

GEF-8 PROJECT IDENTIFICATION FORM (PIF)

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General Project Information

Project Title

Blue Nature Alliance to advance the high-quality protection of 1.8 billion hectares of ocean ecosystems

Region	GEF Project ID
Global	12294
Country(ies)	Type of Project
Global	FSP
GEF Agency(ies):	GEF Agency ID
CI	
Executing Partner	Executing Partner Type
TBD	
GEF Focal Area (s)	Submission Date
International Waters	3/2/2026

Project Sector (CCM Only)

Taxonomy

Focal Areas, Biodiversity, Protected Areas and Landscapes, Productive Seascapes, Coastal and Marine Protected Areas, Community Based Natural Resource Mngt, Species, Threatened Species, Wildlife for Sustainable Development, Financial and Accounting, Payment for Ecosystem Services, Conservation Finance, Conservation Trust Funds, Natural Capital Assessment and Accounting, Biomes, Mangroves, Sea Grasses, Coral Reefs, International Waters, Fisheries, Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction, Strategic Action Plan Implementation, Coastal, Polar Ecosystems, Mangrove, Seagrasses, Marine Protected Area, SIDS : Small Island Dev States, Learning, Large Marine Ecosystems, Climate Change, Climate Change Adaptation, Least Developed Countries, Climate information, Innovation, Small Island Developing States, Climate resilience, Influencing models, Transform policy and regulatory environments, Deploy innovative financial instruments, Strengthen institutional capacity and decision-making, Convene multi-stakeholder alliances, Demonstrate innovative approach, Stakeholders, Private Sector, Financial intermediaries and market facilitators, Capital providers, Individuals/Entrepreneurs, Large corporations, Non-Grant Pilot, Project Reflow, Type of Engagement, Partnership, Participation, Information Dissemination, Civil Society, Community Based Organization, Non-Governmental Organization, Academia, Communications, Awareness Raising, Strategic Communications, Education, Behavior change, Public Campaigns, Indigenous Peoples, Beneficiaries, Gender Equality, Gender Mainstreaming, Women groups, Sex-disaggregated indicators, Gender-sensitive indicators, Gender results areas, Capacity Development, Participation and leadership, Knowledge Generation and Exchange, Capacity, Knowledge and Research, Enabling Activities, Adaptive management, Indicators to measure change, Theory of change, Knowledge Generation, Professional Development, Training, Course, Workshop, Seminar, Knowledge Exchange, Twinning, Conference, Peer-to-Peer, Field Visit, Targeted Research

Type of Trust Fund	Project Duration (Months)
GET	60
GEF Project Grant: (a)	GEF Project Non-Grant: (b)
18,148,625.00	0.00
Agency Fee(s) Grant: (c)	Agency Fee(s) Non-Grant (d)

1,633,375.00	0.00
Total GEF Financing: (a+b+c+d)	Total Co-financing
19,782,000.00	187,424,934.00
PPG Amount: (e)	PPG Agency Fee(s): (f)
200,000.00	18,000.00
PPG total amount: (e+f)	Total GEF Resources: (a+b+c+d+e+f)
218,000.00	20,000,000.00

Project Tags

CBIT: No NGI: No SGP: No Innovation: No Competitive Window: No

Project Summary

Provide a brief summary description of the project, including: (i) what is the problem and issues to be addressed? (ii) what are the project objectives, and if the project is intended to be transformative, how will this be achieved? (iii), how will this be achieved (approach to deliver on objectives), and (iv) what are the GEBs and/or adaptation benefits, and other key expected results. The purpose of the summary is to provide a short, coherent summary for readers. The explanation and justification of the project should be in section B “project description”. (max. 250 words, approximately 1/2 page)

Ocean conservation areas, inclusive of MPAs and OECMs, have been shown to enhance climate resilience, support ecosystem connectivity and function, protect biodiversity, improve fisheries productivity, and strengthen human well-being. Scientists widely agree that securing a healthy, thriving ocean will require protecting at least 30% of the ocean through effective and well-managed area-based conservation measures.

This high-leverage global project is designed to accelerate the pace, scale, and quality of area-based conservation through the following objectives:

1. Improve the quality of existing ocean protections through direct site-based investments to measurably improve protection level, effectiveness, and durability of existing ocean conservation areas.
2. Catalyze designation of new large-scale ocean conservation areas through targeted support for strategic campaigns and direct site-based investments to support early implementation.
3. Increase ambition and catalyze new designations in underinvested regions through region and site-level investments to address systemic gaps limiting ocean protection.
4. Facilitate increased knowledge sharing and coordination through the sharing of project experiences and lessons learned with between partners, sites, and/or peer initiatives.

Through these objectives, the project will advance the high-quality protection of 1.8 billion hectares of ocean area. At the same time, it will also address the systemic barriers that impede progress towards achieving the ambitious global ocean conservation target outlined in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) Target 3, thereby catalyzing greater ambition and momentum for future ocean conservation action. Expected results of the project include 500M hectares of marine protected areas newly created, 1.3B hectares of marine protected areas under improved management effectiveness, at least 1 shared water ecosystem under new or improved cooperative management, level 4 engagement with IW:LEARN, and delivery of direct benefits to 15,000 people (50% women).

The Blue Nature Alliance

This project has been prepared for consideration by the Blue Nature Alliance (the Alliance) - a global initiative designed to accelerate the pace, scale, and effectiveness of ocean conservation through partnership. The Alliance was established in 2020 with equal financial contributions from five core partners, including Conservation International, The Pew Charitable Trusts, The Global Environment Facility, Minderoo Foundation, and the Rob Walton Foundation

The Alliance deploys a majority of project resources through site-based engagements to support the creation, expansion, and improved management of ocean conservation areas. Through these engagements, the Alliance provides a combination of flexible financial resources, technical expertise, and thought partnership to support a global portfolio of work. The Alliance works with partners at all levels, from local to national leadership, to catalyze the creation and implementation of bold, transformative ocean conservation action.

Since its launch in 2020, the Alliance has supported work to catalyze more effective and equitable protections in over 160 ocean conservation areas, collectively covering almost 3 billion hectares or approximately 8% of the global ocean. Together with a network of over 130 partners, the Alliance is delivering impact on a planetary scale through the protection of critical ocean ecosystems for the benefit of nature and people.

Indicative Project Overview

Project Objective

Advance high-quality protection in 5% of the Ocean (1.8 billion ha) by improving the effectiveness and durability of existing ocean conservation areas, catalyzing the designation of new large-scale ocean conservation areas, and increasing ocean protection in underinvested regions.

Project Components

Component 1: Improved Ocean Protection Quality

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
4,808,258.00	122,044,007.00

Outcome:

Outcome 1.1: Previously designated ocean conservation areas have measurably improved protection quality, as measured by site-specific targets for protection level, management effectiveness, sustainable financing, and/or durability.

Outcome 1.2: Global capacity to implement and manage high-quality ocean protections is enhanced through regional support systems for MPA managers, networks, and partner organizations.

Outcome 1.3: Momentum for future ocean conservation action is inspired through the strategic sharing of lessons and stories of impact and innovation from beacon sites.

Output:

Output 1.1.1: Engagement frameworks with site-specific targets for improved ocean protection quality are collaboratively developed with governments and implementing partner(s) and endorsed for investment.

Output 1.1.2: Financial and/or technical support is provided to implementing partners to achieve upgraded levels of protection.

Output 1.1.3: Financial and/or technical support is provided to implementing partners to achieve high management effectiveness thresholds.

Output 1.1.4: Financial and/or technical support is provided to implementing partners to develop, implement, and resource sustainable financing and durability strategies.¹

Output 1.1.5: Financial and/or technical support is provided to partners within the Alliance network to support adaptive management/learning, innovation incubation, collaborative approaches, and rapid response to threats to durability of protections.

Output 1.2.1: Global MPA Capacity Community of Practice (CoP) is resourced and has collaborated with existing initiatives (e.g., IW:LEARN) to strengthen the MPA workforce and institutions globally.

Output 1.2.2: Formalized partnerships with trusted technical partners and experts deliver in-depth support across key MPA management functions to Alliance sites and implementing partners.

Output 1.3.1: With co-financing, beacon sites are identified within the Alliance portfolio, and lessons and innovations from these sites are captured and shared in their region and globally.

Component 2: New Designations in Key Ocean Geographies

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
10,430,579.00	19,370,989.00

Outcome:

Outcome 2.1: New large-scale ocean conservation areas have been legally designated with support provided for initial implementation.

Output:

Output 2.1.1: Scientific research to identify areas most critical for protection and inform decision-making is supported through co-financing.

Output 2.1.2: Financial and/or technical support is provided to governments or government-endorsed partners to catalyze designations of new large-scale ocean conservation areas.

Component 3: Increased Ambition & New Designations in Underinvested Regions

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
812,569.00	25,307,498.00

Outcome:

Outcome 3.1: Ocean protection ambition is raised, and coverage of conserved ocean is increased by 50% in at least one underinvested region, identified by low ocean conservation area coverage and historically limited philanthropic investment.

Output:

Output 3.1.1: Regional strategy framework(s) to address regional ambition, implementation, and finance gaps are collaboratively developed with governments and implementing partner(s).

Output 3.1.2: Financial and/or technical support and networking resources are provided to implementing partners at the regional and site level to address systemic gaps (e.g. capacity and financing gaps) limiting ocean protection ambition and to secure the designation of new ocean conservation areas.

Component 4: Knowledge Sharing, Learning, & Coordination

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
887,311.00	977,915.00

Outcome:

Outcome 4.1: The GEF International Waters Community (IW:LEARN) has gained new and relevant knowledge through the sharing of Alliance project results and implementation experiences.

Outcome 4.2: Alliance partners, sites, and peer initiatives are better equipped to meet site needs and address systemic large-scale ocean conservation challenges through shared learning and professional development.

Outcome 4.3: Improved coordination within the 30x30 Marine Funders Action Network and broader ocean funder community increases the amount and coordinated impact of funding available for KMGBF Target 3.

Output:

Output 4.1.1 Project results, experiences, and lessons learned are shared through IW:LEARN communications and knowledge exchange opportunities, including participation in IW:LEARN convenings and the production of Results and Experience Notes.

Output 4.2.1: Implementation and marine management experiences and lessons learned are shared by Alliance partners, sites, and/or peer initiatives (e.g. GEF IW projects).

Output 4.2.2: Professional development opportunities in MPA management and financial operations are delivered to Alliance partners, such as coaching, mentorship, skill building, and experiential learning opportunities.

Output 4.3.1: As a result of the Alliance leadership, the 30x30 Marine Funders Action Network aligns funding, and amplifies peer investments, including investments within the Alliance portfolio and increased philanthropic match for relevant GEF-9 ocean protection projects.

M&E

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
345,688.00	971,113.00

Outcome:

Outcome 5.1: A functional monitoring and evaluation system supports accurate reporting of results to the GEF and other Alliance core partners and the continuous improvement of the project.

Output:

Output 5.1.1: A monitoring and evaluation framework/system is in place and used.

Component Balances

Project Components	GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
Component 1: Improved Ocean Protection Quality	4,808,258.00	122,044,007.00
Component 2: New Designations in Key Ocean Geographies	10,430,579.00	19,370,989.00
Component 3: Increased Ambition & New Designations in Underinvested Regions	812,569.00	25,307,498.00
Component 4: Knowledge Sharing, Learning, & Coordination	887,311.00	977,915.00
M&E	345,688.00	971,113.00
Subtotal	17,284,405.00	168,671,522.00
Project Management Cost	864,220.00	18,753,412.00
Total Project Cost (\$)	18,148,625.00	187,424,934.00

Please provide justification

PROJECT OUTLINE

A. PROJECT RATIONALE

Briefly describe the current situation: the global environmental problems and/or climate vulnerabilities that the project will address, the key elements of the system, and underlying drivers of environmental change in the project context, such as population growth, economic development, climate change, sociocultural and political factors, including conflicts, or technological changes. Describe the objective of the project, and the justification for it. (Approximately 3-5 pages) see guidance here

Global Environmental Significance of Oceans & Marine Protected Areas

A thriving ocean underpins a healthy, productive, and resilient planet. Covering more than 71% of the Earth's surface, it is the planet's largest biosphere and home to an estimated 50-80% of all life on Earth. The ocean generates roughly half of the planet's oxygen, absorbs about 25% of global CO₂ emissions, and captures nearly 90% of the excess heat produced by those emissions - making it one of our most critical buffers against climate change.^[1] At the same time, ocean-based economies are among the fastest growing in the world. Marine and coastal industries support a global market estimated at USD \$3 trillion per year, including a fisheries sector that provides 57 million jobs (UN Global Compact) and 15% of the animal protein consumed worldwide.^[2]

Despite its importance, the ocean is under threat. Destructive fishing practices, habitat loss, pollution, and climate change are driving declines in marine productivity and biodiversity, undermining the health of the ocean ecosystems and the services they provide.^[3] Today, an estimated 60% of the world's major marine ecosystems are degraded or used unsustainably and, without significant change, more than half the world's marine species may face extinction by 2100.^[4]

Over the past two decades, a growing body of research has demonstrated that area-based ocean conservation can enhance climate resilience, support ecosystem connectivity and function, protect biodiversity, improve fisheries productivity, and strengthen human well-being.^{[5][6][7]} When thoughtfully designed, effectively implemented, and properly enforced, ocean conservation areas – particularly those with high levels of protection from extractive and destructive activities – can serve as powerful tools to replenish fisheries, safeguard biodiversity, and enable ecosystems to function as they should^[8] – building ocean resilience as a critical hedge against climate change.^[9]

Scientists widely agree that addressing the challenges facing the marine environment requires protecting at least 30% of the ocean through area-based conservation measures, such as marine protected areas (MPAs) and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs), while ensuring the remaining ocean is sustainably managed by 2030.^{[10][11]}

Ocean Protection Progress & Current Baseline

The last two decades have seen a notable increase in the number and extent of MPAs and OECMs, with MPA coverage expanding more than tenfold since 2000, when only 0.7% of the ocean was reported as protected.^{[12]12}

As of January 2026, the World Database on Protected and Conserved Areas (WDPA) reports 9.6% of the ocean as protected through 16,608 MPAs and 231 OECMs.^{[13]13} This expansion of coverage, which includes a 1.2% increase in 2025 that was driven in large part by Blue Nature Alliance engagement sites reaching designation, is reinforced by a rise in global commitments. The Aichi Biodiversity Targets, which were adopted as part of UN Convention on Biological Diversity's Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2022, set an initial target of conserving 10% of coastal and marine areas through protected areas and other area-based conservation measures (Aichi Target 11).^{[14]14} More recently, 196 nations came together in 2022 to adopt the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF), a historic agreement that raised ambition to conserve 30% of all marine and coastal areas through ecologically representative, well-connected, effectively managed, and equitably governed systems of MPAs and OECMs by 2030 (KMGBF Target 3).^{[15]15}

The KMGBF has served as an effective call to action, with 122 governments voicing commitment to support the implementation of KMGBF Target 3 through the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People.^{[16]16} However, even with this support, ocean protection remains far off track to meet the 30% target by 2030. The rate of progress is further stymied when quality and effectiveness, in addition to quantity and coverage, of ocean conservation areas are considered. The Marine Protection Atlas (MPAtlas), a project of the Marine Conservation Institute that integrates science-based assessments to measure ocean protection progress, found that just 3.2% of the ocean is highly or fully protected.^{[17]17} Further, a 2024 study of the 100 largest MPAs by area found that only 74.6% of assessed MPA area was implemented or actively managed, and 36.9% of assessed MPA area allowed for high-impact activities incompatible with the conservation of biodiversity,^{[18]18} equating to an estimate of only 2.6% of the ocean protected in MPAs that are highly or fully protected and implemented or actively managed.^{[19]19} In the year since the study was completed, engagements under the first phase of the Blue Nature Alliance have made meaningful contributions to increasing this percentage, but substantial work remains.

Barriers to achieving KMGBF Target 3, Drivers, and Opportunities for Change

It has taken nearly half a century to establish protections for just over 9% of the ocean and just two countries – Palau and the United Kingdom – have effectively protected more than 30% of their waters in ocean conservation areas that are both implemented and highly or fully protected.^{[20]20} The current rate of progress for ocean conservation remains too slow, falling far short of what is needed to meet global targets and address growing threats from overexploitation, climate change, and biodiversity loss.^{[21]21}

Turning the tide to achieve KMGBF Target 3 will require a coordinated global effort to not only accelerate the designation and expansion of new ocean conservation area, but also to ensure that areas are well governed, effectively and equitably managed, and capable of delivering lasting conservation outcomes. Success in this effort will require addressing the full system, recognizing and responding to how the different drivers and barriers to progress interact, compound, and collectively shape the pace and quality of ocean conservation.

This project identifies and seeks to address four key drivers that, together, create a persistent feedback cycle, reinforcing systematic barriers and hindering progress towards achieving global ocean conservation goals. While these drivers are significant, they are not insurmountable. Approaches tackling individual drivers can and have been seen to yield incremental progress. Ocean protection wins to date have demonstrated that well-designed and managed projects and initiatives can generate real impact on the ground. However, meaningful and sustained impact cannot be unlocked until all drivers, and the relationships between them, are addressed simultaneously.

