis of qualitative data: There was a dominance of Tanzanian data (17 interviews and 17 e-surveys), if there was too much standard deviation from the normal distribution in the answers then Tanzanian data biased the results, therefore we have selected the comments that are most illustrative of the various views. If the other data coalesced with the Tanzanian data (i.e. when looking at relevance); then this one country would not bias the views and the qualitative data could be quantified. When processing the interview data using visualisation tools, only seven representative voices were chosen from Tanzania because there was too much data for the programme to process. This ensured easier comparison with Fiji, Indonesia and Philippines, all with around seven representatives from the country perspective.

Connectivity issues: not all the countries had equally stable internet, this affected their ability to engage with any online engagement for the evaluation. The surveys were designed for mobile phone use to overcome this limitation.

Large number of sites: The project is being implemented in six very different countries, each one is worthy of its own evaluation. A balance had to be struck between digging into the country level detail and trying to understand the overview. The main body of the evaluation aims to focus on the overview, with insightful detail for each country being presented in Annex 5.1d, 5.1e and 5.1f. Similarly for all the sections, selective evidence has been presented in the body of the main report, with complimentary evidence given in Annex 5.1.

Field Visit Limitations: There were a large number of Regional Meetings organised at the same time, this either led to clashes in priorities or meant that stakeholders were rushing off to get to the next large meeting. The evaluation team were not always able to register and attend these meetings so came after or between them. Several of the government stakeholders were attending these regional meetings and had also attended several National Hub meetings and workshops. NTF staff were concerned that stakeholder fatigue (especially in island nations where there were a small number of stakeholders) would limit either their engagement with the evaluation or with the project activities. The evaluators relied on the NTF project coordinators judgement for this and chose not to push for interviews but ask the NTFs to organise them. It was noted that some country NTFs were probably too overwhelmed to make this decision, and hence why the evaluators chose not to go to Solomon Islands.

Last Minute Changes in Schedule: Tanzania schedule changed unexpectedly reducing the community engagement opportunity at Zanzibar and project observation in the remaining site, and mode of interaction with stakeholders.

Lack of previous evaluation experience combined with a lack of preparation time: One of the first countries for fieldwork was Fiji. Due to delays in finalising the dates for the National Hubs, evaluation preparations were limited. There was not enough time to prepare for the evaluators to visit participating communities and to

validate their voices and experiences. It also became apparent that the Fiji team had not fully understood the importance of the evaluators visiting a community in the context of this project. Some of this confusion was because this was not considered a community level project but a policy enabling project therefore it was felt that the extensive preparation needed for a community visit was unnecessary and not easy to facilitate so quickly. The evaluation team failed to communicate that the purpose was for the evaluators to validate community perspectives and views, but also get a sense of what some of the issues communities were facing that could put pressure on their Coral Reefs. It should therefore be noted that formal requests need to be made and this takes time which was a factor the evaluators had not realised was needed. To mitigate this a bus journey was taken through the main island to understand landuse patterns and a village was visited on the mouth of the river Nadi. Community representatives and Provincial Council representatives from BCU areas were interviewed to try to validate the community level information the project is relying on as a mitigation of this situation.

Translation issues and AI: Evaluation tools were translated into French and Bahasa Indonesian, and also NTFs provided translation assistance in Indonesia during the remote semi-structured interviews. AI transcription software was used for all meetings; however, it did not recognise Bahasa Indonesian consistently and refused to provide any transcription, including the sections that were in English and it was found that the AI did not like transcribing heavily accented English speech. To overcome this several of these transcripts were completed in sections, combining AI and human transcription. All scripts had to be cleaned for erroneous words that were colloquial.

Indonesian Document Availability: Coral Huddle Use: Not all the NTFs are equally good at promptly uploading their reports and documents into Huddle. The Indonesia NTF was noted for this, which meant their progress was underestimated, as there were not up to date versions of the technical documents available. It should be noted that some delay is inevitable, where different drafts are being iterated and translations are required. Indonesian team submits 50% of their deliverables in Bahasa Indonesian that the PMU team then translate using AI. For other reports submitted in English, this team would have needed to translate their documents from Bahasa Indonesian and therefore this added an extra step. There was not a dedicated staff member in the NTF to facilitate this and this may have resulted in delays in uploading.

2. Project description and development context

The Project seeks to build capacity and solutions that ensure the long-term survival of climate refuge coral reef ecosystems, thereby conserving their biodiversity and supporting the blue economies and communities dependent on them. This project is designed based on the premise that if strong enabling conditions are established, including individual knowledge, and understanding as well as institutional policies, structures, and processes, then increased investments can be mobilized. This, in turn, will enable and motivate stakeholders across sectors to work together for the conservation and management of climate refuge coral reefs. The collaborative effort across stakeholders and sectors will minimize risks and maximize the conservation returns on the benefit. Conserving climate refuge coral reefs creates a critical seed bank to support the regeneration of coral reefs globally. The Project is organized into the following components:

- **Component 1: Global to local capacity strengthening for climate refuge coral reef monitoring and conservation:** create a Global network of knowledge practitioners and creation of online learning course (MOOC) and establish a Knowledge Unit (KU) to develop a 'Knowledge Proposal' for teaching and learning which will describe (1) proposed learning approach, objectives, and principles (including gender considerations), (2) proposed curriculum/content, (3) proposed design of delivery methods (including offline options), (4) potential contributors, coordinators/moderators for communities of practice for all outputs
- **Component 2: Planning for climate refuge coral reef rescue at the national level:** establishment of National Hubs (NHs) and TWGs in the project countries to guide national stakeholder coordination, enhance communication and encourage further learning through the development of action plans based on inclusive and scientific inputs.
- **Component 3: Financial solutions for climate refuge coral reef rescue:** project will ensure that there is a strong enabling environment in each of the countries to mobilize new investments and capabilities to support the action necessary for transformational change. This enabling environment includes: National Hub Technical Task Forces, and

Bench marking studies on coral friendly investments and business opportunities, Shortlist selection, and the development of a business project pipeline

- **Component 4: Knowledge Management and Monitoring and Evaluation:** Create Communications and Knowledge management plans for the project reaches and influences a wide variety of stakeholders and a large audience. Ensure the project is efficiently, effectively and adaptively managed.

2.1. Project start and duration

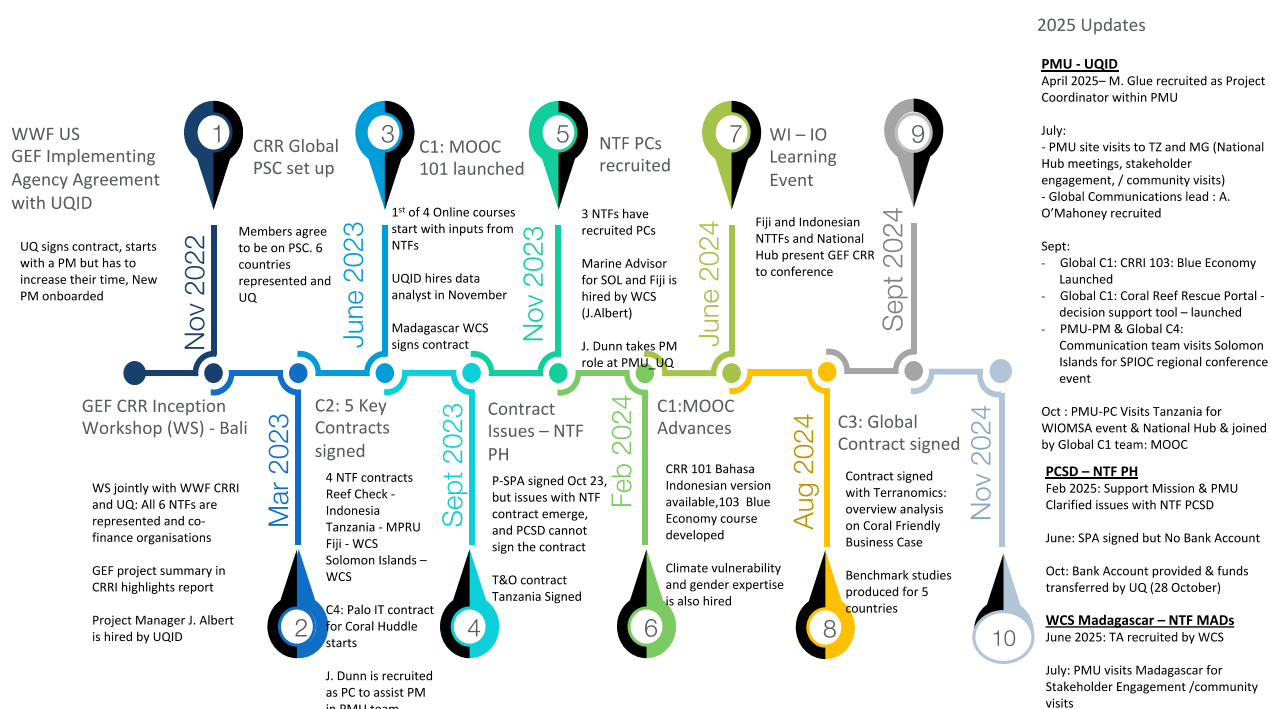
Project Development and Timeline

The following table (4) identifies clear events during the key stages of the project. A more detailed timeline is presented in figure 1, below.

Table 4.: Key Project Periods and Relevant External Events

Timeline	Summary	Relevant External Event and Implications
Project Development	Project development started in 2020 as the implementation vehicle for the WWF CRRI. UQID was asked to be the PMU, and although it had experience of managing projects such as those in educational or research, this type of development project offered a new complexity.	Global Analysis of Coral Reef Climate Vulnerabilities (Beyer et al 2018) COVID lock down during 2020 and 2021 meant that the GEF agency development team were not able to travel to the site during this period. Development team members were located in Tanzania, Fiji and Australia. WWF CRRI focal points in all 6 countries and Australia influenced the design, co-financing elements and some NTF choices – the project was designed to deliver the then CRRI strategy. First clarified that WWF country focal points could not be direct beneficiaries.
Project soft period commenced	Nov 2022 to Mar 2023: Recruitment and on-boarding of Core project support by UQID and a part-time project manager was initially hired to lead the project. Safeguarding categorization was low for the project.	NTF contracts were prepared by UQ legal team, however each contract required bespoke elements. It was once again clarified that the WWF focal points could not be direct beneficiaries of the project under GEF rules. Funding landscape changed for Ocean conservation making it difficult to find alternative sources of funds to support the WWF offices in the six countries and complement the project.
Project Plan Implementation by core project support team	Started in April 2023: First quarter sees several calls for proposals sent out. Due diligence on the NTFs is undertaken. Core team Changes: The core PMU team (consisting of a PM and PC) changes with a smooth transition. PMU, GEF Agency PM and NTF leads join the inception workshop in Bali. Contracted Consultancies (Pablo IT) design a data gathering system to remotely track project progress.	Various TORs for consultancy studies are developed from January 2024 onwards as the integrated project timeline shows below. Several NTFs are not yet functioning in the country: Philippines, Madagascar. First funds are sent to the Philippines in late October 2025, but were received by PSCD in December 2025. Other NTFs are taking time to engage their stakeholders navigating local elections and bureaucratic hurdles required to officially engage their governments in the process.

Figure 1: Project Timeline



2.2. Main stakeholders and beneficiaries

The following discusses the main stakeholders and beneficiaries to the project, and their role and benefit from the project.

PMU-UQID: The PMU team sits in the International Development arm of the University of Queensland (UQID). This is the first time UQID had the role of delivery partner in a project of this nature (as opposed to research or education focused). There were a number of challenges to set up the Project Management and Coordination systems and personnel, initially too few hours were assigned to the project manager position and there was no coordinator role. There were three changes in the Project Manager (PM), and a Project Coordinator (PC) role was introduced in 2024 due to the workload of managing 6 mini-projects. The last staff change had very little impact because there was an internal shift within the project (Old PM shifted to be a Marine Advisor for WCS, the PC became the PM and a new PC was then on-boarded). The Director of UQID provides support and strategic input on an ad-hoc basis. A part time communication expert is being added to the team as the project enters its 3rd year. UQ currently supports the wages of these staff because the Australian salary levels are too high to be covered by the 5% PMU cost allocation of GEF. The administrative and legal support is provided by the UQID accounts team as well as other separate departments for legal and administration in the University. There were unforeseen issues with NTF contracts that had not been anticipated. UQID has benefited from the experience from being the lead PMU in this project.

University Queensland Experts and Consultants: University of Queensland (UQ) has a number of academics that are open to consultancy and research contracts in their fields of expertise offered at competitive rates because their salaries are covered. These contracts can provide material for teaching based on real experiences and the funds provide a source to spend on research field visits or assistants. UQ also gained valuable institutional visibility through the project, particularly with senior executives and global events: “The IW conference in Uruguay... was a great way for UQ to go, ‘Here’s what we’re doing’.” The involvement of the Pro Vice-Chancellor as Steering Committee Chair also strengthened internal recognition. UQ has the role of Chair currently as there were no national government nominations after multiple calls, this is expected to

change in year 4⁵. The project has been able to tap into this available expertise, in the area of the MOOC design and the communication strategy for social change team. UQ Marine Experts were advisors to WWF CRRI during the design phase of the project as they were involved in the original 50 plus analysis of the resilient coral reefs. They also have been involved in previous GEF projects. Significant expertise was needed initially because the first year work plan had MOOC design in parallel with NTF set up, but there were no functional NTFs to draw on to provide content. The first year Annual workplan was not adjusted to stagger implementation more logically and sequentially.

NTFs: Two are government entities and four are NGOs; three from the same organisation WCS. Many of the NTF organisations were chosen during the design phase due to their connection with WWF CRRI or recommended by the WWF focal office for that country. UQ performed due diligence on respective partners. Madagascar was the last to come onboard where WCS was chosen to be the NTF. Most NTFs consist of two to three core implementation staff, often supported by the organisational management, admin and communications teams, whether they are within a government organisation or not. When the NTF is an NGO, eg. Fiji, there is an official agreement with the national government that they are the Hub chair and the NTF is supporting a government endorsed process. Three NGOs do not yet have official government endorsement (Indonesia, Solomon Islands, Madagascar).

National Hub Members: Members are from various government departments with marine resources under their authority and in some cases those whose area may impact Coral Reef, research institutes with a background of working in Coral, NGOs that have experience in Coral, community leaders representing the areas identified as sources of climate resilient reefs (BCUs) and in two countries private sector or donor community representatives (Tanzania & Indonesia). There are a variety of structures, although most NTFs have set up a number of working groups around specialist topics; e.g. data collection, or blue economy or policy. There is no one size fits all model as it depends upon the size of the country, the number of islands or geographical range of the BCU areas, and the availability of members to consistently attend meetings. Either the National hub or the TWGs meet on a regular basis, every two to three months.

Global PSC members: There are a number of members; **PSC Chair** (rotates annually), National Government; at the time of the evaluation, UQ held this role, and it will soon shift to Tanzania, **PSC Vice Chair** (rotating) is also National Government, **PSC Secretary**, PMU Project Manager (UQID) and **PSC Members:** Consisting of the Chairs of six national steering committees, key NGO/University representatives with interests in the Marine environment or Climate Change (e.g. CARE (Senior Director), Climate Justice; Rare (Managing Director Fish Forever); UQ (Pro-Vice Chancellor of Global Partnerships); WWF (WWF International); WCS (Executive Director, Marine Conservation) and with three observers; WWF CRRI (observer), WWF GEF Agency Representative (observer), UQ Scientific Advisor (observer).

Other Beneficiaries: This project focus is primarily on delivery of a change in enabling conditions to prioritize Climate Resilient Reefs, so the direct beneficiaries beyond those participating in the project itself are limited to a degree, but consist of the following. 1. Participants of the MOOC or four online courses, 2. Participants of community visioning workshops or engagement events. 3. Participants of training modules facilitated by the NTFs to support community understanding of the importance of coral, coral status and its measurement, threats and coral friendly business and actions they can take. 4. General public as recipients of awareness campaigns. These were a harder to reach group in terms of the evaluation. Added more recently is a 5th source; Users of the Data Platform. Representatives from these beneficiaries were either interviewed or took part in an e-survey designed for mobile phones, but could also be taken using a laptop. See the stakeholder list in Annex 5.5b.

⁵ Tanzania is currently the Deputy Chair and will assume the role of Chair for the Project in year 4, in April 2026 at the next PSC meeting.

2.3. Discussion of Indicators and Expected Results

The following section discusses in detail the indicators chosen in the Results Framework used to measure success. It considers how they are defined, the baselines and targets as well as whether they are working or not. All the baselines for the 3 core indicators are zero. Tables with more detail are presented in Annex 5.1b as supporting evidence. Table 29 in Annex 5.1b discusses the project baselines. The following discussion summarises the findings.

Core Indicator 4.1 Target: The baseline was zero. There was a discrepancy between the target discussed in the text, 400 hectare (ha) (page 126 pro doc) and the target in the results framework. Where it is stated the Year 4 target is 4000ha. Given the source for this target is not well explained, it is not clear which of these was the intended value. 4000 has is the value for the target used in the RF by the project. The indicator as defined (see below in Table 5), does not reflect the direct and measurable threats to Corals, but targets the longer term land based threats. However, as more recent threats analysis identifies, not all the priority threats are land based: e.g. bleaching, pollution, physical damage. Neither does this indicator reflect the co-financed improved management of coral reef activities that are informing the NAPs at the community level. National Hub Action Plans are directional from Reef to Ridge – not Ridge to Reef, which is a longer-term target threat. This choice, as far as can be ascertained, reflects a CRRRI legacy that has a longer timeframe for impact. Analysis of the NAPs mean this is impossible to achieve even with a target at 400 ha because the land base projects would take too much time to impact the Coral reef ecosystems.

Core Indicator 7.4 Target: The baseline was zero engagement with IW:Learn, Level 1, but was stated NA. There is currently no disaggregation, but if there were it could be disaggregated by country or regional waters to give a nuance to the analysis and to show a broad participation of each of the countries. In general, we question whether the rating levels as defined⁶ are ambitious enough, but we also recognise they are set by GEF and cannot be changed. The year 4 target is set at Level 4, but without disaggregation by country or region, it is difficult to show progress if the levels are achieved early. A higher level of participation could be defined in addition to the Year 4 target, which is set at Level 4. This could be a voluntary Level 5, where in addition to achieving all other levels, National Hub members/PSC members and NTFs would lead discussion panels on Climate Resilient Corals, and Project results. Posters to IW conference and other regional conferences would be accepted and include engagement with private sector/donors with commitments to support the elements in at least one NAP.

Core Indicator 11. Targets: The baseline was no participation, or none. The target values set for Years 2 and 4 are ambitious, and have clearly defined source sources coming from various activities in the project. The targets are possible to achieve, although the sources are likely to be different that that assumed in the design. The gender target is set at 50%, which although commendable, is problematic mathematically speaking. The sources for this target have lower target percentages of 30 or 40%, so to accumulate up from those values is mathematically challenging. It also assumes that gender will be known for all source data, and this may not be the case as some participants may choose not to divulge their gender. This assumes that for both the data platform visitors and MOOC participants, the gender will be known, which is not the case. It would have been better to define the gender indicator in terms of where gender is known, 50% will be women.

There is also inconsistency in the values for the participant targets here and the source indicator target for the same year from within the RF. For example; Year 2 targets for the source data for Learning events is set in core indicator 11 at 1500 participants, but indicator 1.1a., its source activity, has a target in year 2 set at 500 participants. The community visioning target source was set at 5000 participants, but this assumes at least 833 participants from each country in this workshop. For quality engagement this is an unrealistic expectation, its not clear that this is possible from the BCU villages or desired to ensure meaningful engagement. To a lesser degree this is also true for National Hub participant target value. The National Hub target value of 250,

⁶ Level 1= no participation, Level 2 = Website in line with IW:Learn guidance is active, Level 3 = In addition; strong participation in training/twinning events and production of at least one experience note and one results note, Level 4 = in addition; active participation of Project staff and country representatives at IW conference and the provision of spatial data and other data points via the Project website.

assumes the source would result in at least 41 members per country. The Year 4 target values for 3.1 activities are also unrealistic. Y4 value is set at 1000 individuals or 100 companies target each with ten people. That would mean for five countries there would need to be 20 companies per country that are shortlisted, this is unlikely due to remote nature of BCU communities, scaling issues and de-risking limitations for the pipeline. This is ambitious in a similar European context. A company with ten employees is often considered to be a small to medium size enterprise, they can be cooperatives, but to find at 20 such organisations from each country in BCU areas is unlikely.

Project indicator Targets

There have been issues with the use of progressive compound indicators in general, which show progression of actions rather than outcome of that action over time. The indicators are defined as different levels of output achieved each year, but just the definition of the level so this does not necessarily show progressive change in state of the element being measured. These levels are similar to the milestones on an outcome map or along a results chain. The challenge comes when country teams or national hub members decide to do things in a different order than originally planned. Or there are implementation delays, which can then mean your progress is always zero because the project achievements were defined by the previous year's level of target, not that of the new year. The indicators are measuring step changes not linear changes with time. Only if the accumulative achievement of the level being achieved each year is considered and then the mean value taken, can these step changes be converted into a measurement of linear change.

The following Table 5, provides more detail on the design on the indicators, their definitions, source data and targets. The colours of the text highlight the points made above where red text is where there is a problem of definition or measurement and blue text is an indicator that needs more ambition. Those with yellow highlight were parts of the indicator definitions that were changed by the project and approved by WWFUS GEF Agency.

In Summary;

There are issues with the M&E design in terms of the ambition of the targets not being realistic in terms of what is possible on the ground in each of the six countries especially given how some of the source targets are defined. This is most evident with gender aggregation, which is an important aspect to draw out of the work, the add hoc targets chosen of 30, 40 and 50%. Core indicator 11 needs to have sources that can cascade into it and consider that gender may not always be possible to note due to data protection policies in different countries.

For some, the indicator targets, their ambition is not enough. Core GEF indicator 7.4 is defined by the GEF and cannot be altered, but we would like to see another level of engagement described that allows teams to demonstrate the full potential that participating in an IW learning event could give each country team. Similarly with indicator 4 which is defined by doing the bare minimum of reporting both technically and financially. Targets need to enable teams to demonstrate they can and have done more to increase the effectiveness of MEL for the project.

Table 5.: Project indicator targets per year per outcome

The indicator targets in blue are not ambitious enough. Those indicators where there is red text this means there is an issue with the definition or compound nature of the indicator, especially where it is not able to demonstrate clear progression or measurable change. Those highlighted in yellow were approved changes.

Project Outcomes or Core Indicator	Indicator explanation of measurement and/or disaggregation targets	TARGETS			
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Project Objective To strengthen capacity and solutions that ensure the long-term survival of climate refuge reef ecosystems, thereby conserving their biodiversity and supporting the blue economy.	GEF Core Indicator 4.1: Area (# Has) of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity (qualitative assessment, non-certified) Disaggregation by Country: Note; Document Review (review of National action plans for climate resilient reefs); Interviews members of the National Hubs' *threats analysis to inform adjustments to the target HA	0	0	0	4000 ha
	GEF Core Indicator 7.4: Level of engagement in IW: Learn through participation and delivery of key products Baseline: None	Level 0	Level 2	Level 4	Level 4
	GEF Core Indicator 11: Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment Learning events: Y2; 1500 individuals , Y4: 3000 - 50% women. Climate Data Platform: Y2; 200 individuals , Y4; 600 individuals Community visioning and community narratives: Y2; 5000 individuals, Y4; 5000 individuals - 50% women National Hub activities: 250 individuals directly engaging and benefitting from the Hub activities C3: SMEs benefiting: Y4; 1000 individuals or 100 SMEs each with 10 Pax		6,950 50% are women		9,850 50% are women
Outcome Statement	Outcome Indicator definition, measurement and disaggregation targets				
Outcome 1.1: Government and non-government practitioners, academia and local communities are connected into networks of knowledge and best practices to identify solutions for the conservation of climate refuge coral reefs and connected ecosystems	Indicator 1.1a: Number of trainees involved in online learning opportunities (which incorporate a gender-inclusive approach and language) of which at least 30% have decision making and leadership responsibilities that have influence on climate refuge coral reefs and at least are 30% women. Disaggregated by: a) Gender, b) Country, c) Stakeholder type (National/Local Government; Private Sector; Community; Academia; Non-Governmental Organization)- Cumulative. Baseline: None		500 Individuals 30%=150 Women and 30% leaders in coral DM	1500 Ind. 30%= 450 Women and leaders in coral DM	3000 Ind.
	Indicator 1.1b: Percentage of participants who view the added value of networking and relationships building opportunities offered through the learning and knowledge sharing events as high/very High. Disaggregated by: a) Gender, b) Country, c) Stakeholder type (National/Local Government; Private Sector; Community; Academia; Non-Governmental Organization)- Non Cumulative. Baseline: None		40%	55%	70%
Outcome 1.2: Near-real-time monitoring data and information is obtained at global to national scales to inform action by national and regional hubs	Indicator 1.2: Number of registered users and their visitations on Climate Data Platform. New: Number of visits by users/visitors Disaggregated by: a) Gender, b) Country, c) Stakeholder type (National/Local Government; Private Sector; Community; Academia; Non-Governmental Organization)- Non Cumulative	0	0	200 users	300 users
		0	0	400 visits	600 visits
Outcome 2.1. Increased coordination and collaboration amongst stakeholders across sectors for the inclusive	Indicator 2.1a: Percentage of identified stakeholders engaged with the National Hub. Clarification: gender disaggregation of participants in NH events, workshops and meetings. Disaggregated by: a) Gender, b) Country, c) Stakeholder type (National/Local Government; Private Sector; Community; Academia; Non-Governmental Organization)- Non Cumulative		60%	60% 40% women	60% 40% women

conservation and management of climate refuge reefs over the long term	Engaged: Y2: identified stakeholders as having medium-high impact/influence on climate refuge reefs accept nomination Y3-4: Nominated representatives participates in at least 70% of the Hubs meetings Indicator 2.1b: Extent to which Community Vision is integrated into National Action Plans of National Hubs. Clarification: Community Stakeholders review NAPs and assess whether their vision has been included Disaggregated by: Country - Non Cumulative Current Definition 0: does not integrate any aspects of Community Vision, 25: integrates less than half of aspects in Community Vision, 50: integrates half of aspects of Community Vision, 75 integrates more than half of aspects in Community vision, 100: integrates all aspects of Community Vision			15% youth	15% youth
				75%	75%
Outcome 2.2: A shared vision and agenda for climate refuge reefs developed through evidence informed and inclusive planning processes	Indicator 2.2: Percentage of National Hub members committed to the realization of the vision and synergistic solutions identified in National Vision and Action Plan for climate refuge reefs in the short, medium and long term. New: Progress and commitment to the realisation of the vision and synergistic solutions identified in Nation Vision and Action Plan for climate refuge reefs in the short, medium and long term. Disaggregated by: a) Gender, b) Country, c) Stakeholder type (National/Local Government; Private Sector; Community; Academia; Non-Governmental Organization)- Non Cumulative Committed: Y2 % countries where Threats/ Opportunity analysis is done, Y3 % countries where Cost/benefit analysis done, Y4 % countries that endorse Action Plan		80%	80%	40% - 35% women
Outcome 3.1: Investment opportunities identified to promote increased sustainable financial flows to relevant seascapes and landscapes to reduce threats to climate refuge coral reefs	Indicator 3.1: Level of advancement of pipeline of projects established by the National Hub Steering Committee. Disaggregated by: Types of reef-friendly businesses to be disaggregated by: a) Gender (Women-owned/Men-owned businesses), b) Sector, c) Country. - Non Cumulative Level of advancement measured by scorecard (see below) based on: Y1 technical assistance, Y2: Scoping, Y3: Filtering, Y4: Pipeline of 100+ projects in investment portfolio Scoring: 0- incomplete, to 1 partially complete to 2 mostly complete and 3 completed 4 complete with at least 10% of businesses that have identified investors and product off-takers	Level 3 for lessons learnt	Level 3 for scoping 30% women owned	Level 3 for filtering	Level 4 for pipelining 100+ 30% women owned
Outcome 4.1: Increased awareness of governments, donors and climate refuge local communities, and knowledge (from local to global level) on the value of climate refuge coral reefs, their main threats, and good practices/actions for their conservation.	Indicator 4.1: Percentage of National Hub members aware of the value and importance of climate refuge reefs. Aware: National Hub member self-reports in survey as supportive or very supportive. Of the need to put in place measures to ensure the survival of climate refuge reefs. Disaggregated by: a) Gender (Women-owned/Men-owned businesses), b) Sector, c) Country. - Non Cumulative		60%	60%	60%
Outcome 4.2: Informed and adaptive project management	Indicator 4.2: Percentage of monitoring plan effectively implemented and utilized for supporting communication, accountability, and adaptive management. Effectively implemented and utilized: Y1 - 2 PPRs, 4 Quarterly Financial Reports (QFR), 1 RE, Y2 - 2 PPRs, 4 QFRs, 1 RE, 1 MTE, Y3 - 2 PPRs, 4 QFRs, 1 RE, Y4 - 2 PPRs, 1 PCR, 4 QFR, 1 RE, 1 TE Disaggregated by: Country	100	100	100	100

3. Findings

The findings are spread across 7 countries so this section will present the overall project perspective and present country level in Annex 5.1e. Although much of the evidence is presented here, supporting evidence can also be found in Annex 5.1b.