Building upon the Alliance's implementation experience to date, this project is designed to drive progress across all four identified drivers. By disrupting the negative persistent feedback cycle and replacing it with a new positive, reinforcing cycle, the project will not only catalyze new and higher quality ocean conservation areas but, by addressing the root causes and barriers associated with these drivers, generate momentum that will continue to drive ocean conservation well beyond the close of project activities.

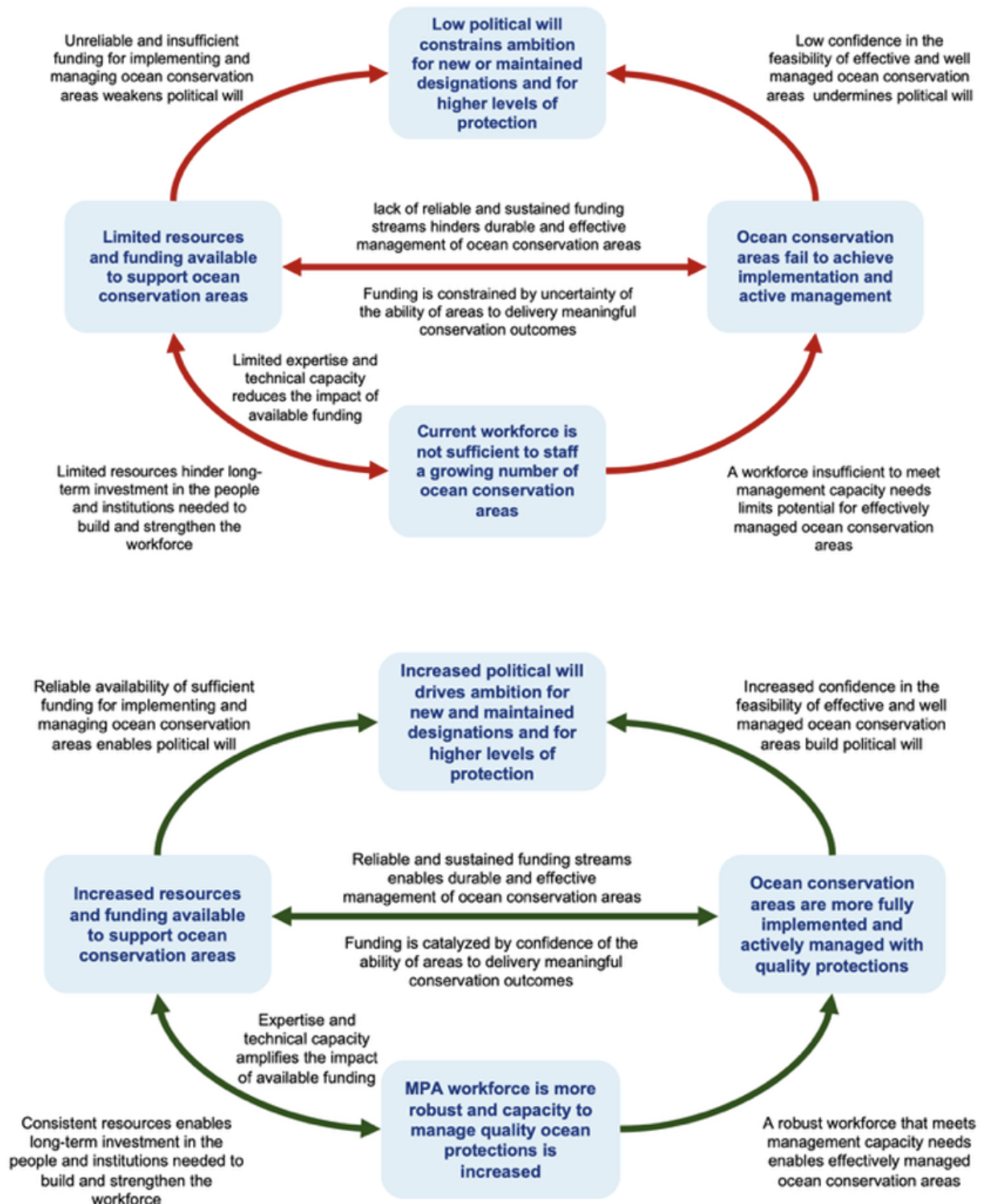


Figure 1. Negative & Positive Feedback Cycles. The figure above shows the current persistent negative feedback cycle (top) that the project has been designed to address and the alternate positive feedback cycle (bottom) that will be achieved through project outcomes. The outputs, outcomes, and components of this project have been designed to directly address and alter the drivers indicated in the boxes. As a result of altering the drivers, the relationships, indicated by the arrows and coinciding text, between the drivers will be transformed to create a positive feedback cycle.

Fewer than one-third of coastal countries have set specific, measurable, and time-bound ocean protection targets aligned with KMGBF Target 3 and, even where targets exist, their ambition, both in terms of coverage and level of protection, is often insufficient to secure desired conservation outcomes. There are multiple causes for constrained ambition. Governments frequently cite economic pressures, competing priorities, data gaps, limited capacity for management, and

high costs of implementation as hindering willingness and ability to act.^{[22]22} These pressures, exacerbated by political volatility and government turnover, are also contributing to a growing rate of protected area downgrading, degazettement, and downsizing (PADDD) threatening to rollback existing protections and erode progress to date.^{[23]23}

Progress against this driver will require not only securing government commitment to global targets but also addressing the underlying barriers that weaken political will. Ambition will be unlocked with increased confidence in the feasibility, long-term value, and conservation benefits of well-designed and effectively managed ocean conservation areas.

Opportunity for Change: The project can build political will through activities that increase government confidence in pursuing new designations and higher levels of protection, including amplifying examples of successful ocean conservation areas and providing reliable post-designation support and financing.

Driver 2: Ocean conservation areas fail to achieve implementation and active management.

The greatest ecological and socioeconomic benefits are delivered by ocean conservation areas that have high levels of protection, strong management capacity, and the capability to achieve compliance through effective enforcement and sustained stakeholder support.^{[24]24} Yet many ocean conservation areas remain ‘paper parks’ after designation, failing to achieve effective and equitable management, often hindered by shortfalls in financial resources, staffing, and overall capacity.^{[25]25}

In the push to achieve 30% coverage, the long-term support needed to ensure ocean conservation areas deliver real outcomes can be deprioritized, with philanthropic resources instead directed towards the designation of new areas,^{[26]26} despite the fact that this shortfall in management perpetuates the negative feedback cycle. Ineffective conservation areas undermine confidence in their feasibility and benefits, which in turn weakens political will and ambition. To break this cycle and ensure that ocean conservation areas can deliver their intended conservation outcomes, sustained support is required throughout a site’s journey – establishing equitable governance and management systems, building management capacity, and securing long-term financing.

Opportunity for Change: The project can support sites and partners to improve the quality and effectiveness of ocean protections through technical assistance and direct investment into governance, planning, implementation, management, and sustainable financing. Through deep partnership, including reinvesting in current Alliance engagement sites, the project can fill a critical gap by offering dedicated support for implementation and active management, enabling sites to make meaningful and durable progress along their conservation journeys.

Driver 3: Current workforce is insufficient to staff a growing network of ocean conservation areas.

Sufficient staffing has been found to be the strongest determinate of an ocean conservation areas’ ability to deliver conservation outcomes, with areas with adequate staffing capacity and funding delivering three times the ecological benefits of those without sufficient capacity.^{[27]27} Despite the critical importance of management capacity, only 35% of MPAs report sufficient funding levels and only 9% report adequate staffing capacity for management.^{[28]28}

The current workforce of trained professionals with the expertise needed to implement and manage ocean conservation areas – spanning management strategies, finance and operations, marine ecology, stakeholder engagement, and more – is insufficient to meet the demands of a growing network of ocean conservation areas.^{[29]29} Substantial investments in human,

technical, and institutional capacity will be essential to support effective marine management at the scale required under KMGBF Target 3.

Opportunity for Change: The project can make long-term strategic investments into the networks and capacity building institutions to create the tools, resources, and support systems needed to continuously build, retain, and sustain management capacity. As a leading partner of the Global MPA Capacity Community of Practice, the project can empower a more adequate and skilled marine management workforce on a global scale.

Driver 4: Limited resources and funding are available to advance ocean conservation efforts.

Finance remains one of the key barriers to effective implementation, with 65% of MPAs operating with budgets inadequate to meet basic management needs.^[30]³⁰ Despite covering 71% of the planet, oceans only receive about 14% of international public and philanthropic funding directed towards achieving KMGBF Target 3.^[31]³¹ As new protections are established faster than funding grows, available financing per hectare of ocean has declined, further constraining effective implementation and management.

Official development assistance (ODA) represents the largest source of funding for ocean conservation and ocean-related economic development, totaling an estimated USD \$2.13B of funds in 2023.^[32]³² When combined with philanthropic funding (USD \$1.21B) and non-foundation funding (USD \$1B), global funding for ocean initiatives reached approximately USD \$4.34B in 2023. With USD \$1.2B of this directed towards ocean protection,^[33]³³ funding remains far short of the estimated USD \$15.8B needed annually to designate and effectively manage 30% of ocean in conservation areas.^[34]³⁴

As highlighted in the GEF-8 strategic positioning, ODA funds alone are insufficient to meet ocean conservation financing needs. Closing the funding gap will require increased coordinated resource mobilization across multiple funding sources – including governments, private philanthropy, conservation organizations, and increasingly private capital markets. Scaling innovative financing mechanisms, such as blue bonds and debt-for-nature swaps, will also be critical to sustainable, long-term funding for effective management of ocean conservation areas.

Opportunity for Change: As the only dedicated NGO-funder collaboration focused exclusively on accelerating ocean protection, the Alliance is uniquely positioned to multiply the impact of a GEF investment. Though co-financing, strategic alignment, and partnership across a broad coalition of funders and implementers, the project can help reduce the ocean finance gap. Further, by providing financial and technical support to advance innovative, scalable sustainable and blended financing mechanisms across a global portfolio – particularly in large-scale sites which have proven far more cost-effective on a per hectare basis, the project can drive lasting improvements in the long-term management effectiveness of ocean conservation areas.

Baseline initiatives and examples of success

While significant challenges remain in ensuring area-based ocean conservation delivers the durable ecological and social outcomes desired under KMGBF Target 3, a growing set of global initiatives is demonstrating how locally led, science informed, and equity focused ecosystem-based approaches can strengthen the effectiveness of ocean protections. Collectively, these initiatives – inclusive of GEF projects, funder collaboratives, and on-the-ground implementors – underscore the value of a whole-of-society approach that engages government, civil society, the private sector, and local communities. Evidence consistently shows that efforts rooted in strong partnerships and collaboration achieve the most enduring conservation gains.

Across initiatives, common priorities include strengthening the core elements of a sustainable ocean protection system. This includes ensuring effective protection of ecologically representative, biodiverse, well-connected, and climate-resilient ecosystems; securing reliable, long-term financing for management; and building sustained capacity to achieve conservation outcomes. These efforts offer tested strategies and practical lessons that the project can draw from to adapt, scale, and accelerate ocean conservation.

By aligning with and complimenting existing work, the project will avoid duplication and can instead direct its contributions to places where needs are greatest – whether due to limited funding, insufficient implementation capacity, or heightened ecological or social vulnerability. Building on emerging models, the project seeks to consolidate what works, close implementation gaps, and accelerate impact across large marine ecosystems.

Information on the notable initiatives that have informed and will continue to shape this project strategy is listed below. The Blue Nature Alliance has existing partnerships with many of these initiatives already and is in active collaboration discussions with others.

GEF Projects & Initiatives

- **GEF International Waters Learning Exchange and Resources (IW:LEARN):** Strengthens management capacity and promotes learning as the global knowledge sharing platform for the GEF International Waters portfolio, fostering peer-to-peer learning, exchange of experiences and best practices, and capacity-building.
- **Pacific Island Regional Oceanscape Program (PROP):** Strengthened coastal ecosystem management in the Pacific Islands region and sustainably financed conservation of large Pacific MPAs. The project provides an example of how governments, regional organizations, and communities can work in partnership to improve sustainable management of marine fisheries and strengthen institutions responsible for ocean conservation.
- **The Coastal Fisheries Initiative Global Partnership:** Coordinated, supported, strengthened, and added value to the effort of local partners in six coastal countries to preserve marine resources and coastal fisheries. The project provides an example of a community-driven global partnership that spans global agencies while drawing from on-the-ground knowledge of local organizations.
- **Catalyzing Implementation of a Strategic Action Program for Sustainable Management of Shared Living Marine Resources in the Humboldt Current System:** Facilitated ecosystem-based fisheries management and ecosystem restoration for the sustainable and resilient management of marine resources and ecosystem services. The project provides learning on multi-sector coordination to achieve a thriving ocean in alignment with the LME SAP.
- **Facilitating Dialogue and Strengthening Transboundary Cooperation with Legislators to Improve Marine Governance:** Focuses on transboundary work and enabling effective MPA governance through a caucus model. The project demonstrates how enabling conditions can be built and activated for transboundary ocean conservation areas.
- **Build Back a Blue and Stronger Mediterranean:** Facilitates the strong, effective, and sustainable management of Mediterranean MPAs. Building on previous projects in the Mediterranean region, the project provides experiences and learning on management and capacity building across a multi-country system of ocean conservation areas and experience executing a Conservation Trust Fund (CFT).
- **Promoting National Blue Economy Priorities Through Marine Spatial Planning in the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem Plus (BCLME+):** Focuses on achieving blue economy development through marine spatial planning and the creation of new MPAs and enhancements of existing ones. The project demonstrates strategies to designate new MPAs and strengthen existing ones, as well as the role MPAs can play in supporting larger blue economy development efforts.
- **Effectively Managing Networks of Marine Protected Areas in Large Marine Ecosystems in the ASEAN Region (ASEAN ENMPAS):** Works to develop and improve management of networks of marine protected areas with LMEs in the ASEAN region. The project provides experiences and learning on the management of regional networks of MPAs and opportunities for management efforts to support biodiversity and sustainable fisheries.
- **Coral Reef Rescue: Resilient Coral Reefs, Resilient Communities:** Builds capacity and pilots solutions to ensure the long-term survival of climate refuge coral reef ecosystems. The project provides learning and an opportunity for knowledge exchange to advance climate-resilient ocean conservation efforts.

Non-GEF Projects & Initiatives

- **Big Ocean:** Peer-learning network of MPA managers and practitioners created to support the sharing of best practices and strategies for the improvement of large-scale MPAs. Big Ocean serves as a neutral convener, strategic partner, and technical collaborator for sites.
- **Global Island Partnership (GLISPA):** Global alliance to build sustainable and resilient island communities with a focus on sustainable development and climate resilience. GLISPA brings together island leaders, communities, and organizations to amplify their visibility in global forums.
- **Global MPA Capacity Community of Practice:** The CoP connects more than 30 MPA capacity development practitioners across universities, NGOs, government, and donors. Together, they take a systems approach - linking global, regional, and local efforts - to tackle the structural barriers that continue to limit effective MPA management.
- **Skylight:** Utilizes data and technology to help reduce illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing by providing AI-powered vessel detection and insights to governments and ocean conservation area managers.
- **Global Fishing Watch:** Creates map visualizations, data, and analysis of fishing activity to enable scientific research and transform ocean governance through increased transparency of human activity at sea.

- **UN Environment Program World Conservation Monitoring Center (UNEP-WCMC):** Conducts biodiversity assessments and provides the best available science to support policy development and implementation. Its datasets include the World Database on Protected Areas, World Database on other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures, and the Global Database on Protected Area Management.
- **30x30 Marine Funders Action Network:** An informal coordination network of the world’s largest ocean protection-focused philanthropies and private funders. Provides a forum for peer learning, aligning grant-making, and increasing leverage. Peer funders of the Alliance and members of the 30x30 Marine Funders Action Network include:
 - **Oceans 5**
 - **Blue Action Fund**
 - **Waitt Foundation**
 - **Wyss Campaign for Nature**
 - **Bezos Earth Fund**
 - **Bloomberg Ocean Fund**
 - **Bloomberg-Arcadia Joint 30x30 Fund:**
 - **Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation’s Arctic Initiative:**
 - **Becht Foundation**
 - **Oceankind**
 - **Packard Foundation**
- **The Ocean Accelerator:** A \$40 million initiative established by Wildlife Conservation Society in 2025 to mobilize the financial and technical resources needed to protect 1 million square kilometers of new ocean area by 2030. The initiative currently works across 26 countries and 117 marine protected and conserved areas, ensuring sustainable, inclusive governance, and science-driven management in collaboration with local and regional partners.
- **Blue Prosperity Coalition:** Launched with a \$150 million commitment in 2019, this coalition consists of NGOs, academic institutions, foundations, and other organizations working together to assist committed governments in developing and implementing sustainable marine spatial plans to protect the environment and improve the economy. The Blue Prosperity Coalition has partnerships with the Azores, Bermuda, the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, the Maldives, Samoa, Tonga, and Vanuatu.
- **Enduring Earth:** Initiative working with stewards of the environment to protect 600 million hectares of land, ocean, and freshwater by 2030. Since its launch in 2021, Enduring Earth has secured over \$1.7 billion to support local leaders from governments, Indigenous peoples, communities, partners, and funders across six PFP initiatives in Brazil, Canada, Colombia, and Mongolia, with 10 additional projects underway in 12 countries.
- **Global Fund for Coral Reefs:** Public-private partnership driven by more than 60 member states, UN agencies, financial institutions, philanthropies, impact investors, and conservation organizations. Launched in 2020, over \$114 million has been committed, contributing to the provision of grants, technical assistance, and concessional finance through on-site partners.
- **SPACES:** Global initiative supporting low and middle-income countries in developing government-led places to meet nature and climate goals, particularly goals pertaining to the 30x30 target. Working in alignment with countries’ National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), SPACES has secured over 13M hectares of marine protected areas.
- **Pristine Seas:** Established by National Geographic in 2008, Pristine Seas uses a combination of scientific research, technology, and media to help protect vital ocean ecosystems, including MPAs covering over 6.8M square kilometers of ocean area.
- **30x30 Southeast Asia Ocean Fund:** Funders collaborative dedicated to supporting efforts to protect 30% of Southeast Asia’s seas by 2030. The fund supports inclusive, equitable, and effective conservation of ocean ecosystems.
- **Coral Reefs of the High Seas Coalition:** Global alliance dedicated to protecting coral reefs beyond national jurisdiction. Founded in 2019, the coalition brings together scientists, communities, and decision-makers to identify the most critical high seas biodiversity hotspots for protection.
- **Pew Bertarelli Ocean Legacy:** Partnership between The Pew Charitable Trust and Dona Bertarelli to support the creation of ecologically significant, large, and effective MPAs. To date, the partnership has helped to establish MPAs covering over 16M square kilometers of ocean area.

Beneficiaries, stakeholders, and their roles

The project engages a broad and interconnected set of stakeholders, including local communities, regional and national government institutions, civil society organizations, financial institutions, private sector actors, researchers, and a robust network of place-based and global implementing partners. These groups are both contributors and beneficiaries of the project as it works to catalyze the designation of new ocean conservation areas and improve the effectiveness and durability of existing areas.

The table below identifies key stakeholder groups and the role they are anticipated to play in project implementation.

Table 1: Beneficiaries, stakeholders, and their roles

Stakeholder Group	Anticipated Project Role
Core Partners	<p>Core partners include the Blue Nature Alliance Executing Core Partners (i.e., CI and Pew) and donors who have committed or will commit funds equivalent to or above an agreed-upon threshold.</p> <p>Core partners hold leadership roles as members of the Alliance Steering Council and shape the mission and direction of the Alliance. As members of the Steering Council, core partners set the tone and direction for Alliance priorities at the global and site level.</p>
Implementing Partners	<p>Implementing partners are those best positioned in specific engagement sites to efficiently and effectively achieve outcomes, including local and international NGOs, community groups, private sector operators, the science and research community, and government institutions.</p> <p>Implementing partners have aligned mission and values with the Alliance and are the vehicles of change on the ground. Their relationships, technical expertise, and place-based connections are essential to achieving success. The Alliance will prioritize early engagement and careful selection of implementing partners.</p>
Technical Partners	<p>Technical Partners are those who provide technical services to advance site-based work or global initiatives. Some technical partners are grant recipients from the Alliance, while others provide pro-bono or in-kind services to the Alliance.</p> <p>The Blue Nature Alliance has a curated list of exceptional technical partners that will it continue to grow, formalizing new partnerships for this project.</p>
Leverage Partners	<p>Leverage partners fund or provide in-kind contributions directly for work that contributes to achieving our shared goal for a site or for a global activity.</p> <p>Leverage partners are aligned with the Alliance in the goal of protecting marine ecosystems and are important to achieving success in Alliance sites, providing important social or political leverage and/or contributing technical support or other resources. The importance of leverage partners differs for areas of work across the project. The Alliance identifies and engages with key leverage partners it deems critical to success before or early in implementation.</p>
Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)	<p>International and national NGOs may become collaborators and partners in the implementation of Alliance sites, including NGOs that are pursuing ocean conservation at scale and/or can provide resources and capacity-building support.</p> <p>NGOs are anticipated to have an interest in working on and being associated with the Alliance in order to advance alignment of goals and initiatives under their own specific scopes of work. The Alliance will prioritize early engagement and relationship building with relevant NGOs to identify potential implementing partners and opportunities to align strategies to amplify impact on-the-ground.</p>
Governing Authorities	<p>Governing authorities (such as national and local governments) have legal authority in the geographies where Alliance implementation sites are located. As stakeholders, governing authorities have a variety of interests regarding the marine space, most often focused on long-term productivity and profitability of marine ecosystems.</p> <p>Support and partnership of key governing authorities is an essential element of Alliance success and, as such, the Alliance will prioritize early engagement with appropriate governing authorities and continue engagement throughout implementation.</p>
Local Communities & Indigenous Peoples (IPLCs)	<p>Local communities and Indigenous Peoples (IPLCs) live in, depend on, or have a cultural connection to the marine ecosystem of an Alliance engagement site. IPLCs (including disadvantaged groups) are a target beneficiary of Alliance site-based engagements, as they directly depend on the marine environment for food or livelihoods and/or indirectly depend on a healthy marine ecosystem to sustain their economy and can have strong cultural connections to the area.</p> <p>The involvement, participation, and, whenever possible, leadership of IPLCs is especially important for the long-term success of Alliance engagements. Without the participation and support of IPLCs on the ground, management interventions and other measures will be hampered or ineffective in their reach and success. The Alliance requires careful consideration and planning for stakeholder engagement at each site, including the development of full Stakeholder Engagement Plans and tracking of key indicators. The Alliance utilizes a Code of Conduct to guide engagements in a way that prioritizes the participation and recognition of rights of IPLCs.</p>

<p>Marine Managers/Staff of MPAs & OECMs</p>	<p>Marine managers and staff include active managers and current staff, as well as up-and-coming staff and managers that may still be pursuing their education or are early in their career. Marine managers and staff are anticipated to benefit from project activities at their site as investments are made into workforce capacity and strategies to secure long-term, reliable financing to support management of their ocean conservation area.</p> <p>As the drivers of on-the-ground implementation, the involvement and participation of marine managers, practitioners, and staff is important for the long-term success of Alliance engagements. Managers and staff provide essential insight into the current conditions and needs of an ocean conservation area, and their involvement in project activities is key to achieving effective and durable management outcomes. The Alliance will prioritize early engagement with managers and staff in the design of engagement strategies and continue engagement throughout project implementation.</p>
<p>Commercial & Artisanal Fisheries</p>	<p>Commercial fisheries that operate in or harvest resources from within an Alliance site may be directly impacted by project activities. Commercial fisheries are interested in the productivity of marine ecosystems and the profitability of marine resources. Commercial fisheries may become concerned with the loss of profits in the short-term as a result of restriction on fishing access.</p> <p>Artisanal fisheries that operate in or harvest resources from within an Alliance site may also be impacted by project activities but, due to the importance of these fisheries for local food security and income, artisanal fishers face significant livelihood impacts from restricted access. A participatory and human dimension aware approach is necessary to minimize harms (e.g. restriction of fishing access) and maximize benefits (e.g. replenished fishing stocks) for artisanal fisheries.</p> <p>The project aims to implement sustainable solutions that ultimately benefit fisheries, making them more productive and profitable in the long-run, but commercial fishing interests (such as IUU) that directly harm ecosystems, IPLCs, and other stakeholders may be targeted within Alliance site-based interventions. The Alliance seeks to work with national, regional, and local governing authorities to outline sustainable management solutions that benefit both local rights holders and stakeholders, artisanal fishers, and, when appropriate, commercial fishing interests.</p>
<p>Tourism Operators</p>	<p>Tourism operators that operate within Alliance sites are inherently dependent on healthy marine ecosystems with the potential of attracting tourists and ultimately, in the long run, on healthy marine ecosystems.</p> <p>In sites where tourism is an important economic driver, engagement with key tourism operators and bodies will be important to ensure project activities are respected and have buy-in.</p>
<p>GEF IW Project Directors</p>	<p>GEF IW Project Directors are interested in identifying opportunities for alignment with the Alliance, avoiding duplication of efforts, and sharing lessons learned.</p> <p>Through the GEF network and connections, the Alliance will engage with GEF IW Project Directors to connect with established partner connections, build new relationships, and leverage existing relationships.</p>

Country-level consultation and engagement of beneficiaries and stakeholders will occur throughout the PPG phase and results will be integrated into the final project document. As project geographies are identified, the Alliance will engage government, local stakeholders, and ongoing projects and initiatives in alignment with their anticipated project roles as outlined in Table 1: Beneficiaries, stakeholders, and their roles. Extensive country-level engagement will, further, be completed a part of the engagement framework and/or regional strategy framework development process and, in alignment with first phase of project implementation, a stakeholder engagement plan will be completed with implementing partners for each engagement prior to the start of project activities to ensure appropriate country-level engagement continues throughout project implementation.

The table below identifies all countries with active or completed site-based engagements within the current Blue Nature Alliance site portfolio. Country-level engagement will occur during the PPG phase for all current Alliance sites, but nature and depth of this engagement will vary by sites based on several factors. As subgrants close for the first phase of project implementation, all grantees will be invited to share their reflections on their partnership with the Alliance, including through a grantee perception survey. The input from this process will serve to inform project development and special consideration will be given to GEF recipient countries to provide opportunity for input from focal points and relevant government ministries engaged in project activities. More extensive consultation and engagement with GEF focal points will occur for the countries with engagements that utilized funds from the GEF Project Grant (noted as 'GEF Funds Allocated' in the table below) to ensure project development is informed by a comprehensive understanding of the impact of and any challenges associated with the utilization of GEF funds in the first phase of project implementation.

Project activities are anticipated to continue in a subset of the countries listed below with reinvestment in select engagements from the first phase of project implementation. These engagements will be identified during the PPG phase

and, upon selection, the Alliance and implementing partners will advance country-level engagement to inform and socialize project strategy. With both political will and local engagement as criteria for investment, all engagement and regional strategy frameworks will require stated interest and support by relevant decision-making authorities at the regional, national, sub-national, and community level, including, where possible, expressed commitment to match or co-support the project. Further, for an engagement to advance into implementation, local champions, inclusive of community organizations, local leaders, and/or coalitions, must be engaged and prepared to support and/or drive the advancing the project process in a participatory way.

Table 2: Blue Nature Alliance Phase I Engagement Countries

Country	Alliance Engagement Name(s)	GEF Recipient Country	GEF Funds Allocated
Angola	Benguela Current	Yes	Yes
Antigua & Barbuda	Caribbean	Yes	No
Australia	Australian Sub Antarctic Islands	No	No
Bahamas	Caribbean	Yes	No
Brazil	Brazil	Yes	Yes
Canada	Canada's Arctic & Atlantic, Great Bear Sea	No	No
Chile	Chile Portfolio of MPAs, Islas Diego Ramirez – Paso Drake	Yes	No
Colombia	Colombia	Yes	No
Costa Rica	Cocos Island	Yes	No
Dominican Republic	Caribbean	Yes	No
Fiji	Lau Seascape	Yes	No
France	Clipperton, European Union, French Polynesia, New Caledonia	No	No
Gabon	Gulf of Guinea	Yes	Yes
Germany	European Union	No	No
Indonesia	Indonesia	Yes	Yes
Ireland	Ireland	No	No
Kenya	Western Indian Ocean	Yes	Yes
Madagascar	Western Indian Ocean	Yes	Yes
Mexico	Revillagigedo, Two Seas	Yes	Yes
Mozambique	Western Indian Ocean	Yes	Yes
Namibia	Benguela Current	Yes	Yes
Netherlands	Dutch Caribbean, European Union	No	No
Niue	Niue	Yes	No
Palau	Palau National Marine Sanctuary	Yes	No
Panama	Cordillera de Coiba, Panama's Caribbean	Yes	No
Philippines	Philippine Rise	Yes	Yes
Portugal	Azores, European Union	No	No
Republic of Congo	Gulf of Guinea	Yes	Yes
Samoa	Samoa	Yes	Yes
Seychelles	Seychelles	Yes	No
Solomon Islands	Solomon Islands	Yes	Yes
South Africa	Benguela Current, Western Indian Ocean	Yes	Yes
Spain	European Union	No	No
Sweden	European Union	No	No
Tanzania	Western Indian Ocean	Yes	Yes
Tonga	Tonga	Yes	Yes
United Kingdom	South Georgia & South Sandwich Islands, Tristan da Cunha	No	No
United States	Marina Trench Marine National Monument, Pacific Islands Heritage Marine National Monument, Papahānaumokuākea	No	No
Uruguay	Uruguay	Yes	No

Justification for the project

The Blue Nature Alliance remains the only dedicated NGO-funder collaboration focused exclusively on accelerating global ocean protection. Since its launch in 2020, the Alliance has grown to be a significant contributor in the marine area-based funder landscape. In this role, the Alliance has served as an effective impact multiplier for GEF funds, leveraging

philanthropic resources to secure over \$115 million in co-financing and nearly \$600 million in additional leverage funding across its investments.

This mobilization of blended financing has allowed the partnership to achieve far-reaching impact. The Alliance has built a portfolio of 43 site-based engagements across 53 countries and the high seas, collectively covering almost 3 billion hectares - approximately 8% of the global ocean. To date, the Alliance’s work has already led to the designation of 370 million ha of new MPAs, the upgraded protection level of 430 million ha of previously established MPAs, and the measurably improved management of 130 million ha of previously established MPAs. In support of this global portfolio, the Alliance collaborates with more than 130 partners, inclusive of governments, civil society, Indigenous peoples and local communities, and coalitions. This ‘big tent’ approach to partnership has solidified the Alliance’s role as a strategic collaborator and trusted partner. As noted in the project’s previous Mid-Term Review, *‘the Alliance serves as an accelerant...and offers clear and considerable added value with the global marine conservation arena’* and *‘the project approach offers synergies through partnership and alignment of strategies and efforts among a broad coalition of funders and implementors.’*^[35]³⁵

The proposed project builds on five years of experience and lessons learned to meet the urgent need to accelerate the designation and effective management of ocean conservation areas capable of delivering lasting conservation outcomes. With 2030 fast approaching and the 30% target still far out of reach, resources must be directed towards efforts that deliver innovations, measurable results, and scalable impact. The project strategy presented in this document positions the Alliance to meet this need in a timely and strategic way.

By addressing the full system— focusing not on individual barriers but on how underlying drivers interact and compound to collectively shape the pace and quality of ocean conservation – the project can deliver meaningful progress. Without renewed GEF support, efforts to confront these systematic drivers will remain fragmented, slowing the pace of global ocean protection and falling short of what is needed to achieve KMGBF Target 3. There is also a real risk that current momentum could stagnate or reverse if the coordination and support provided by the Alliance to the ocean conservation community is lost. This project offers an important opportunity to deepen partnerships, strengthen the Alliance’s contributions, and accelerate the pace, scale, and effectiveness of ocean conservation during this critical decade, securing a healthy ocean for generations to come.

Incremental cost reasoning

In the absence of this project, the pace, scale, and effectiveness of area-based conservation efforts will remain insufficient to achieve KMGBF Target 3. Without a coordinated and holistic approach to address the systemic barriers that impede ocean protection progress, efforts will remain far short of protecting the 30% of ocean area needed to counter threats from destructive fishing practices, habitat loss, pollution, and climate change. The table below provides a summary of the Incremental Benefits of the project’s interventions.

Business as Usual <i>(without project)</i>	Incremental Benefits <i>(with the project – contributions to baseline)</i>
1. Coordination across ocean conservation efforts remains limited, hindering progress and impact of investment by the GEF and other funders.	The project will continue to cultivate the Alliance’s robust network of 130+ partners, increasing collaboration and coordination across the ocean conservation community. The Alliance’s approach to partnership will not only increase the impact of this project’s outcomes but will also positively impact other initiatives through improved knowledge sharing, coordination across projects, and alignment of funding sources.
2. Low political will continues to constrain ambition for new or maintained designations and higher levels of protection.	The project will build political will by increasing government confidence to pursue new designations and higher levels of protection from extractive and destructive activities, through the provision of reliable support for initial implementation and the amplification of successful ocean conservation area examples. Benefits will include both the designation of new ocean conservation areas and sustained ambition for future ocean conservation action. The project will also include activities to support sites in weathering political transitions and counter the risk of PADD.

	Incremental benefits will be additional to 750M hectares of new designated ocean conservation area anticipated to be achieved in the first phase of the Blue Nature Alliance.
3. Ocean conservation areas will continue to fail to achieve implementation and active management.	<p>The project will support sites and partners to improve the quality and effectiveness of ocean protections, inclusive of governance, planning, implementation, management, and sustainable financing. Through financial investment and deep partnership, the project will meaningfully advance sites along their conservation journey and demonstrate the feasibility and benefits of high-quality ocean conservation areas.</p> <p>Incremental benefits will build upon and/or be additional to 500M hectares of existing ocean conservation areas with legally upgraded levels of protection from extractive and destructive activities and/or with improved management effectiveness anticipated to be achieved in the first phase of the Blue Nature Alliance.</p>
4. Workforce remains insufficient to staff a growing network of ocean conservation areas, undermining the ability of these areas to deliver desired conservation outcomes.	The project will make strategic investments into ocean conservation area networks and capacity development providers required to build and sustain a robust marine management workforce. Through the Global MPA Community of Practice and professional development support for Alliance partners, the project will bolster a skilled marine management workforce, supporting the effective and sustained management of ocean conservation areas.
5. Funding remains insufficient to advance ocean conservation efforts.	The project will support sites to design, implement, and resource innovative sustainable financing strategies, creating reliable financing streams for these sites and demonstrating the feasibility of mechanisms that can be scaled through future GEF-9 projects. Further, the Alliance will continue to multiply the impact of GEF investment through substantial cash co-financing secured from philanthropic funders and conservation organizations.