3.1. Project Design

3.1.1. Relevance and Theory of Change

Relevance

Several stakeholders involved in the project design (e.g. WWF Country offices for Fiji, Philippines and Tanzania, as well as UQ, WCS, Care), and have remained engaged as it moved into implementation. In terms of national relevance, the Madagascan government or beneficiaries were not consulted due to political instability at the time of the evaluation⁷. However, all other national government stakeholders in the other countries have stated the relevance and importance of Coral Reefs. Overall, from 137 themed responses relating to relevancy, 79% were positive and 21% were negative, mainly stating it was too early to tell, or gave no answer or were not sure. The majority of the Malagasy answers were in this more negative group of responses, which reflects the early nature of implementation there and the lack of clarity on what will be the national government priorities.

Theory of Change (ToC)

The theory of change was strong as the project design was based on a 2018 research paper that identified the 50 most climate resilient coral reefs globally. WCS is about to publish an update on this paper based on a field data validated model at a higher resolution (1km rather than 5km), which confirms the theory underpinning the goals of the project. The coral focus with a combination of education, policy framework, blue economy supporting coral friendly business and awareness raising activities has resonated with all Stakeholders with interest in coral or coral dependent businesses (like tourism) and has motivated their efforts in participating in the project. Two government stakeholders were found to be less focused on just the coral; e.g. Indonesia, where the government stakeholders want to include other marine ecosystems (like mangroves, seagrass and beaches) on the agenda of the National Hub, and Madagascar, whereas mentioned above the newly emerged government has yet to clarify its priorities. The project still has a while to go before the concept of the “climate refuge reef” is fully understood and articulated by stakeholders, with the exception being WCS and UQ as the key project stakeholders who have contributed to developing the ToC.

The theory of change in the Pro-doc (its annex 5.6) is supported by clear and logical steps, activities leading to outcomes detailing the four component approach. It was designed to mirror the WWF CRRI strategy at the time and as such key experts (WWF Focal Points) from several of the six countries participated in the design including UQ who were the technical advisors to CRRI. The WWF CRRI has a much longer timeframe. Some of the targets and indicators chosen to show progress are indicative of this longer implementation timeframe. They reflect a scale of operation unexpectedly large for the region, especially in terms of one of the impact indicators (Core indicator 4.1), the time allocated for start up in Year 1 in general, as well as targets for Component 3 (hence the large number of indicators highlighted in red in Section 2 above, that require revisions). It should be noted that the six countries chosen have some of the most challenging governance issues and logistical challenges that need to be considered when designing projects and programmes. These factors influence how fast a project can be set up and start. The project design assumptions need to be considered in more detail.

⁷ This was most significant during September and October 2025: <https://amaniafrica-et.org/briefing-on-the-situation-in-madagascar/>. NTF staff were given the option to send the questionnaires to external stakeholders, but they chose not to do so.

Assumptions

There are twelve assumptions linked to each of the indicators in the RF. Table 30 in Annex 5.1b discusses whether the project assumptions are still valid, and concludes that on the whole they are, but one is poorly considered (assumption 1 underpinning indicator 4.1) and another not necessarily very relevant to the indicator (assumption 10 supporting indicator 3.1). The concern is more about scale and timing in the project design discussed above. However in general, the assumptions were still valid reflecting the overall solid design.

3.1.2. Use of lessons from other similar projects

Several GEF projects were identified in the design phase, Globally and within specific countries; Blue Nature Alliance, Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA) and MSP-PEUMP as well as GEF United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) project 5398 as a Ridge to Reef focused work. The design document identified 14 projects external to GEF that were to inform the project, but by the time the project was approved, not all of these were running or connected. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) was impacted by a shift in funding priorities by the US government, Allen Coral Atlas staff changes resulted in a loss of connection and the project finished. During the first year of the project, the contract UQ had with EDx (providing support to its' own online platform for online courses) was not renewed. Consequently, the MOOCs had to change platform during the first year as UQ wanted to shift back to providing university students with face-to-face educational experiences post Covid. However, WCS stepped up its commitment to Coral conservation and in particular the projects objectives. WCS has continued to support the coral modelling work funded by Bloomberg as a parallel project supporting its Coral Strategy. Several of the international NGOs (WCS, WWF, CI, and Care) and regional institutes (SPC) also continue to support the community based work focusing on coral conservation; their experiences feed into the National Action Plans through the community representatives and when they engage directly with the project in the National Hubs. The project design model seeks to update or assess the various threats, conduct cost benefit analysis and incorporate community viewpoints as well as identifying coral friendly businesses. All of these technical reports are drawing on lessons and reflections from each country especially in terms of sustainable finance mechanisms and experiences in the regions. The project has continued to be very active in regional meetings that not only allow staff and stakeholders to share their lessons, but they provide an opportunity to draw on the lessons from other experiences shared in those fora. It should be noted that where these projects had outputs related to coral, its status, data monitoring and management, these are identified on the Coral Reef Rescue Data Portal, which has gathered these tools and ensure they are available to the country teams and others working in similar projects globally.

3.1.3. WWF and EA comparative advantage

WWF International has been supporting coral reef conservation for many decades, the Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI) started as a WWF global programme, but is now owned by the region as an independent body. WWF CRRRI has continued to support the WWF country focal points as it channels network funds to them. Some WWF country offices still support communities implementing "Ridge to Reef" projects funded by the Network and described in the annexes of ProDoc. Although there has been a shift in the availability and support of funds for marine conservation, WWF International has incorporated its Oceans Practice into a larger umbrella initiative supporting biodiversity. WWF Country offices have had to adjust as funds from the Network supporting them, has not been to the level as originally envisioned or previously provided. This reflects a more challenging funding ecosystem. WWF US GEF agency has a portfolio of projects that not only support marine policy advancements in International Waters, but also those that support Blue Economy activities where coral dependant businesses are also being identified and supported. There is an opportunity to work with other agencies to share project portfolios and through forum like IW:Learn, exchange lessons and experiences beyond the IW programme and bring in other projects that can learn from the exchange. The limiting factor is the lack of funds to enable these project stakeholders to exchange their experiences face to face. This project has limited availability of funds to support travel to for face to face exchange meetings within the seven participating countries (including Australia with PMU), let alone go beyond their own project, the potential is there and is an added value as yet untapped.

Alignment with WWF and Country Priorities

The project is very aligned with WWF CRRI, almost too much in terms of the results framework design (see Section 2 discussion). WWF CRRI drew on the experience of its focal offices in the region to inform the project design, the assumption was that the Network would continue to support these offices as the project commenced. The funding environment became more challenging and the WWF offices have been left without the expected financial support. This has limited complementary activities at community level (Ridge to Reef project funding has not been built on as expected). WWF CRRI has only a modest annual budget to amplify and promote related activities, but it is overly reliant on the GEF CRR project for “its results” as it has very few sources of other information. The project activities are also building on the legacy of the WWF Coral Triangle Initiative in the SEA region and the recently launched WCS coral strategy.

This project, GEF CRR, is very aligned with the each of the countries priorities. Of the 137 themed responses⁸ mentioned above; 28% of the themed responses voiced that the project was enabling national government to meet their global and regional biodiversity conservation and SDG targets. For example: *“towards aligning to the Regional Pacific Coral Reef Action Plan's vision that “By 2030, the resilience and health of reef ecosystems in the Pacific islands are improved.” or 30x30 targets and Aichi Target 11, as well as the implementation of the Paris Agreement, SDG 14 (Life Below Water)”*. Similarly another 8% of the themed responses mentioned, the project was contributing to meeting national priorities around the blue economy, sustainable financing or coral data collection.

10% of the themed responses recognised that the project had elevated the importance of coral nationally, rather than as one of four marine ecosystems (e.g. mangroves, seagrass and beaches). Some even emphasized that coral was previously neglected compared to land/forest issues, and this hub is the first dedicated forum in which to discuss its threats, status, climate resilience and their protection or better management. Similarly 9% of the themed responses identified the National Action Plans and the National Hubs themselves as filling gaps in governance or *“bridging”* between collaboration and coordination of national stakeholders (including community) or between strategies and local realities, *“ensuring policies are locally adaptable and scientifically supported”*.

8% of the themed responses mentioned the way the project had raised awareness of coral status had contributed to a reduction of the threats and was aligned to long-term community concerns about the declining health of their coral. The remaining themed responses (between 6 and 7%, approx. totalling 20%) mentioned the importance of technical improvements around coral data collection, management and local decisions made, the way threat analysis informed the NAPs⁹ with the intention of strengthening national governance and planning frameworks for coral reef management.

WCS contribution was significant with their new coral strategy and supporting the project delivery even in the Philippines where they do not have a project contract, but are nonetheless supporting the government organisations to help the national government deliver on a coral management strategy. This is part of their global commitment and new coral strategy supported by the updated 50 reef plus model, mentioned above.

3.1.4. Coherence

There are several aspects considered here, but considered broadly as; internal and external coherence, where internal cohesion looks at the alignment of the Toc, activities, policies, M&E system and governance relationships between stakeholders; a) GEF Agency, PMU and the NTF and the technical consultants (internal stakeholders/partners) as well as b) the Project Steering Committees and the National Hubs. Several of these aspects are considered separately in sub-sections below. External Cohesion looks at how the project relates to other similar projects working on Coral Conservation and or the Marine environment in the six countries,

⁸ Noting that a respondent mentioned several response themes in a single answer to the interview questions. All the percentage values relate to the percentage of those that mentioned the response theme, rather than the number of respondents.

⁹ Although each country has its own way of describing their National Action Plans for Coral, they are generically referred to as the NAP for ease of understanding.

in many cases through the National Hub and Working groups. In practice the distinction may not be so definitive as external stakeholders participate in the PSCs, and the National Hubs or may just be aware of the project rather than actively participating in it. The responses in this area were some of the most divergent and contradictory, to the extent that it was difficult to find common themes by which to coalesce the data. The findings presented are therefore selected for illustration and discussion.

Internal Cohesion: Generally, from our own observations (listening to meetings and observing the project internal operations) that there was good cohesion between the GEF agency, PMU and the NTFs due to frequent and clear communications via regular monthly catch up meetings. Information was seen to move through the various layers at lightning pace. This was helped by a culture of active listening from WWF GEF Agency to PMU to NTFs that facilitated this. The systems developed by PMU assisted the flow of information between all aspects of the project implementation and the consultants from UQ were building on trusted relationships and were often just in another building. We were not surprised to see the following comments: *“PMU team has collaborated well with partners by maintaining open communication, coordinating activities through the national hub, and ensuring technical expertise is shared across institutions”*. Even for the teams that were experiencing challenges with implementation; *“the PMU team addressed these issues (project delays) through regular coordination meetings, clarifying roles, and fostering collaborative planning to keep activities on track”*. The respectful relationship the NTFs had with their National Hub participants was also observed and this stakeholder comment was indicative of this; *“the NTF has engaged and worked well with local partners”*. Aspects of this will be discussed further in the Stakeholder engagement section below.

Some stakeholders qualified their comments, and pointed out areas of frustration rather than criticism, noting that cohesion was not yet considered optimal. One of these areas was the MOOCs where they felt that their suggestions on content had not been adequately addressed. The MOOC development process had to overcome some significant challenges, with UQ and the NTFs, where a mismatch in timing initially, was problematic. These aspects will be discussed further in the Efficiency and Knowledge Management sections below. When asked to suggest improvement there were two areas of note; the value of the upcoming communication strategy and its implementation as a way of working better with partners as well as cross-country sharing or learning. It was noted *“There hasn’t been much cross country sharing or learning so far but this may pick up before project closes”* and the suggestion that the project should *“plan for stakeholder awareness sessions or prepare a scientific conference where we can share information”*. Again, the idea of cross-country learning and sharing will be discussed further in the Knowledge Management section below.

External Cohesion: Generally, the data followed a similar pattern of diverse views and divergent opinion, although more voices of frustration were noted. On the positive side, in the countries where the National Hub and TWGs were functioning well, the following sentiments were noted. *“The project brought together actors who otherwise would have continued working separately. It strengthens coherence across initiatives and ensures national strategies are harmonized”*. One of those areas of external cohesion was around data monitoring; *“national coral-reef network linking NGOs and data providers demonstrates synergy with existing national platforms, fulfilling knowledge and data integration”*. The Hub itself; *“hub model addresses one of the objectives: to connect otherwise fragmented efforts and create synergies across projects”* and the development of the National Action Plan or its equivalents; *“supports collaboration, by breaking silos and creating collective ownership of the NAP”*.

Again, there were stakeholders that qualified their position whilst recognising the synergy potential of the project; *“The project objective of building national hubs and knowledge sharing benefits from these parallel initiatives. However, overlap suggests a need for coordination to avoid duplication and to integrate CRR outputs with existing NGO activities”*. However, other stakeholder views contradicted this and felt that *“this cross-program involvement enhances knowledge sharing and reduces duplication of efforts, contributing to the project’s coherence at national and subnational levels”*. There were three programmes where there was significant external coherence; WWF CRRI, CTI and WCS 50 Reefs Initiative. Where “harmonising” overlapping

initiatives was seen to align with the CRR goal of avoiding fragmentation and improving coherence in coral reef conservation efforts. In the countries that were active in the CTI; the NTFs were seen to be anchoring the CRR NAP in CTI structures, which in their opinion illustrated coherence with existing regional biodiversity commitments. Finally, it was seen that *“WCS is leveraging CRR to deepen regional ties and contribute data to the global 50 Reefs” initiative*. We do not necessarily disagree, but we would note, it is early days to see whether the project has increased external coherence with these three initiatives in particular. Rare (Philippines) wanted more opportunity for coherence in the future, but was waiting for the project to start.

There was a key area of exception; coherence with the private sector initiatives. This was seen as a gap in more than one country (e.g., Fiji, Indonesia and Madagascar). Where stakeholders commented; *“private sector (tourism) engagement is still weak, which is crucial since many coral restoration initiatives are resort-based”*. Although it should be noted that none of the countries has any data on where these private sector initiatives were being implemented, nor on how successful they are and so we would agree it is a gap that could be filled going forward. Component 3 is at an early stage, but engagement with the private sector in the national hubs was noted only for two countries (Tanzania and Indonesia), and even Coral Huddle was not set up to gather that data. We would also agree with the comment of one stakeholder that stated that the private sector could be a strategic partner; *“Collaboration with the private sector in marine tourism remains limited; this could be a strategic partner for sustainable coral conservation”*. A comment made, that is a note for future implementation (noting expectations of stakeholders were at times high given the project is in its early stages); *“The project could have contributed more to strengthening market access for coral-friendly businesses, ensuring wider inclusion of women and youth in leadership roles, and integrating reef conservation lessons more strongly into national education and awareness programmes”*. See Annex 5.1b. Supporting Evidence of more stakeholder suggestions on how to improve External Coherence.

Lastly, links to improved documentation of good practices and public communication were seen as being needed to *“better recognize and adopt project benefits among a wider range of stakeholders, including local governments and communities”*. Suggestions were made for more regular information sharing and joint monitoring to enhance synergies, while *“expanding collaboration with local government and private sector actors could increase resources and long-term impact”*. These are factors for the project implementers to bear in mind going forward and in part expected as a result of approving the NAPs for coral. These aspects will be explored in later sections and reflect the stage that the project implementation is in. The project is going in the right direction in terms of how it is being implemented and it is considered to have coherence, although there is room for improvement going forward.

Adherence with WWF and GEF Policies

The GEF’s Policy on Stakeholder Engagement of November 2017, clearly mandates the requirement for documented stakeholder participation during project design and implementation (specifically policies 8 and 9 as specified in the project design document, see Annex 5.6). The WWF Standard on Stakeholder Engagement also outlines specific requirements for stakeholder engagement during the project preparation phase and implementation phase, with emphasis on the engagement of stakeholders as early as possible in the project cycle, through timely, understandable, and accessible information. The project design embraced these policies and the project implementation has continued to uphold them. The GEF Policy on Stakeholder Engagement defines ‘stakeholder’ as an individual or group that has an interest in the outcome of a GEF-financed activity or is likely to be affected by it. In the ProDoc’s Annex 6, the SEP, in the design package for the project, documented a number of workshops in each country or region to engage with stakeholders and map them out. The categorisation of stakeholders was quite simple; Government (ministries-national/local), community groups, private sector, INGOs/NGOs and development partners as well as Academics and Research Institutes, for each of the six countries. Regional bodies based in the countries were also identified. At this early stage, how each National Hub intended to engage with these various stakeholders was not mapped out as a process, and given the unique situation of each country this was an important step. However, it’s noted that at the inception phase, various models or process designed for stakeholder engagement were still not drawn out (see the document summary in Annex 5.6). This may have been a missed opportunity to exchange

UQID and the subcontracting of teams that have shared this vision and ways of working have re-enforced national ownership. It has also been important in several cases that the project has elevated corals, put them on the National Governments agenda (see the earlier section on relevance and Annex 5.1b Supporting Evidence).

Participatory and Co-designed Methodology of UQ ensured local ownership, adaptability, and culturally responsive strategies across the participating countries (e.g. Indonesia, Fiji, Solomon Islands). Being involved in working groups on capacity building and financing; contributed to the national plan and it demonstrates strong stakeholder participation and co-creation in core components (e.g. education, financing, national planning). The description of the partnership with the Marine Parks and Recreation Unit (MPRU) as a “co-implementation” structure underscores the project’s aim of strengthening government ownership.

There have been some lessons where teams have felt ownership has been accidentally undermined: *“Some countries delegated tasks to external consultants who lacked the participatory training background, leading to inconsistencies in delivery”*. Similarly institutional hierarchies (e.g., in Indonesia) were seen to slow down adaptation and ownership. Community based voices noted that MPRU were valued as the implementing partner but they felt *“they had delayed stakeholder engagement at the local community level, where early involvement could have strengthened ownership and information flow for communities”*. It was also felt that there were some unfulfilled commitments from the Coral Reef Rescue Initiative (WWF CRRI) that created staffing and operational gaps in participating organisations, and in some countries, this combined with other factors to undermine local ownership. There was an isolated criticism that suggested that whilst UQ’s scientific authority was respected, a government-led PMU¹⁰ might have ensured stronger ownership. However, we found no evidence to substantiate this view. The choice of PMU was perhaps initially unusual, but UQIDs ability to have a neutral overview from outside any of the participating countries and foster co-creation, flexibility and support has been invaluable.

3.1.7. Analysis of M&E design

The project’s M&E processes were designed to support learning, communication, accountability, and adaptive management with the members of the National Hubs actively involved in contributing to and using the outcomes of M&E for learning and planning purposes. The responsibilities for M&E were to be shared between the NTFs and PMU. So all national level indicators were the responsibility of the NTFs and PMU was responsible for quality control and consolidation of data and information across the six countries and global level interventions (e.g. those in C1, C3 and C4). NTFs were set to be responsible for engaging members of the National Hub in reflection, sense making and identifying recommendations to adapt strategies and approaches, informed by their M&E data and information. These were to be shared with the PMU and the Global Steering Committee for endorsement. The overall budget for this was set at 7.67%, which follow good practice. The system envisioned for gathering and reporting data was the Results Framework, AWP, and other GEF reporting tools (financial and technical). There was to be an M&E expert assigned to PMU to support this data gathering.

The design identified the baseline situation for the context of the project and the stakeholders as well as relevant projects. Most of the indicators in the RF had indicators that were designed as ‘compound indicators’ or ‘multi-dimensional indicators’ where they did not change linearly with time, but in a step wise manner showing progress against milestones and levels of achievement. There were a few indicators in which baselines were not available (such as existing levels of investment in reef friendly businesses), but it was envisioned that these could be assessed within the first six months of project start up. The RF suggested a method and source for measuring indicators, which were on first assessment; Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (SMART) and disaggregated by sex where applicable as well as by country sector and age, depending upon the indicator. Adequate resources were provided through Component 4 of the RF, which had a number of activities dedicated to basic GEF M&E requirements, and then additional value of knowledge sharing and coordination. The reasoning behind some of the core indicators; in particular GEF Core Indicator 4.1, which is discussed above in Table 5 and

¹⁰ GEF SEC prohibits the direct funding of government staff. Where a government is an NTF, the staff have been seconded into these positions so they are in a government office, but they are not government staff.

section 2.4, was questioned at the CEO stage as to why changes at the ridge were being prioritized over measuring change more directly on the reef, but it was still approved.

Although on face value, the M&E plans lined up with the logic of the project and had clear targets, they were not very practical when being implemented across six to seven countries. Too many indicators (5) had targets that were set at the same value for several years, but then changed their definition of the “level of achievement” for each year. This means that they are not changing linearly with time and this is problematic in practice when trying to measure them. The issue is if there are delays in implementation and results are different for each country, and they are then out of sync with the expected targets and achievement. Consequently measured results will always play catch up (like chasing a moving target), and the system then under reports progress. One indicator (GEF Core 4.1) had only one target for the last year, which the project cannot show that it is making any progress towards this longterm impact. These issues and other challenges with indicators (problematic measures, targets and wording is in red) are assessed in detail in Table 5 above. It’s worth noting that many of the additions in the M&E system were not identified in the design package, but the nearly 8% budget gave sufficient funds to go beyond the minimum, see section below 3.2.2 on M&E implementation.

Table 6. GEF Rating Table of M&E Design (the ratings are in Annex 5.9)

4. Assessment of M&E Systems	Rating	Remarks
M&E Design – Was the M&E plan at the CEO endorsement practical and thoughtful? Does the plan align with the project theory of change and GEF M&E requirements? Did the M&E plan include baseline data? ¹¹ Did it: specify clear targets and appropriate SMART indicators to track environmental, gender, and socioeconomic results; a proper methodological approach; specify practical organization and logistics of M&E activities including schedule and responsibilities for data collection; and budget adequate funds for M&E activities?	Moderately Satisfactory	There was a plan and it had been considered in theory, but it was not practical because some of the assumed sources for the target values were unrealistically high. Most indicators had baselines of zero. In theory, the results framework met all requirements, but many indicators were designed to measure progress against expected results rather than progress over time. This created a significant risk that the project would be unable to demonstrate progress if delays caused actual results to fall out of sync with expected delivery. This risk materialised once implementation delays occurred and achievements no longer aligned with the expected targets. Such delays should have been anticipated in any of the six implementing countries. A recommendation for GEF is to avoid approving designs that rely on compound or multi-dimensional indicators when there is a risk of implementation delays. Indicators should be able to show change or progress over time in a clear and linear manner.

3.2. Project Implementation

Project Progress of Outputs or Products – Efficiency of AWP Delivery

See Annex 5.1c. Table 31, for the table of output products discussed here. Out of the possible 95 project output documents or products; 20 outputs are complete, another 19 are nearly completed (Year 3) as they have been started and significant progress has been made. They have been drafted and need approval of their National Hub or feedback on the document. For those 60 outputs in the pipeline; 33 are expected by the end of Year 3, and 29 in Year 4 and another 13 remain uncertain (indicated with “?”) due to the delays experienced to date. There are 43 products that are expected but have not yet been started as of the end of Q2 Y3. The 13 uncertain outputs have budget allocated, but with the delays so far experienced, they may not be completed by the end of the project, unless there is a six-month extension. Sometimes the countries are producing their own report, or they are just contributing (indicated by a tick) into a global report.

¹¹ If there is not a project baseline, the evaluator should seek to estimate the baseline conditions so achievements and results can be properly determined.

3.2.1. Project Performance – Results Framework Progress

Table 7.: GEF Table of Progress of the project indicators at the impact and outcome levels Qtr 2, Yr3.