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B. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project description

This section asks for a theory of change as part of a joined-up description of the project as a whole. The project description is expected to cover the key elements of good project design in an integrated way. It is also expected to meet the GEF’s policy requirements on gender, stakeholders, private sector, and knowledge management and learning (see section D). This section should be a narrative that reads like a joined-up story and not independent elements that answer the guiding questions contained in the PIF guidance document. (Approximately 3-5 pages) see guidance here

Project Approach

The project approach outlined in this document is shaped by the Alliance’s implementation experience to date. It represents a shift in focus to the areas where the Alliance has demonstrated the greatest impact, informed by the unique strengths of the Alliance team and by gaps identified in the work of peer funders and implementors.



Figure 2. Conservation Journey. The conservation journey is aligned with the stages of establishment and based on each stage, the Alliance provides a combination of technical expertise, access to a network of partners, and flexible financial resources to support the activities indicated in orange.

In only five years, the Alliance has established itself as both a major ocean protection funder and a source of deep technical expertise for on-the-ground implementation. This success has been enabled by the Alliance's distinct approach which is characterized by the following:

- The Alliance's approach is rooted in the **conservation journey framework**, which recognizes that every site is at a different stage in its journey. With a commitment to meeting sites where they are in their stage of establishment, the Alliance tailors support to address each site's specific challenges, needs, and contexts.
- Engagements allow for **flexible project designs**. Implementing partners note their appreciation for the Alliance's flexibility – both as a funder and collaborator – and willingness to adapt project designs, process, and arrangements.^{[1]³⁶} This flexibility also enables quick response to emerging opportunities and changing priorities on the ground.
- Staffed by a team comprised of former marine area managers and practitioners, technical experts, and coalition-builders, the Alliance provides a **unique blend of flexible and rapidly-deployed financial resources and technical support**. Implementing partners value this expertise, particularly in the areas of sustainable finance, surveillance and enforcement, policy engagement, and science.³⁶
- The Alliance's hands-on approach to partnership enables the team to **build trusted relationships** that go beyond typical funder-grantee relationships. Implementing partners consistently describe their regional contact points as thought partners and a trusted source of input, guidance, and support.³⁶
- Drawing on relationships held across the partnership, the Alliance acts as a **network mobilizer and strategic coordinator**. Implementing partners emphasize the value of the Alliance's ability to convene stakeholders, catalyze resources, and facilitate connections.³⁶ Peer funders also view the Alliance as a valuable collaborator for project sourcing and co-funding.^{[2]³⁷}
- In the global push towards 30% protection, commitments and new designations often overshadow later stages of the conservation journey, such as active management and sustainable financing, which remain under-resourced.³⁷ The Alliance is filling this gap by **supporting implementation and management to achieve effective and durable protections**. Alliance commitments to sustained implementation support also help move new designations over the finish line.
- The Alliance has emerged as a leader in the field of **marine workforce development and capacity building**, with a focus on building the human, technical, and institutional capacities needed to ensure the marine workforce can keep pace with expanding area-based conservation. As a founder and key convener of the Global MPA Community of Practice, the Alliance has developed and is leading the execution of a shared global vision in this space.

This project represents an evolution for the Alliance. The strategy outlined below retains the core elements of the Alliance's approach that have enabled its success while sharpening priorities to ensure resources flow to the places and activities where contributions will have the most impact. Rather than competing with other funders or initiatives, the Alliance seeks to more fully occupy its unique niche in the ocean conservation community, while forming strategic collaborations with others, including developing a robust potential project pipeline for other GEF-9 projects to complement and deepen impact.

Theory of Change

This global project is designed to address four primary drivers that interact, compound, and collectively shape the pace and quality of ocean conservation. Building on the Alliance's ability to enable ambition and advance high-impact site work through flexible grant funding and technical assistance to right-placed local partners, the project looks holistically at the systems that both hinder and motivate ocean conservation action.

Drawing on the expertise of its core partner institutions, staff, and partner network, this theory of change outlines how the Alliance can enable effective and durable protections through deepened investment in sites, catalyze new designations through targeted support for strategic campaigns and early implementation, and drive ambition in places where the ocean remains under protected and underserved through system-level solutions and finance models at regional scales.

Through site-based engagements, the Alliance will directly advance high-quality protection across 1.8 billion hectares or approximately 5% of the ocean. This objective will be achieved through measurably improved protection quality (e.g.,

improvements in protection level, management effectiveness, sustainable financing, and/or durability) in an estimated 1.3 billion hectares of existing ocean conservation areas and an estimated 500 million hectares of new ocean conservation areas. While the impact of individual sites will be substantial and contribute meaningfully to KMGBF Target 3, the true power of the project strategy will be realized in the cumulative impact of these coordinated investments.

The project strategy and theory of change are structured to address four system-level drivers and the negative feedback cycle they perpetuate. In their current state, these drivers interact in ways that stymie ocean protection progress. Efforts that address individual drivers have demonstrated that well-designed and managed initiatives can produce site-level impact. However, meaningful and sustained change cannot be realized until all drivers – and the relationships between them – are addressed simultaneously. This project is designed to act across all four identified drivers. By disrupting the existing negative feedback cycle and replacing it with a new positive, reinforcing cycle, the project will not only catalyze new and higher-quality ocean conservation areas but, by addressing the root causes and barriers associated with these drivers, generate the momentum needed to drive future ocean conservation action.

To achieve this transformation, the project's outputs target change within each driver. By systematically addressing the identified drivers, the Alliance will increase confidence in the feasibility and value of high-quality ocean protections. This shift will help to establish a positive feedback cycle that accelerates the designation of new highly and fully protected ocean conservation areas and investment in their management beyond the project's implementation period.

The following section will walk through each driver in detail to outline how the drivers currently interact to impede progress, how the project's targeted interventions will address and shift these dynamics, and the new, positive interactions between drivers that the project seeks to establish. Together, these explanations will illustrate how the project strategy translates into practical action and system-level change.

Driver 1: Low political will constrains ambition for new or maintained designations and for higher levels of protection.

Low political will constrains ambition both for new designations and higher levels of protection from extractive and destructive activities. Governments often cite economic pressures, competing priorities, data gaps, limited capacity for management, and the high cost of implementation as barriers to their willingness and ability to act.³¹³⁸ Political volatility and government turnover can further exacerbate these barriers, contributing to a growing rate of protected area downgrading, degazettement, and downsizing (PADDD), which threatens the durability of existing protections. Together, this reinforces a negative driver, where ambition to commit new or strengthened protections is constrained.

This project aims to transform this negative driver into a positive one, in which increased political will actively drives ambition for protections. To achieve this transformation, the project will invest in interventions that meaningfully build government confidence to pursue ocean conservation action. This includes amplifying credible examples of successful, well-managed ocean conservation areas, and ensuring that financing mechanisms are in place to reduce the real and perceived risks of advancing ambitious protections.

To directly address the underlying constraints, the project will catalyze new designations through targeted and gender-sensitive investments. Utilizing co-financing, the project will support scientific research to help identify areas most critical for protection and provide governments with the information needed for MPA planning, including baseline ecological data and cost/benefit analyses. Most importantly, the project will provide direct financial support, in the form of a subgrant or contract, and/or technical support to governments or government-endorsed implementing partners to advance new ocean conservation areas through the final stages of commitment and designations by filling strategic gaps in ongoing campaigns led by other partners and providing committed post-designation support for early implementation.

Recognizing that ambition has varied greatly across regions – with large and often remote conservation areas of the Pacific far outpacing the under-protected but biodiversity-rich coastal waters of regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa⁴¹³⁹ – the project will also work to build ambition in at least one underinvested region. Through support to regional and site-level implementing partners, the project will advance region-wide interventions to address the systemic gaps limiting ambition, while also helping to drive site-based campaigns to secure the designation of new ocean conservation areas critical to the region.

By reducing the risks and uncertainties that currently suppress political will – and by demonstrating that strong protections can be effectively implemented, funded, and sustained – the project will shift this driver from a negative constraint to a

positive, where growing political commitments and positive outcomes drive ambition for new, high-quality, and durable ocean protections.

Driver 2: Ocean conservation areas fail to achieve implementation and active management.

Despite clear evidence that the greatest benefits are delivered by ocean conservation areas that are highly or fully protected and actively managed, less than 30% of existing ocean conservation area meets this threshold.^{[5]40, [6]41, [7]42} These ‘paper parks’ not only fall short of delivering their intended conservation but also reinforce the current negative feedback cycle by weakening confidence in the feasibility and value of ocean conservation. Ineffective and poorly managed ocean conservation areas undermine trust, diminish political will, and discourage further ambition for new or stronger protections.

The project aims to transform this driver into a positive in which ocean conservation areas are more fully implemented and actively managed for quality protections. To drive this transformation, the project will support implementing partners to improve the quality and effectiveness of ocean protections through targeted technical assistance and direct financial investments into site-based engagements. By offering strategic, timebound, and gender-sensitive support for activating management teams and systems – including reinvestment in current Alliance sites – these engagements will enable sites to make meaningful progress along their conservation journey. This progress then serves to demonstrate that high-quality, well-managed, and sustainably financed ocean conservation areas are both achievable and able to deliver positive conservation outcomes.

Success in addressing this driver is central to establishing the envisioned positive feedback cycle. As more ocean conservation areas become effectively implemented and actively managed, these areas will generate visible, credible conservation and socioeconomic benefits. These examples – particularly beacon sites that model quality, scale, and innovation – will increase confidence in the feasibility and value of high-quality ocean conservation, increasing political will and enabling greater ambition for future protections. Effective and durable conservation areas will, further, serve to unlock new funding opportunities, creating a reinforcing cycle in which demonstrated success catalyzes investment, which in turn enables greater support for implementation and management.

Driver 3: Current workforce is not sufficient to staff a growing number of ocean conservation areas.

Sufficient staffing has been found to be the strongest determinant of an ocean conservation area’s ability to deliver conservation outcomes, yet only 9% of MPAs report adequate staff for management.^{[8]43} The current workforce of professionals with the expertise needed to implement and manage ocean conservation areas remains far insufficient to meet the demands of a growing network of ocean conservation areas. This workforce gap undermines the ability of existing ocean conservation areas to achieve active management, with staffing that is overstretched, working in isolation with minimal support, or not present at all.^{[9]44} As ocean conservation area coverage continues to expand in pursuit of the 30% target, this shortfall in skilled workforce will continue to grow, slowing the pace of marine protection, weakening management effectiveness, and diluting conservation returns.

To address this driver, the project will make strategic and gender-responsive investments into the networks and capacity-building institutions that are leading the development of a more robust and skilled workforce. As a founder and leading partner of the Global MPA Capacity Community of Practice, the Alliance plays a central convening and thought-leadership role in this space, bringing together conservation leaders and capacity development practitioners to address the structural barriers that limit effective ocean conservation area management. This includes building the human, technical, and institutional capacity that will be essential to support effective marine management at the scale required under KMGBF Target 3.

This work will be grounded in the cultivation and strengthening of regional networks that provide resilient support systems for the managers, communities, and partner organizations implementing capacity building development at the site, national, and regional level. These networks – combined with the creation of practical resources, learning opportunities, and dissemination of best practices – will help generate the workforce growth needed to sustain effective, long-term management across ocean conservation areas.

Successfully transforming this driver into a positive, in which a robust marine workforce provides the capacity and technical expertise to deliver quality ocean protections, will underpin progress across the entire theory of change. As more ocean conservation areas gain access to skilled staff and organizational with the technical expertise required for quality implementation and active management, confidence in the feasibility of effective ocean conservation will grow.

Driver 4: Limited resources and funding available to support ocean conservation areas.

Adequate and reliable financing remains one of the most significant barriers to both designation and effective implementation of ocean conservation areas. Resource constraints, inclusive of budget and staffing capacity, limit implementation in an estimated 91% of these areas, preventing active management and durable protections.^{[10]⁴⁵} Globally, annual funding for ocean protection – inclusive of official development assistance, philanthropic funding, and non-foundation funding – totals just over USD \$1.2B, ^{[11]⁴⁶[12]⁴⁷} far below the estimated USD \$15.8B annually that will be required to designate and effectively manage 30% of the ocean in conservation areas. ^{[13]⁴⁸} Closing this gap will require coordinated resource mobilization across governments, private philanthropy, conservation organizations, and increasingly private capital markets.

The project aims to transform this driver into a positive in which more sufficient, sustainable financing enables high-quality and actively managed ocean conservation areas. To achieve this shift, the project addresses financing needs across all components. Through site-based engagements, the project will support the development, implementation, and resourcing of sustainable financing and durability strategies aligned with 30x30 financing principles. By providing targeted financial and technical support to advance innovative, scalable sustainable financing mechanisms across a global portfolio – particularly in large-scale sites which have proven more cost-effective on a per hectare basis^{[14]⁴⁹} – the project will encourage public and private sector investment into ocean conservation areas and enable lasting improvements in long-term management effectiveness. These strategies will include the piloting of new and innovative blended financing mechanisms and scaling proven mechanisms such as blue bonds and debt-for-nature swaps. In underinvested regions, the project will also advance region-wide financing strategies to enable increased ambition and support the designation of new ocean conservation areas.

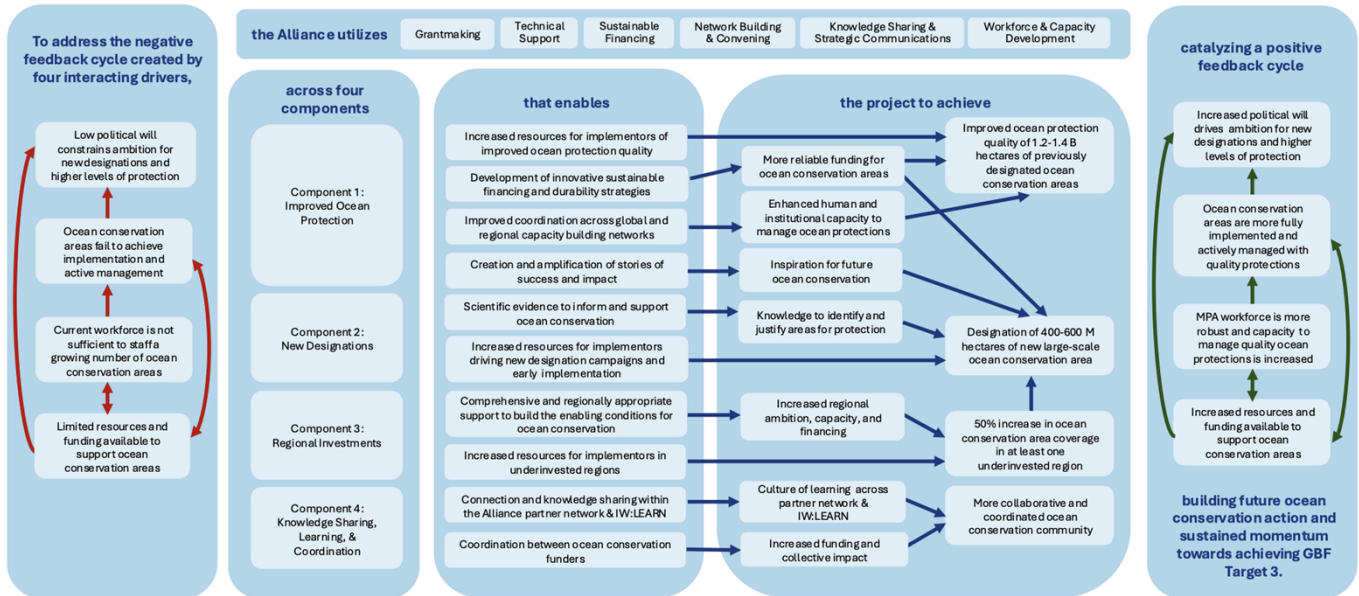
The project will further address this driver through co-financing, partnership, and strategic alignment across a broad coalition of funders, implementers, and the private sector. The Alliance has proven successful in multiplying the impact of GEF investment through substantial cash co-financing secured from philanthropic funders and conservation organizations, plus in-kind contributions through technical partners. In the design and implementation of sustainable financing plans, this collaborative approach will help to mobilize resources from peer funders and, where appropriate, facilitate the transition of strategies to trusted partners (e.g., Enduring Earth, Nature Debt Coalition, etc.) and country-led GEF projects for further development and resourcing. Through this project, the Alliance will also provide leadership to the 30x30 Marine Funders Action Network, serving to align philanthropic investments and increase both the amount and impact of ocean conservation funding.

By addressing the funding gap across site-based, regional, and system-level interventions, the project will help to secure the sufficient and reliable financing streams needed to shift this driver from a negative to a positive, where increased resources and sustained funding enable durable, high-quality ocean protections. Increased funding will then make it possible for ocean conservation areas to achieve and maintain active management which, in turn, strengthens political will by reducing perceived risks and increasing government confidence in pursuing ambitious designations and protections. If successful, the project will serve to reinforce a positive feedback cycle, where reliable funding allows sites to deliver meaningful conservation outcomes, which then attracts additional investment, driving continued progress towards KMGBF Target 3. It is estimated that effective protection of 30% of the ocean will unlock at least \$85B annually in economic gains and prevented losses. By ensuring these benefits are known and captured locally, this project will further drive additional political will for ocean protection.

GLOBAL CHALLENGE

Current ocean protections are not sufficient to address the growing threats to the marine environment. Ocean conservation coverage and the pace of new designations remains too slow, with ocean protection coverage projected to only reach 10% by 2030, far short of the global targets. Once designated ocean conservation areas are often of an insufficient quality, both in terms of level of protection and effectiveness of management, to achieve desired conservation outcomes.

Achieving the global goal to conserve 30% of all marine and coastal areas through ecologically representative, well-connected, effectively managed, and equitably governed ocean conservation areas (GBF Target 3) will require a coordinated effort to address the causal factors contributing to this shortfall. 3



Underlying Assumptions

Conservation is a journey. The conservation journey framework provides a tool to identify the most impactful opportunity for investment at each site based on its stage of establishment. Through the strategic infusion of financial and technical support to address a systematic challenge(s) relevant to the site's current stage in its conservation journey, Alliance investment will catalyze momentum for the site's continued advancement along this journey. Systematically addressing the identified drivers will increase confidence in the feasibility of successful high-quality ocean protections and their ability to deliver impactful ocean conservation, creating a shift to a positive feedback cycle that will continue to build momentum for designation of new highly or fully protected ocean conservation areas and investment into their management that continues beyond the project's implementation period.

Project Components

COMPONENT 1: IMPROVED OCEAN PROTECTION QUALITY

Outcome 1.1: Previously designated ocean conservation areas have measurably improved protection quality, as measured by site-specific targets for protection level, management effectiveness, sustainable financing, and/or durability.

Indicator 1.1: Total area of previously designated ocean conservation areas with measurably improved quality of ocean protection that received financial and/or technical investment from the Blue Nature Alliance. The hectares associated with Indicator & Target 1.1 will be cumulative of the sub-indicators listed below.

Target 1.1: 1.3 billion hectares of ocean area.

- **Sub-Indicator 1.1a:** Total area of previously designated ocean conservation area that achieves upgraded levels of protection.
- **Sub-Indicator 1.1b:** Total area of previously designation ocean conservation area that achieves high management effectiveness thresholds.
- **Sub-Indicator 1.1c:** Total area of previously designated ocean conservation area with implemented sustainable financing and durability strategies.
- **Sub-Indicator 1.1.d:** Total area of previously designated ocean conservation area that remains durable against threat of PADD.

Output 1.1.1: Engagement frameworks with site-specific targets for improved ocean protection quality are collaboratively developed with governments and implementing partner(s) and endorsed for investment.

This output focuses on the identification and selection of sites for engagement during the project implementation. The geographic scope of the project will be global, with a portfolio of engagements sites that are to be scoped and approved for implementation by the Blue Nature Alliance Steering Council.

The Alliance will be guided by six criteria while evaluating potential sites for engagement:

- **Significant:** Site has local, regional, and global significance for nature (i.e., global biodiversity significance, including concentrations of endemic or threatened species, as well as particularly healthy, productive, connected, and

representatives' ecosystems vital for ocean health and food security) and significance for people (i.e., economically, socially, culturally), either locally or globally, although investment will not be restricted to places with human populations.

- **Catalytic:** Outcomes that build momentum for durable protections, innovative approaches, or unprecedented new scales of conservation.
- **Political Will:** There is a stated interest, ideally a written commitment, by decision-making authority of a national, sub-national, or Indigenous community leadership and, where possible, an expressed commitment to match or co-support the project – this can be achieved through government revenues, tourism fees, landing fees, local staffing, etc.
- **Local Champions:** Local champions are prepared to drive the process forward in a participatory way, and community organizations, local leaders, and/or coalitions are engaged in conservation and have requested support. In the case of indigenous-led initiatives, this criterion will be more important than explicit government support.
- **Achievable:** The intended project outcome has a high probability of success not only for the immediate policy or management action, but for that action to lead to sustainable protection including the resources (human and financial) needed to achieve the conservation goal(s) for the long-term.
- **Leverage:** Opportunity for Alliance investment to incentivize additional resources such as co-investment and/or match funding, which may include government revenue, private sector donations, public funding, or philanthropic donations. The Alliance will aim to incentivise at least a 2:1 leverage ratio to its investment averaged across the portfolio.

Once a site is identified for engagement, the Alliance will work collaboratively with local implementing partners to develop a gender-sensitive engagement framework which will describe objectives, measures of success, and interventions for the site. All engagement frameworks developed under Outcome 1.1 will address at least one measure of ocean protection quality as defined in Outputs 1.1.2-1.1.4, although many engagement frameworks will address multiple measures. A comprehensive framework of ocean protection quality (i.e. level of protection, management effectiveness, sustainable financing, and durability) that builds from project learning to date and aligns with existing global MPA effectiveness frameworks will be developed during the PPG phase and this framework, once adopted, will serve as the guiding document for the development of engagement frameworks and setting of site-specific targets for improved ocean protection quality.

The project intends to identify sites and implementing partners during the PPG phase, with likely reinvestment into select successful sites from the first phase of the Alliance. Most, if not all, engagement frameworks will be developed during the PPG phase and will be counted towards the baseline. The target for engagement frameworks developed during project implementation will be reduced dependent on the baseline and less will be acceptable if spatial targets are on track.

Outputs 1.1.2 – 1.1.4 focus on the provision of direct financial support, in the form of a subgrant or contract, and/or technical support to on-the-ground implementing partners to achieve improved management quality in a previously designated ocean conservation area(s) based on the endorsed engagement frameworks. Potential implementing partners best positioned to deliver activities will be requested to submit a workplan and budget in alignment with the objectives, measures of success, and interventions identified in the corresponding engagement framework. Measures of success, while specific to each site, will be developed in alignment with the project's ocean protection quality framework. The ocean protection quality framework will be developed during the PPG phase and will align with and build from best practices of existing global MPA effectiveness frameworks.

In addition to providing grants and/or contracts, the Alliance may deploy technical experts and technical partners to directly or remotely support activities outlined in the engagement framework. Throughout the execution of this output, the Alliance will strive to remain an active and flexible partner, working collaboratively with implementing partners to achieve the agreed upon measures of success.

Output 1.1.2: Financial and/or technical support is provided to implementing partners to achieve upgraded levels of protection.

Financial and/or technical support will be provided to on-the-ground implementing partners to achieve an upgraded level of protection (i.e., highly or fully protected levels) from extractive or destructive activities within previously designated minimally or lightly protected ocean conservation area(s). Measures of success will be developed in alignment with the project's ocean protection quality framework and informed by levels of protection as defined by The MPA Guide (i.e. minimally protected, lightly protected, highly protected, fully protected) and/or IUCN protected area categories (i.e. VI – Protected Area with Sustainable Use of Natural Resources, V – Protected Landscape/Seascape, IV – Habitat/Species Management Area, III – Natural Monument or Feature, II – National Park, Ib – Strict Wilderness Area, Ia – Strict Nature Reserve).

Upon achieving measures of success, areas under this output will contribute to **Sub-Indicator 1.1a:** *Total area of previously designated ocean conservation area that achieves upgraded levels of protection.*

Output 1.1.3: Financial and/or technical support is provided to implementing partners to achieve high management effectiveness thresholds.

Financial and/or technical support will be provided to on-the-ground implementing partners to achieve high management effectiveness thresholds in previously designated ocean conservation area(s) through improvements to the structures and capacity to implement and actively manage an ocean conservation area. Measures of success will be developed in alignment with the project's ocean protection quality framework and informed by The MPA Guide's stages of establishment (i.e. proposed/committed, designated, implemented, actively managed) and other existing global MPA effectiveness frameworks (e.g. METT, Blue Park Standard, Large Marine Ecosystem Management Effectiveness Scorecard).

Illustrative examples of interventions that could be supported include, but are not limited to:

- An ocean conservation area (or government agency responsible for this function) stands up a **formal management team/office** with formalized government positions that have management responsibility/authority to carry out the provisions of the gazette and site purposes.
- An ocean conservation area (or government agency responsible for this function) stands up a formal and staffed **monitoring, control, and surveillance system**.
- An ocean conservation area formalizes (legally or through formal agreement) a **co-management agreement and structure with Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities**.
- An ocean conservation area (or government agency responsible for this function) stands up a **Science, Research & Monitoring program**, with a formalized plan and regular data collection mechanism/system, including formal research partner and/or the stand up of a research team/capacity

Upon achieving measures of success, areas under this output will contribute to **Sub-Indicator 1.1b: Total area of previously designated ocean conservation area that achieves high management effectiveness thresholds.**

Output 1.1.4: Financial and/or technical support is provided to implementing partners to develop, implement, and resource sustainable financing and durability strategies. Where applicable, financing strategies will be transitioned to trusted partners (e.g., Enduring Earth, Nature Debt Coalition) and/or developed further as country-led GEF-9 blended financing projects, with measures of success reached upon the successful transition of engagement to the trusted partner.

Financial and/or technical support will be provided to on-the-ground implementing partners to develop, implement, and resource sustainable financing and durability strategies in previously designated ocean conservation area(s). Measures of success will be developed in alignment with the project's ocean protection quality framework.

The sites selected for financial and/or technical support under this output are anticipated to include sites from geographies receiving assistance through the Munderoo Foundation's Marine 30x30 Finance Program, which is being executed by the Blue Nature Alliance. As the implementor of this program, the Alliance will have initiated activities in these geographies prior to the start of project implementation but does not anticipate that measures of success will be achieved. With this project, the Alliance will not only be able to successfully complete the pilots in the first three countries but will additionally replicate the model to ensure sustainable financing in a larger portfolio of sites.

Upon achieving measures of success, areas under this output will contribute to **Sub-Indicator 1.1c: Total area of previously designated ocean conservation area with implemented sustainable financing and durability strategies.**

Output 1.1.5: Financial and/or technical support is provided to partners within the Alliance network to support adaptive management/learning, innovation incubation, collaborative approaches, and rapid response to threats to durability of protections.

This output will include the design, resourcing, and execution of a grants facility. The facility will provide partners within the Blue Nature Alliance network - inclusive of current and prior implementing partners - with expedited access to funds to respond to emerging opportunities for their respective sites. Support under this output will primarily come in the form of small grants and/or contracts (\$10-\$50k) with focus on the improvement of the site through support to advance adaptive management, innovation incubation, and/or collaborative management approaches to increase quality, effectiveness, and durability of the site.

In the case a partner identifies valid threat(s) to durability of protections, funds from the grant facility will be made available to support a rapid response effort to address the identified threat(s). Grants issued for this purpose may cover amounts <\$500k. Upon meeting durability thresholds in adherence with the project's ocean protection quality framework, the area will be counted towards **Sub-Indicator 1.1.d: Total area of previously designated ocean conservation area that remains durable against the threat of PADD.**

Outcome 1.2: Global capacity to implement and manage high-quality ocean protections is enhanced through regional support systems for MPA managers, networks, and partner organizations.

Indicator 1.2: Number of regions with strengthened MPA management support systems.

Target 1.2: 2-3 regions.

Output 1.2.1: Global MPA Capacity Community of Practice (CoP) is resourced and has collaborated with existing initiatives (e.g. IW:LEARN) to strengthen the MPA workforce and institutions globally.

This output focuses on the resourcing and operationalization of the Global MPA Community of Practice (COP), which was jointly launched by the Alliance and the Global Network of Marine Protected Area Networks to address the persistent capacity and workforce gap in marine management. Recognizing that closing this gap will require partnership and global coordination, the project will identify and provide financial support, in the form of grants or contracts, and/or technical support to organizations, institutions, networks, and partnerships working to empower and secure an MPA workforce with the professional skills, staff, and technical expertise to effectively and equitably manage a growing network of ocean conservation areas. Priority will be given to gender-responsive approaches and regional capacity-building networks or funding partnerships that can help coordinate efforts and leverage Alliance resources for greater impact.

Partnerships supported through this effort, and those aligned with the aims of the CoP, will be connected with sites across the Alliance portfolio. These connections will facilitate the provision of technical and management capacity support while fostering relationships that span sites and regions. In doing so, the project aims to strengthen long-term conservation benefits and enhance the collective ability of practitioners to manage ocean conservation areas at scale.

Output 1.2.2: Formalized partnerships with trusted technical partners and experts deliver in-depth support across key MPA management functions to Alliance sites and implementing partners.

Under this output, the project will identify and engage trusted technical partners to provide sustained technical assistance and expertise to implementing partners and engagement sites across a range of thematic areas. These areas are anticipated to include, but are not limited to, monitoring and surveillance, sustainable financing, management planning and capacity, communications, and science and research.

Partnerships established under this output may be formalized by legal agreement (e.g. contracts or memorandums of understanding) or may take the form of ongoing coordination and collaboration among the technical partner, implementing partners, and the Alliance. Regardless of structure, these partnerships will ensure that implementing partners in Alliance sites have consistent access to the technical support needed to advance effective and durable ocean conservation.

Outcome 1.3: Momentum for future ocean conservation action is inspired through the strategic sharing of lessons and stories of impact and innovation from beacon sites.

Indicator 1.3: Number of beacon sites identified and successfully amplified through comprehensive lesson capture and communications plans.

Target 1.3: At least 10 beacon sites.

Output 1.3.1: With co-financing, beacon sites are identified within the Alliance portfolio, and lessons and innovations from these sites are captured and shared in their region and globally.

This output focuses on the identification and amplification of select 'beacon sites' within the Alliance portfolio. Beacon sites will be identified based on the quality of protections and management, scale, innovation, and ability to inspire future ocean conservation within their region and globally.

Once a beacon site is identified, Alliance staff and communications specialists will collaborate with implementing partners and relevant stakeholders (e.g., government, communities, NGOs, etc.) to capture lessons learned and stories highlighting the success and impact of the site. Strategic multi-year communications plans will be developed for each beacon site to create, disseminate, and amplify high-quality and engaging knowledge products. While the nature and content of knowledge products will be tailored to the region and desired audience, all beacon sites and their associated communications products will strive to demonstrate the feasibility of durable, high-quality protections and potential for ocean conservation areas to deliver meaningful conservation outcomes and socio-economic benefits. Ultimately, successful beacon sites will serve to inspire confidence for advancing new designations and catalyze momentum for future ocean conservation action.

COMPONENT 2: NEW DESIGNATIONS IN KEY OCEAN GEOGRAPHIES

Outcome 2.1: New large-scale ocean conservation areas have been legally designated with support provided for initial implementation.

Indicator 2.1: Total area of new large-scale ocean conservation areas legally designated.

Target 2.1: 500M hectares of ocean area.

Output 2.1.1: Scientific research to identify areas most critical for protection and inform decision-making is supported through co-financing.

This output focuses on the cultivation of partnerships and provision of financial support, in the form of subgrants and contracts, to advance scientific research to identify areas critical for protection, guide MPA planning, and inform decision-making in the field of large-scale ocean conservation. Examples of research topics that may be supported through these

partnerships include cost and benefit analysis of ocean conservation areas, baseline biodiversity and biophysical information, global contributions of ocean conservation areas, and protected area design and management effectiveness.

To ensure that any research commissioned is relevant, rigorous, unbiased, and accurate, all potential partnerships and projects will comply with the Blue Nature Alliance's process for soliciting and reviewing science projects. In many cases, research will be provided through the multiple in-kind technical partnerships already established by the Alliance. Where feasible, advanced scientific research will be utilized to support the identification and prioritization of opportunities under Output 2.1.2.

Output 2.1.2: Financial and/or technical support is provided to governments or government-endorsed partners to catalyze designations of new large-scale ocean conservation areas.

This output focuses on the provision of direct financial support, in the form of a subgrant or contract, and/or technical support to governments or government-endorsed implementing partners to advance new ocean conservation areas through the final stages of commitment and designation. Financial and technical support provided will primarily aim to fill strategic gaps in ongoing campaigns led by other partners and provide committed post-designation support for early implementation.

While investments will continue to be guided by the Alliance's six criteria for site selection (i.e. significant, catalytic, political will, local champions, achievable, leverage) and will be approved by the Blue Nature Alliance Steering Council, support provided under output is intended to be made available at the direct request of government, with governments invited to approach the Alliance and request commitment for post-designation support in advance of a legal designation. With this commitment, the Alliance will work in partnership with government and/or government-endorsed partners to identify interventions and develop an engagement plan to advance early implementation of the site. Prior to the provision of support, partners will be requested to submit a workplan and budget in alignment with agreed upon objectives and interventions.