1. Progress Towards Results and Individual Outcome Ratings								
Project Strategy	Indicator (if applicable)	Baseline level	MT Target	End of Project Target	Current level of achievement and percentage	Outcome Rating	Justification	Other Notes
Objective	To strengthen capacity and solutions that ensure the long-term survival of climate refuge coral reef ecosystems, thereby conserving their biodiversity and supporting the blue							
Core Indicator 4.1	Area (# ha) of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity (qualitative assessment, non-certified)	TBD as part of the development of the National Action Plans for Climate Refuge Reefs	NA	4000ha	NA	NA	Note table 5 comments on this indicator. No further work has been carried out to measure this indicator as none of the NAPs have prioritized land based activities. There is no indication that the Threats analysis carried out in any of the 6 countries has enabled the baseline to be defined.	Not all the priority threats are land based: bleaching, pollution, physical damage Predator removal
Core Indicator 7.4	Level of engagement in IW: Learn through participation and delivery of key products 1= No Participation 2= Website in line with IW:LEARN guidance active 3 = As above, plus strong participation in training/twinning events and production of at least one experience note and one results note 4 = As above, plus active participation of project staff and country representatives at International Waters conferences and the provision of spatial data and other data points via project website	NA	Level 2	Level 4	Level 4 100%	HS	Verified by the participation of 2 country NH representatives presenting the project at IW conference	
Core Indicator 11	Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment	None	6950 50%F	9850 50% F	4959 = 71% of target 46% of known gender are Female & is 63% of target	67% av. MS	Aggregation of Coral huddle data, which is inputted by all NTFs (bar PH). tracked via activity code In this case M=1764, F=1526, (=3290) Unknown=1669	Note table 5 comments on the source data.

Yellow highlighted text were changes already approved by WWFUS GEF Agency.

1. Progress Towards Results and Individual Outcome Ratings								
Project Strategy	Indicator (if applicable)	Baseline level	Midterm Target	End of Project Target	Current level of achievement and %	Outcome Rating	Justification	Other Notes
1.1. Government and non-government practitioners, academia and local communities are connected into networks	1.1a: Number of trainees involved in online learning opportunities (which incorporate a gender-inclusive approach and language) of which at least 30% have decision making and leadership responsibilities that have	None	500 30% F 30%NH member	3000 30% F 30%NH member	2193, - 100% 37% are Female 5% are NH members – 18% of 30% 4/5 countries,	HS	Coral Huddle data. Source Online course logs participant gender and country and NH membership	Note this number aggregates with other sources to form indicator 11.

of knowledge and best practices to identify solutions for the conservation of climate refuge coral reefs and connected ecosystems.	influence on climate refuge coral reefs and at least are 30% women				Private Sector Missing 100%		Female= 783, Male= 547, Unknown = 863 69 national hub members MOOCs – 230 total as participants in Learning events	
	1.1b: Percentage of participants who view the added value of networking and relationships building opportunities offered through the learning and knowledge sharing events as high/very high	None	40%	75%	85% with this view 100%	HS		
1.2: Near-real-time monitoring data and information is obtained at global to national scales to inform action by national and regional hubs	1.2a: Number of registered users (Visitors = individual IP addresses) and their visitations (Views) on Climate Data Platform (	NA	NA	300 Users, 600 visits	806 Visitors 3900 views 100%	HS	1 st two months after it has been launched 38% of views were from the 6 target countries. The Year 4 target has been achieved at the MTE stage.	Gender is not possible to gather from the analytics:
2.1: Increased coordination and collaboration amongst stakeholders across sectors for the inclusive conservation and management of climate refuge reefs over the long term	2.1a: Percent of identified stakeholder groups engaged with the National Hub Y3 % countries where Cost/benefit analysis done	None	60% identified stakeholders as having medium-high impact/ influence on climate refuge reefs accept nomination	60% Nominated representatives participates in at least 70% of the Hub meetings 40% F 15%Y	76% of NH members are stakeholders with influence 100%	HS	The Youth are not being targeted by the national hubs to be participants – unless youth is defined as those with an age less than 35 years old.	FY Target of 15% youth is not possible, unless there is a workshop that presents NAP to youth group organisations in each country
	2.1b: Extent to which Community Vision is integrated into National Action Plans of National Hubs Where 0: does not integrate any aspects of Community Vision 25: integrates less than half of aspects in Community Vision 50: integrates half of aspects of Community Vision 75 integrates more than half of aspects in Community vision 100: integrates all aspects of Community Vision	None	NA	75%	NA	NA	Currently this is defined by a negative statement – it needs redefining to show community inputs steps it needs to allow NH to define what is useful to them See table 5 for more discussion	Change how indicator is measured. Consider revising so it can show progress with time rather than just in year 4
2.2 A shared vision and agenda for climate refuge reefs developed through evidence informed and inclusive planning processes	2.2a Progress and commitment to the realisation of the vision and synergistic solutions identified in Nation Vision and Action Plan for climate refuge reefs in the short, medium and long term.	None	80% of countries where Threats/ Opportunity analysis is done	40% of countries endorse National Plans	42% As of Y3 Q2: - #Countries with Threats/ Opportunity Analysis Complete = 2 out of 6,	MU	The purpose here is to get National Government to take action to prioritize coral reefs through the support of NH The indicator does not	Define the Indicator in terms of the progressive levels leading to delivering on the vision

	Percentage of National Hub members committed to the realization of the vision and synergistic solutions identified in National Vision and Action Plan for climate refuge reefs in the short, medium and long term				- #Countries with Cost/benefit analysis complete = 2 out of 6, - #NAP Endorsed = 1 out of 6		show fully the progress each country is making in terms of incorporating various studies into the plan.	
Outcome 3.1 Investment opportunities identified to promote increased sustainable financial flows to relevant seascapes and landscapes to reduce threats to climate refuge coral reefs	3.1a: Level of advancement of pipeline of projects established by the National Hub Steering Committee. 30% of Businesses selected are owned by women Y1 lessons learned Y2: Criteria for reef-friendly businesses & SME investment Y3: Reef-friendly businesses & SME shortlisted Y4: Pipeline of 100+ projects in investment portfolio –	None	3 Completed Criteria for reef-friendly businesses & SME investment	3 Completed Pipeline of 100+ projects in investment portfolio [Impossible too deliver in timeframe]	PMU=2 Evaluator score: Y1 = 3 - 100% Y2 = 1 - 33% Av. 67%	MS	Indicator measure needs to be redefined so it shows change over time It can be Measured by Mean av. Of each step achieved that year of each milestone as illustrated	Note the following scores are assigned by: 0- incomplete, to 1 partially complete to 2 mostly complete and 3 completed 4 complete with at least 10% of businesses that have identified investors
Outcome 4.1 Increased awareness of governments, donors and climate refuge local communities, and knowledge (from local to global level) on the value of climate refuge coral reefs, their main threats, and good practices/actions for their conservation.	4.1a: Percentage of National Hub members aware of the value and importance of climate refuge reefs	To be established as soon as the National Hubs are in place	60%	60%	77% of National Hub members are aware of the value and importance of climate refuge reefs 100%	HS	Targets are set to be the same every year. Nothing about how effective the communication strategy – in terms of reach to other stakeholders	NH members - Preaches to the converted.
Outcome 4.2 Informed and adaptive project management	4.2: Percentage of monitoring plan effectively implemented and utilized for supporting communication, accountability, and adaptive management	None	100%	100%	100% reports plus Coral Huddle	HS	Could incorporate M&E rating table elements	Does not show extra actions taken beyond the minimum for project management

Note: areas are where there are issues, and where suggested changes are being proposed, are highlighted in table 12 below in adaptive management section. The text highlighted in yellow highlight are already approved changes.

The following table calculates the DO rating at this Y3, Q2 point. It also seeks to use clearer ways of measuring progress through the existing indicators, as they are currently defined. Ensuring that delays and adaptive management decisions are not hindering how project progress is measured

Table 8. Results Framework Tracking Summary Outcome Performance Percentage or DO rating

Results Framework Tracking: Summary at MTE		
Year	% average achievement	DO Rating
Y1	50%	Moderately Unsatisfactory
Y2	62%	Moderately Satisfactory
MTE	81%	<i>Changed to Satisfactory¹²</i> Satisfactory

Of the 12 possible indicators, 7 showed demonstrable over performance and score highly satisfactory (these are in a green box). Therefore, the rating of this project of **Satisfactory** is agreed by this evaluation as a fair reflection of the performance so far.

The AWP activity tracking shows a similar level of performance, although it is more difficult to see through the scoring at this stage as MTE is tracking against the number of activities planned in Year 3, which has increased from 131 to 153. The Year 3 average per activity is 44% (mean % for 153 activities), 57% average per component (mean % across six values) at the six month mark and is close to 50%, however four of the NTF teams (MAD, PH, IND) do need to increase their delivery effectiveness in terms of activities and outputs, Annex 5.1c table 33 shows the summary status of activities per country. With 48% of activities completed by the Global team, and 51%, 53%, 34%, 14%, 61% and 14% completed activities by Fiji, Solomon Islands, Indonesia, Philippines, Tanzania and Madagascar respectively.

Table 9. Activity Tables of Average Percentage Achieved per Component

Annual Work Plan Activity Tracking: Summary				
Component	% achievement			
	Y1	Y2	MTE	
Component 1	58%	100%	63%	
Component 2	11%	48%	43%	
Component 3		60%	15%	
Component 4	53%	79%	48%	
PMC (with optional extras)		77%	80%	
PMC (AWP, Data collection and reporting)	100%	100%	100%	
Average for Activity Components	41%	72%	52%	
Average including management	56%	73%	57%	
Number of activities completed		131	153	
Average per Activity	32%	67%	44%	

The following sections now look at the project performance and achievement from the stakeholder perspective.

3.2.2. Assessment of Project Performance:

The tables above highlight the quantitative achievements of the project at Q2 in Year 3, this allows us to adjust for the implementation delays, which will be discussed in the efficiency section below. This section describes emerging outcomes from the project that have been identified by stakeholders, but excludes considering the effectiveness of stakeholder engagement, which is considered later with other GEF criteria. The stakeholder results discussed in this section have been drawn from the responses in interviews and questionnaires, as several questions in each had similar responses relating to effectiveness. It should be noted that the responses

¹² The WWF GEF Agency determined that the rating was Satisfactory to reflect the actual project progress. The achievement using the indicator scoring would have resulted in a lower rating according to the WWFUS GEF rating scales, but the WWFUS GEF Agency and PMU determined that a fair rating was Satisfactory. The calculated rating score is a starting point.

were not evenly spread throughout the six countries, as there were more Tanzania stakeholders both for the surveys and the interviews.

Effectiveness

Project Management: The experience of PMU from stakeholders (based on responses from approximately 102 respondents¹³) was mainly positive (56% of a total 25 response themes about PMU), with only 24% of responses noted mild criticism, and the remaining stakeholder responses mentioned themes related to challenges. For example, four positive response themes about PMU highlighted in the feedback were the following; Scientific rigour and credibility (28%), Showing leadership (24%), Acting as a bridge or link (20%) and the Ability to facilitate learning (20%) and with its' respective percentage of responses that mentioned them. Four other themes that are worth noting as they were mentioned in 12% of the response themes were: Collaboration and coordination, Adaptive management capacity, Facilitating new dialogue and relationships and finally, Developing new tools. The six negative themes were from comments on externalities such as the ambiguous governance between WWF CRRRI and GEF CRR, or the lack of support from WWF CRRRI that created gaps in staffing and operations in countries. Two responses also mentioned external factors out of PMU's control; i.e. The lack of funds to NOAA and the lack of electricity to support online participation, and the last two negative comments were on the downside of an institute leading the project outside of both governments and outside the countries thus linking to this creating a lack of local ownership. Although there is sufficient evidence from elsewhere that suggests there is a strong sense of lack local ownership, as long as the NTF-NGO is working closely with their national government (e.g. Fiji). *"International credibility of UQ/GEF leadership ensures scientific rigor and cross-country learning; the ministry perceives this as complementing, not replacing, national leadership"* (Government stakeholder).

Technical Components: It should be noted that there was no single model for how to set up and run national hubs; NTFs and their lead government ministries were left to determine their own engagement approach. This aspect is discussed later in 3.4 on Stakeholder engagement. Overall, comments on the effectiveness of the technical components (66 responses across 34 themes), 62% of the stakeholder responses were positive, with 38% citing challenges in the delivery of the 4 components. Most of the challenges clustered around the experiences of Components 2 and 4 activities. As Component 3 activities have only just begun, and there was only one challenge mentioned. Overall, challenges centred around the delays in setting up the NTFs and National hubs which meant that for those leading the global work in components 1, 3 and 4, they either had to deal with early staff changes or had no-one to engage with to be able to draw on the local views or capabilities into their work-streams at the points in time where they needed them. Equally because WWF CRRRI lacked resources to support the country focal points, they were not able or willing to fill in any gaps, as good will contributions had understandably come to an end. Therefore unsurprisingly, the most frequent theme stakeholders mentioned was that there were gaps in the operations or alignment of work-streams (26%). *"The absence of prior ethnographic or local-level data meant that workshops had to surface the context dynamically, increasing abstraction and reducing cultural specificity of the workshops"* (Delivery Partner Stakeholder). *"Terranomics' work didn't align with the local context."* (Global Partner), or *"Difficulty in contextualizing materials for six diverse countries with varying languages and needs."* (Delivery Partner Stakeholder). A theme that scored 21% was the challenge of capacity or capability being missing or lacking in some way. This was either due to early staff turnover which affected the delivery of component activities, local or focal point staff unable to operate or that key stakeholders were missing from the national hubs (e.g. Hydrologists and sanitation engineers), which meant that there was not the technical diversity as expected. It was also noted that there were difficulties with contextualising information and language barriers were noted (9%), most significantly for Component 1, but also for Component 4 activities.

¹³ 56 surveys and 46 interview sessions were processed by drawing on all the themes mentioned across several questions in both. Several stakeholders would give more than one theme in an answer, so hence why 113 responses were spread across a total of 59 response themes, by 102 stakeholder groups. A total of 47 responses were spread over 25 response themes about PMU effectiveness, whereas 66 responses were spread over 25 response themes about the effectiveness of the four technical components. Percentage values therefore give a sense of the importance of a theme.

The areas where component activities were seen to be operating effectively included stating the confidence being given to stakeholders and their legitimacy due to the participatory methods being facilitated (29%), the way that governments were being supported by NGOs through the National Hubs or directly through their GEF guided steps which increased the government's coordination and collaboration capacity. This was followed closely with the increase in integrating knowledge from global to local (21%). Other strong themes mentioned were on building trust, collaboration and coordination (15%) and facilitating a multi-country learning experience (15%). It's worth noting that 9% of responses were acknowledging the importance of transitioning activities in the long term to government. Several of these themes will be discussed in more depth in the Stakeholder Engagement section below. So, although there are challenges to effective implementation, they have in part been overcome by strong NTFs and PMU that work well together and there is effective delivery of activities in four out of six countries, but with two countries that are slowly coming on board (Madagascar and Philippines).

Combining secondary and primary sources with the observation of operations in the field, these general findings are verified, however there are words of caution for specific country operations, namely Tanzania in terms of the quality of the stakeholder engagement processes (see section 3.4 below), Madagascar in terms of facilitating multi-sector dialogue through a regional sustainable coral friendly tourism hub and ensuring a consultant is hired to facilitate dialogue with the private sector and regional governments, and Philippines in terms of getting started and ensuring there is someone hired to facilitate the CTI secretariat and bridge to Palawan regional government. There are other country teams that could benefit from third party hiring to support the project delivery but these are discussed in more detail in the efficiency section below, section 3.3. Fiji Observational point was that effective engagement in the Hubs was hindered if they did not share documents to be reviewed early enough for stakeholders to read and digest their content.

Gap – Community of Practice: The community of practice outcome linked to the online courses (including the MOOCs) and training activities in Component 1, has not materialised yet¹⁴. Indonesia has taken on board this activity as the online courses are in Bahasa Indonesian, but they also facilitate the learning experience with participants. However, the success of this is not shared via documents uploaded to coral huddle, so it has not been evaluated. The other five countries have not really focused on facilitating this beyond facilitating technical working groups as part of the National Hubs. This may have been too challenging without the support material in the local languages.

Measurable Changes

Stakeholder responses from interviews and surveys were integrated in the following series of priority project results, and although it is very early in the project, the following list gives a strong indication of where the qualitative outcomes are emerging. An example of this is: *“GEF CRR is the first structured, coral-specific initiative many community participants have experienced”* (Community stakeholders).

Table 10. List of Project Results as Identified by Stakeholders

Results Cited by Project Participants – Themes Identified that have Potential for Impact	Frequency of Response as a % of total responses
1. Increased awareness of the situation of coral reef and their importance	17%
2. Creation of the National Hub and Technical Working Groups	10%
3. More Coordination and collaboration between various stakeholders on Coral Reef	10%
4. National Action Plan for Coral	7%
5. Coral Reef Network - community of practice - learning & sharing - website	7%
6. Increase in community voice and participation	7%
7. Status of Coral Reefs - data base	7%
8. Improved coral management through training and community participation	5%

¹⁴ The required shift from EdX to UQ Edge course platform used up personnel time and resources that would have been used to support NTFs/countries to develop or strengthen their CoPs.

9. Research technical reports (Threats, opportunities, cost-benefit)	4%
10. Consultative process with communities and provincial/local government	4%
11. Sustainable financing - trust fund for coral	4%
12. Increase in Political will of government to act in the interests of Coral	4%
13. Coordination on data collection - monitoring protocol	2%
14. Policy Changes, strengthening	2%
15. Increased Partnership between community and government	2%
16. Cross country learning	2%
17. Availability of funding	2%
18. Creation of coral reef training course (MOOC)	1%
19. Involvement/participation of the private sector	1%
20. Coral Reefs are showing signs of recovery	1%

Further tables of project results per country is provided in table 33, 34 and 35 in Annex 5.1c.

It is really only in the last year (2025) that outcomes have started to emerge from the work at the country levels and only in those most advanced countries (Tanzania, Fiji, Indonesia and to a degree Solomon Islands). These results indicate that the project is heading in the right direction and has critical government support but will need more time to consolidate the results going forward. The least advanced area has been component 3; creating a Coral Friendly Business pipeline. However, stakeholders when asked, have a clear idea about what a coral business is or could be in their areas. The three strongest themes were around eco-tourism or sustainable marine tourism; which included tours, dive centres, swimming and snorkelling activities, even homestays; another was around sustainable mariculture activities (e.g. crab, sea cucumber, shrimps and octopus farming, crab fattening, environmentally friendly seaweed farming). The third theme was around sustainable fishing practices, either as certified sustainable fishing or just through the use of non-destructive practices or not using damaging gear like traps. Less frequently mentioned businesses were those that were further down the supply chain or based on land management activities. None of the types of stakeholders active in such businesses are currently being regularly engaged in the National Hubs, with Indonesia and Tanzania engaging some of these sectors irregularly. This is a gap.

Table 11. GEF Rating of Overall Assessment of Project Outcomes (Ratings are in Annex 5.9)

2. Overall Assessment of Project Outcomes	Rating	Justification
Were project outcomes Relevant when compared to focal area/operational program strategies, country priorities, beneficiary needs, mandates of WWF GEF and partners, and WWF priorities?	Highly Satisfactory	This project has enabled at least four, and possibly five, of the six national governments to elevate coral ecosystems on their policy agendas. In the remaining country, the project aligns with regional government economic priorities that depend on coral ecosystems. For coastal communities, the project's priorities are highly relevant in all countries. The four components are delivering objectives that meet the needs of beneficiaries, partners, WWF GEF, the WWF Network and WCS Global. The relevance of the objectives under Component 3 will need to be reconsidered to ensure they align with local contexts. The project is also highly relevant to international CBD commitments.
Is the project Coherent or compatible with / supported by other relevant projects and programs in the recipient country or countries? Does the project have alignment among the theory of change, governance structure, activities and M&E system? Is there alignment with GEF policies, guidelines and is there integration of lessons from similar projects?	Satisfactory to Highly Satisfactory	Internal coherence has been assessed as highly satisfactory. The project is aligned with the theory of change, the governance structure is functioning effectively and it aligns with GEF policies. It builds on more than fifty climate resilient reef research initiatives and incorporates lessons from the technical research reports. External coherence is weaker in relation to the private sector, as only two countries have included private sector representatives in their national hubs and contributed to the development of the National Action Plans. This will need to be strengthened.
What is the Effectiveness of project outcomes (e.g. were ex-ante targets met)? Did the project make the expected contributions to global environmental	Satisfactory	Delivery has been delayed in five of the six countries. Despite these delays, significant progress has been made in activities, outputs and outcomes. The project has exceeded its mid-year targets, taking into account the six-month delay in the MTE period, in seven of the twelve

benefits? Were there unintended consequences of the project that added to or negated project benefits?		indicators in the results framework. The development objective rating is now 81% and progress has been made on year three activities. Effectiveness is not consistent across the six countries. Tanzania needs to slow the pace of workshops to improve effectiveness. In Fiji, information needs to be provided to National Hub stakeholders in advance. Implementation effectiveness could be improved in at least three countries by contracting local experts to engage with stakeholders, particularly the private sector.
What is the Cost-efficiency of project outcomes? How does the project cost/time versus output/outcomes equation compare to that of a similar project?	Moderately Satisfactory	A detailed discussion is provided in section 3.6. Overall, the project is being implemented with cost efficiency that is on track, both overall and at the component level. The cost efficiency ratio is at or near one for two components, meaning spending is broadly aligned with planned activity delivery. Two components have lower than expected efficiency ratios, which indicates that spending is progressing more quickly than justified by the number of completed activities. Component 3 was expected to begin implementation in year three, but the recruitment of consultants in the five countries has taken longer than anticipated. In the Philippines, implementation has not begun. Although the contract has been signed and the first tranche of funds released, the funds are still with DENR and have not yet reached PCSD. Adjustments to year three activity expectations may be required. A six-month no-cost extension is necessary to allow the project to catch up. Cost efficiency at the country level is uneven. Recommendations have been made to improve implementation efficiency in Indonesia, Madagascar and the Philippines. The Solomon Islands has recently recruited a new project manager, but additional expertise in government engagement may also be needed.
Overall Rating of Project Outcomes	Rating	Justification
Using above criteria, please provide an overall rating for the achievement of the Project outcomes. This assessment should analyze both the achievement and shortcomings of these results as stated in the project document.	Satisfactory	Overall, the project has experienced implementation delays in five of the six countries, but these have had only a limited impact on the achievement of outcomes in the results framework. There are, however, areas that will require close monitoring. Although the plans for Component 3 have been adjusted, progress is still not at the level required to ensure that coral friendly businesses can benefit during the fourth year of the project and within a six-month no-cost extension.

3.2.3. M&E implementation / adaptive management and capacity

M&E Staff: For PMU this function is integrated into both the PM and PC roles, but earlier on in PMU, there was only a PM role. It was initially assumed the Coral Huddle IT system could eliminate the need for dedicated staff, however it became apparent that the workload of following up data, reports and information with the countries, was too much for just a PM to manage given the other demands. A project coordinator role has also been included in PMU where they manage different aspects of the M&E systems, which are significantly beyond just using the AWP, RF and PPRs to assess the status of activities.

- 1. M&E system and reporting: Coral Huddle:** In the first year an IT team (Identified by CRR1) was contracted to design and set up Coral Huddle as a means for each of the 6 countries to report their progress to PMU, which would then be validated and verified with a summary dashboard showing the progress of each project that their stakeholders and public would be able to view. The system works, there are challenges as it is not very flexible so does not incorporate agreed changes in the RF indicator definitions. The system was designed by an IT specialist rather than by an M&E specialist with IT skills. Basic information into the system gets visualized in dashboards and that can be viewed by anyone with the link. A guidance document reminds the teams how to input data into the Huddle system (note this is only in English). The document is clear and simple to understand.
- 2. Kobo Survey Tools:** Coral Huddle has been adapted and combined with Kobo Survey Tools that ask those inputting information into the system to provide the details that are required for the RF and to be able to

disaggregate data by gender, sector, country and age. This is downloaded by excel. There is another guidance document that shows all the extra entry forms designed to capture data needed for the RF (note this is only in English). It is a clear document.

3. **Disaggregation activity mapping:** Every single activity that feeds information into the RF indicators is mapped in the excel database so that the team can monitor what data is being delivered by what country NTF when.
4. **Activities Status Tracking:** An extra tracking tool was developed that provides an overview of what country is planning to start and intends to finish each task assigned by each year. This allows the team to hold an overview and is synced by hand by the team. It's a summary of the longer AWP tracking tool.
5. **Spatial site mapping:** The Bio-Climatic Units, project communities that are being engaged in the project and their economic zones have been mapped using ArcGIS. This lends itself to further analysis by overlaying problems or threats which would then allow different NTF teams to identify what are the common areas for cross learning. The cross learning opportunities regionally have been encouraged by suggesting teams piggy back off large relevant international conferences. The results of this are explored in section 3.7: Knowledge Management. Similarly, where Coral Friendly Businesses operate, their type, scale and impact could also be mapped using this tool. Neither the threat data, nor the Coral Friendly Business operations has been mapped by the project yet because data on threats are not complete and Component 3 is not yet mature enough. We would encourage the project to explore the use of this tool in the future as impact (Core Indicator 5 results) could also be shown spatially and provide insights. WCS is about to update research on the 50 reefs assessment, the theory behind this project. This will reveal new insights in terms of potential restoration and recovery reefs because the analysis is at 1 km resolution, rather than the current 5km.

There are a substantial number of monitoring tools and data collection is complemented by regular remote meetings with the NTF teams, where updates on the project are regularly shared. There are regular regional meetings but due to the time zone differences, meeting all six project NTFs at one remote meeting is difficult. The first and last meeting of representatives of all 6 country NTFs, PMU and WWF GEF US, was for the inception meeting in Bali in March 2023. From an M&E perspective, data gathering, its validation and verification, we would recommend another meeting of all parties 6 months before the close of the project (more would be possible to achieve if this were before the six months extension kicked in).

Project Progress reports are completed 6 monthly, and AWP/RFs tools are completed annually as planned. There is also an annual reflection meeting remotely facilitated by PMU however, it has mixed results as it was seen as a chance to simply report. Although the reports give good insight on what activities have been completed or challenges being experienced, they lack insights on the significance of what is being achieved, they do not provide a cross-country synthesis of how well the project is doing and nor do they summarise the results of the technical reports. It should be noted that although there are photos, these are not always embedded into the PPRs, where one or two could be useful for context. There is regular reporting to WWF GEF US through remote meetings with PMU that provide this missing nuance. However, it would be more useful for the reports to have these reflections included going forward as the project activities are starting to deliver on outcomes and more significant results.

Requests Made by NTFs Stakeholders for Adaptation that were responded to by the project

There were three main areas where PMU made requests for adaptive management over the two year period.

AWPs: In year 1, most of the year's activities were asked to be shifted to be implemented in Year 2 due to delays in contracting the NTFs. Unfortunately, the delays in implementation of Y1 activities had a knock-on effect on Y2 project implementation. Several activity areas caught up by combining multiple activities in a single workshop event and the PMU promoted this approach with NTF's for planning their activities, when applicable. Activity 1.2.1.2, for developing national and regional monitoring systems, was made 'optional' to all NTFs because it was no longer felt relevant to the success of Outcome 1.2. Activities under Component 3, lead by the PMU and a global consultant (Terranomics) were delayed as Terranomics was not onboarded until

November 2024 and countries were not yet equipped with in-country consultants to assist with this Component so most of its activities were moved into Year 3.