Illustrative examples of interventions that could be supported to fill strategic gaps in ongoing campaigns include, but are not limited to:

- Strategic communications and public awareness campaigns;
- Stakeholder engagement and/or engagement of high-level political champions to increase political will and social support for the conservation area;
- Learning exchanges with other large-scale ocean conservation sites and/or participating in learning networks;
- Scientific, economic, or political analyses to inform conservation policy decisions or conservation planning;
- Collaboration among and across sectors, relevant government ministries, LMEs, multi-state cooperation frameworks, and/or RFMOs.

Illustrative examples of interventions that could be supported to provide post-designation support for early implementation include, but are not limited to:

- Development of management plans that identify measurable conservation targets and threats to conservation targets, plan activities to mitigate threats and achieve conservation targets, and develop monitoring plans to measure progress towards conservation targets;
- Establishment and standing up of a formal management team/office with the authority to carry out provisions of gazettelement and site purposes;
- Timebound support for initial staffing within the management authority with transition plan;
- Establishment of an interagency management unit to facilitate effective shared management and governance of a site that is inclusive of all responsive agencies;
- Facilitation (to be formalized legally or through formal agreement) of co-management agreements with Indigenous peoples and local communities;
- Design and implementation of systems for monitoring, control, and surveillance;
- Development of sustainable financing plans to support the long-term management and staffing of the ocean conservation area.

The approach under this output will be further refined during the PPG phase as the project continues to assess the evolving geopolitical landscape (i.e. implementation of BBNJ Treaty, political will, economic pressures, etc.) to identify anticipated opportunities for new designations and tailor interventions to support the opportunities that are most significant and catalytic, with a reasonable likelihood of success. The project anticipates that sites will continue to be identified beyond the PPG phase and, as a result, flexibility in approach will be maintained through project implementation to allow for activities supported to remain responsive to actual and evolving needs of sites. Upon legal designation, areas under this output will be counted towards *Target 2.1: 500M hectares of new large-scale ocean conservation areas legally designated*. Where applicable, the Alliance will support sites to identify and pursue additional funding opportunities, including GEF-9 projects,

with an anticipated focus on continued management support and the development of blended and sustainable financing mechanisms.

COMPONENT 3: INCREASED AMBITION & NEW DESIGNATIONS IN UNDERINVESTED REGIONS

Outcome 3.1: Ocean protection ambition is raised, and coverage of conserved ocean is increased by 50% in at least one^{[15]50} underinvested region, identified by low ocean conservation area coverage and historically limited philanthropic investment.

Indicator 3.1: Total area of new ocean conservation areas legally designated within priority region(s).

Target 3.1: Target will coincide with a 50% increase in ocean conservation area coverage across the region and will be set in the PPG phase based on the baseline of the region(s) selected.

Output 3.1.1: Regional strategy framework(s) to address regional ambition, implementation, and finance gaps are collaboratively developed with governments and implementing partner(s).

This output focuses on the identification and selection of at least one underinvested region for focused engagement during project implementation. Region(s) will be identified based on low ocean conservation area coverage and historically limited philanthropic investment.

Once a region is identified for engagement, the Alliance will work collaboratively with governments and local implementing partners at the regional and site level to develop a gender-sensitive regional strategy framework which will describe objectives, measures of success, and interventions for the region. Each regional strategy framework will include region-wide interventions to address systematic gaps limiting ocean protection ambition, and site-based campaigns to secure the designation of new ocean conservation areas. Tailored indicators will be developed for each region with a minimum target to increase ocean conservation area coverage by 50% across the region.

Illustrative examples of indicators that may be included in regional strategy frameworks include but are not limited to:

- Number of countries with measurable and timebound plans to achieve 30% ocean conservation area coverage;
- Number of countries that achieve 30% ocean conservation area coverage;
- Number of regional and/or local organizations supported to increase the size/scope of the region's constituency for ocean protection;
- Number of practitioners with increased capacity to implement and manage ocean conservation areas as a result of initiatives and/or training programs supported;
- Amount of financing made available for ocean protection and/or ratio of leverage funds secured to Alliance funds committed;
- Number of countries or ocean conservation areas with sustainable financing and/or durability strategies developed.

The project intends to identify region(s) prior to CEO Endorsement with regional strategy framework(s) developed during the PPG phase. The development of each regional strategy framework will include the design and execution of comprehensive stakeholder engagement and gender mainstreaming plans, as well as assessment of and engagement with relevant existing and planned regional and country-level strategies and projects to ensure that the regional strategy developed by the Alliance is complimentary to and filling critical gaps in work already occurring in the region.

Regional strategy frameworks developed during the PPG phase to be counted towards the project baseline. The target for regional strategy framework(s) developed during project implementation will be reduced, dependent on the baseline, and reduced to zero if all regional strategy framework(s) are developed prior to the start of project implementation. The project will engage in at least one underinvested region, with additional regions to be added based on co-financing secured. ^{[16]51}

Output 3.1.2: Financial and/or technical support and networking resources are provided to implementing partners at the regional and site level, to address systemic gaps (e.g. capacity and financing gaps) limiting ocean protection ambition and to secure the designation of new ocean conservation areas.

This output focuses on the provision of direct financial support, in the form of subgrants or contracts, and/or technical support to on-the-ground implementing partners to achieve the designation of new ocean conservation areas and the reduction of systematic gaps limiting ocean protection ambition in the region. Potential implementing partners best positioned to deliver activities, both at the regional and site level, will be requested to submit a budget and workplan (or proposal) in alignment with the objectives, measures of success, and interventions identified in the corresponding regional

strategy engagement framework. The project anticipates having 2-5 implementing partners per region working in coordination to secure the designation of new ocean conservation areas and facilitate the enabling conditions for future ocean conservation action.

In addition to providing grants and/or contracts, the Alliance will deploy technical experts and technical partners to directly or remotely support activities outlined in the regional strategy framework. Throughout the execution of this output, the Alliance will strive to remain an active and flexible partner, working collaboratively with implementing partners to achieve the agreed upon measures of success. Where applicable, the Alliance will support partners to identify and pursue additional funding opportunities, including GEF-9 projects, with an anticipated focus on transboundary management support and the development of blended and sustainable financing mechanisms.

COMPONENT 4: KNOWLEDGE SHARING, LEARNING, & COORDINATION

Outcome 4.1: The GEF International Waters Community (IW:LEARN) has gained new and relevant knowledge through the sharing of Alliance project results and implementation experiences.

Indicator 4.1: Level of engagement in IW:LEARN through participation and delivery of key products.

Target 4.1: Engagement level = 4.

Output 4.1.1 Project results, experiences, and lessons learned are shared through IW:LEARN communications and knowledge exchange opportunities, including participation in IW:LEARN convenings and the production of Results and Experience Notes.

The Alliance will actively participate in the GEF IW:LEARN network to disseminate best practices and lessons learned generated from the project. As the project will engage in a global portfolio, it is anticipated that the project will generate significant new knowledge and information relevant to a wide array of GEF funded projects and initiatives, thus serving as an important knowledge donor through IW:LEARN to build capacity and improve project implementation.

The project will capture project results, implementation experiences, and lessons learned to be shared with the IW:LEARN network through a compliant website, results and experience notes, twinning exchanges, and participation in regional and global IW:LEARN conferences, such as the biennial GEF International Waters Conference and Annual Large Marine Ecosystems Consultant Meeting.

Outcome 4.2: Alliance partners, sites, and peer initiatives are better equipped to meet site needs and address systemic large-scale ocean conservation challenges through shared learning and professional development.

Indicator 4.2b: Percentage of Alliance sites with individuals accessing professional development and shared learning opportunities

Target 4.2b: At least 80% of Alliance sites.

Output 4.2.1: Implementation and marine management experiences and lessons learned are shared by Alliance partners, sites, and/or peer initiatives (e.g. GEF IW projects).

Learning and knowledge sharing are core elements of the Alliance's strategic approach for expanding and strengthening ocean conservation at scale. To advance this objective, this output will support a suite of activities to facilitate the sharing of management experiences, insights, and lessons learned from Alliance partners, engagement sites, and/or peer initiatives. Activities will include, but are not limited to, the development of knowledge products, creation of toolkits and other technical resources, dissemination of communication materials, twinning exchanges, and the convening of all or a subset of Alliance partners. Together, these activities will strengthen collective capacity, promote cross-region learning, and enhance the effectiveness of ocean conservation initiatives globally. The project will prioritize gender-responsive activities and aims for a minimum of 40% of participants in these activities to be women. This target may increase during the PPG phase based on the results of the Gender Analysis and Action Plan and identified opportunities to incorporate gender mainstreaming into project activities

Output 4.2.2: Professional development opportunities in MPA management and financial operations are delivered to Alliance partners, such as coaching, mentorship, skill building, and experiential learning opportunities.

Supporting partners in their professional development is essential to sustaining the project's long-term outcomes. By creating opportunities for partners to strengthen their technical and operational skills and build the capacity needed to excel in their roles, the Alliance will be investing in the durability of the ocean conservation gains achieved through the project. This ensures that local practitioners are well equipped to manage resources, monitor biodiversity, implement regulations, mainstream gender considerations, and effectively manage ocean conservation areas well into the future. To achieve this, the output will facilitate and support, through the covering of associated expenses, a wide range of professional development opportunities for individual managers or staff of Alliance partner organizations. Activities under this output will focus on strengthening the technical and operational skills of the individual and may include coaching, mentorship from Alliance staff and trusted technical partners, skill-building activities, formal trainings, and experiential learning opportunities that empower partners with the knowledge and competencies needed to access diversified funding sources and deliver

lasting impact. While the project anticipates sites will benefit as a result of strengthened capacities of local practitioners, success under this output will be measured based on the professional development and learning facilitated for the individual. The project aims for 40% of participants in these opportunities to be women.

Outcome 4.3: Improved coordination within the 30x30 Marine Funders Action Network and broader ocean funder community increases the amount and coordinated impact of philanthropic funding available for KMGBF Target 3.

Indicator 4.3: Cumulative funds leveraged across the 30x30 Marine Funders Action Network.

Target 4.3: Target to be determined.

Output 4.3.1: As a result of the Alliance leadership, the 30x30 Marine Funders Action Network aligns funding, and amplifies peer investments, including investments within the Alliance portfolio, and increases philanthropic match for relevant GEF-9 ocean protection projects.

The Alliance is a founding member and convener of the 30x30 Marine Funders Action Network (MFAN), a coalition of leading philanthropic funders supporting global marine 30x30 efforts. MFAN provides a platform for funders to share insights, align strategies, and identify opportunities for collaboration, coordination, and co-funding. Under this output, the Alliance will deepen its leadership role in MFAN to facilitate increased coordination among members, increasing the amount and collective impact of available ocean conservation funding. This work will also help to mobilize additional leveraged resources to support activities across Alliance engagement sites and to advance project opportunities under GEF-9 with increased access to co-financing.

COMPONENT 5: MONITORING & EVALUATION

Outcome 5.1: A functional monitoring and evaluation system supports accurate reporting of results to the GEF and other Alliance core partners and the continuous improvement of the project.

Indicator 5.1: Accurate and timely submission of reporting to the CI-GEF Implementing Agency.

Target 5.1: 100% of required reports and evaluations.

Output 5.1.1: A monitoring and evaluation framework/system is in place and used.

This output focuses on the development of a monitoring and evaluation framework that provides a clear plan for tracking project progress at the portfolio level. The plan will consist of indicators that will be tracked consistently across the Alliance's portfolio, descriptions of methodologies to collect indicator information, and processes by which the Alliance will utilize the information to inform adaptive management. Through the successful implementation of this plan, the Alliance will ensure that 100% of required reports and evaluations are accurate and are submitted to the CI-GEF Implementing Agency in accordance with agreed upon requirements and deadlines.

Global Environmental Benefits

The project will generate significant global environmental benefits by advancing high-quality protections in 1.8 billion hectares of critical ocean ecosystems, including the improved effectiveness and durability of an estimated 1.3 billion hectares of existing ocean conservation areas, the designation of 500 million hectares of new large-scale ocean conservation areas, and increased ocean protection in at least one underinvested region. Further, through this portfolio, the project will address the systemic drivers that determine the pace and scale of ocean conservation progress, working to create the global enabling conditions for continued momentum for increased ocean protection ambition and progress beyond the conclusion of project implementation.

As noted in the project justification, these benefits would not materialize under a business-as-usual scenario. The Alliance, building on five years of implementation experience and a robust network of partners, is uniquely suited to deliver these environmental benefits at the accelerated pace required to secure a healthy ocean for generations to come. In its first phase, the Blue Nature Alliance was able to rapidly scope and invest in high-quality ocean conservation initiatives collectively covering almost 3 billion hectares of ocean, so far resulting in over 920 million hectares of ocean protection added or improved, with much more projected before the project end. This ability to rapidly operate and generate impacts on a planetary scale is sorely needed. Further, through significant cash co-financing secured through the core partner model of the Alliance, the project serves as an impact multiplier for the funds provided by the GEF.

The GEF funding for this project is crucial to achieve the Global Environmental Benefits (GEBs) of an additional 1.8 billion hectares of high-quality protections in critical ocean ecosystems, as compared to the baseline scenario. To be able to achieve the project goal and the associated GEBs, the Alliance requires USD \$205,573,559 in project capital, which will be leveraged with an additional USD \$420,000,000 in leveraged co-investments. With the proposed GEF funding, the project will be enabled to reach a greater diversity of geographies through a global portfolio of sites, with projects covering conservation efforts across a range of marine and coastal ecosystems. These efforts, if successful, will serve to enhance

climate resilience, support ecosystem connectivity and function, product biodiversity, improve fisheries productivity, and strengthen human well-being. Without the contribution from the GEF, the investment from the other core partners will be insufficient to meet the project goal. Additionally, the commitment of the GEF funds will be a critical motivator for securing additional core partner contributions. Without the GEF contribution, the Alliance will be able to finance some activities but will not be able to achieve the proposed legal recognition of new conservation areas or improved management effectiveness of existing areas at the scale required to meet the target GEBs. The Alliance will also have insufficient funding to address the fundamental barriers that are holding back the expansion of ocean protection.

Innovation

The project advances an innovative model of partnership that brings together non-governmental organizations, private philanthropy, and public funding through the GEF to accelerate large-scale ocean conservation. This presents a replicable opportunity for the GEF to secure blended co-financing across its portfolio of projects and has been recognized by the STAP as a 'catalytic initiative leveraging philanthropic resources'. This focus on partnership further allows the project to serve as both a funding mechanism and implementation partner, providing flexible and rapidly deployed financial resources coupled with technical support from a skilled staff and set of curated technical partners, in response to locally identified needs. This dual functionality has proven to be successful in accelerating ocean conservation action across a large and diverse range of sites globally.

Through activities pertaining to the design, implementation, and resourcing of sustainable financing strategies, the project will advance innovations that contribute to coordination and increased resource mobilization across funding sources, including governments, philanthropic organizations, and the private sector, inclusive of private capital markets. In alignment with GEF priorities, these innovations serve to advance the use of blended financing models to mobilize resources for global environmental goals and targets.

The project will also build upon a strong track record of innovation in project management, operations, and processes. As recognized in the previous phase of work's midterm review, the project has been a source of innovation across its granting process, including the rollout of a fit-for-purpose safeguards processes that ensures plans are applicable and beneficial to project partners, streamlined monitoring and evaluation indicators, and a more partner focused granting process. These continued innovations provide an opportunity for the sharing of experience and learning across the broader GEF portfolio of projects.

Institutional Arrangements

Institutional arrangements will be defined in the PPG phase

^[1] EcoAdvisors, "Mid-Term Review for: Blue Nature Alliance to Expand and Improve Conservation of 1.25 billion Hectares of Ocean Ecosystems", *prepared for Conservation International* (2024).

^[2] CEA Consulting, "Blue Nature Alliance: Funding Landscape and Orientation Analysis." *prepared for the Blue Nature Alliance* (2024).

^[3] Together for the Ocean, "The Ocean Protection Gap: Assessing progress toward the 30x30 target." (2025): <https://for-the-ocean.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Ocean-Protection-Gap-Report.pdf>

^[4] Together for the Ocean, "The Ocean Protection Gap: Assessing progress toward the 30x30 target." (2025): <https://for-the-ocean.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Ocean-Protection-Gap-Report.pdf>.

^[5] Stephenson, Fabrice, Barbara Horta e Costa, Anna M. Addamo, Paula Bueno, Mark John Costello, Nigel Dudley, Patrick A. Eskuche-Keith et al. 'Quality of marine protected areas is critical to achieving global biodiversity targets.' *npj Ocean Sustainability* 4, no. 1 (2025): 63.

^[6] David Gill, Michael B. Mascia, Gabby N. Ahmadi, Louise Glew, Sarah E. Lester, Megan Barnes, Ian Craigie et al, "Capacity shortfalls hinder the performance of marine protected areas globally." *Nature* 543, no. 7647 (2017): 665-669.

^[7] Together for the Ocean, "The Ocean Protection Gap: Assessing progress toward the 30x30 target." (2025): <https://for-the-ocean.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Ocean-Protection-Gap-Report.pdf>.

^[8] Pike, Elizabeth P., et al. 'Ocean protection quality is lagging behind quantity: Applying a scientific framework to assess real marine protected area progress against the 30 by 30 target.' *Conservation Letters* 17.3 (2024): e13020.

^[9] To inform this work and better understand the priorities and needs of MPA managers, the Blue Nature Alliance has supported a survey of 45 large-scale MPA managers, representing 30 sites. Gray, N.J., Gruby, R.L., and Lewis, N., "Progress, Priorities and Challenges for Large-Scale Marine Protected Area Management: Report on a Global Survey of Managers." (2025).

^[10] Pike, Elizabeth P., et al. 'Ocean protection quality is lagging behind quantity: Applying a scientific framework to assess real marine protected area progress against the 30 by 30 target.' *Conservation Letters* 17.3 (2024): e13020.

^[11] Sustainable Ocean for All Initiative: Data Platform on Development Finance for the Sustainable Ocean Economy", The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, accessed February 2026, <https://oecd-main.shinyapps.io/ocean/>.

^[12] Lewis, F., Saliman, A., & Hardt, M. "Funding Trends 2025: Tracking the State of Global Ocean Funding." *CEA Consulting* (2025): <https://oursharedseas.com/funding>.

^[13] Together for the Ocean, "The Ocean Protection Gap: Assessing progress toward the 30x30 target." (2025): <https://for-the-ocean.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Ocean-Protection-Gap-Report.pdf>.

^[14] McCrea-Strub, Ashley, Dirk Zeller, Ussif Rashid Sumaila, Jay Nelson, Andrew Balmford, and Daniel Pauly. 'Understanding the cost of establishing marine protected areas.' *Marine Policy* 35, no. 1 (2011): 1-9.

^[15] Number of regions may increase with additional project co-financing.

^[16] Based on early scoping, the project anticipates focus on a subregion, with interest in Sub-Saharan Africa, which will allow the project to build upon relationships and knowledge of the region developed through engagements under the first phase of the Alliance.

Coordination and Cooperation with Ongoing Initiatives and Project.

Does the GEF Agency expect to play an execution role on this project?

No

If so, please describe that role here. Also, please add a short explanation to describe cooperation with ongoing initiatives and projects, including potential for co-location and/or sharing of expertise/staffing

TBD at the ppg phase.

Coordination and Cooperation with Ongoing Initiatives and Projects

The project will explore opportunities to collaborate with, learn from, and build on a range of ongoing initiatives and projects that are working in and making meaningful contributions to the area-based ocean space. These potential areas of cooperation, alignment of strategies, co-funding, mutual learning, and knowledge exchange will be further explored during the PPG phase. As project geographies are identified during the PPG phase, additional initiatives will be identified for coordination and cooperation specific to each geography.

The table below identifies a subset of ongoing GEF funded initiatives and projects with which the Alliance has engaged in coordination and cooperation with during the first phase of the project and/or intends to continue or initiative coordination and cooperation during the proposed project. This list is not exhaustive and additional initiatives and projects are anticipated to be identified as project geographies are selected.

Initiative	Potential cooperation with relevant initiatives
IW:LEARN	<p>The project will participate in IW:LEARN activities and share lessons from project implementation for dissemination to the GEF IW community. Where applicable, IW:LEARN will be invited to engage with other communities of practice and knowledge sharing platforms (e.g. Global MPA Capacity Community of Practice, Reef Resilience Network).</p> <p>During the first phase of the project, the Alliance shared project experiences and learning with IW:LEARN through Results/Experience Notes, contribution of content to IW:LEARN website and learning materials, and participation in events include IWC10 and LME24.</p>
Coral Reef Rescue: Resilient Coral Reefs, Resilient Communities	<p>The project can explore opportunities for collaboration in shared geographies and facilitate the sharing of learning and identified best practices based on similarities in the project structure and operations (e.g. global partnership model, supporting in-country implementation partners).</p> <p>The current site portfolio of the project overlaps with CRR in several geographies including Western Indian Ocean, Philippines, and Indonesia. During the first phase of the project, coordination and lesson sharing took place between the projects, including a twinning exchange through IW:LEARN to share project implementation experiences is planned for May 2026.</p>
Beyond 30x30: Securing resilience in the Eastern Tropical Pacific through enhanced transboundary cooperation	<p>The project can explore opportunities for collaboration in shared geographies. It is likely that the project will reinvest in a subset of sites in this region, providing an opportunity to strengthen the outcomes of both projects through coordination and sharing of experiences, facilitating transboundary efforts with the ETP.</p> <p>To date, the Alliance has engaged in discussions with this initiative, including sharing implementation experiences in the ETP to help inform strategy. There is continued communication between the Alliance and this initiative regarding shared geographies and strategies.</p>
Philippine Rise Integrated Conservation for Enduring Legacies through Ecosystem Support Services (PRICELESS)	<p>The project can continue coordination with the PRICELESS project by engaging project stakeholders in efforts to advance the designation of large-scale MPAs in the Philippines and broader SE Asia region.</p>

	<p>During the first phase of the project, the Alliance has coordinated with PRICELESS in the development and execution of the Philippine Rise engagement to ensure work is complimentary and there is coordination between the existing and proposed ocean conservation areas.</p>
Facilitating Dialogue and Strengthening Transboundary Cooperation with Legislators to Improve Marine Governance	<p>The project could explore knowledge exchange and collaboration as an opportunity to engage legislators and build political will in overlapping project geographies. Coordination may be complimentary to work achieved through the Alliance's previous partnership with Parliamentarians for Global Action.</p>
Effectively Managing Networks of Marine Protected Areas in Large Marine Ecosystems in the ASEAN Region (ASEAN ENMPAS)	<p>The project can continue coordination with ASEAN ENMPAS project by engaging project stakeholders in efforts to advance the designation of large-scale MPAs in the SE Asia region, including knowledge sharing and collaboration across project activities.</p> <p>During the first phase of the project, the Alliance has coordinated with ASEAN ENMPAS in several shared efforts including co-hosting of workshops at IWC10 and aligning on efforts to advance the designation new large-scale ocean conservation areas and management of existing networks of MPAs in Indonesia and the Philippines.</p>
Coastal Fisheries Initiative	<p>During the first phase of the project, the Alliance recognized and explored overlapping project geographies. While the initiative has ended, the project can explore knowledge exchange with previous PMU staff of the initiative for the sharing of learning and experience overseeing a global portfolio of work. Where geographies overlapped, coordination with entities advanced through the Coastal Fisheries Initiative may be pursued to identify and align work where fisheries and protected area efforts are complimentary.</p>
Build Back a Blue and Stronger Mediterranean	<p>The project can facilitate knowledge exchange pertaining to implementation experiences advancing regional coordination and capacity building and the establishment of regional conservation trust funds.</p> <p>During the first phase of the project, the Alliance coordinated with MedPAN and MedFund for the sharing of knowledge pertaining to regional management capacity and sustainable financing strategies.</p>
Promoting National Blue Economy Priorities Through Marine Spatial Planning in the Caribbean Large Marine Ecosystem (BCLME+)	<p>The project may collaborate with BCLME+ to advance sites identified within the Caribbean LME. Opportunities for shared learning pertaining to the successful integration of MPAs into marine spatial planning can also be explored.</p> <p>During the first phase of the project, the Alliance communicated with BCLME+ and previously PROCARIBE+ for the exchange of knowledge and coordination opportunities in the Caribbean region.</p>
Philippines Biodiversity Finance Program	<p>The project can explore knowledge exchange and potential collaboration to identify and advance sustainable financing opportunities for MPAs designated within the national waters of the Philippines. While primarily focused on terrestrial biodiversity, this initiative may offer replicable models that can be applied to the marine space, with potential interest in sustainability for the Alliance's Philippine Rise engagement.</p>
Indonesia Coral Bond	<p>The project can explore collaboration to align efforts to secure the designation of new large-scale MPAs within national waters of Indonesia with potential funding streams through the coral bond, with potential interest in sustainability for the Alliance's Indonesia engagement. Knowledge exchange can also be pursued to learn from the coral bond model and identify if it may be applicable within alternate project geographies.</p>
Foster transboundary cooperation and capacities for the management of marine biodiversity of the Southwest Atlantic Large Marine Ecosystems through Regional and National Actions	<p>The project could explore opportunities for coordination to ensure sites supported by the Alliance in this region are engaged and aligned with the larger transboundary strategy of the Southwest Atlantic Large Marine Ecosystem. Knowledge exchange may also be pursued to learn from the initiative's experience facilitating transboundary cooperation across an LME.</p> <p>During the first phase of the project, coordination occurred within this region as a result of overlapping project geographies and the Alliance's engagement with the MPA School of the Southern Cone.</p>

Promoting Sustainable and Inclusive Blue Economy Transformation in Africa	With Sub-Saharan Africa identified as a potential priority underinvested region for the project, coordination with this initiative would allow the project to align and learn from ongoing region-wide efforts. Knowledge sharing may also be pursued pertaining to the advancement of sustainable blue economy efforts.
Mainstreaming Climate-Resilient Blue Economy in the BCLMW Region (BCLME IV Project)	The Alliance's Benguela Current engagement was informed by and developed in cooperation with previous GEF funded projects in the BCLME region. The project can continue this coordination with the BCLME IV Project.
Enabling Activities to Support the Ratification and Early Implementation of the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction	Pending the establishment of a legally binding mechanism to designate MPAs under BBNJ Agreement, the project anticipates a subset of the sites identified and supported under Component 2: New Designations in Key Ocean Geographies will be MPAs in the high seas. The project can explore opportunities for coordination to ensure that the Alliance strategy is complimentary to work completed under EA-BBNJ and builds upon the enabling conditions advances for the protection of marine resources in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

In addition to GEF funded projects and initiatives, the project intends to pursue coordination and cooperation with a wide array of implementing, technical, and leverage funding partners. Many, but not all, partnerships developed during the first phase of the project are anticipated to carry over and be further advanced during the proposed project, and additional partnerships will be identified and pursued as relevant during the PPG phase. A list of current Alliance partnerships can be seen below. This list is comprehensive but not exhaustive as new partnerships continue to be formed throughout project implementation.

- Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition
- Aruba Conservation Foundation
- Bahamas National Trust
- Becht Foundation
- Benguela Current Commission
- Beta Diversidad
- Big Ocean
- Birdlife International
- Blue Marine Foundation
- UC Santa Barbara – Bren School of Environmental Science and Management
- Cape Horn International Center
- Caribbean Biodiversity Fund
- CARMABI Foundation
- Conservation International
- Coast Funds
- Coastal Oceans Research and Development in the Indian Ocean
- Colorado State University – Center for Protected Area Management
- Coral Reef Alliance
- Coral Reefs of the High Seas Coalition
- Corporacion Nacional para el Desarrollo
- Cultural Working Group of Papahānaumokuākea
- Customary Senate of New Caledonia
- Dalhousie University
- Danmarks Naturfond
- Deep Sea Conservation Coalition
- DEPESCA
- Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance
- Enduring Earth
- Environmental Education and Monitoring Center (NEMA)
- Europe Jacque Delores
- EU Ocean Governance Project
- Fair Seas
- Fondo MARENA
- Forum for the Conservation of the Patagonian Sea
- Friends of Cocos Island Foundation
- Friends of the Earth Germany – BUND
- Fundacion Mapelo y Otros Ecosistemas Marinos

- Global Environment Facility
- Global Fund for Coral Reefs
- Global Island Partnership
- Global Networks – The Ocean Foundation
- Great Blue Ocean
- High Seas Alliance
- Holisticos
- Instituto Fomento Pesquero (IFOP)
- International Eco-Fund
- Irish Environmental Network
- IUCN
- Joint Analytic Cell
- Konservasi Indonesia
- Marine Conservation Institute
- McKinsey & Company
- MigraMar
- Minderoo Foundation
- Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources of Dominican Republic
- Ministry of the Environment of the Republic of Chile (MMA)
- Mission Blue
- Moore Foundation
- MPA Connect
- MPA Management School for the Southern Cone
- Namibia Nature Foundation
- National Geographic Pristine Seas
- National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP)
- National Fisheries and Aquaculture Service (SERNAPESCA)
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- Noe
- Northern Marianas College
- Ocean Collaborative
- Ocean Mind
- Oceana
- Oceano Azul
- Oceans 5
- Oceans North
- OnlyOne
- Omora Foundation
- Organizacion Comunitaria Funcional Mar de Juan Fernandez
- Pacific Blue Foundation
- Pacific Islands Managed & Protected Area Community
- Pacific Islands Heritage Coalition
- Palau International Coral Reef Center
- Palau National Marine Sanctuary Office
- Peopled Seas
- Pew Bertarelli Ocean Legacy
- Polynesian Voyaging Society
- Prince Albert II Foundation
- Rapa Nui Local Sea Council
- Reef Resilience Network
- Rob Walton Foundation
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
- Samoa Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
- Samoan Voyaging Society
- Sciaena
- Sea Education Association
- SeaBlue Canada
- Seas at Risk
- Seychelles Conservation and Climate Adaptation Trust (SeyCCAT)
- Seychelles Marine Spatial Plan Unit
- Skylight

- Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute
- Solomon Islands Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Fisheries
- Swedish Society for Nature Conservation
- The Nature Conservancy
- The North Sea Foundation
- The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley
- Tiffany & Co.
- Tofia Niue
- Tonga Government – MEIDECC
- Tufts University - Rotjan Marine Ecology Lab
- Undersecretariat of Fisheries and Aquaculture (SUBPESCA)
- University of California Santa Barbara
- University of Victoria
- Vava'u Environmental Protection Association
- Waitt Foundation
- Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association
- Wild Ocean
- WildAid Marine
- Wildlife Conservation Society
- World Wildlife Fund
- Wyss Foundation
- Zoological Society of London

Aligned with the interest and strategic priorities of the GEF, the project will place particular focus on the continued cultivation of partnerships to advance the sustainable and blended financing of sites. Examples of ongoing partnerships with sustainable financing initiatives include:

- McKinsey & Company: The Alliance partners with McKinsey & Company's Nature Analytics Team to provide pro bono support to develop and advance sustainable financing strategies at select sites.
- Enduring Earth: The Alliance has partnered with Enduring Earth at several engagement sites, including Canada's Great Bear Sea and Arctic, Colombia, and Gulf of Guinea, to explore and advance long-term financing for ocean conservation areas through the Project Finance for Permanence model.
- Oceans 5: The Alliance, in partnership with Niue Ocean Wide and others, coordinated with Oceans 5 to support the development and launch of Niue's Ocean Conservation Commitments, a first-of-its-kind financing mechanism to sustainably manage 100% of Niue's ocean area.
- Debt for Nature Coalition: The Alliance, through CI and Pew's status as founding members, engages with the Debt for Nature Coalition to support the broader systematic evaluation on opportunities to use debt-for-nature swap instruments to scale conservation outcomes.
- Global Fund for Coral Reefs: The Alliance coordinates with GFCR to advance the development of ocean financing mechanisms in overlapping geographies, including collaboration on the 2024 Indonesia debt swap, and explore collective strategies to advance ocean financial mechanisms at the global level.
- SPACES: The Alliance is exploring opportunities to work with SPACES, aiming to connect select engagement sites with practical support that helps governments at key sites to develop national plans for nature conservation and achieve 30x30 targets.
- Minderoo Foundation's 30x30 Marine Finance: The Alliance is the executing partner of the Minderoo Foundation's \$10M Marine 30x30 Finance Initiative to unlock financing and demonstrate the achievability of 30% protection through three pilot countries.

Core Indicators

Indicator 2 Marine protected areas created or under improved management

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
180000000	0	0	0

Indicator 2.1 Marine Protected Areas Newly created

Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)

500000000	0	0	0
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Name of the Protected Area	WDPA ID	IUCN Category	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
TBD			500,000,000.00			

Indicator 2.2 Marine Protected Areas Under improved management effectiveness

Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
1300000000	0	0	0

Name of the Protected Area	WDP A ID	IUCN Category	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)	METT score (Baseline at CEO Endorsement)	METT score (Achieved at MTR)	METT score (Achieved at TE)
TBD			1,300,000,000.00						

Indicator 7 Shared water ecosystems under new or improved cooperative management

	Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
Shared water Ecosystem Count	Agulhas Current 1	0	0	0

Indicator 7.1 Level of Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis and Strategic Action Program (TDA/SAP) formulation and implementation (scale of 1 to 4; see Guidance)

Shared Water Ecosystem	Rating (Expected at PIF)	Rating (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Rating (Achieved at MTR)	Rating (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 7.2 Level of Regional Legal Agreements and Regional management institution(s) (RMI) to support its implementation (scale of 1 to 4; see Guidance)

Shared Water Ecosystem	Rating (Expected at PIF)	Rating (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Rating (Achieved at MTR)	Rating (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 7.3 Level of National/Local reforms and active participation of Inter-Ministerial Committees (IMC; scale 1 to 4; See Guidance)

Shared Water Ecosystem	Rating (Expected at PIF)	Rating (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Rating (Achieved at MTR)	Rating (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 7.4 Level of engagement in IWLEARN through participation and delivery of key products(scale 1 to 4; see Guidance)

Shared Water Ecosystem	Rating (Expected at PIF)	Rating (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Rating (Achieved at MTR)	Rating (Achieved at TE)
Agulhas Current	4			

Indicator 11 People benefiting from GEF-financed investments

	Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
Female	7,500			
Male	7,500			
Total	15,000	0	0	0

Explain the methodological approach and underlying logic to justify target levels for Core and Sub-Indicators (max. 250 words, approximately 1/2 page)

The project will contribute to Core Indicator 2 – Marine protected areas created or under improved management by advancing the high-quality protection of 1.8 billion hectares of ocean area, or approximately 5% of the global ocean. This will be achieved through both newly created marine protected areas and marine protected areas under improved management. The ranges below are estimates, and the project will maintain flexibility in proportionality across Core Indicator 2.1 and Core Indicator 2.2 to allow the project to remain responsive to emerging opportunities throughout implementation.