- **In Madagascar**, the NTF has grouped the recruitment of multiple consultants to significantly increase the mobilization of the project workplan, and thus support the project to achieve project targets.
- **Fiji**, the workplan was assessed and after consultation with the PMU and the WWF-GEF team, revisions were made to the project outputs. The revised outputs included changes from a cost benefit analysis (several of which have already been completed by partnering agencies) to a policy gap analysis, which will be more beneficial and will further bolster the National Action Plan for Coral Reefs. This team created a significant workload in the first year, but realized that stakeholder fatigue risk was increasing and therefore scaled back the intended activities for Year 3 to reduce this risk.
- **Philippines**: The NTF, PCSD adapted their workplans and budgets given the remaining project implementation period. Their revised budget was submitted for GEF Agency and G-PSC approval, once the agreement was signed between UQ and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). Year 3 activities that other countries achieved in project year 1 and 2 were prioritized with the rest of the activities being listed as “achievable”, “completed” (some activities within Component 1), and “forgo – no longer achievable” and much of Component 3 / Sustainable Blue Economy work. This was removed from the workplan as laying the groundwork for stakeholder participation and creating the national hub in the Philippines, was prioritized. The budget allocated for Philippine work was halved. Some of this unused budget was then reallocated to global activities. UQ and PCSD refined the sub-grant agreement with the Philippines NTF, reducing the workplan, budget and target outcomes. It has now been signed and money sent ready for Q4 implementation.

Financial Reporting: PMU needed to have financial reports that combined up to date reporting from UQ but report one quarter behind on the spend per country to enable UQ time to consolidate the reports from the actual country expenditure.

Results framework There have already been 4 minor changes to the indicators in the RF that have been approved by WWFUS GEF. The changes are listed and discussed in Annex 5.1c.

- Changes to 1.1a indicator minor changes in the wording
- Indicator 2.1a: The gender targets were changed
- Indicator 2.1b: Wording was changed
- The target for Indicator 3.1b year 1 wording was changed

Table 12 below, shows the approved changes highlighted in yellow to the indicators. There were other concerns raised by PMU about the core indicators, however, changes were not proposed.

Areas to Consider further Adaptation

AWPs and Resource allocation: A number of countries are likely to require further adjustments to their workplans; Madagascar, may need changes in their activities around the national hub, moving to a regional dialogue platform. Indonesia needs more resources to support the legalisation of the hub and facilitate more regional hubs to feed into the National Hub forum. Philippines has less time than anticipated due to the various administrative delays and may require another adjustment to the budget and the AWP. Fiji may require the re-allocation of resources within its components to ensure the consultation process is sufficiently engaged with community stakeholders to meet cabinet approval criteria for its NAP. Tanzania may require a slower, more focused approach to facilitate better quality stakeholder engagement and to bring other stakeholders along with them in understanding the project – doing less but better and to more depth. Finally Solomon Islands may need more resources dedicated to deepening relationships with government, either by engaging officials at a higher level (similar to Fiji) or finding ways to enable them to meet their objectives, professional development or workwise. All countries need dedicated resources to translating information into local languages.

Results Framework Indicators: A number of changes have been proposed above to enable better measurement of project progress. In addition the following needs to be considered to ensure the RF works more effectively.

Table 12. Adaptive Management Changes Suggested to Improve the Functionality of the RF

Indicator as it is currently defined	Issue	Example of Proposed Change
Core Indicator 4.1: Area (# ha) of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity (qualitative assessment, non-certified)	Only Year 4 target, not likely to be able to achievement within project timeframe	Use Core Indicator 5 instead: Area of Marine ecosystem under improved management with target for Year 3 (1000 ha), and year 4 (4000ha)
Core Indicator 7.4: Level of engagement in IW: Learn through participation and delivery of key products 1= No Participation 2= Website in line with IW:LEARN guidance active 3 = As above, plus strong participation in training/twinning events and production of at least one experience note and one results note 4 = As above, plus active participation of project staff and country representatives at International Waters conferences and the provision of spatial data and other data points via project website	Year 4 target could be more ambitious. Year 4 target has already been achieved.	Informally define a series of engagement actions equivalent to a new Level 5, to share in the reports. E.g. Voluntary set a Level 5 in that in addition to achieving all other levels, the following activities are also considered: National Hub members/PSC members and NTFs would lead discussion panels on Climate Resilient Corals, and Project results. Posters to IW conference and other regional conferences would be accepted and include engagement with private sector/donors with commitments to support the elements in at least one NAP.
Core Indicator 11: Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment	Not all of the actual source data sets are able to be disaggregated by gender	50% of those with known gender are female.
1.1a: Number of trainees involved in online learning opportunities (which incorporate a gender-inclusive approach and language) of which at least 30% have decision making and leadership responsibilities that have influence on climate refuge coral reefs and at least are 30% women	30% of the total participating in online learning is likely to be a larger number than the total number of National Hub members across six countries.	30% of the total number of possible National Hub members across six countries have participated in either an online course or training facilitated by the project. Include the ability for Coral Huddle to capture private sector participation
1.1b: Percentage of participants who view the added value of networking and relationships building opportunities offered through the learning and knowledge sharing events as high/very high	Being measured for MOOCs, few CoPs. Over achieved the Year 3 target.	Revise target up for Year 4: Increase the % target to 85%
1.2a: Number of registered users (Visitors = individual IP addresses) and their visitations (Views) on Climate Data Platform (	The Year 4 target for # visitors and views has been achieved at the MTE stage.	Revise target up for Year 4: to 1000 visitors and 5000 views
2.1a: Percentage of identified stakeholder groups engaged with the National Hub Y3 % countries where Cost/benefit analysis done	Year 4 targets 15% youth, however youth participation is inconsistently captured in the attendance sheets.	Define youth as those less than 35 years old and ensure representation is included via government bodies and attendance sheets have the same age categories.
2.1b: Extent to which Community Vision is integrated into National Action Plans of National Hubs Where 0: does not integrate any aspects of Community Vision 25: integrates less than half of aspects in Community Vision 50: integrates half of aspects of Community Vision 75 integrates more than half of aspects in Community vision 100: integrates all aspects of Community Vision Consider revising so it can show progress with time rather than just in year 4	Need to allow NH to define where and how community voice is incorporated into the NAP and its approval process. Only year 4 target was given so no progress can be shown towards this in year 3.	Measure the mean average for each year targets achievement; irrespective of the year it was completed. Redefine where: Level 1-Community Visioning WS defines /inputs into NAP , Level 2-Community Representatives attend NH-TWG meetings , Level 3- Community representatives endorse NAP and Level 4-80% of Community Participants recognise their vision in the NAP Progress targets: Year 3: 30% of countries reach L1 and 50% of countries reach L2 Year 4: include year 3, plus 70% of countries reach level 3 and 80% of countries reach level 4
2.2a Percentage of National Hub members committed to the realization of the vision and synergistic solutions identified in National Vision and Action Plan for climate refuge reefs in the short, medium and long term New wording would reflect more clearly what the NHs are doing and delivering, e.g. % of National Hub members committed to a robust and analytically sound National Action Plan increasing the protection and sustainable management of coral reefs	This indicator does not show progress towards the development, delivery and endorsement of the NAP Either new levels of achievement need to be defined or a better way of calculating progress as currently defined is needed.	Calculate the Mean av. of each yrs % achievement – Y2 % countries where Threats/ Opportunity analysis is done and Y3 % countries where Cost/benefit analysis done and Y4 % countries that endorse Action Plan Or Define Indicator in terms of the progressive levels leading to delivering on the NAP: L1 50% Countries review TOA/CBA or PA/CS L2. 50% countries have sustainability plan L3 50% Countries Review Draft NAP L4 50% Countries that NH endorse NAP L4 50% Countries that Ratify NAP

		L5 50% of countries that have NAP continuity funding
3.1a: Level of advancement of pipeline of projects established by the National Hub Steering Committee. 30% of Businesses selected are owned by women Y1 lessons learned Y2: Criteria for reef-friendly businesses & SME investment Y3: Reef-friendly businesses & SME shortlisted Y4: Pipeline of 100+ projects in investment portfolio (needs to be changed)	Not showing project progress as calculated The Year 4 level is too ambitious and unlikely to be achieved given the limited financial literacy and business capacity in several of the target communities	Calculate the Mean av. of each yrs % achievement. Where; Y1: % countries review Lessons Y2: % countries Verify/adapt and use CFB criteria Y3: % countries ID companies that fit CF criteria Y4: % countries that have a shortlist or change tit o: 10 coral friendly businesses identified per country (with a number of start ups, CBOs (running 1 yr), SMEs and MMEs), 30% women led/owned
4.1a: Percentage of National Hub members aware of the value and importance of climate refuge reefs	The target percentage does not change so no progress is shown, so its overachieved Public awareness of this or the reach of the message is not measured	Include the awareness campaign reach with the Public in each country. Increase the targets for Y3 and Y4: 70%, and 90% respectively
4.2: Percentage of monitoring plan effectively implemented and utilized for supporting communication, accountability, and adaptive management	The target does not change and it can be achieved with minimum effort. It does not show progress or improvement	Revise the targets to show % of each country using the extra tools or the timeliness of delivering outputs and reports.

More Implementation Time: A six month no cost extension will be needed to allow the various countries to consolidate the NAPs and get approval from their National Hubs. As well as consolidate the Coral Friendly Business support to create a potential pipeline.

Table 13. GEF Rating Table of M&E Systems

4. Assessment of M&E Systems	Rating	Remarks
M&E implementation – Did the M&E system operate as per the M&E plan? Where necessary, was the M&E plan revised in a timely manner? Was information on specified indicators gathered systematically and as scheduled? Were relevant GEF core indicators/corporate results indicators and/or tracking tools analyzed and reported as expected? Were appropriate methodological approaches used to analyze data? Were resources for M&E sufficient? How was the information from the M&E system used during project implementation? Did it facilitate transparency, sharing and adaptive management?	Highly Satisfactory	The additional tools developed, together with consistent data collection and results measured linearly over time, demonstrate a functional M&E system operating across seven countries, including Australia. This is a notable achievement. The project has applied adaptive management in three key areas, responding to challenges in the countries. For example, a visit to the Philippines by the PMU could have been scheduled earlier, but the face-to-face dialogue that took place helped resolve critical issues. These countries are among the most challenging, where establishing activities takes time and circumstances change rapidly. The ability to use data to adapt has been evident. Not all NTFs are equally proficient at inputting data into Coral Huddle, and remote follow-ups have limitations.
Overall Rating of M&E	Rating	Justification
Using above information as guidance, please provide an overall rating for M&E during project design /implementation.	Satisfactory	The M&E design was rated Moderately Satisfactory due to challenges in indicator measurability. However, the additional tools, supported by guidance and regular mentoring meetings from the PMU, have facilitated their effective use. Data is regularly deposited, validated, and verified within the system.

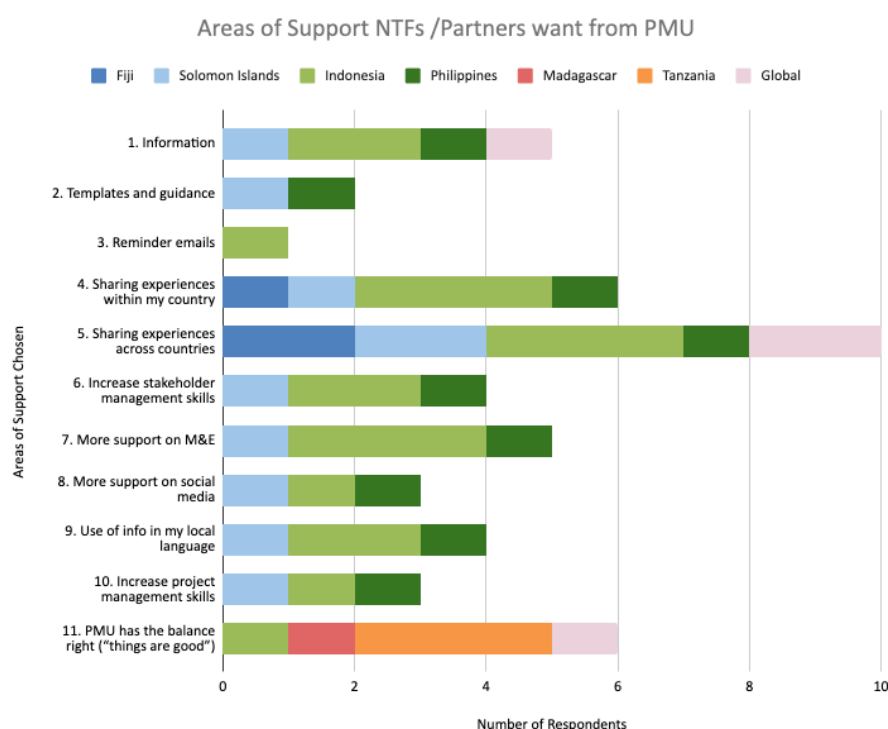
3.2.4. Implementation Governance and management arrangements

PMU - UQ: In terms of communication, coordination, integration and operational management these are rated highly by NTF stakeholders. The discussions above indicate that it's seen to have a high degree of competence and communication from the NTFs, to PMU to WWF US GEF and is very efficient. Governance arrangements have worked as they were expected in the design.

The PSC Chair is the Pro-Vice Chancellor Global Partnerships, from the University of Queensland. The advantage is that the PMU get the full support of the university of Queensland and this translates to in-kind

substantial co-financing from administration, finance and legal teams, but it has also strengthened internal recognition of the project.

Graph 1: Area of Support NTFs/Partners Would like from PMU



Fiji, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Solomon Islands (and even global respondents) keep asking for more sharing of experiences — both inside their own country and with other CRR countries.

Capacity support is a big need (except for Tanzania and Madagascar).

Indonesia, the Philippines, and Solomon Islands say they need help with things like stakeholder management, monitoring and evaluation, social media, project management, and materials in local languages.

NTFs: The stakeholder engagement processes used by the NTFs are discussed in the later section, but set National Hub for consultation, collaboration and coordination. The NH governance and management was generic in the design; each country NTF has its own approach depending upon whether it is an NGO or Government department, which is highlighted in Table 36, Annex 5.1c. It should be said that although the approach to the national hubs has unique characteristics in terms of set up and governance arrangements, there is always a link to government (where there is one to engage with) and clear accountability. The PSC approves the annual workplans and budgets. The effectiveness of the stakeholder engagement through these structures is discussed in the section 3.4 below. There is inconsistent documentation in terms of how these are set up and functioning. Each NTF team has between two to three staff, with support from part-time staff.

WWF CRRI: There has been, and still is, a level of confusion in terms of how the project relates to the WWF Initiative. It was key in developing the project design, which is the main vehicle for implementation of its strategy, but it has only observer status on the PSC. There was an expectation within the WWF focal offices that they would be supported by the project, however, this was and is not possible because of GEF rules. The WWF network was not able to fill the funding gap sufficiently so there was a cliff edge which has created resentment in some cases and WWF offices have not always been able to support the project as was envisioned. There is now a new Project leader and Coordinator who is aiming to build back key relationships and add value to the project. WWF CRRI needs to coordinate its requests for information through PMU to avoid confusion from attempting to communicate with the NTFs directly. Similarly in a way to how they engage with WCS Regional Director and other Partners. Quarterly meetings can be set up to facilitate this information exchange between PMU and WWF CRRI, but we would discourage ad-hoc requests as these can be draining on the project team. It's recognised this may cause a sense of frustration for the WWF CRRI team, but this is a complicated project with many challenges that take up a lot of PMU time to sort out.

3.2.5. WWF GEF implementation / EA and partner execution

Role of WWF GEF Agency:

Pro-doc identified 7 task areas in the role of the WWF GEF Agency: (i) provide consistent and regular project oversight to ensure the achievement of project objectives and Results Framework, and provide other assistance upon request of the Lead Executing Agency; (ii) liaise between the project and the GEF Secretariat; (iii) ensure that both GEF and WWF policy requirements and standards are applied and met (i.e. reporting obligations, technical, fiduciary, monitoring and evaluation-M&E); (iv) approve work-plans and budget revisions, certify fund availability and transfer funds and ensure proper use of GEF funds; (v) organize the final evaluation and review project audits; and (vi) certify project operational and financial completion; and (vii) arbitrate and ensure resolution of any conflicts during implementation that cannot be resolved in first instance by the EA.

WWF GEF Implementation and Support:

In practice WWF GEF US project manager has been pro-active and enthusiastic in her support of the project, going beyond the tasks set out in the design. Pre-approval the GEF agency visited Fiji as part of a support mission to another project in their portfolio. They met with WCS and the Fijian Government to discuss who could be the lead NTF for the project and work with the National government. There are regular monthly meetings the agency attends with PMU so that they can understand how the project is being implemented in each of the components. The GEF agency PM is therefore able to respond quickly when approving adaptive management requests made through the reporting structure as they have already been discussed and their context has been well understood. These meetings were noted as 9/25/2024, 11/05/2024, 1/13/2025. The project is operating across several timezones and this requires flexibility in terms of being available for meetings. Travel budgets are small so trips have piggy backed off visiting other projects in the GEF agency portfolio. The GEF team was able to attend in person the inception workshop in Bali in March 2023. They were an active facilitator in the gender mainstreaming workshop, and actively shared the GEF policies.

Two other examples that demonstrate commitment of the WWF GEF agency: In September 2024, the GEF agency PM Co-hosted IW:Learn conference sessions; 1) an interactive Booth for IWC10 Participants as part of the “Innovation Marketplace” to engage with project management staff and facilitate workshop participants learning about Coral Reefs and the CRR project and 2) co-led a clinic session exploring “How to Increase Coral Reef Resilience”. As part of that trip meetings were held with the Executing Agency PM to discuss project challenges and opportunities as well as talking with the National Hub representatives that were participating in the same conference.

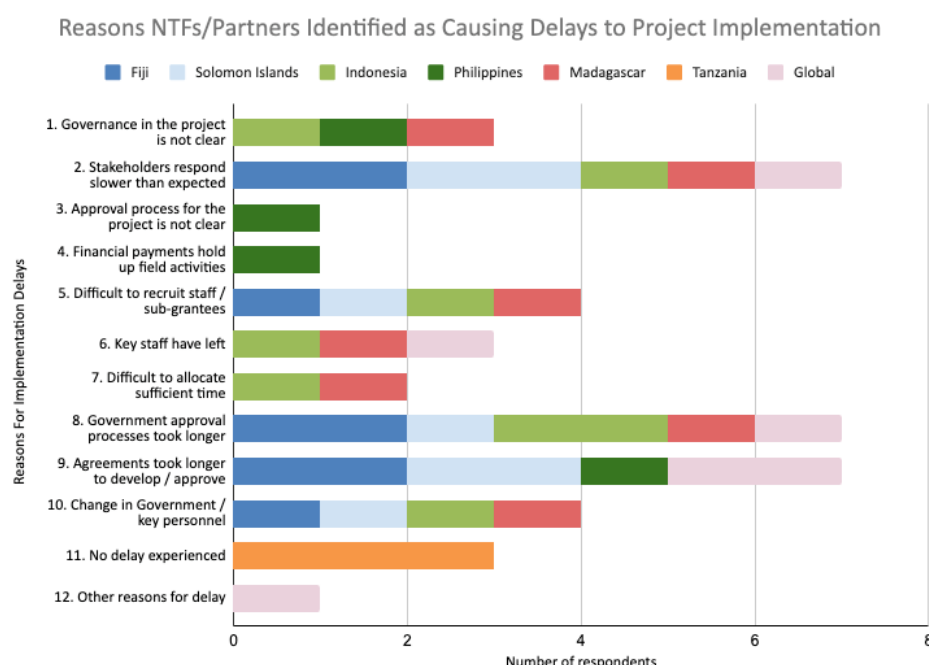
In February 2025 GEF agency PM was able to include a visit to the Philippines as part of another work trip, to conduct a support mission to Manila and Puerto Princesa, Palawan. In collaboration with PMU, the GEF Agency PM met with the various parties in DENR and PCSD to clarify what caused the delays to the project and agree that the budget needed to be halved to reflect the remaining time available. There were then discussions with PMU to divert these funds to support 3 areas of global activities; Data platform, PMU staffing levels and a part time communications officer to support IW:learn publications. We find the GEF Agency very engaged in the MTE and very willing to attend meetings, and being very open about where some of the challenges have been with the project.

Execution Agency - Activity/Output focused delivery:

PMU-UQID has been highly effective in managing the project and supporting the implementation by the six NTFs. There were challenges early on to adapt the UQ systems to manage a development type project, rather than a purely education or research type project, which is where their previous PM experience was. There have been two highly effective programme managers, and two effective project coordinators, the current team share the various management responsibilities and have complementary skills. UQ provided more pro-bono assistance to the project than had been originally foreseen, in terms of staff time, legal teams and the finance teams. There have been issues with implementation as global teams were often ready to engage with the NTFs but the NTF teams were not able to respond. The administrative delays in getting contracts out

should have been anticipated in the project design as the project is being implemented in six countries with some of the most challenging operating conditions and each requires its own bespoke legal contract as each has its own legal system. What has been key is the willingness to listen, respond and actively adapt the project to optimise outcomes and deliverables.

Graph 2: Reasons NTFs/Partners Identified as Causing Delays



There have been implementation delays, especially in the first year.

Fiji and Solomon Islands have similar types of delays: i.e. Stakeholders respond slowly, government approvals take a long time, agreements also take longer than expected, there were changes in government, and it has been hard to hire staff.

Indonesia and Madagascar have very complicated delay situations: i.e. They face

issues with unclear governance, slow recruitment, staff leaving, slow responses from stakeholders, limited time, and long government procedures.

- The Philippines is the only country reporting an “unclear internal, in-country approval processes” and delays in financial payments that are stopping fieldwork, along with internal delays in signing agreements.
- Tanzania is different from all the others: all three people who responded said they had no delays, and none of the other delay reasons were selected.
- Global Technical Teams had identified very similar causes for delay in their workstreams, although it should be noted that their stakeholders were the NTFs themselves.

In the same survey NTF/partners were asked to identify their Challenges, what worked and did not work as well as what they would have done better. Not all the answers were relevant to implementation management, see the tables 34 and 35 in Annex 5.1.c.

Table 14.GEF Rating Table of Implementation and Execution Rating Against Responsibilities

5. Implementation and Execution Rating Against Responsibilities	Rating	Justification
WWF GEF Agency implementation (e.g. project identification, concept and detailed proposal preparation, approval and start-up, oversight and supervision, completion and evaluation, etc).	Highly Satisfactory	The project was well designed, particularly given the constraints of COVID. Supervision has been active and enthusiastic. The PMU feels well supported by the GEF Agency Project Manager, with communication frequent, clear, and responsive. The GEF Agency Project Manager actively collaborates with the PMU to address project challenges.
Executing Agency execution (e.g. Management and administration of project's daily activities, including appropriate use of funds, procurement and contracting of goods and services in line with GEF Agency rules regulations)	Highly Satisfactory	The PMU at UQID has been a highly effective programme manager, with UQ providing more pro bono support than originally anticipated. Country-specific implementation challenges have arisen, which is to be expected given the difficult operating conditions. Crucially, the PMU has demonstrated a willingness to listen, respond, and adapt the project to optimise outcomes and deliverables.

3.2.6. Transformational change, catalytic effects and additionality

The potential of this project to bring about transformational change is way too early to establish. However, because this project is based on research identifying climate resilient coral reefs and has elevated coral reef up on various governments agendas, the creation of the National Hubs in their various forms, can have a transformational impact in the long term if their NAPs are endorsed and implemented. There is significant potential with supporting coral friendly businesses and the guidance that will come from this, which could also bring a blue economy element into this potential. Similarly, if there are local or regional trust funds set up to sustain Coral restoration and conservation work, this could transform coral conservation. The MOOCs and Data Portal and awareness raising are going to have indirect effects that will be difficult to predict but it should be noted they offer additional ways to present and direct any professional or student towards an increased understand of coral reefs, their threats and potential solutions.

3.2.7. Unintended effects

We have not come across any unintended results yet, although it is still too early to tell, they may emerge out of the work for Component 3. See sections under GEF Policies for further discussion on this potential as it relates to local community groups and the potential support of their coral friendly livelihoods or businesses. The risk is both positive in supporting women's business interests and negative in terms of equity of opportunity and disbursement of benefits.

3.2.8. Sustainability / project exit

Four countries are scheduled to develop a sustainability strategy in Year 3, Fiji already has a draft for approval of the National Hub members (not shared with the MTE), which was planned to be completed and approved remotely. CI another NGO has offered to help WCS and the National Hub develop a Coral Trust Fund to ensure there are resources to support the Hub going forward. Tanzania has set up a Coral Trust fund to support the implementation of their National Action Plan, but there was not a sustainability strategy draft shared with the MTE. Solomon Islands and Indonesia are both scheduled to complete a sustainability plan by the end of year 3. Madagascar does not yet have a functioning National Hub, therefore a sustainability plan needs to be re-focused on regional governments (initially one, expanding to two more). Specialist support may be required from a French-speaking consultant to support a local consultant specialised in stakeholder engagement. In the Philippines, although a sustainability plan is scheduled for year 4, it is not yet clear how the NTF, based in Palawan, will engage the National Hub to run through CTI and DENR-EB. Again, this may require specialist assistance to work through the sustainability options and support a local consultant to develop a plan. There are currently no global resources focusing on sustainability strategies, even for the four MOOCs, that are currently free, nor the Data Platform; both of these require a clear exit strategy to be developed. Options need to consider if they are taken over by UQID as part of its enterprise activities or another part of the University of Queensland agrees to take it on. A global sustainability strategy is also required going forward to build capacity and help teams think through their options. There is no global guidance as to what sustainability plans should consider. Ensuring there is a sustainably financing element to all of the National Hubs' sustainability plan is strongly recommended and would be a strong candidate for cross country learning and exchange.

Support and Buy-in:

The project outputs are well supported as various sections (e.g. Relevance) have discussed above and there is a long-term vision of local ownership via the National Hubs and National Action Plans.

National Hubs: There was a strong voice recognising the importance of government leadership in the NH, however a note of caution is that the majority that expressed this view were from Tanzania. A more nuanced perspective was from Fiji; *"the government as the lead actor after project completion but emphasizing continued collaboration with technical partners such as NGOs and community institutions"*. In addition, other country stakeholders also saw the importance of bringing in researchers and the private sector so the multi-sector approach could continue. Donors and the private sector voices were the ones to suggest that NGOs should lead the process suggesting they had more confidence in their ability to facilitate meaningful

engagement processes after the project. However, NGOs themselves were keen to continue to support government. It should be noted though that only Tanzania and Indonesia are engaging with the private sector stakeholders. Community voices (majority Tanzanian), were all keen to put themselves forward as the implementers of the plan, recognising they may need technical support to do that, but with a strong continued commitment, started with engagement in the Hub. *“We have 54 communities... we have been engaged in this program from the beginning... we are fortunate enough to learn this policy kind of information and then we have to take it down to community level”* (Fiji).

There were exceptions where both Solomon Islands and Madagascar do not feel they have the government commitment yet (for different reasons) to feel confident that their governments will lead things in the future. Indonesian stakeholders also expressed similar misgivings and suggested a Development Bank should lead the work going forward, this may have been a way to ensure the Hubs would be funded.

Online Resources: These include both the three (soon to be four) online MOOCs and the Data Portal Platform, both of which are led by UQ based teams. There is uncertainty in terms of their future. UQ used to have a department dedicated to online courses that were paid for to ensure their sustainability. However early on in the project, the University pivoted and closed this area of work, preferring to spend its resources on face to face experiences. The assumption was that UQ would provide this long term buy-in for the MOOCs and either subsidise those from the six countries wanting to take these courses or keep the fees to a minimal. The Data Portal is a stand alone site with links to and from the IW:learn hosted project website. There is no clear understanding of who will take this on; i.e. keeping up the linkages and ensuring functionality and adding resources. UQ Marine science department seems an obvious choice, but it is still not clear. WWF CRRI already has links to the MOOCs, but it should be noted however willing the initiative seems, there has been no commitment from the WWF Network to support the CRRI long term, it's support to the Initiative during the life of the project has been limited so far. WCS could be another candidate, but again there has been no formal commitment. This is a gap we feel should be addressed by PMU and the global teams going forward.

Local ownership of the MOOCs in their current form is limited, partly because they are not in the local languages and some stakeholders have suggested they do not have enough local context material in them. This is acknowledged by the development team, but has arisen because the MOOC content had to be created at a time when the National Hubs and NTFs were not set up or functioning. There is evidence to suggest that the increased awareness of the importance of coral reefs and their climate resilience has increased and may endure as a lasting legacy. However, materials are not in local languages and there are not yet enough video clips to engage with the public with or via social media engagement.

Component 3: Coral Friendly Businesses: This area of work is too emergent to assess. It has a great deal of potential, however it needs to ensure to include an effective capacity building element and select a variety of businesses to support that range from early start ups led by community, through to MMEs (if there are any). It should be noted that the remote nature of communities linked to BCUs may mean that examples of good practices and coral friendly business models are supported by the project in other coastal areas for demonstration and learning purposes. Sustainable financing mechanisms need to be incorporated as early as possible. The current global consultant has not shown an awareness of these requirements from the participating countries, but as local consultants come on board, relevancy and sustainability can become stronger themes.

Endureability

There were 6 themes mentioned by stakeholders; Finances, Leadership, Formalisation, Attitude, Knowledge and capacity building, in that order of frequency, which would ensure the project outcomes would endure.

Finances: Stakeholders recognised the need for funds to continue the work, but varied in their suggestions in terms of the mechanisms that would sustain financial resources. These ranged from Trust Funds, to ecosystem service payments to private sector inducements.

Leadership: This included at all levels; Government, NGOs and community levels. It was seen to drive ownership in the project, the main risks were from the lack of continuity and the ability to navigate the politics and trade offs *“It’s a bit of a problem... continuity of the people, the politics of NGO versus ministries... in every place those dynamics were different.”*

Formalisation: This covers three key aspects, legalisation of the National hub, formal endorsement of the national action plans developed and endorsed by the national hubs as well as just embedding the plan into existing rules, regulations and budgets.

Positive Attitude: This was more at the community level in terms of having an increase in awareness of the importance of coral and what the project is trying to achieve. Where there is not yet this awareness then a recognition that the National Hubs will need to have an outreach to communities to build this awareness.

Knowledge: This theme was in two parts, the creation of the MOOCs as a source that will be able to sustained beyond the project to improve the understanding of Coral Reefs and their vulnerabilities and some of the solutions. This was caveated with the comment if UQ extends the free submission or access to these courses. The other theme looked at the sharing of knowledge being key; through the portal and other online tools. One stakeholder also highlighted the importance of have exchanges with other teams in other areas – peer to peer learning experience.

Capacity Building: Surprisingly this was not as highly mentioned as might be expected. The theme was mentioned with other areas, the sense that government had programmes in capacity building that would benefit the endurance of this project results and stating the projects online capacity building tools, which contradicts other themes that have stated that the project needs to be taken down to the community. The project has not pitched its capacity building at the community level more in terms of young professions or interested early career workers from any sector.

Table: 15. GEF Table of the Assessment of Risks of Project Outcomes (ratings are explained in Annex 5.9)

3. Assessment of Risks¹⁵ to Sustainability¹⁶ of Project Outcomes
<i>Please describe these risks below, taking into account probability and magnitude of their effect/severity:</i>
Financial Risks - moderately severe risk, if funding is stopped and activities have not been completed.
Sustainable Financing of the Hub: Each country needs financial provision within the project to ensure the National Hubs can continue operating and have the budget to implement their plans. Concerns focus on the ability to deliver the National Action Plans and translate these actions to the relevant communities. Indonesia is particularly concerned that the hub model is costly, making it difficult to sustain beyond the project.
Project Finance: The project risks significant underspending if the PMU and WWF US GEF do not allow additional time for budget utilisation, for example through a no-cost extension. Funds may need to be reallocated to improve delivery, including contracting additional third-party consultants, as more human resources are required to facilitate activities effectively.
Socio-Political Risks - moderately severe risk, implementation delays might result.
Lack of National Government: Madagascar faces this risk, as the country is currently led by a self-appointed military leader who has promised elections in two years. The project should formally refocus on the three regional governments and align with the priorities of the coral-based tourism sector. Component 3, which promotes coral reef businesses, should be accelerated where possible to mitigate the impact of limited national government engagement.
Elections: Tanzania has recently held elections with associated civil disobedience and protests. Fiji is scheduled to hold national elections next year. While civil society engagement is not expected to react significantly, government processes will be constrained. Sign-off from Cabinet must occur before the election period, and Fijian law requires extensive community consultation prior to this. Resources should be directed to enable these processes to occur.
Inclusive Engagement: Tanzania is a concern because its National Action Plan was drafted without sufficient cross-sector engagement and may not be fully inclusive. The multiple hub approach and high participant numbers in workshops may not effectively bring stakeholders along, risking project benefits. Engagement with the private sector is also limited, with only two countries consistently involving them.
Leadership Capacity: The project has not directly targeted communities dependent on the BCUs, except through Component 3. Strong leadership is crucial, and any loss could negatively affect project outcomes.
Institutional Framework and Governance Risks – low risk as the effects can be mitigated in the remaining project time.
Institutional Continuity: Changes in leadership within supporting organisations, due to government rotation or personnel turnover, require NTFs to repeatedly rebuild relationships and interest. Budget cuts and ministerial reorganisation disrupt formal

¹⁵ Risks are internal or external factors that are likely to affect the achievement of project outcomes. In this context, please consider how these risks could affect the sustainability or *persistence* of project outcomes. Please feel free to list individual risks for each category (financial, sociopolitical, etc) and provide a corresponding assessment on likelihood and magnitude for each of these. This will help you in forming your overall rating of sustainability of project outcomes.

¹⁶ Sustainability refers to the likelihood of continuation of project benefits after project completion according to the [2019 Monitoring Policy](#).

institutionalisation efforts for the hub. Very few project materials are available to mitigate this, and none are in local languages or adapted to engage stakeholders effectively. Online MOOCs do not sufficiently address this gap. Indonesia is concerned that current political dynamics may not remain stable.

Institutional Ambiguity: In the Solomon Islands, it remains unclear whether MAFF or the Ministry of Environment is the lead government stakeholder. Limited government staff availability means the project competes for their time, risking the reversal of project benefits.

Environmental Risks - moderately severe risk depending upon which areas are impacted.

Climate Impacts: Typhoons, floods, volcanic activity, and coral bleaching events are increasing in frequency and intensity. A new model for identifying resilient reefs at a finer scale is expected, but current management interventions by National Hub members may be insufficient.

Pollution and Physical Damage: Sedimentation from mining and other onshore pollution sources continues to threaten coral reefs. The BCUs do not account for these external pressures, and it is unclear whether threat and opportunity reports have been mapped against the location of new BCUs. In Tanzania, communities perceive industrial fishing nets as causing coral damage.

Other risks — low risk if project resources are re-directed.

Lack of Cross-Country Learning: Without sharing lessons on common threats, sustainable financing mechanisms, or hub continuity, advances made by the project may not be consolidated and could be lost.

Overall Rating of Sustainability of Project Outcomes	Rating	Justification
Using above information, please provide an overall rating for the risks to sustainability of project outcomes.	<i>Likely</i>	Overall, when considering the risks to the outcomes of the project, mitigation measures can be taken to address most of them. The outcomes are for the overall project and there are seven countries that are contributing to the project achievements and benefits.

3.3. Gender Equality and Mainstreaming

3.3.1. Gender Assessment and Gender Mainstreaming - GAP

The GAP document's title Gender Mainstreaming Action Plan accurately reflects the scope of the GAP. The plan, in sections III and IV, recognizes that there are differences between countries in regard to the participation of men and women and addressing their different needs are important to achieve more favourable outcomes. The GAP's targets seek to mainstream gender within the implementation process of the project, for example considerations in ToRs and strategy documents, and through measuring the participation of women and to a lesser extent of youth. For the project activities, the GAP measures output level mainstreaming through the percentage of women and youth participation in activities. The project does aim to increase women's leadership participation in various activities, but it's not stated explicitly at the country level, equally well. The GAP would have benefitted from clearer actual action points, guidance or tools on how NTFs and their partners could increase and improve the quality of women's participation and inclusion.

GAP Implementation

The GAP provides 10 guiding rules for the CRR project. In general, the PMU and NTFs comply with the rules, but full implementation would require guidance of the NTFs on how best to incorporate them in the projects (See Annex 5.1d for more details on gender).

Gender in the RF disaggregation indicators is highlighted in table 12, and is inconsistent in the design: Core indicator 11 the target is 50%, in 1.1a, its' target is 30%, in 2.1a its' target 40% and 15% youth, in 2.2. its' target is 35% and finally indicator 3.1, its' target again is 30%. There is no rationale in the GAP for these different target values. It is mathematically challenging to have lower percentages lead into a higher percentage value. The participation of women and different age groups was not recorded consistently from the start of the project. The collection of sex-disaggregated data has gradually increased, but even with these considerations 46% of those beneficiaries with a known gender, are female.

The MOOC has attracted a total of 2027 enrollees, 1193 identified their gender, and 61% identified as female. There were 834 participants with an unspecified gender. The topics on women in marine conservation and other roles was appreciated by stakeholders, demonstrating that training modules are successfully shifting perceptions and may go on to encourage gender participation in local conservation activities.

Overall, the NTFs are promoting the inclusion of women in the project activities, but there is no detail yet on the quality of their participation, so that Gender and vulnerability mainstreaming may remain superficial and needs deeper integration. In Tanzania engaging women during meetings continues to be mentioned as a challenge. Observation however also indicates that given the opportunity, women do speak up in meetings or consultations, but this can vary by location. A member of academia was very positive when looking forward: *“I hope women are also involved (in the project). Traditionally they’ve been left behind, but nowadays a lot of them have come forward. Many women have woken up; there’s a lot of women participation now.”* This insight directly advances capacity and inclusion objectives and CRR’s gender-mainstreaming commitment. It shows that cultural and physical barriers remain, but targeted interventions, such as training, life-jackets, having female trainers and women’s leadership can be transformative entry points. The recognition of improvement demonstrates the social impact and empowerment potential when gender actions are deliberate and practical.

The quality of participation will be crucial in Component 3, which seeks to support to coral reef friendly businesses, in which women are identified as primary beneficiaries. Objective 5 and Objective 6 in the GAP emphasize the integration of coral reef initiatives into local institutional and financial mechanisms. Strengthening these ties could ensure post-project continuity and local ownership. One stakeholder noted their preference to work with women groups as funding channels because of their higher accountability compared to their own ¹⁷. While not a comprehensive gender strategy, this reflects an implicit acknowledgment of gender as a pathway for accountability. For CRR, this is an entry point to strengthen gender-responsive design, linking women’s leadership to effective resource management.

In their activity reports the NTFs apply different age categories hampering a unified presentation of the participation of youth or young people in project activities. The recording of age or age group of activity participants was introduced around the second year of implementation as an additional column on the participant registration forms. There is an opportunity for PMU to facilitate further discussions with the NTF teams to understand what youth participation means and why it is a meaningful measure of engagement quality and bridging intergenerational gaps and sustaining benefits.

A more detailed discussion of how gender is implemented in each country is discussed in Annex 5.1d. In general, engaging women in project activities has been challenged in several countries due to the local culture. Male community members are more likely to occupy leadership positions and thus invited for meetings and workshops. Consequently, the women depend on the echoing of any information, which can be incomplete and possibly incorrect. Both sexes in several countries indicated that activities directly in communities will increase the participation of women. Other stakeholders suggest including women or youth associations that can represent vulnerable groups, or in their absence establish them. Without deliberate strategies for women, vulnerable groups, and remote communities, the hub risks reinforcing existing silos and power imbalances. Overall, some countries lack inclusive participation and the project lacks community level benefits. This may change depending on how Component 3 is implemented. A continuing gender imbalance could undermine the project’s equity commitments.

Dedicated Resources: The only area where the Global budget has been dedicated to gender mainstreaming and inclusion has been in the development of the MOOC content. Care was contracted by the project for this. In terms of the NTFs; Tanzania has recruited a gender specialist for their GAP implementation. Madagascar has also just hired a GAP consultant. SI and Fiji have hired consultants to ensure gender inclusive approaches are mainstreamed into their project activities. The results of which have not yet been felt. However, outside of these, the NTFs do not have gender specialists assigned to the project nor do they have access to a gender advisor.

¹⁷ This is similar to findings from more comprehensive studies: https://www.macfound.org/media/article_pdfs/pb174_strengthenwomeninclusion_online.pdf

3.3.2. WWF Gender Policy Responsive Measures

The project complies with WWF and GEF's gender policies. Gender analyses were completed as part of the GAP. The GAP describes by country any gender differences in the access and utilization of marine resources. The project PMU and NTFs proactively aim for the equal participation of women in all of the activities, building on existing norms of affirmative action or purposely inviting women to events and trainings. A remaining challenge in some of the countries is that the quality of participation of women can be improved, and needs attention by the NTFs. However, there are no indications that activities exacerbate existing gender-related inequalities, or do harm to the position of women in their community or household.

In response to gender responsive measures CRR's RF includes Gender-Sensitive Indicators and gender-disaggregated targets. The collection of gender-disaggregated data was over time adopted by the NTFs, with full compliance at the time of the MTE. The gender-disaggregated data is presented in the PPRs and on the Coral Huddle, the online M&E data platform of the CRR project.

The PMU and NTF are aware of existing Gender Gaps in each of the countries. The CRR project mainstreams gender in its activities. Gender Gaps in resource access and use are acknowledged. To address a gap in benefits from resource use will require interventions that are beyond this project. Small achievements may be made if there are pilot investment projects in female led coral friendly businesses under Component 3.

3.4. Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder Engagement Plan

The SEP reviewed is an updated, post-inception workshop version of 2023 (Annex 5.6). The plan prescribes further revisions as needed per annual reflection meetings, but no further changes were made. The SEP presents the key stakeholders under each of the types for each country. The lists are elaborate, and all the stakeholder types are supposed to be represented in National Hubs, with CRR partners, alongside government. They are also expected to have seats on national and global steering committees. All groups are indicated as possible members of the National Hubs, and for some, like community organizations the outputs are mentioned where they should be explicitly involved and consulted. In addition, the document has a stakeholder analysis, describing for each their general role, and their relevance to the project.

The SEP includes a stakeholder analysis providing names, mandate, and relevance to an organisation to the project. It also provides a summary of who should be engaged and why, but beyond meetings like National Hubs the plan provides little guidance on how. A general notion is made towards communities that need to participate in 'visioning' exercises, and considerations that need to be made to ensure the views of women and other relevant groups are taken seriously. Examples given are the deployment of capacitated, inclusive and gender-sensitive project teams, and project activities, which are accessible to women and other relevant groups, considering location, timing, transportation etc. The SEP does not provide examples of strategies and approaches on how to improve participation and quality of consultations, for example the use of Participatory Rural Appraisal techniques or workshop facilitation skills.

SEP Implementation:

Without exception all of the countries aim to work with the relevant government agencies. This is perceived easier in Tanzania with a government agency as the NTF, improving the outreach to colleagues in other agencies. In the other countries some key ministries are involved, but in none of the National Hubs there is representation of the Ministry of Women or youth, or equivalent agency. National women networks or those representing other vulnerable groups also do not have a fixed seat on the national Hubs. With the possible exception of Tanzania, the countries do not seem to have tapped in the list of stakeholders, or the reason behind their exclusion is not documented. Table 16 below summarizes the representation of the different stakeholder types in the present composition of the National Hub, associated TWGs or other support groups.

Table 16. Different Stakeholder Types in each National Hub, associated TWGs and other support groups.

National Country	Hub	National government entities	Local/Regional government representatives	NGOs	IPs & Local Community Orgs.	Private Sector Stakeholders	Academic & Research Institutions
Fiji			Provincial Coordinators		NROCs		
Indonesia							
Madagascar							
Philippines	No formal project activities have started yet – NH is expected to be composed of the CTC-NCC members.						
Solomon Islands							
Tanzania							

Only two of the National Hubs (Tanzania and Indonesia) include members from the private sector beyond environmental consultants, and none include regular engagement with the tourism sector. The Ministry of Tourism did attend the last Fijian National Hub meeting. Stakeholders considered missing from some of the Hubs are: Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Women, FLMMMA Network (Fijian Locally Managed Marine Areas), the inter-denominations - the religious groups, Navy and BMKG (National Climate Agency), Tourism, and Fisheries. See Annex 5.1d for further detailed survey evidence on Stakeholder Engagement.

The project has established in several countries the harmonization of coral data collection and storage, as a direct result of increased collaboration between key ministries, NGOs and technical experts. Tanzania was able to establish collaboration between ministries, NGOs, and scientists through the National Action Plan and the Coral Reef Task Force. This is a major contribution to CRR's governance and partnership outcomes. The creation of shared databases, joint decision-making, and cross-sectoral representation shows that trust and coordination are improving, transforming previously fragmented data ownership into a collaborative governance culture. It confirms progress toward CRR's objective of strengthening stakeholder networks for integrated reef management. The limited engagement of stakeholders in Fiji and the Solomon Islands indicate that improvements should be possible without a large effort.

Responses to the surveys indicate the level of stakeholder satisfaction participating in workshops, policy development and the establishment of the Hub and TWGs. Figure 3 below visualizes the various levels of satisfaction for the survey of NTF participants in project activities. It shows the level of satisfaction in the various stakeholder engagement activities, taken from the view point of the NTFs themselves. Where level 5 is most satisfied, and level 1 is least satisfied. Level 0 means that the activity has not taken place yet. What is shown is the average level of satisfaction in each activity per country. Out of the respondents more than 90% participated in Workshops and meetings, and 68 – 86% in Hub and TWG related activities. Leaving Madagascar and Philippines results as being reflective of implementation delays in these countries, most other activities have scored above level 4. There is room for improvement, but most NTFs are satisfied with the quality of their engagement activities in the project. There is room to discuss with Indonesia why their satisfaction scores are less than 4 in four areas of activities. Equally Solomon Islands scored level 2 satisfaction in terms of the workshops and training, and this needs to be clarified with the team.

Figure 3: Average Participant Satisfaction per Activity per Country

Country	# of answers by country	Workshops & Training	Project Governance	Project Management	Knowledge Sharing	National Hub Meetings	Validation Workshops	Other Activities
Fiji	2	4.5	4.5	4.5	4	5	4.5	2
Indonesia	5	4.2	3.6	3.6	4	4	3.2	3.6
Madagascar	1	2	1	2	3	2	1	2
Philippines	1	0	0	1	2	2	0	2
Solomon Islands	2	2.5	4.5	4.5	4	4.5	4	2.5
Tanzania	3	4.3	4.3	4.7	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3

Progress reports indicate that expenses and time constraints have challenged stakeholder availability for activities. As a remedy, countries decided to maximize stakeholder availability by conducting several activities within one workshop or meeting, and where appropriate hold virtual meetings. The effectiveness of the gatherings in terms of participant learning are rarely measured, and having 5 major topics in a half day, as documented in Tanzania, does suggest that sessions may be superficial, and discussion and participation interaction limited. A session in one of Tanzania's target districts was not pursued as planned, thus the expected actual observation was not conducted. Another issue, certainly in Fiji, but this may be more widespread, is ensuring that documents or materials are sent in advance to the participants so they can prepare having read and reviewed those documents.

In an inquiry in the survey looking at whether the project processes enable people's participation, 77% of the 30 respondents were positive. In Indonesia community participation is through partners or intermediaries, and it was suggested that community groups should be provided with direct opportunities to share their views and experience. Fiji enabled this successfully through facilitating early on a community visioning workshop. Community members in Tanzania and Fiji expressed the same desire to participate in the project, learn more, and in particular have community level activities. A long-term commitment to communities supports the need for the National Hub and a National Action Plan. Stakeholders need to plan together, coordinate and prioritize their resources to reach communities. In Tanzania for example the country is vast, and important coral reefs spread across different parts of the country. There are numerous NGOs active on the ground in awareness raising and coral restoration that can coordinate at the national level, as well as within local hubs, to support the National or local action plan.

The National Hub is a key strategy for stakeholder engagement. The Hubs are key to participatory governance of the project and hopefully coordinating coral reef restoration initiatives beyond the project. The hubs and their members play crucial roles in guiding the project implementation and its different components, ensuring that stakeholders continuously are involved in the project. From the themed responses 11% indicate the importance of the national Hub as a step to improved coordination and collaboration between stakeholders. *"The inauguration of the national plan of the Coral Reef, the big milestone that we have reached. Also, we have the hub... NH and local hub... this is a big achievement because we have a place where all stakeholders work together."*

The National Hub for Coral Reefs are praised for their focus and strong links to the government and existing policies; 10% of the themed responses voice the strength of national ownership the project establishes. Dialogues at Hubs build trust between communities and the national government. This is a major CRR objective; bridging local and national governance. Evidence that trust is growing shows the hub is working as a social contract mechanism, which is essential for resilience, compliance, and long-term conservation outcomes.

Practical initiatives themed around common challenges can also strengthens trust. The collaborative effort to collect, analyse, and publish national coral reef data under a unified framework demonstrates the project's ability to overcome traditional silos between government agencies, scientific institutions, and NGOs. By building a shared evidence base, *"we collect many data, analyse together"*, the project fosters transparency, joint ownership, and credibility of information among partners.

3.5. Safeguards Review

3.5.1. Safeguard Risk Design

The project is in compliance with WWF Environmental and Social Safeguards Framework (ESSF), as detailed in WWF's Environmental and Social Safeguard Integrated Policies and Procedures (SIPP). The GEF CRR Project was screened according to the Standard on Environmental and Social Risk Management and was categorized

as a Low Risk/Category "C" project, given that it is a global technical assistance project. As such, the project does not have a safeguards mitigation plan.

The PPRs for year 1 and 2 do not report any environmental and social concerns resulting from the project, and **a Category "C" categorization for the CRR project appears correct for the implementation to date.** For environmental aspects this is in particular the case, the project is only expected to have a positive impact on the environment. In regard to social concerns, some caution should be in place. The NTF in Tanzania, MPRU, is taking the opportunity of CRR to introduce an MPA in one of the districts. It is not yet clear whether project funds will be allocated to this, or other funds used¹⁸. There is some confusion, and concerns on how an MPA will affect the livelihood of communities. The confusion roots in the insufficient exposure of the MPRU team in the field and explaining the relation of the project and an MPA, and the impact that an MPA might have on the communities. Caution needs to be taken and simple mitigation by awareness raising should be conducted. This may be a lesson for Component 3 in which the NTFs will work with selected groups of community members or businesses. Without clarity this could create mistrust and conflict among communities. Transparency needs to be key when potential projects are identified in the investment portfolios, and mitigation measures identified. The implementation of small on the ground projects with businesses and communities are within the examples of Category "Medium" in WWF's ESSF. The environmental and social impacts that potential businesses could have are not identified in the Global and country specific studies conducted for Component 3 by Terranomics. General mitigation planning for potential social risks could be meaningful if it is included in the portfolio development process.

A grievance redress mechanism (GRM) was designed to enable the receipt of complaints. As described in the SEP it is designed 'to address the concerns of the community(ies) with a particular project, identify the root causes of the conflicts, and find options for the resolution of grievances. WWF distinguishes country level and project level GRMs, with the former providing a forum to directly deliver grievances and concerns to the GEF WWF US office. A grievance email was assigned at the design stage (namely SafeguardsComplaints@wwfus.org), and the project itself, also had a dedicated email to receive feedback from stakeholders at the design stage (namely: pmucomplaints.crri@uq.edu.au). Subsequently they have a page on the [UQ website about grievance](#), and who you can contact. Not only is the WWF email mentioned, the project email (pmu.crri@uq.edu.au) is given and the GEF conflict resolution contact provided. It should be noted from observation this information is not always put up during the National Hub meetings. The 46 stakeholder interviews include 12 themed responses related to the grievance mechanism. The majority, 58% were negative responses, stating unawareness with the grievance mechanism in this project, or heard about it, but not familiar how it works within this project. The positive responses include still a few that refer to a local, traditional, grievance system, not one of the national or global project. The grievance system needs more socialization, in particular among communities. The PPRs report that there have been no complaints filed yet through the mechanism, which could be due to unfamiliarity, or grievances being dealt with differently and thus go unrecorded. For community members any mechanism would also need to be accessible in the local languages.

3.5.2. Environmental and Social Risks

In general, no environmental and social risks have been identified. A common response in interviews is that everybody will benefit. *"I don't think so... the management or the action plans will consider all groups... I don't think anyone will be left behind."*

However, the restrictions that protection measures, even if seasonal, on certain parts of reefs or surrounding areas, have raised concerns among some evaluation participants. For example, even just temporary closure for octopus the fisherfolk, including women, may be left out. *"Some of these fishers who need to fish within the area which are not allowed... when you put more force on conserving this area... they might need to use illegal fishing gears... Also, maybe the women and the youth who depend on fishing of the octopus... they may*

¹⁸ If the Project funds are used to create the MPA, then ESS requirements will be needed.

think or feel as if they are left behind because of some [kind] of closure [of reefs].” This reveals trade-offs inherent in reef protection policies. While promoting resilience, enforcement can create short-term socio-economic tensions. This underscores the need for socially sensitive transition strategies, such as alternative livelihoods and participatory management, to prevent exclusion of vulnerable groups. PMU needs to facilitate cross country discussions around these topics as part of the learning and sharing themes going forward.

3.5.3. Beneficiary Criteria

The CRR project has not established specific beneficiary criteria. The PIF identifies everyone who received direct support from project activities, men and women, as beneficiaries. This includes, but is not limited to government officials, practitioners, academia and local communities, and participants in national coral hubs, and other platforms.

As noted in Table 16 above, the NTFs success to include different stakeholder types in the consultations and national hub development varies. Also, the total number of beneficiaries for GEF indicator 11 is monitored but not disaggregated by beneficiary group. One NTF indicates that a criterion that evolved is the motivation and willingness of National Steering Committee and National Hub members to champion the project and its mandate. It can take time to find the particular individuals within agencies that take on that role.

Component 3 will have a more proactive engagement with women, and coral friendly business led by women. NTFs have indicated that to be able to start with a number of businesses during this project some level of capacity should be in place. No list of criteria has been established yet, but it should include formal registration and administrative capacity.

3.5.4. Unforeseen Environmental or Social Impact Risks

No additional safeguards documents were provided to the MTE team, or documents monitoring the safeguards. In the absence of complaints filed to the GRM no review or response needed to be conducted.

3.5.5. Lessons Learnt and Shared

So far there have been no lessons or shared exchanges on this theme. However, as examined above there is potential for this going forward in terms of understanding the benefits and possible risks to developing and supporting coral friendly businesses and those that are led by women or owned by women. To consider the differences between equitable approaches and equality in the context of the various cultures that are present in the six countries.

3.6. Finance and Co-finance review

Financial Management

Overall, the project is well managed financially, despite the challenges faced. The lowest dispersal has been in the “grants & agreements” category, which has only spent so far 20%. This does not reflect the amount pipelined, but it is noted that this reflects the delays in setting up contracts and getting agreements with the NTFs in the 6 project implementation countries. Only 30% of the total budget has actually been spent whereas 56% is earmarked for spending. There remain sufficient funds for a 6 month extension to project activities and 3 months for a transition phase to wind down the reporting on this project or set up a phase 2.

Table 17.: Project Spend per Category and Component from the Project Start April 2023 to Oct 2025

Cost Categories	Total Spend to Date	Approved /Obligated Budget	% Spend of Total Project Budget Available	By Components	Total Spend to Date	% Obligated spending against Total Project Budget
Personnel	530,112	691,474	64%	C:1	592,182	85%
Third Party Fees & Expenses	352,993	396,041	66%	C:2	728,813	61%
Grants & Agreements	1,106,837	2,709,710	20%	C:3	203,695	27%
Travel, Meetings & Workshops	93,247	76,344	70%	C:4	378,581	54%
Other Direct Costs	0	0	0%	PM Costs	182,901	73%
Equipment	2,983	3,000	119%			
Administrative Costs	0	0	0%			
Total	\$2,086,172	\$3,876,569	\$6,925,000	Total	\$2,086,172	
Percentages	54% spent of the approved budget	56% of total available has been approved for spending	30% of the total project budget has been spent			

When the spend patterns are considered across components; Component 3 spend is low because it only just started implementation in Year 3. The obliged budget spent for this component is only 27% of the total budget allocated and is still too low for Year 3 planned spending (blue and orange area of the bar).

Graph 3: Total Spend vs Approved Budget for Each Component

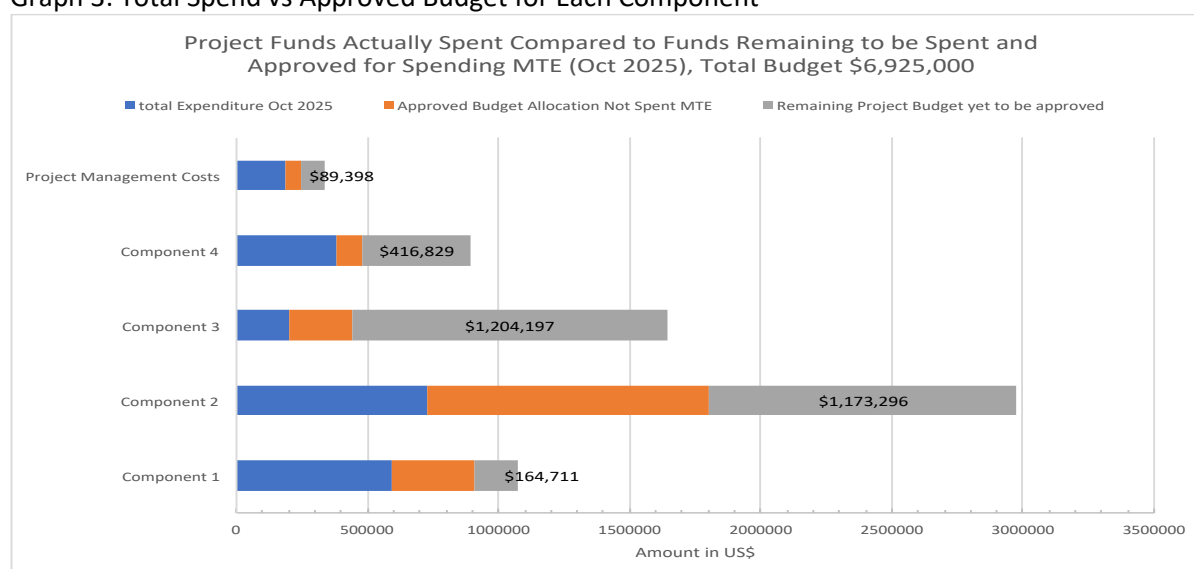


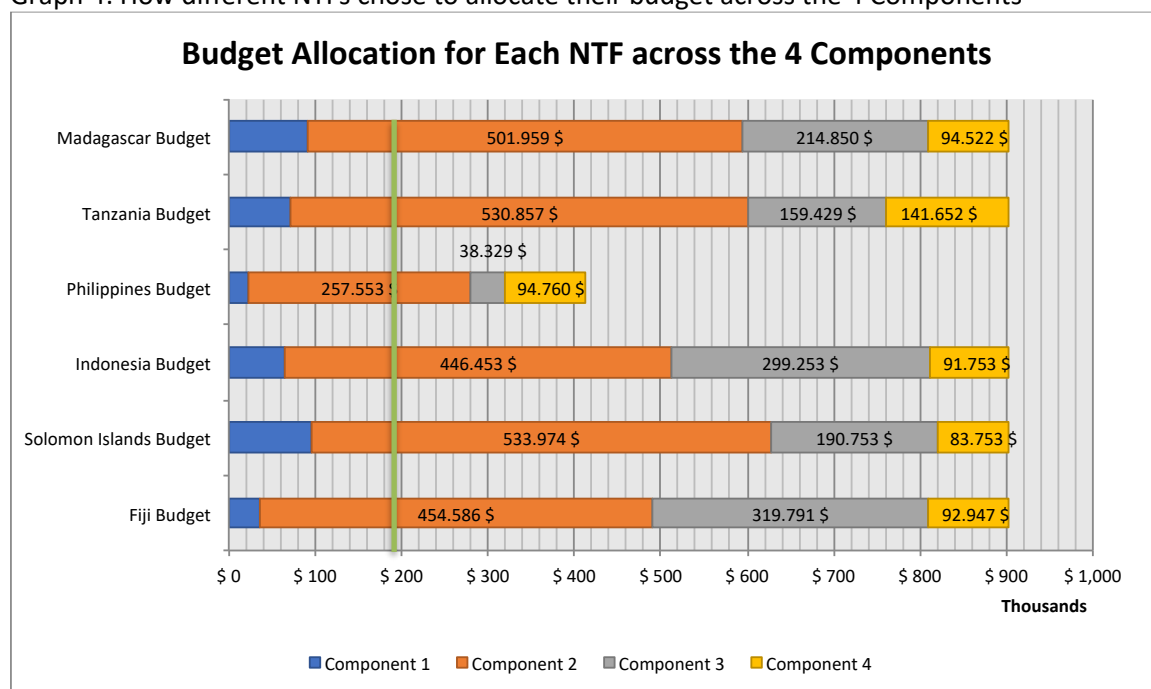
Table 18 below illustrates the contracts and grants managed by UQ. Most of the contracts have been for Component 1 development activities, there remains plans to develop a French translation of the courses. There have been 5 grants to the NTFs to deliver mainly Component 2 work, but activities are spread across various components. UQ has not been able to disperse all the grant allocated funding because the NTFs have not spent what they have already received or pipelined what they plan to spend.

Table 18.: Contracts and Grants to individual consultants and organisations

Type	Names or Initials	2023-2024	24-2025	25-2026
Number of Contracts	C4: M&E, PaloIT, Global - Coral Huddle C2: T&O, Dr Nsajigwa Mbije, Tanz (11,200,000 TSH)	3	6	
Total Under Contracts	C1: MOOC, Dr Dwi Haryanti, INDO language version C1: MOOC, Mibu Fischer, Global - Traditional knowledge C1: MOOC, Dr. Manuel Gonzalez Rivero, Global - Data, monitoring C1: MOOC, Louise Lieberknecht, Global - Blue Economy C1: MOOC, Klaas de Voss, Global - Blue Economy C1: MOOC, Diana Kaekebeke, Global- Climate vulnerability Cap analysis C1: MOOC, Thuy-Binh Nguyen, Global- Climate vulnerability Cap analysis C1: MOOC, Pranati Mohanraj, Global - Gender sensitivity	\$94,068	\$45,904	
Number of Grants	C2: NTF: Yayasan Pantau Terumbu Indonesia	5		1 pending
Total under grants	NTF. Indonesia C2: NTF: WCS Fiji NTF - Fiji C2: NTF: WCS Solomon Islands NTF - Solomon Islandss C2: NTF: Marine Parks and Reserve Unit (Tanzania) NTF - Tanzania C2: NTF: WCS Madagascar NTF- Madagascar	\$4,516,500		Not Known
	Subtotals	\$4,610,568	\$45,904	
	Total		\$465,472	

A more granular analysis is required to consider the country specific spending patterns, see below in graph 4.

Graph 4: How different NTFs chose to allocate their budget across the 4 Components



Graph 4 shows that budget allocation across the 4 components varied according to the priorities of each country, although the largest proportion of funds have been allocated to deliver inclusive National Action Plans based on scientific data as well as increased collaboration and coordination activities. In hindsight this seems rather a large budget allocation for policy advocacy work as there are only so many workshops stakeholders can participate in and ensure quality engagement. Some countries may find it difficult to spend this allocation especially if they are consolidating or building on previous studies (e.g. from CTI). The planning activities for year 4 and beyond need to review the detailed number of workshop when, to ensure NTFs can be realistic about what funds they will use and resources be re-allocated if need be.

3.6.1. Cost Effectiveness and Cost Efficiency

As noted above the project is well managed as the following Table 19 demonstrates per component and PMC. The efficiency ratio of this project is almost 1, which tells us that the money spent is being spent responsibly in the way that is planned and approved. Not all the activities are at 100% delivery, there have been delays, but what is being planned, is being spent to deliver the activities in the AWP. The gap between the amount spent and what is expected at this time in the MTE, reflects the 6 month implementation delay.

Table 19.: Project Financial Summary Data, Including Efficiency Ratios as of end of Oct 2025

Project Component	\$ Expenditure to date at MTE ¹⁹	A. % Expenditure for Project Year at MTE ²⁰	B. % Activity Implementation for Project Year ²¹	% Spent against total Project Budget ²²	IP Ratings (based on A and B %s)	Efficiency Ratio (B/A)
C: 1	592,182	65%	63%	55%	S	1
C: 2	728,813	40%	43%	25%	MS	1.1
C: 3	203,695	46%	15%	12%	MU	0.3
C: 4	378,581	79%	48%	42%	MU	0.6
PMC	182,901	75%	80%	55%	S	1
Total	\$2,086,172	54%	57%	30%	MS	1

Table 20.: Future Budget Available

Project Component	Remaining Project Budget yet to be approved	% Remaining Total Budget for Y3 Q3&4, Year 4: 26-27
C: 1: Global to local capacity strengthening for climate refuge coral reef monitoring and conservation	\$164,711	15%
C: 2: Planning for climate refuge coral reef rescue at the national level:	\$1,173,296	39%
C: 3: Financial solutions for climate refuge coral reef rescue:	\$1,204,197	73%
C: 4: Knowledge Management and Monitoring and Evaluation:	\$416,829	47%
PMC	\$89,398	27%
Total	\$3,048,431	44%

The remaining budget is unevenly spread, Table 20. The time remaining from October, is 18 months, with a six month extension there would be 24 implementation months. Both Component 2 and 3 still have large amounts left, although not necessarily a large remaining percentage of their budget. Initially Component 2 may need to be allocated and although Component 3 is yet to start in earnest and there are a significant

¹⁹ total spend per component

²⁰ Percent of total spent per component as compared to the budget approved in Annual Workplan and Budget.

²¹ Average achievement (%) of activity indicator targets per component in the Annual Workplan and Budget for year 3, Quarter 2.

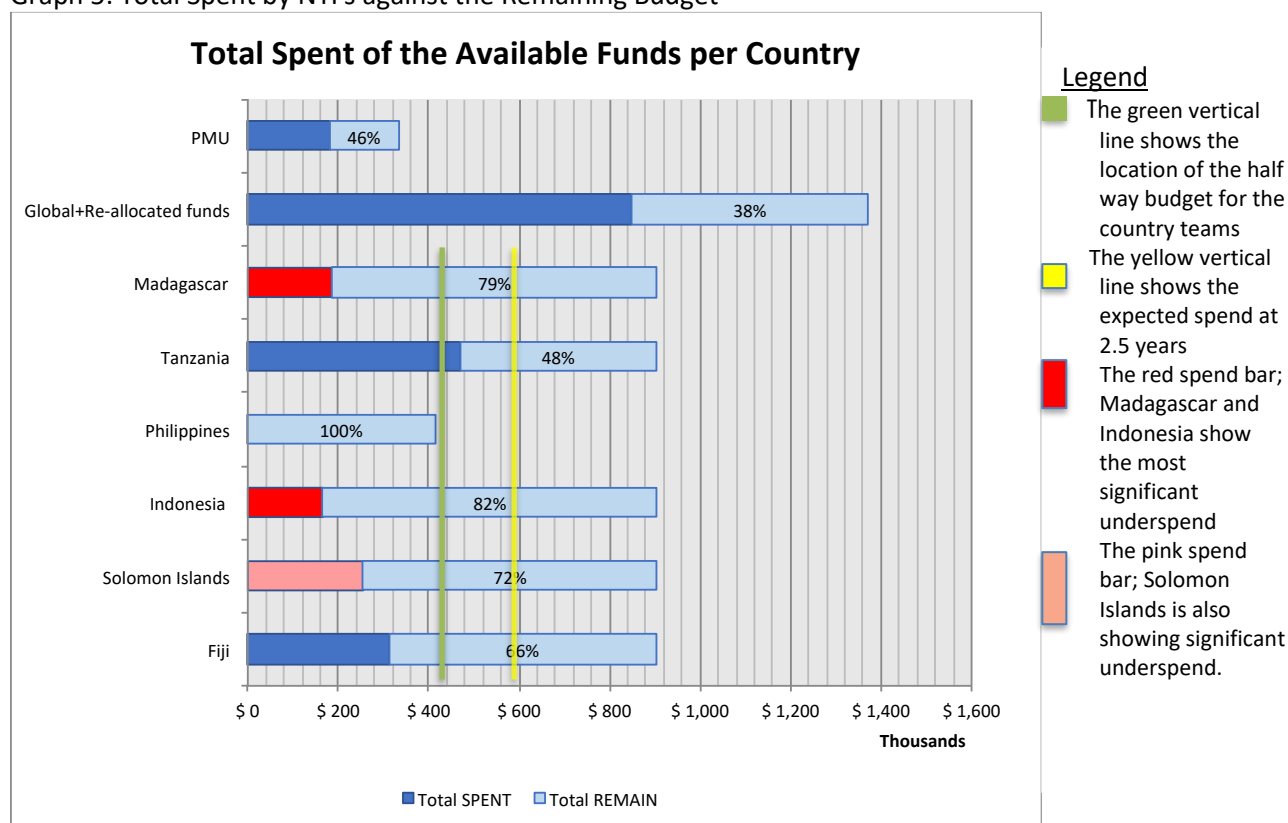
²² Percent of total spent per component as compared to the Project budget approved in Pro-Doc.

number of technical analyses planned, there may be room to reallocate budget to other areas that will help deliver on the overall outcomes for the project.

3.6.2. Project Burn Rates

Country NTF spending patterns are below in graph 5, where the green line is where the halfway spend amount would be, and the yellow line shows where the 2.5yrs MTE expected spend amount. This is approximate, but the % remaining spend in each of the countries or areas is based on the figures. The bar for the amount spent is darker blue, but for the three countries showing the lowest amounts spent.

Graph 5: Total Spent by NTFs against the Remaining Budget



Those with the largest underspend; Administrative challenges early on, (e.g. the CRRI focal point naming DENR in the SPA letter rather than PCSD) created knock on delays for the project in terms of the Philippines taking so long to become operational. The Philippines has now adjusted its budget to that of half its original allocated budget. It still has not started spending the budget, it would have to have a burn rate of over \$22K per month over 18months, or \$16K/month with an extended deadline. Although this is not impossible, it is unlikely, we strongly suggest from a financial perspective that more than one NTF is considered and a national level partner is subcontracted either via PCSD or directly with UQ with the permission of DENR, to support its national level policy and awareness work.

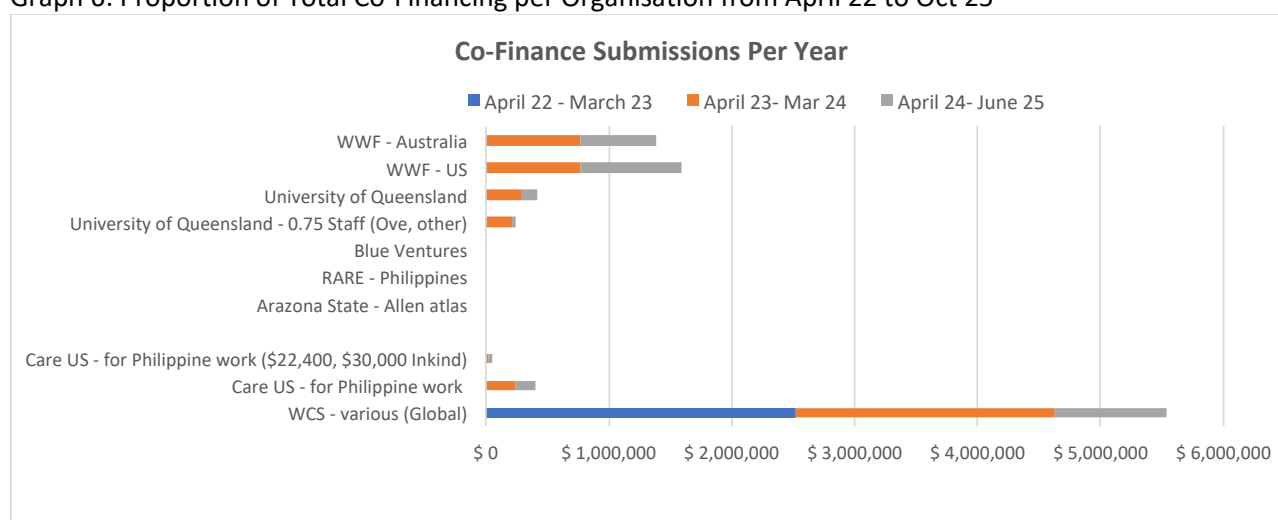
Indonesia and Madagascar (the red bars for total spent) will catch up to an extent with another 6 months extension, however for both countries there is expected to be significant underspend which should be directed to hiring a Stakeholder engagement expert through a consultancy to support the NTF team to deliver on the outcomes with regional stakeholder and targeted engagements between working group or national hub meetings. Indonesia, given its large size and the large underspend two to three stakeholder engagement experts (one west and one eastern region) could support Reef check to engage the various sectors (private, NGO and community sectors) and support the NTF to deliver central region outcomes and National. Using the budget in this way would ensure support without over inflating the NTF PM costs.

Graph 7 in Annex 5.1f illustrates the pending patterns in more detail across each component for each country. We would be pleased if this helped guide PMU with conversations with its NTFs regarding realistic budget reallocation going forward.

3.6.3. Co-Finance Reported

The following table and graph show how much co-finance commitments have been actualised over the project period and when and by whom. The activities behind these commitments are strategically aligned as they are complementing either coral conservation work at the community level, or data collection or providing direct in-kind support to provide technical support, administer the project activities and house the team (UQ). A significant amount of co-financing for this project has been in the form of grants that strategically complement the work, most significantly by WCS global and regional offices that are prioritizing their commitment to Coral conservation. WCS Global team has developed the Mermaid model that refines the 50 plus refuge reef identification model, the basis of this GEF project through grants from various sources. This model will be available on the project data platform.

Graph 6: Proportion of Total Co-Financing per Organisation from April 22 to Oct 25



This list however does not represent the level of global commitment to Coral Conservation across the six countries that compliments this project. It has been challenging for the team to obtain letters of endorsement from all the organisations that made commitments during the design phase of the project.

Table 21.: Summary of the Type of Co-Financing Committed to the Project to Date

Organisation	Amount Recieved	Expected or Committed	% recieved
Grants level of Cofinancing	\$5,950,088	\$6,403,191	93%
• WCS Global	\$5,542,157	\$5,451,637	102%
• Care US – Philippines	\$407,931	\$951,554	43% or 51% if * is included
In-kind Level of Cofinancing	\$3,682,259	\$20,740,210	18%
WWF – US (not stated Y1, Green Climate Fund Y2)	\$1,597,191	\$16,840,000	9%
WWF – Australia (CRRI)	\$1,380,576	\$2,198,251	63%
Care US – Philippines	\$52,400*	None as commitment was grant	51% if included
University of Queensland – C1: 0.75 Staff	\$239,522	\$1,019,842	23%
University of Queensland – M&E Costs	\$412,570	\$682,117	60%
	\$9,632,347	\$27,143,401	35%
Commitments Made but Not Actualised	Reason	\$44,395,133	0%

• Arizona State - Allen Coral Atlas	No Response to letter	\$20,500,000	0
• RARE - <i>Philippines</i>	No Response to letter	\$1,001,778	0
• Blue Ventures	Alasdair Harris has moved, BV not able to provide statement of the actual amount	\$22,893,355	0

The total commitments made, but not actualised comes to approximately \$44.4 million US, over half of the co-financing total, see Table 21 above. From the discussions with WWF CRRI and UQ, it is highly unlikely that Allen Coral Atlas or Blue Ventures are ever going to provide co-financing commitment letters as the former relationships with these organisations has been ruptured due to personnel moving onto other organisations. Allen Coral Atlas project has come to an end as well. The percentage achieved in terms of co-finance commitments actualised versus made is 13% (total being approx. \$71 million US committed). However, if these three planned commitment totals are removed from the co-finance target, the new total would be approximately \$27 million US. This is a substantial amount of co-financing to aim for a \$7 Million GEF funded project. Whereas a \$71 million co-finance target is over ambitious to the point of being unrealistic. The funding climate has significantly changed for Ocean conservation work since this project was designed and approved. We are satisfied that a new co-finance target should be adopted, but this may require further discussion with the GEF.

It should be noted that a total of 35% cofinancing can be said to have been committed so far (adjusting commitment target) but it still does not reflect the potential or amount of supportive and complementary activities that WWF network, WCS and CI are providing in a number of the countries. WWF CRRI stated that the Network (i.e. via WWF UK) provides financial support to their country focal points, and it is paid via WWF Australia. Anecdotal evidence from the global team developing the MOOCs stated they had help from WWK UK Blue Economy expert²³, but they would not provide a co-finance letter when asked. It is clear that Co-financing is not well understood, even by WWF network or other international NGOs. This is a gap.

3.7. Assessment of Knowledge Management

The project has a number of elements to be considered in this section, 1) Component 4: Awareness and Knowledge Management, 2) Component 1: three Online MOOC courses and 3) Quality of the outputs/reports and knowledge products produced by the project

3.7.1. KM Design and Implementation

Design approach

This component was designed to focus on strengthening support for climate refuge reefs and reach out to raise awareness to actors and institutions that have the most influence and impact on climate refuge reefs to ensure their survival. It wanted to create spaces for communities to share their own realities, their reliance on cultural and traditional ties to climate refuge reefs, using their own voices.

The project was designed to actively participate in and contribute to IW:Learn, including PMU attendance at regional meetings, the GEF IW Conference, and twinning exchanges. A commitment was made to have the project website hosted by the IW:Learn, so it could be linked and searchable through IW: LEARN's International Waters Information Management System. This would then allow it to be used to disseminate project results internationally and to relevant practitioners.

There was a strong emphasis to provide local communities the opportunity to share their wealth of traditional and indigenous knowledge within their countries and beyond. Focusing on the climate refuge reefs in priority areas, the project will support local communities to share their histories, customs and cultures through their own voices, ways of knowing and valuing. Narratives, lessons and experiences generated were to be shared through the knowledge platform and capacity strengthening activities under Component 1, through meetings of the National Hub (Component 2), with investors and government officials in the awareness raising activities

²³ The evaluators were not able to ask Louise Heaps the reason for this, due to time constraints.

under Component 3 as well as regionally and globally through the IW:LEARN meetings, GEF International Waters Conference and other relevant events and platforms.

The project design document also stated it wanted a strong approach on knowledge management, learning and, in general, strengthening capacities of national institutions and would be designed considering existing institutional capacities. Evidence suggests that the project is on track to meet these design intentions. There were some challenges initially with hosting of the online courses, but this has now been resolved. The exception is the availability of project materials in French, Bahasa Indonesian has been covered to an extent because UQ has experience with working in Indonesia and pushed to establish that they really needed the online courses in their own language or there would be no uptick from Indonesia. The Madagascan team were not as explicit, none of the NTFs teams were, but as the project has progressed and the success of the online courses has become clear, they are requesting the availability of community friendly materials. Meeting this request at this stage is now outside the possibilities of this project, but needs to be considered in any further iteration. However, like Indonesia, Madagascar's working language for government is French or Malagasy, English is understood but it is a communication barrier.

3.7.2. Knowledge Activities and Products

- Three out of four online courses (MOOC) are actively engaging with participants.
- The Global team have produced a Communication Strategy and distributed it to the country teams and is now reviewing the communication strategies specifically designed by the NTFs. Madagascar, Tanzania, Indonesia and Solomon Islands strategies are in draft form being commented on by the global team. Fiji also has a draft strategy being reviewed by its NH members.
- Communication Strategy and Social Change Workshops facilitated by UQ Global team in Indonesia and Fiji (with Solomon Islands participation) and Tanzania (with Madagascan team participation)
- A project specific website has been developed (using the IW:Learn platform) as a mechanism to enhance visibility of the project and an informal WhatsApp group has been established to enable informal sharing between countries.
- The project team (PMU, NTFs and Government focal Ministry representatives from Fiji and Indonesia and WWF GEF Agency) represented the GEF CRR project at the IWC10. This provided an opportunity to network and share the national hub approach with fellow IW colleagues.

Participants in the IWC10 were able to interact with the PMU and take a short quiz on coral reef science to further engagement with the project in a CRR booth that was designed and run by PMU.

- Participation in two regional conferences; WIOMSA (with PMU, Tanzania, and Madagascar) and the Pacific Islands Ocean conference in Honiara (PMU, Global teams, Fiji and Solomon Islands)

Review of Knowledge Products – Project Deliverables

Online MOOCs: All are accessed through the lwlearn.net hosted project site, having moved from edX site. There is slight confusion as 104 suggests you register for edX Edge site.

- CRR1 101x Coral Reefs: [Challenges and Solutions](#)
- CRR1 102x Coral Reefs: Data and Monitoring
- CRR1 103x Coral Reefs: [Sustainable Blue Economy](#)
- CRR1 104x Coral Reefs: [Climate Resilient Communities](#)

These courses are also accessed through the [WWF CRR1 website via their knowledge hub](#), however the landing page does not acknowledge the project neither GEF. It does mention GEF and UQ in the about the hub section.

MOOC Recommendations: Several key point have been drawn from the MTE team member who participated in the online courses as a user to understand the full experience and these are presented in Annex 5.1g. The courses were completed over several weeks in a part-time capacity. They are of high quality and very engaging, noting the way gender and vulnerable voices are given prominence. Two of the several points made emphasized the need for more languages to be available and the info graphics and videos to be in downloadable format. A lot more detail is given in the Annex 5.1g.

Online GEF Project Knowledge Tools

- GEF CRR [Coral Reef Rescue Portal](#): the site has a couple of ways to get to the data sets; via a questionnaire or via filters.
- GEF CRR [Site map showing the location of the BCUs](#) and the communities that are engaged with the project via their NTFs.
- GEF CRR Coral Huddle²⁴: [Public facing portal](#), to see what the NTFs and PMU see you need to be a registered user.

Websites:

There are a number of websites where the project details appear.

1. UQ Global Partnership Webpage: [GEF 7 Coral Reef Rescue](#): Resilient Reefs Resilient Communities: has information about GEF 7 project, CRR, and the grievance process. Also has several news articles, a link the courses and the project document download.
2. IWLearn.net hosted project webpage: GEF 7 [Coral Reef Rescue Project landing page](#) with tabs taking you to about the project, Countries involved, News articles, the online learning and the coral reef rescue portal as well as knowledge sharing.
3. Reef Check Indonesia: [GEF 7 Coral Reef Rescue](#) project webpage: Grievance mechanism mention is on the page, but no link
4. ICRI Forum Website: International Coral Reef Initiative [GEF 7 Coral Reef Rescue](#) Data Portal link and Project website link

Knowledge Products Assessed

The Project has produced 28 other knowledge products: 8 articles, 6 news posts, 4 reports, 8 social media related posts and 2 newsletters. 17 were produced by the global team, 7 by Fijian partners, 4 by Solomon Islands partners, 2 by Tanzanian partners and 1 by the Philippines' partners. There was nothing on this list noted by Madagascar partners, however after searching, WSC Madagascar has [a facebook page about the project](#) in french. It should be noted that WCS does not have a link to the project on its global coral reef website, although it is a delivery partner in three of the six countries.

There were 8 products listed in the last PPR, however, this is an underestimation of the documents reviewed by the MTE team, these are in Annexes 5.1g and 5.6. The list and summaries of the 74 publications reviewed by the MTE team are provided in the Annex 5.6 . It should be noted that not all the documents are easily accessible through Coral Huddle, although that is the idea; some teams are less diligent in posting documents into the system. Out of 83 documents provided, 74 were considered relevant to assess using the scale: Highly Satisfactory, Satisfactory, Moderately Satisfactory, Moderately Unsatisfactory, Unsatisfactory and Highly Unsatisfactory.

Table 22.: Summary of the Documents Assessed by Country

Country	HS	S	MS	MUS	US	HUS	Total
Design Documents	3	1	1				5
Global	3	9	5	1			17
Fiji			3	1	5		9
Solomon Islands			2	2			4
Philippines							0
Indonesia		4	1	1			6
Madagascar					2	1	3
Tanzania	1	11	6	8	3		29
	7 (9%)	25 (34%)	18 (24%)	13 (18%)	10 (14%)	1 (1%)	74

²⁴ There is a separate WWF CRRI coral huddle that is separate and distinct, although a majority of the GEF CRR Project activities do link to the CRRI coral huddle and complete activities/outputs when the GEF Project has completed them. The CRRI focal points in-country (WWF staff) are the registered users of the CRRI coral huddle and have greater admin access.

The project has produced a significant number of reports so far, 50 (67%) of which were either of high or good quality (HS, S or MS). The lack of an output list meant it was difficult to select all of the relevant documents or know what to ask for, some reports were just documenting a process, but were loaded into the Coral Huddle. There was no guidance (as far as we can tell) from PMU in terms of what structure to use or what is expected from these outputs in terms of cover and what evidence they need to include within the report, this may have been done verbally through the regular conversations. The overall evidence expected for each activity is in a column in the AWP and is also repeated in coral huddle.

The Needs assessment, communication strategy and the Terranomics progress year 3 progress report scored highly satisfactory for example, as did the Tanzanian harmonization of needs document. Other knowledge products, a series of economic analysis benchmark reports carried out at a global scale and as sectoral analysis for each country. There were two key concerns; 1) for all of them there needed to be a spatial sense of where the impacts and the opportunities or examples are located, so they can be assessed in relation to the BCUs for each country and 2) the country specific reports did not acknowledge the small scale nature of the economic activities in coastal communities in most of these countries. This limits how useful they can be to the NTFs. We note that the methodology acknowledged that the reports were not based on field work, but mainly desk review based. More detailed analysis can be found in Annex 5.6. It would be helpful to NTFs and consultants to have guidance on what outputs may contain and critical feedback mechanism to ensure good quality analysis and outputs are produced. Common characteristics of the reports to note:

- **No Executive Summaries to longer reports:** Reports should include concise 1–2 page summaries highlighting key points.
- **Lack of Maps:** Despite the 6 countries and the large areas they cover, as well as the geographic link to BCUs We suggest a standard baseline map set should be created for consultant use or accessible to them.
- **Lack of Infographics:** Few diagrams or infographics were used; reports relied heavily on text. Infographics would improve clarity and reduce wordiness.
- **Lack of Photos in the Project Progress Reports:** It would be helpful for PMU/NTFs to have included photos as evidence of dynamic engagement, rather than have them as a separate database. Although it is noted the GEF system does not allow for embedded photos in the PIRs that are loaded on its system. Documentation of how stakeholders are engaging in activities is useful, and as providing more materials for posts, and
- **Lack of overviews or summary conclusions:** Reports often left the reader hanging or left to work out what it meant. Need to provide a synthesis; especially now that the project progress is maturing.
- **Dominance of English:** it is necessary to have key global reports in at least French and Bahasa Indonesian. Although the NTF personnel have a strong command of english, Government partners and key in country stakeholder may not. This would ensure messages get fairly shared.

There were two videos produced; Solomon Islands stakeholder testimony and Fiji Community Visioning workshop experience. These were very powerful and we would encourage more use of this technique, ensuring that perfect is not the enemy of good. The use of mobile phone and capturing stories is a powerful tool that needs to be encouraged for all of the projects. We suggest a guidance document or training workshop is provided by the global team – training the trainers approach so the NTF teams have the skills to train local stakeholders to use these, so they can have more voice and presence when they present at the National Hub meetings and it can be a way that women and youth get heard in forum where they are not always invited.

3.7.3. Lessons Learnt and Shared

PMU:

- A key lesson noted by the global team/PMU is the importance of a shared understanding of the project, and that developing such a shared understanding takes time and relationship building. As the Philippines comes onboard so late in the project cycle, effort will be needed to ensure this lesson is applied.
- Scheduling workshops have been challenging for all project countries as not all stakeholders can attend hub meetings on the proposed dates. As a result, country teams have realized the need to have flexible and forward planning schedules to ensure everyone can participate.

- Sharing lessons and activity outputs (e.g. ToRs) between project countries is an essential aspect to the project, both in terms of sharing knowledge to reduce time, problem-solving, accelerate learning, save money and enhance project outcomes. The Coral Huddle provides a platform to enable such sharing throughout the life of the project, it is not as flexible as PMU or the MTE would like to see, but it gives the opportunity for different teams to download the work of others.
- The importance of physically sitting in a room together for a shared experience and dialogue was emphasized by PMU and other NTFs. The benefits of in-person connections and engagement cannot be stressed enough. The mission trip to the Philippines for meetings with DENR and PCSD showcased the value of face-to-face meetings and the increased productivity and collaborations that can occur when
- There is a need to enhance project visibility at both the national and global level. Attendance at the IWC10 provided an opportunity to share approaches and outcomes with fellow IW practitioners, with the increase in online learning course enrolments in the week after the event showcasing the importance of sharing such outcomes at different national and global fora. At the global level, with the exception of attendance at such events, there are no project funds within the existing budget to enable travel (for the PMU and project team members from different countries to meet in person). The value of building relationships through personal connections is important to enrich sharing and networking, thus enhancing project outcomes.

Technical Components:

- Component 1: During the development of the first online learning course, the global team realised the importance of standardised guidelines for course contributions, to enable course contributors to effectively use their time to contribute to the courses as well as meet course goals and standards required.
 - It was also noted that valuing existing platforms is key to ensuring the achievement of project objectives. In fact, working with active projects and programs will facilitate the implementation of the frameworks and action plans that the project will deliver. Otherwise, there is a risk that the project outcomes will simply be written documents that are never used. This can be seen in the development of the data portal.
 - Targeted promotion of online courses within partner countries was needed to increase knowledge of the offerings and participation. Despite the global reach of the EdEx platform, the number of learners from project countries was not high. This has been addressed with the production of promotional materials and core partner engagement to help advertise the courses (note these are in English).
 - Engaging global consultants for Component 3 (Terranomics) and Component 4 (UQ's Centre for Communication and Social Change) has been hugely beneficial, however the timing of bringing them onboard was out of sync compared to NTF progress and their ability to take on another aspect of the workplan. Either more time or a bit more preparation to have national consultants onboard prior to engaging with global consultants would have made the initial engagements more productive and efficient.
- There are a number of country specific lessons and recommendations that have been identified in Annex 5.1.e

Lessons Shared

The project is sharing lessons regularly through a newsletter update as well as via attending regional ocean's conferences where a booth is set up to tell others about the project as well as presentations to the IW learn conference. These efforts will be explored more in the Knowledge management section 3.7. The evaluators are confident that there are good mechanisms for sharing the project lessons with external stakeholders, however there are a number of areas of improvement going forward.

Cross country learning – there is a desire for this and a need which we predict will only increase as component 3 comes on board. There are already some common themes to potentially exchange within a region (pacific or SEA or East Africa) and between all of the countries. PMU attempts to do this remotely, but it's not having the desired outcomes. This inter-country exchange can be facilitated within the regular IW:learn conference framework or within other International Ocean Conferences.

Use of Local Languages- Only the Indonesian NTFs were clear from the onset that they needed project materials in Bahasa Indonesian, however, as the project has continued there is more courage to ask for this.

During consultations in the Philippines there was some reaffirmation of the needs analysis that MOOC in local language(s) would attract more enrollees.

Use of Videos – PMU asked for video documentation of some key project activities as a way to encourage cross learning and sharing of experiences. The NTF chose to video report on the community visioning workshops, this proved an insightful way of reporting, but it has not been repeated by the NTF Fiji team or others and this is a missed opportunity to do so.

4. Conclusions, Lessons, & Recommendations

Conclusions

In general the Project is performing well, given the early set up delays. It has scored satisfactory, with areas that are both over performing (i.e. C1 and C4) and underperforming (i.e. C2 and C3). Underperformance is unevenly spread with each country presenting its own set of implementation challenges that the NTFs are skilfully navigating.

The project's four-component design is based on a strong scientific analysis, however, the time needed for set up and the impact of cultural contexts in which the project is being implemented, were under-estimated by the designers. It is on track and outcomes are emerging that lead to the expected results, but the project has struggled to demonstrate this with the RF as designed, there is about a six month implementation delay.

A six-month no cost extension is required to consolidate the achievements and enable those countries that have struggled to start (i.e. Philippines and Madagascar) due to factors beyond the control of the project leads (PMUs and NTFs), to catch up and ensure that especially in the case of component 3, there is sufficient time to engage meaningfully with the coral friendly businesses that will be shortlisted in the 5 participating countries (namely: Fiji, Indonesia, Madagascar, Solomon Islands and Tanzania). Budgets will need to be re-allocated to different areas of the workplans to accommodate this and increase the cross learning face to face events.

4.1. Lessons learned

Relevance

Good results overall, leading to a rating of highly satisfactory. The scientific paper that underpinned the theory of change, identifying the Bio-Climatic Units of resilient coral reefs was valid, it is in the process of being updated and refined through the work of WCS Global team called 50 Reef Plus. Madagascar had no functioning national government at the time of the evaluation, so could not be consulted. All national government stakeholders in the other countries have confirmed the relevance and importance of Coral Reefs and that is has elevated their importance on the national agenda. Community beneficiaries (those in BCU areas) were also positive about the project objectives as they reflected their own priorities and concerns about the status of their reefs.

An area where relevancy is moderately satisfactory, is namely in Component 3, as the project design has set the coral friendly business concept at an economic level that is not aligned with local socio-economic situations. The BCUs are in remote areas of islands nations where access is limited and the cultural and socio-political context are more complex than anticipated. Aiming to have 100 plus project investment pipeline by year 4 is not realistic given that many countries operate at a subsistence or community-based livelihood level, and have limited basic numeracy skills. However, this can be easily addressed going forward.

Coherence

This area also scored satisfactory to highly satisfactory for both internal and external coherence. GEF CRR, is closely aligned with all of the national priorities, whether or not the NTF was a government body or an NGO.

The project enables the national governments to meet their global and regional biodiversity conservation and SDG targets, priorities around blue economy, and coral data collection. The project has elevated the importance of Coral Reefs that have been neglected or overlooked compared with forest or land based biodiversity. The Hubs and the National Action Plans for Coral are seen to help fill an important gap.

There are also three programmes where the project aligns significantly; WWF CRRI, CTI and WCS 50 Reefs Initiative. In the countries that were active in the Coral Triangle Initiative; the NTFs were seen to anchor the CRR NAP in CTI structures, and align with existing regional biodiversity commitments. WCS has increased its strategy commitment to coral reef with its 50 plus modelling project. Identifying BCUs at a finer scale validated by field data. At half of the project sites, the NTFs are able to complement this work by collecting coral data, collaborating with community projects, and developing this new model. Alignment with WWF CRRI may be considered almost too close, as the project was designed to implement its strategy, which has led to some unforeseen complications and confusion with WWF focal offices.

There is still a gap, in private sector engagement, especially the ecotourism sector and in more than one country (e.g., Fiji, Indonesia and Madagascar). It is not known where the private sector initiatives are being implemented nor how successfully the coral restoration has been, but this can be addressed going forward with Component 3. Only two Countries have National Hubs that have engaged the private sector (Tanzania and Indonesia), and Coral huddle was not originally set up to gather this data (this has now been corrected).

Internal cohesion is very strong between the GEF agency, PMU and the NTFs due to frequent and clear communications via regular monthly catch up meetings. Information was observed to move through the layers at lightning speed. This was supported by a culture of active listening from WWF GEF Agency to PMU to NTFs that facilitated this. The systems developed by PMU assisted the flow of information throughout the project and key consultants from UQ not only built on trusted relationships but, also designed methodologies to foster participation and local ownership.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness rating was satisfactory. The extent of revisions needed for the RF design meant it did not receive a higher rating. There were good results from PMU in facilitating high quality management of the project and from the technical components delivering initial changes. It is a strength that there is no one model for how to set up and run National Hubs; NTFs and their lead government ministries were left to determine their own engagement approach.

The use of compound indicators to compare project progress with expected targets, when combined with a six-month implementation delay, meant left the project unable to demonstrate its progress adequately with the RF.

There are also recommendations for improving specific country operations, namely Tanzania, to enhance the quality of the stakeholder engagement processes (slower and deeper for better buy-in and inclusion), Madagascar to facilitate multi-sector dialogue through a regional sustainable coral friendly tourism hub and to ensure a consultant is hired to facilitate dialogue with the private sector and regional governments, and Philippines to initiate activities and ensure a consultant is hired to support the CTI secretariat and bridge with the Palawan regional government, and Solomon Islands to increase engagement of frequently rotating government officials. The Fiji NTF team appears to have sufficient staffing support, although managing stakeholder fatigue is required, during the next intensive timeline to ensure adequate stakeholder consultation before cabinet approval. Other country teams could benefit from third party support for project delivery (for example, communications and language in Indonesia, Madagascar, and the Philippines) and there are sufficient funds to do so.

Effective Knowledge Management Systems: Out of 83 documents provided, 74 were considered relevant, although some were process documentation rather than output products demonstrating team progress. The

project has produced a significant number of reports to date, 50 (67%) of which were either of high or good quality (HS, S or MS). It would be helpful to NTFs and consultants to have guidance on the expected contents of outputs and a critical feedback mechanism to ensure good quality analysis and outputs are produced. Common characteristics of the reports include:

- **No Executive Summaries to longer reports:**
- **Few Maps:**
- **Lack of Photos in the PPRs:**
- **Lack of overviews or summary conclusions:**
- **Dominance of English** (although some reports were received in the local language and were translated by PMU using AI tools)

One challenge was the absence of an output table listed per country separate from the AWP, making it difficult to select relevant documents or determine what to request. Some reports documented processes, but were loaded into the Coral Huddle. The project has several online tools and platforms, including three MOOCs, a Data Portal, and Coral Huddle as well as more conventional knowledge products such as a communications strategy, reports, and articles. These are of high quality and already have high levels of engagement. Coral Huddle is a good depository across six countries although not all documents are up to date (Indonesia must allocate dedicated resources to address this).

The [Project website](#): it is very good but not well publicised. It does not appear easily in Google searches, and most searches and links lead to the WWF CRRI website, including links from the UQ website. WCS does not reference to it on its own website.

We suggest a guidance document on the use of mobile video (for example, Vox pop) or training workshop is provided by the global team using train the trainer approach. This would equip NTF teams with the skills to train local stakeholders to use these tools, increasing their voice and presence at National Hub meetings and provide women and youth with opportunities to be heard in forum where they are not always invited.

WWF GEF US project manager has been proactive and enthusiastic in support of the project, going beyond the tasks outlined in the design. Pre-approval, the GEF agency visited Fiji as part of a support mission to another project in their portfolio. They met with WCS and the Fijian Government to determine who could be the lead NTF and work with the national government. There are regular monthly meetings the agency attends with PMU so that they can understand how the project is being implemented in each of the components is proceeding. The GEF agency PM is therefore able to respond quickly to requests for adaptive management approval as these have already been discussed and the context well understood.

PMU-UQID has been highly effective in managing the project and supporting the implementation by the six NTFs. There were challenges in adapting UQ systems to a development focused project, rather than a purely education or research focused one. There have been two highly effective programme managers, and two effective project coordinators, the current team sharing management responsibilities and complementing each other's skills. UQ has provided more pro-bono support than originally foreseen, including staff time, legal teams and the finance teams. Implementation challenges occurred as global teams were often ready to engage with the NTFs but the NTFs could not respond. Administrative delays in issuing contracts should have been anticipated in the project design, as the project operates in six countries with challenging conditions, each requiring bespoke legal contracts. Key to success has been the willingness to listen respond and actively adapt the project to optimise outcomes and deliverables.

Efficiency

Overall, the project is financially well managed, despite the challenges faced. The project has an efficiency coefficient of 1 due to the careful financial management of PMU. The lowest expenditure has been in the "grants & agreements" category, which has only spent 20% so far. This does not reflect the amount pipelined, but it is noted that it reflects delays in setting up contracts and agreements with the NTFs in the six project implementation countries. Only 30% of the total budget has actually been spent where as 56% is earmarked

for spending. There remain sufficient funds for a six month extension to project activities and three months for a transition phase to conclude the reporting on this project or set up a phase two.

There is significant underspend in three countries at end of Q2, Year 3: the Philippines, Indonesia and Madagascar and all of which have spent less than \$200,000. It is predicted that spending the remaining Component 2 budget will be difficult without a six months extension and reallocation of funds. It should be noted that the budget design allocated approximately \$900K to each country. Although equal, it was not an equitable distribution as each country has a different level of cost of living, which means an uneven burn rate should have been expected. The budget design also limited travel by PMU and NTFs within and between countries.

Not all the activities are at 100%; there have been delays, but planned is aligned to deliver the activities in the AWP. The gap between the amount spent and the expected expenditure at the MTE stage, reflects the six month implementation delay. The time remaining is 18 months, with a six month extension there would be 24 months of implementation. Both Components 2 and 3 still have large amounts remaining, although not necessarily a large percentage of their budgets. Initially Component 2 may require reallocation and although component 3 is yet to start in earnest, a significant number of technical analyses are planned. There may scope to reallocate budget to other areas, such as cross country visits, to support the overall project outcomes.

Co-financing commitments at the design phase were unrealistic, being 10 times larger than the proposed budget. This was a weakness in the original design. The total commitments made, but not realised comes to approximately \$44.4 million US, over half of the co-financing total. From discussions with WWF CRRI and UQ, it is highly unlikely that Allen Coral Atlas or Blue Ventures will provide co-financing commitment letters as previous relationships with these organisations have been ruptured due to personnel moving to other organisations or have come to an end. The co-financing target needs to be reduced to \$27 million US to reflect this. Rare may have an opportunity for re-engagement in the Philippines. This remains a substantial amount of co-financing for a \$7 Million GEF funded project.

A total of 35% cofinancing can be said to have been committed so far (adjusting the commitment target), but this does not reflect the potential or the amount of supportive and complementary activities provided by the WWF network, WCS and CI in several countries. It has been clear that co-financing is not well understood, even by WWF network or other international NGOs. This remains a gap.

Results/Impact

The implementation delays have affected the delivery of results. However, the RF design also under reports results due to the way indicators are measured/calculated. Despite the many tracking tools, output delivery was not being specifically monitored, but only as part of the AWP. The PMU has addressed this and out of the possible 95 project output documents or products; 20 complete, and another 19 are nearly complete in Year 3, having been started with significant progress made. These have been drafted and require approval from their National Hub or feedback. Of the 60 outputs remaining in the pipeline 33 are expected by the end of Year 3, 29 in Year 4 and 13 remain uncertain.

Of the 12 possible outcome indicators, seven have demonstrated over performance and score highly satisfactory, with an DO rating of 81% after calculation adjustments. This is significantly higher than the rating at the end of Year 2. Therefore, the project's overall rating of **Satisfactory** is considered by this evaluation to fairly reflect performance to date. An effectiveness recommendation is that the outcome indicators be revised. The top 12 project achievements identified by stakeholders that are leading to changes (impact) were the following:

Table 23.: Summary table of the top project results as identified by Stakeholders, NTFs and Partners.

1. Increased awareness of the situation of coral reef and their importance
2. Creation of the National Hub and technical working groups

3. More Coordination and collaboration between various stakeholders on Coral Reefs
4. National Action Plan for Coral
5. Coral Reef Network - community of practice - learning & sharing - website
6. Increase in community voice and participation
7. Status of Coral Reefs - data base
8. Improved coral management through training and community participation
9. Research technical reports (Threats, opportunities, cost-benefit)
10. Consultative process with communities and provincial/local government
11. Sustainable financing - trust fund for coral
12. Increase in Political will of government to act in the interests of Coral

We would add the 3 MOOCs and Data Portal to this list as significant achievements. The project results are generally on track, but more time will be needed to consolidate them, as results are not evenly distributed across the six countries; Tanzania, Fiji, Indonesia, Solomon Islands, Madagascar and the Philippines. The most successful countries have achieved the greatest number of items on the list. It should be noted that several Tanzanian government stakeholders displayed optimism when reporting their achievements.

There is significant potential for transformational change with the project supporting coral friendly businesses. The guidance generated could also introduce a blue economy element. Similarly, if local or regional trust funds are established to sustain Coral conservation work, this could transform coral conservation and restoration. The MOOCs, Data Portal and awareness raising activities are expected to have indirect effects that are difficult to predict, but provide new ways to engage professionals or students, increasing understanding of coral reefs, their threats and potential solutions.

Project Impact is measured by the achievement of the 3 GEF core Indicators. Under core indicator GEF 11, the project calculated 4959 beneficiaries, (71% of the intended target for Year 2), and for beneficiaries with a known gender, 46% are Female. The project is on track to achieve its ambitious target with a six month extension, although the composition of the beneficiaries may differ from the original plan. GEF core indicator 7.4 Year 4 target has already been achieved, but could be voluntarily stretched to capture additional collaboration and participation in IW:Learn events. GEF core indicator 4.1 is unlikely to meet its Year 4 intended target and is not expected to demonstrate measurable impact.

Sustainability

The sustainability risk table considers several factors. Three factors, Finance, Socio-political, and Environmental, were assessed as being of moderate risk to project activities. While three factors, Institutional and Governance and Other risks, were assessed as low risk. The overall rating is therefore likely that the projects continue despite these risks, as most of them can still be mitigated through planned activities. The most concerning risks are disruption from elections in Fiji, the political instability in Madagascar and recent elections in Tanzania. Financial risks relate to funding for NAP implementation and continuation of the National Hubs. Environmental risks include floods, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes and typhoons. Other risks relate to the lack of cross country learning opportunities.

Four countries are scheduled to develop a sustainability strategy in Year 3. Tanzania has established a Coral Trust Fund to support implementation of the National Action Plan, but no sustainability strategy draft was shared with the MTE. In Fiji, the National Hub could potentially develop a Coral Trust Fund to secure resources for future operations. Solomon Islands and Indonesia are scheduled to complete their sustainability strategies by the end of Year 3.

Currently, there are no global resources dedicated to sustainability strategies, including the four MOOCs, which are free, or the Data Platform, both require a clear exit strategy and consider if they should be taken over by UQID as part of its enterprise activities or by another part of the University of Queensland.

The long-term vision is local ownership through the National Hubs and National Action Plans in countries with a functioning national government. Local ownership of the MOOCs is limited, partly because they are not in the local languages and some stakeholders have noted a lack of local context in the materials. This is acknowledged by the development team, but arose because the MOOC content was created before the National Hubs and NTFs were established.

There is evidence awareness of the importance of coral reefs and their climate resilience has increased and may endure as a lasting legacy. However, materials are not yet available in local languages and there are insufficient video clips to engage the public effectively.

Component 3: Coral Friendly Businesses. This area is too emergent to assess. Fully, but has substantial potential. To be effective, smaller scale operations should be prioritised, with significant capacity building in financial management and fewer number of businesses selected to allow more effective focused support.

Endureability: Six themes were highlighted by stakeholders as critical for sustaining project outcomes; finances, leadership, formalisation, attitude, knowledge and capacity building, in that order of frequency.

Adaptive Capacity

The project has been adaptively managed from the onset as the design has underestimated the time required to contract all the NTFs. The AWP was adjusted because Component 3 activities were delayed a year. Four other adaptations were made in Madagascar, Fiji and the Philippines, as well as minor changes to a few RF indicators. The four-component design is solid, but the implementing countries have challenging conditions both at project start up and during implementation, and agreements take longer than expected. A project spanning this number of countries, requires adaptively managed to ensure delivery, and M&E systems must be effective.

The M&E design scored only Moderately Satisfactory due to issues with the RF indicators, see below. In terms of implementation however, the M&E system is rated as Highly Satisfactory due to the additional tools developed and applied across the project. Five monitoring and data collection tools have been developed. Regular remote meetings with PMU and the NTF teams complement these tools, and providing frequent updates. Regional meetings are also held, but time zone differences make it difficult to convene all six NTFs simultaneously. The only meeting with representatives from all 6 country NTFs, PMU and WWF GEF US was the inception meeting in Bali in March 2023. From an M&E perspective, data gathering, validation, and verification would benefit from another meeting of all parties six months before project closure, ideally before the six months extension begins.

Table 24. Summary table of Actions to take to improve the RF Core (Impact) Indicators

	Status	Finding
Core Indicators	3 GEF Core Indicators; 4.1 – Y4 target unlikely to be achieved 7.4 – Levels of IW learn engagement – Very likely (<i>Could be stretched voluntarily</i>) 11 – Achievable target different sources; 50% female, Community visioning target 5000	Time frame was designed for CRRI and not with a project time limits. Core 4.1: land indicator not appropriate for the project 7.4: target Year 4 could be more ambitious – can voluntarily revise additional activities to encourage greater engagement of all the country representatives through the IW:Learn conferences and other international ocean symposiums or conferences. 11: clear contributions from activities mapped, but calculation not clear, needs to be accumulative, and 50% women not possible because its being aggregated from 30% targets lower down, Community visioning targets of 5000 were unrealistic

Proposed changes: Core Indicator 7.4 cannot officially change its Year 4 target. The NAPs so far developed have focused on prioritizing “Reef to Ridge” activities, as the priority to need to focus on restoring or protecting coral reefs first. This means that indicator 4.1 is no longer valid within this project timeframe and needs to change.

Indicators have been assessed and recommendations made to either measure them using mean average achievement of these milestones, adjust the scale of Year 4 expectations (in red), or stretching the Year 4 target (in green and orange text) in some cases where the project has over performed.

Table 25.: Summary table of Actions to take to improve the RF outcome indicators

	Status	Finding
Component 1	1.1a learners & trainees – over achieved MT target: NH target impossible as % of total 1.1b: participant view - Over achieved year 3 target and EoP target 1.2a. Unique Visitors - Over achieved on EoP target	1.1a Does not have a stretch target for EoP - likely Private sector missing. NH target needs revising down 1.1b responses from the courses is good – community of practice less likely to be formed in all countries , only in Indonesia its likely – revise targets 1.2a. No target for MT, achieved EoP target – Revise the Y4 target
Component 2	2.1a: stakeholder groups – MTE over achieved – Youth target unlikely 2.1.b: inclusive community vision – not showing progress – only EoP target – revise 2.2a: NAP development – not showing progress	2.1.a: Compound indicator, EoP difficult to measure – change to % of each years achievement and a mean average taken over the no. of years - Revise 2.1.b: Does not reflect the variety of Community inclusion nor the progress towards it – no MT target! Redefine 2.2a: Takes agency from National Hubs, does not reflect process of the technical inputs – Redefine or Revise to include more steps
Component 3	3.1. Describes the Pipeline process – targets out of sync so progress is impossible to show – target Y4 is highly unlikely to achieve	3.1. Allow for the achievement of each year to be considered in the measurement to reflect the different stages each country is implementing C3 – revise measurement Redefine target for year 4
Component 4	4.1: N. Hub member opinion – overachieved 4.2: project management - overachieved	4.1: Nothing about how effective the communication strategy is. i.e. reach to other stakeholders beyond Nation Hub Members - Redefine 4.2: The extra M&E elements are not captured – revise to stretch

The substantial number of monitoring tools and regular remote meetings with NTF teams ensures data collection is robust. The M&E systems implementation is rated Highly Satisfactory because it goes beyond using the AWP, RF and PPRs. Key tools include:

- 1. Coral Huddle for M&E system and reporting**
- 2. Kobo Survey Tools** to gather extra data across all RF indicators:
- 3. Disaggregation activity mapping:** which tracks every activity feeding into the RF indicators in the excel, allowing monitoring which NTF provides which data and when
- 4. Activities Status Tracking tool,**
- 5. Spatial site mapping:** using ARCFIS to map Bio-Climatic Units, project communities and their economic zones.

Project Progress reports are completed every six months, and AWP/RFs tools are completed annually as planned. An annual reflection meeting is remotely facilitated by PMU, but its effectiveness is mixed, as it is often seen as a reporting exercise. While the reports provide insight into completed activities and challenges, they lack reflection on the significance of achievements, cross-country synthesis and summarises of the technical report results. Although photos are included, they are not always embedded in the PPRs. Regular reporting to WWF GEF US through remote meetings provides additional context and nuance, but it could be more useful if these reflections were incorporated into the reports going forward as the project activities begin to deliver on outcomes and more significant results.

GEF Criteria

Gender

The GAP provides ten guiding rules for the CRR project. In general, the PMU and NTFs comply with the rules, but full implementation would require guidance for the NTFs on how best to incorporate them in the projects.

Gender disaggregation in the Results Framework is inconsistent and the GAP gives no rationale for the differing targets. It is mathematically difficult for lower percentages to lead to a higher overall percentage.

Overall, the NTFs are promoting the inclusion of women in the project activities, but there is little information about the quality of their participation. Gender and vulnerability mainstreaming may remain superficial without deeper integration. The NTFs use different age categories in their activity reports, which prevents a consistent summary of youth participation. GESI reports have been produced for Fiji and Solomon Islands, but they lack analysis. Indonesia does not yet have a report, but the National Hub does have a GESI task force.

Gender inclusion remains a challenge in contexts with patriarchal norms. Tanzania has not yet adopted separate consultations for women to encourage their participation, whereas this approach has been successful in Indonesia. Participants of all genders have indicated that activities held directly in communities would increase women's involvement. Other stakeholders suggest involving women's or youth associations that can represent vulnerable groups, or establish such groups. Without deliberate strategies for women, vulnerable groups, and remote communities, the Hub risks reinforcing existing silos and power imbalances. The quality of participation will be crucial in Component 3, which supports coral reef friendly businesses, and identifies women as primary beneficiaries.

The MOOCs have embedded gender and local voice concepts very effectively, particularly CRR104 due to the which benefitted from inputs by Care's gender mainstreaming expert. The Communications strategy also contains guidance on language, gender and inclusion, although it is available only in English.

Safeguards

The assignment of **"C" categorization** for the CRR project appears correct for the implementation to date. However, caution may be required going forward as the project progresses. The NTF in Tanzania, MPRU, is using the CRR as an opportunity to introduce an MPA in one of the districts. There is confusion and concern about how an MPA may affect community livelihoods. Careful management and clear awareness raising will be needed. This may offer lessons for Component 3, where the NTFs will work with selected community groups or businesses. Without clear communication, mistrust and conflict could arise among communities. The implementation of small projects with businesses and communities falls within the examples of Category "Medium" in WWF's ESSF.

Local and traditional voices are being included in the NAP processes and the extent to which communities recognise this inclusion is monitored through the RF. Grievance and complaints mechanisms exist, including those on the UQ website, but they may be overlooked and their use is not explained in the local languages. This is in addition to the mechanism provided by GEF WWF US team. However, stakeholders are not able to describe the process.

Stakeholder Engagement

The SEP does not provide examples of strategies and approaches on how to improve participation and quality of consultations, such as Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) techniques or workshop facilitation skills.

The National Hubs and technical working groups are the main stakeholder engagement mechanisms to date. All countries aim to work with the relevant government agencies. It is considered by some, easier for a government agency acting as the NTF to engage colleagues and ministers. It was noted that an NGO as the secretariat can ease the administrative burden associated with the role, allowing government to lead the engagement process. Key ministries are involved in all countries except the Philippines and Madagascar. However, none of the National Hubs include representatives from the Ministry of Women, or an equivalent agency. National women's networks or those representing other vulnerable groups also do not have a formal seat. With the possible exception of Tanzania, countries do not appear to have drawn on the stakeholders lists in the SEP, and the reasons for excluding groups, whether by choice or design, are not documented. It may be that the intention is to include more of these groups going forward.

Only two of the National Hubs, Tanzania and Indonesia, include members from the private sector beyond environmental consultants, and none engage regularly with the tourism sector. The Ministry of Tourism attended the most recent National Hub meeting in Fiji. Stakeholders identified as missing from some Hubs include the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Ministry of Women, the FLMMA Network (Fijian Locally Managed Marine Areas), religious groups, the Navy and the National Climate Agency (BMKG), Tourism, and Fisheries representatives, and sanitation and waste engineers. Some of these stakeholder are expected to be engaged in the future, as future iterations of the NAP are developed.

4.2. Recommendations by Criteria

Relevance

- **Synergies with 50 Reef Plus:** With WCS Global team, PMU need to explore how the new refined climate resilient coral reef research may affect the beneficiaries (at the national and community levels) in the 6 implementing countries.
- **Component 3 Rescaled:** Needs an identification of community preparedness and current private sector involvement, assessment of good financial best practices before any financing is considered; the potential to have exchange of good practices of micro-financing, proposal writing skills within and across project countries should be explored. PMU to guide National Steering Committees in establishing minimal capacity requirements of community-based organizations and SMEs for financing. Component 3 final year outcome needs to be refocused to support different scales of Coral Friendly Business or social enterprises in each country and reduce the expectation to more realistic levels given that some areas will have very few businesses operating in them due to their remoteness of the climate resilient reefs.

Coherence

- **Clarify Overlapping Mandates for Communities:** NTFs with PMU improve external cohesion by identifying shared objectives with other initiatives and working together with other projects with similar objectives, especially the private sector and with government and regional initiatives. Clarify any perceived overlapping mandates, and increase coordination with other initiatives to reduce confusion at the community level, but also share experiences.
- **Implementation of the Communication Strategy:** PMU (with C4 consultants) to improve internal coherence even further by; using the upcoming global communication strategy and the process of generating country specific strategies, to pave the way of working better with partners, and facilitate cross-country sharing or learning in the future between the NTF/partners. PMU/NTFs consolidate the documentation of good practices and more communication with the public was seen to improve recognition and adoption of project benefits with a wider range of stakeholders.

Efficiency

- **Budget Re-allocation:** With GEF WWF US, PMU and NTFs to negotiate a reallocation of budgets earmarked for 3 countries to support cross country visits and learning opportunities.
- **Co-Finance Target Adjustment:** With the agreement of GEF WWF US, PMU reduce the co-finance target to \$27 million removing those organisational contributions that are no longer in a position to make those commitments.
- **Co-Finance Guidance:** GEF WFF US agency to provide guidance to WWF network and other NGOs and Governments in terms of what co-finance means and what it does not require in terms of committed funds and support to a GEF project.

Effectiveness

MOOC Recommendations: These are the key areas of improvement.

- Increase the number of languages available, Include some infographics in video transcripts, alongside the written text, or as a separate downloadable document.

- Correct misspellings and grammatical mistakes. Typos are often easy to read and understand if you are proficient in English, but it may be more difficult if you are not proficient in English, or if you are using a translator programme.
- Place the notable posts that present unexpected insights a further reading document, in the main bulk of the course. Organize the discussion section to more strongly encourage users to answer their posts under the headings provided by the staff.

Report Quality Improvement: PMU to provide critical feedback on reports to ensure they have good structure, are logical and have essential elements for clarity. Where necessary ensure that outputs are provided in multiple languages. Project progress reports in particular need to have a synthesis across the countries and NTFs need to be encouraged to explain the significance of their results in their country context.

Create a Briefing Kit or Briefing Videos: NTFs, with guidance from the Global Consultants, to prepare (via their communication consultants) a package of information that combines video and visually appealing information sheets on the project to keep government entity stakeholders, that are rotated or newly appointed, always informed about the project.

Availability of Multi-language Materials and Messages: Key reports, MOOCs, communication messages need to be in multiple languages or produced with downloadable info graphics in ways that local languages can be added in, translated from simple easily accessible English.

Cross – Country and Cross Regional Exchange: More needs to be made of international conferences like IW:Learn conference and Ocean Conference, to bring NTF representatives and Key National Hub members to come and jointly, face to face workshops, work through what has worked and not worked elsewhere that could be applied in their context after adaptation. In the meantime, more interesting online engagement processes need to be developed and put into practice that encourage deeper reflection, critical thinking and increase effective delivery. Consider panel discussions on particular themes, with outside experts as well as project staff (provide the questions first so they can prepare), dragons den presentations, role play are all techniques that can be use explored to break teams out of an optimism bias reporting mode and enable real learning.

Enabling Communities of Practice: PMU to lead conversations with the NTFs to assess what this might mean in their country context and what level (ie. Community or professional). It needs to be assessed how likely the emergence of CoPs is from the members of the technical working groups, or from those participating in training. It would be helpful to identify common themes that could interest stakeholders and NTFs staff in year 4.

Results/Impact

No cost extension: PMU and GEF WWF US to agree a no cost extension for 6 months implementation to make up for the implementation delays and three months wind up. The extra six-month for project implementation will be needed to allow the various countries to consolidate the NAPs and get approval from their National Hubs. As well as consolidate the Coral Friendly Business support to create a potential pipeline.

Project Symposium with IW learn: - an exchange with all NTFs participating, similar to the inception workshop, but one where WCS presents its new model for 50 Plus refuge reefs, PMU presents is data portal and multi-language MOOCs. NAP processes and sustainability plans need to be shared – including how coral trust funds work within each of the regions, lessons exchanged

Consolidating and Building Impact:

A number of the recommendations have been combined here to show how a follow on project could build on the enabling conditions established by this project. There are two timeframes to consider, an immediate follow on project which aims to embed the results of the enabling conditions set out in the GEF CRR design,

this would have another four year timeframe. The other is to consider the longer term changes that need to occur in the country that are more land based, require significant government budget and or support from larger investors like development bank with the aim of reducing sedimentation in rivers and marine pollution through effluent treatment and upgrading waste water systems.

Increasing Resilient Reef Cover: GEF WWF US through its portfolio of new GEF 9 projects, to seek to support Coral related projects that fill country gaps (eg: PNG, East Timor and Seychelles, Mauritius), build on previously supported GEF projects. Consider the results of the WCS 50 Plus model in terms of identifying areas that can be added to the six country approach and increase geographical integrity and synergies already gained: (eg: Singapore, Malaysia; PNG, East Timor; Seychelles, Mauritius, and Mozambique).

GEF CRR Plus – Building Resilient Reefs and Communities in Practice

Component 1:

- MOOC materials: Develop adaptable MOOCs that can support local language training and Community level training materials, using local examples and to support each team's capacity building needs of BCU communities and that can be adapted to be used in a variety of local languages as well as being used off line. Key targets to be youth, and high school students as well as community cooperatives dependent on the coral reefs or impacting them (e.g. fishers. Seafood processors, tour guides etc)
- Multi-Language MOOCs: Provide Spanish, French and Portuguese versions of the existing courses.
- MOOC expansion, courses on Coral Classification, field monitoring techniques and best practice in Coral Restoration.
- Community of Practice: design an engagement process using training events, role play and scenario thinking to create a supportive community of practice in the regions

Component 2:

- Strategic expansion locally to new geographic areas within the regions - this should be considered carefully with most Marine Conservation Areas or BCUs already included in the CRR project - Explore the use of the 50 plus WCS model as the way of informing this later.
- Implementation of NAPs: Implementation in the six countries, and in some cases taking regional NAPs to inform National Governments. The National Budgets would be aligned to enable and support NAP implementation at key BCU communities and the results presented to the National Hubs.
- National Hub Sustainability strategy or plan implementation
- Data platform use in planning, research and by the private sector ensuring that additional data inputs can be processed and emerging information added to the data platform.
- Facilitate technical working groups to explore innovations supporting coral restoration, monitoring and conservation efforts.

Component 3:

- From the case studies that could result from this component – the organisations pipelined as coral friendly could be considered for scale up through blended finance. Develop business plans that support start ups and enable them to scale up. Increase the business literacy of BCU communities. Set up micro-finance mechanisms (women led) to support female leadership and economic empowerment.
- Develop guidelines with the tourism industry to ensure sustainability and coral friendly criteria are met and well as helping to support community coral conservation and restoration activities E.g. Sustainable financing of Coral Restoration Approaches
- Develop a Coral Bond: based on the experience of Nutrient Neutrality credits, Flood/sediment neutral credits, Coral Conservation credits, Coral restoration credits and Coral Friendly Business start up or scale up support. Ensure there is species specific instruments and using blended financing to ensure the Coral Bond supports future initiatives building coral resilience. Introducing Coral Friendly Business labelling may also be explored as part of the verification and validation process for the Bond.

Component 4:

- Increase the locally produced materials - videos and testimonies, in local languages – teaching teachers to teach children how to make environmental documentaries or small videos telling their stories. Have a competition and presentation event where environmental documentary makers are invited.
- International exchanges between the countries (piggy backing off IW learn events)
- Increase awareness of Coral Resilient Reefs and how climate resilient communities and coral are linked.

Longer Term, CRR Mitigating Landbased Coral Impacts through Coral Friendly Infrastructure

It is not likely that GEF could support all of these activities, however they are needed to deliver landbased impacts.

Component 1: MOOC course on Coral Friendly Infrastructure/Engineering (use of NBS, Bio-engineering and low tech solutions) – water sanitation, waste-water treatments, flood control/erosion control measures – endorsed by Environmental, Water and Civil engineering professional bodies

Chartered Engineering Support of Coral Friendly Infrastructure/Engineering projects

Component 2: National Hubs to set up a Coral Friendly Infrastructure working group to review the policies, insurance costs, economic analysis, perverse financial incentives (in the taxation, national budget allocations and treasury systems), and technical NBS innovations.

Component 3: Enable Coral Friendly Infrastructure, define the term for different countries, create a pipeline of potential projects that address riverine flooding (gouging) more sustainably incorporating Nature Based Solutions and bio-engineering, find alternatives to coral as a building material, use technology to reduce effluent pollution sources impacting the reef

Coral Bond for CFI Investment: Using a financial structure like catastrophe bonds, build on earlier experiences on Coral Conservation trusts, or Coral restoration self funding mechanisms and create the enabling environment with Insurers, Capital Bond Market Investors, and development banks to provide the capital to fund capital investment that reduces the impact of riverine sediment and waste loads, reduces the nutrient load of effluents carrying pipelines, and marine transport bilge waters.

Component 4: Increase the awareness of Coral Friendly Infrastructure within the professional bodies, government departments, banking and insurance industries, and development banks as well as the public including the communities that are suffering from river induced erosion of their lands, and pollution or suffocation of their coral reefs.

Sustainability

A global sustainability strategy is developed going forward to continue the MOOCs and data portal, build local capacity and help teams think through their sustainability options (i.e. Coral Trust funds, or self sustaining finance mechanisms). There is no global guidance as to what sustainability plans should consider. Ensuring there is a sustainably financing element to all of the National Hubs' sustainability plan is strongly recommended and would be a strong candidate for cross country learning and exchange.

Adaptive Capacity

AWPs and Resource Re-allocation: A number of countries are likely to require further adjustments to their workplans; Madagascar requires changes in their activities around the national hub, moving to a regional dialogue platform. Indonesia needs more resources to facilitate more regional hubs to feed into the National Hub forum and to possibly support the legalisation of the hub. Philippines has less time than anticipated due to the various administrative delays and may require another adjustment to the budget and the AWP. Fiji may require re-allocation of existing resources (e.g. shift allocation from one component to another) to ensure the consultation process sufficiently engages community stakeholders for the cabinet to approve the NAP. Tanzania requires a slower, more focused approach to facilitate better quality, more inclusive stakeholder engagement and to bring other stakeholders along with them in understanding the project. Finally, Solomon Islands requires more resources dedicated to deepening relationships with government, either by engaging officials at a higher level (similar to Fiji) or finding ways to enable them to meet their objectives, professional development or workwise. All countries need dedicated resources to translating information into local languages.

Blue Economy Journey: There will be a need to exchange experiences on Coral Friendly Businesses, Livelihoods/CBOs/SMEs and identify the key lessons learnt, looking at what has not worked, also looking at inclusiveness and how well each of them have empowered women leaders and entrepreneurs, eco-tourism experiences and the challenges of scale up – start up to a registered, tax paying enterprise.

In and Cross Country learning: This needs to be facilitated a more formal/regular way learning from how the regional hubs are working for some of the countries, like within Indonesia. Madagascar and Philippines will have important lessons to share from their experiences on regional hubs. We expect there to be lessons from working with the CTI structures and whether there has been a shift from the awareness of coral biodiversity to the importance of coral reef resilience and the management interventions from the various NAPs that have made a difference.

Recommended RF Indicator Changes: to be discussed and agreed between PMU and GEF WWF US.

- Core Indicator 7.4 to have Year 4 target to a level 4, but with voluntarily adding activities to encourage greater engagement of all the country representatives through the IW:Learn conferences and other international ocean symposiums or conferences.
- Core indicator 4.1 needs to change to Core indicator 5: Area of Marine ecosystem under improved management, which reflects the stories and analysis that will could out of activity 4.1.2.4 in the AWP, the target value can stay the same.

Table 26. Summary table of Recommendation to take to improve the RF outcome indicators

RF Indicator Change Recommendations for discussion and agreement with PMU and GEF WWF US.	
Core Indicators	Change Indicator 4.1 to GEF Core indicator 5, Area of Marine ecosystem under improved management - but with the same target for year 4 (4000ha) Stretch target 7.4 – create voluntarily additional engagement activities: to Include a cross learning symposium for all project countries and with IW Revise 11 target for Females: Mean average of total % and % that reaches target of 30% Female
Component 1	1.1a: Redefine target NH member to be 30% of each countries total NH members. Private sector needs to be included in the huddle survey form – more encouragement required in NH 1.1b: Revise EoP target to increase the target percentage is an option 85% 1.2.a: Revise EoP target up - 1000 Visitors (unique IP addresses), 5000 views
Component 2	2.1a: Refine – youth EoP target not possible. (35yr) 2.1b: Redefine: Mean av. % of countries at the following levels; L1- Community Visioning WS defines /inputs into NAP, L2-Community Representatives attend NH-TWG meetings, L3- Community representatives endorse NAP, L4- 80% of Community Participants recognise their vision in the NAP 2.2a: Redefine to at least measure the mean av. of each yrs % achievement of; Y2 % countries where Threats/ Opportunity analysis is done Y3 % countries where Cost/benefit analysis done and Y4 % countries that endorse Action Plan
Component 3	3.1. Redefine to Measure as the mean average of % achieved against Y2 target achievement and Y3 target achievement and Y4 target achievement. - rather than against the single year's achievement Change EoP target to 10 prepped companies in pipeline/country; with community scale 30%, CBO-Cooperative scale 30% and SME 30%, with MME 10% - 30% Female owned is retained
Component 4	4.1: Redefine EoP target to include an additional indicator and target for the numbers of public reached for message on coral conservation 4.2: Revise EoP target to show % each country uses extra tools or timeliness in uploading documents

GEF Related Criteria

Gender:

Ensuring better quality, more inclusive engagement:

- More NTFs need to hire GESI consultants to review the emerging NAPs and assess whether they are re-enforcing existing power dynamics. More needs to be done to include women's organisations (either a relevant government, community or trade group/organisation) into National Hubs and or Technical Working Groups. The quality of engagement needs to be the focus, providing separate forum if they are not comfortable speaking up. This input will be important with a focus on women owned coral friendly businesses in Component 3.
- In general PMU need to screen ToRs for consultants before they get advertised to ensure they are of good quality and are including gender aspects for the team and research.
- PMU to send the standard participant form out again to NTF teams to standardise recording gender and age (with the same definitions) and have a recording space.
- PMU contacts Care or another agency, to provide materials and orientation (online) of the approaches and techniques to increase the quality of women's participation and engagement in meetings and events.

Safeguards:

- The grievance system needs more socialization in local languages, in particular among communities, the prime target group to use the mechanism if needed.
- PMU with GEF WWF US to review the project categorisation once component 3 is further along to assess whether it changes due to the support for local coral friendly businesses.

The stakeholder Engagement recommendations have been included with Effectiveness section above.

4.3. Evaluation Rating Tables

Table 27.: GEF Table of the Summary Ratings for GEF CRR Project

Evaluation Ratings			
1. Progress Towards Results		2. Overall Assessment of Project Outcomes	
GEF Core Indicator 4.1 – NA	NA	Relevant	HS
GEF Core Indicator 7– Level 4 – 100% Highly Satisfactory	HS	Coherent	S-HS
GEF Core Indicator 11 – 71%; 63% of Female target– Av. 67% Moderately Satisfactory	MS	Effectiveness	S
Outcome 1.1 – 100% Highly Satisfactory	HS	Cost Efficiency	MS
Outcome 1.1a – 100% Highly Satisfactory		Overall Rating of Project Outcomes	S
Outcome 1.1b – 100% Highly Satisfactory		3. Sustainability Risks	
Outcome 1.2a– 100% Highly Satisfactory	HS	Financial – Moderate Risk	
Outcome 2.1 – 100% Highly Satisfactory	HS	Socio-political – Moderate Risk	
Outcome 2.1a – 100% Highly Satisfactory		Institutional Framework and Governance - Low Risk	
Outcome 2.1b – NA		Environmental – Moderate Risk	
Outcome 2.2a – 42% Moderately Unsatisfactory	MU	Other – Low Risk	
Outcome 3.1a - 67%, Moderately Satisfactory	MS	Overall Rating of Sustainability of Outcomes	L
Outcome 4.1a – 100% Highly Satisfactory	HS	4. Monitoring And Evaluation	
Outcome 4.2 – 100% Highly Satisfactory	HS	M&E Design	MS
Overall Outcome Rating – reported 62% MTE value 81% - Satisfactory	S	M&E Implementation	HS
		Overall M&E Rating	S
		5. Implementation and Execution	
		WWF GEF Agency Implementation	HS
		Executing Agency Execution (CI)	HS

Other GEF Ratings tables are presented together in Annex 5.2, in part two of this report.