- Indicator 2.1 reflects an estimated 500 million hectares of marine protected areas expected to be designated. This will include areas designated under Component 2: New Designations in Key Ocean Geographies and Component 3: Increased Ambition & New Designations in Underinvested Regions. Area will be counted towards this indicator upon legal recognition of the new or expanded ocean conservation area. This target was determined based on a global analysis to identify potential opportunity for new ocean conservation areas, including underrepresented regions with potential for ocean conservation action and geographies with potential for future large-scale designations. The target range is anticipated to remain consistent through the PPG phase but there is potential for the target to increase if notable additional large-scale opportunities are identified (ex. framework under the BBNJ treaty for the designation of high seas MPAs) or co-financing allows for engagement in additional underinvested regions.
- Indicator 2.2 reflects an estimated 1.3 billion hectares of marine protected areas under improved management. This will include areas supported under Component 1: Improve Ocean Protection Quality and potential for a small contribution from areas supported under Component 3: Increased Ambition & New Designations in Underinvested Regions. Areas will be counted towards this indicator upon achievement of a site-specific measure of success for improved ocean protection quality. Site-specific measures of success will be described in the engagement framework and will be aligned with a comprehensive framework for ocean protection quality (i.e., level of protection, management effectiveness, sustainable financing, and durability) to be developed during the PPG phase and adopted upon approval of the project’s Steering Council. The project will maintain flexibility across intervention types to remain responsive to the opportunity and needs of each site, with area contributed to this indicator upon the achievement of upgraded levels of protection, high management effectiveness thresholds, implemented sustainable financing strategies, and increased durability against threats of PADDD.

The project will work in Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs) that contribute to Core Indicator 7 – Number of shared water ecosystems under new or improved cooperative management. An initial target of one (1) shared water ecosystem has been set aligned with the regional strategy to be advanced under Component 3. The target under this core indicator may increase during the PPG phase if transboundary/shared water engagements frameworks are developed in LMEs under Component 1. While the final number and location of these LMEs will be determined during the PPG phase, the project will reinvest in a subset of the site portfolio developed during the first phase of project implementation. This portfolio includes sites within the Pacific Central American Coastal, Caribbean Sea, Humboldt Current, North Brazil Shelf, Patagonian Shelf, Arctic, Mediterranean Sea, Guinea

Current, Benguela Current, Agulhas Current, Somali Coastal Current, Indonesian Sea, Sulu-Celebes Ses, and Small Islands States LMEs.

Under Indicator 7.4, the project aims to reach Level 4 for IW:LEARN engagement by project closure by maintaining an IW compliant website, producing and sharing knowledge products through IW:LEARN, and actively participating in IW portfolio learning events and exchanges. IW:LEARN will, additionally, be invited to engage in other learning networks (e.g. Global MPA Capacity Community of Practice) advanced by the project.

The project anticipates reaching approximately 15,000 direct beneficiaries under Indicator 11: Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as a co-benefit of GEF investment. While this indicator will be further refined through the PPG phase and upon identification of project geographies, the current estimate was developed based on experience from the first phase of project implementation and the following definition of direct beneficiaries:

Number of persons who receive target support from Alliance activities. Beneficiaries may receive socio-economic, recreational, or cultural benefits, including both monetary (e.g., jobs, grants, increased income) and non-monetary benefits (e.g., training, increased knowledge, leadership opportunities). These include the following groups, which will be measured for each site-based engagement that the Alliance will invest in, or for broader science, policy, and capacity-building activities that the Alliance may invest in to grow the field of large-scale marine conservation. The Blue Nature Alliance will collect data on this indicator in a gender-disaggregated manner when possible, and data will be collected from reviewing Alliance activities and grant progress reports. An individual should only be counted once, even if they received multiple types of benefits. Beneficiaries vary depending on project activities, but examples include:

- Staff of implementing partner, as well as any person who is employed in part due to project implementation, such as consultants or sub-grantees.
- Participants in formal learning initiatives.
- Participants of trainings, workshops, or other activities that promote knowledge and/or the acquisition of new skills or materials relevant to the project.
- Relevant staff of MPA sites or partner organizations who receive support to improve MPA management.
- Individuals who have increased participation in recurring, meaningful, and defined leadership roles that contribute to increased input in decision-making processes.

Key Risks

	Rating	Explanation of risk and mitigation measures
CONTEXT		
Climate	Moderate	<p>Risk: Global climate change is anticipated to negatively impact ocean conservation areas through stressors such as ocean warming, acidification, and deoxygenation, leading to declines in ecosystem functionality, habitat and biodiversity loss, and shifts in species ranges and migrations. These changes may decrease the ability of the project’s site-based investments to achieve desired conservation outcomes and the long-term sustainability of the project’s impact on ocean health and ecosystems.</p> <p>Mitigation measure: Climate risks for each site will be assessed prior to investment through a limited ESIA embedded in the engagement and regional framework template documents. For</p>

		<p>all high-risk sites, and for other sites when feasible, the Alliance will work with relevant experts to ensure climate considerations, including zoning, management, and monitoring, are factored into the engagement strategy for that site and continued throughout the Alliance investment.</p> <p>The project will, further, seek opportunities to encourage the sharing of experiences related to climate mitigation and adaptation across partnerships, inclusive of ocean conservation areas, regional institutions, and local organizations. Where aligned with priorities of the Alliance and relevant site-based engagements, resources will be dedicated toward research and/or communities of practice, which could result in improved understanding of, and tools to address, climate change impacts on ocean conservation areas.</p>
Environmental and Social	Moderate	<p>Risk: Environmental and social conditions at the project sites, such as unequal access to natural resources, entrenched gender norms, socio-economic barriers, or low trust in external actors, may limit community engagement and/or local support for the project’s intended conservation actions. Mitigation measures: Environmental and social risks for each site will be assessed prior to investment through a limited ESIA embedded in the engagement and regional framework template documents. Across all sites, the project will implement a robust system to ensure appropriate stakeholder involvement, including the use of stakeholder engagement plans, gender and Indigenous peoples safeguards, a grievance mechanism, and other tools to ensure that all site-based engagements are properly assessed for risks and that appropriate safeguard instruments or risk management controls are incorporated into project design. Additionally, all site-based engagements will be designed collaboratively with the local implementing partner, ensuring the engagement strategy is informed by and responsive to local conditions, including any potential impacts on local livelihoods and economic opportunities. All engagement strategies will, further, adhere to the social principles of the Alliance’s Code of Conduct to ensure social equity is integrated throughout all engagements and interventions benefit those who live in proximity to the ocean conservation area, increasing the likelihood of support as the needs of stakeholders are considered. As a criteria of site selection, the project will seek local champions at each site-based engagement to ensure there is local support as well as advocates for the engagement at local, regional, and national levels of government.</p>
Political and Governance	Moderate	<p>Risk: A lack of alignment between policy frameworks and mandates across government ministries and/or insufficient cross-sectoral collaboration may undermine the project’s ability to deliver on site-based targets. Mitigation measures: Pertinent governance laws and policies, agencies and organizations, and decision-making processes will be assessed prior to investment through a limited ESIA embedded in the engagement and regional framework template documents. Where applicable, site-based engagements will include efforts to achieve policy coherence and whole-of-government alignment. This may include activities to engage all relevant ministries (e.g., environment, fisheries, coast guard, etc.) and sectors to achieve project objectives and/or activities to advance alignment of policies, laws, and institutional arrangements to strengthen governance and management of ocean conservation areas. Risk:</p>

		<p>Unpredictable global geopolitical dynamics, political instability, institutional turnover, or declines in political may lead to a reprioritizing and redirection of resources away from ocean conservation, decreasing achievability of new designations, weakening management quality of existing ocean conservation areas, or leading to an increased threat of protected area downgrading, degazettement, or downsizing (PADD) across project sites. Mitigation measures: Political and governance risks for each site will be assessed prior to investment through a limited ESIA embedded in the engagement and regional framework template documents. As a criteria of site selection, the project will pursue site-based engagements with existing political will and engagements will include efforts to seek commitments, ideally a written commitment, from the relevant decision-making authority. Wherever feasible, government will be engaged with project implementation and encouraged to serve both as a co-implementer and co-financer of the activities being completed at each engagement site. Throughout implementation, the project will closely monitor sites for potential changes in government and will deploy, as needed, resources to buffer uncertainties associated with political change, including support for the development of campaign strategies to build political will and aid in increasing government interest in ocean conservation areas. Further, recognizing an increasing risk of PADD as a result of the current global political climate, periodic portfolio-wide scans will be completed to identify emerging risks at sites, with resources available to rapidly respond to these risks through a small grants facility.</p>
<p>INNOVATION</p>		
<p>Institutional and Policy</p>	<p>Moderate</p>	<p>Risk: While the project is broadly aligned with global and regional policy priorities, a lack of alignment with local policy frameworks or community support may hinder the long-term success and sustainability of investments. Mitigation measures: Local champions will be identified and engaged at each site-based engagement to ensure this is local support as well as an advocate for the engagement at local, regional, and national levels of governments. Where feasible, the project will seek to directly support local organizations and will empower communities, with particular focus on Indigenous groups and women, to participate in project design and execution. In alignment with the Blue Nature Alliance Code of Conduct, potential impacts on local livelihoods will be identified through a limited EESIA embedded in the engagement and regional framework templates, to be followed by a robust stakeholder engagement throughout project implementation. Where applicable, interventions will be designed with an emphasis on providing benefits to those living in proximity to and interacting with the ocean conservation area. Where additional effort is needed to secure community support, engagements will deploy resources to advance campaign strategies that h build local support for the ocean conservation area and help to establish the necessary local policy frameworks.</p>
<p>Technological</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Risk: The growing prevalence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) may generate risks to project implementation, such as flawed decision-making and/or loss of</p>

		<p>ethical human judgement based on information bias, data inaccuracies, and over-reliance on AI models. As the utilization of AI in the ocean conservation space is nascent, new and unanticipated risks associated with AI may be identified later in project implementation. Mitigation measures: Project staff will seek to stay informed on the evolving role of AI within the field of ocean conservation and education opportunities will be provided to staff and as requested, partners to ensure a shared understanding of best practices (e.g. data security and intellectual property) for the ethical use of AI in project activities.</p>
Financial and Business Model	Moderate	<p>Risk: Core partner commitments are not sufficient to secure planned project co-financing. Mitigation measures: Core partner engagement and fundraising efforts will take place during the Project Preparation Grant phase with the intent to secure commitments from existing core partners and identify additional core partners to provide co-financing to the project. In the case the planned project co-financing is not fully secured, the project will adjust the scope of activities and targets to be feasible under the final financing amount. Risk: Volatile economic conditions and/or global economic shocks may impact political will and success of sites (e.g. COVID caused an unanticipated decline in tourism and tourism-based revenue for ocean conservation area management costs which increased risk of PADD in select sites). Mitigation measures: Support will be provided to site-based engagements to develop sustainable financing strategies that utilize diversified sources of funding to increase resilience and reduce dependence on a single funding stream. Strategies will also enable business planning and long-term financing initiatives to enable the sustainable management of ocean conservation areas. These efforts will be enhanced by the Alliance’s role as implementor of the \$10M Minderoo Marine 30x30 Finance Pilot, in-kind parentships (e.g., McKinsey & Company’s Nature Analytics), and coordination with existing initiatives (e.g., Enduring Earth, TNC NatureVest). Risk: Global financial challenges may lead to reduced funding from international donors, causing leverage targets not to be achieved. Mitigation measures: The Alliance is proactive in seeking opportunities to build relationships with other international donors in the ocean conservation space to strategically coordinate and secure leverage funding for site-based engagements. This will continue to include leadership in the 30x30 Marine Funders Action Network, which serves to increase alignment and collaboration across this funding base.</p>

EXECUTION

Capacity	Low	<p>Risk: The project executing entity may lack the technical and managerial expertise required for efficient project execution. Mitigation measures: Mitigation measures: The Alliance has extensive experience in implementing complex, multi-stakeholder environmental projects across marine and coastal ecosystems. Through the first phase of implementation, the Alliance has built a strong institutional culture, refined organizational processes, and exceeded expectations in developing a diverse portfolio of supported initiatives. The Alliance has demonstrated the capacity to manage a complex GEF-funded initiative with a strong track record of proficient and successful project</p>
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		<p>execution and will provide solid inputs to the EA that will be defined in the ppg phase. Risk: Weak management capacity of implementing partners for planning, management, and governance may reduce the effectiveness of site-based engagements. Mitigation measures: Capacity needs will be assessed for all implementing partners as part of a financial and operational assessment conducted prior to the issuing of a subgrant or contract. The assessment will identify and guide activities to address capacity gaps and, as needed, activities are included in the site-based engagement to provide support for building capacity for planning, financial management, and other management areas.</p>
Fiduciary	Low	<p>Risk: Risk of non-compliance of the project executing entity with financial management and procurement guidelines, potentially leading to misuse of funds or delays in procurement. Mitigation measure(s): Risk is considered low given the Alliance’s well-established processes and proven proficiency in managing donor-funded projects. The Alliance has robust financial, procurement, and operation systems in place to ensure compliance with fiduciary standards and efficient day-to-day project implementation, monitoring, and accountability. The Alliance has had clean audits with zero findings every year it has been audited (annually 2020-2025).</p>
Stakeholder	Low	<p>Risk: The diversity in project geographies, contexts, and partners may make it challenging to achieve consistent, meaningful and inclusive stakeholder engagement across all project activities. Mitigation measure(s): A detailed stakeholder engagement plan will be designed and implemented from project inception to ensure there are clear roles and expectations for each stakeholder, and that consistent communication and participation are maintained. A safeguards packet consisting of a stakeholder engagement, gender mainstreaming, and grievance redress plans will be completed for each site-based engagement to ensure appropriate stakeholder engagement, led by implementing partners, will occur across all project geographies.</p>
Other	Moderate	<p>Risk: Threats to the marine ecosystems where the project engages may grow and, thus, demand higher investments. Mitigation measure(s): Regular communications will be maintained with implementing partners to identify and track the potential for threats (e.g., increasing fishing pressure, deep-sea mining, etc.) to impact the probability of success at Alliance engagements. Where necessary, engagement strategies will be adapted to address threats and minimize negative impacts on marine ecosystems. A robust monitoring and evaluation system will allow the project to monitor the presence of threats and impact on sites at the portfolio level. As a result, portfolio-wide trends and/or implications of increasing costs due to threats will be identified early allowing the project to proactively adapt.</p>
Overall Risk Rating	Moderate	<p>The overarching risk to this project is moderate. The project’s diverse global portfolio of sites provides a buffer against risk as sites with higher levels of risks can be balanced with low-risk sites, decreasing the impact of these risks</p>

	<p>on the project’s overall ability to deliver its intended outcomes. Close monitoring of the identified risks and effective implementation of mitigation measures will ensure that the risks do not adversely impact the success and durability of the project.</p>
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C. ALIGNMENT WITH GEF-8 PROGRAMMING STRATEGIES AND COUNTRY/REGIONAL PRIORITIES

Describe how the proposed interventions are aligned with GEF- 8 programming strategies and country and regional priorities, including how these country strategies and plans relate to the multilateral environmental agreements.

Confirm if any country policies that might contradict with intended outcomes of the project have been identified, and how the project will address this.

For projects aiming to generate biodiversity benefits (regardless of what the source of the resources is - i.e., BD, CC or LD), please identify which of the 23 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework the project contributes to and explain how. (max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

This project is fully aligned with the GEF-8 International Waters (IW) Focal Area through activities to support transboundary cooperation and global efforts to secure healthy marine ecosystems. The project directly supports IW objectives to (1) accelerate joint action to support Blue Economic Development and (2) advance management in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ).

The project recognizes the critical importance of key coastal and marine ecosystems for the economic development of many nations, food security, and local livelihoods. In alignment with IW, the project recognizes threats to these ecosystems (e.g. climate change, habitat loss, pollution, overfishing, seabed mining) as barriers to blue economic development and identifies ocean conservation areas as a critical tool to help protect and restore ecosystems and secure their ability to provide ecosystem services and benefits. By advancing the high-quality protection of 1.8 billion hectares of ocean area, including transboundary and collaborative engagements across a wide range of LMEs, the project will make a significant contribution towards meeting this IW objective.

The project is prepared to provide support for the designation of ocean conservation areas in ABNJ upon the adoption of a mechanism for the designation of high-seas marine protected areas (HSMPAs) under the BBNJ treaty. In the interim, the Alliance has and will continue to contribute to efforts to build the enabling conditions to fast-track these designations once the mechanism is in place. This includes support to regional organizations (e.g., RMFOs and regional unions such as ECOWAS) to equip countries with the information and capacity needed to advance HSMPA proposals through the BBNJ Treaty mechanism once adopted, conduct research to identify and build the case for protection of ABNJ, and develop best practices for HSMPAs managed based on learning shared from large-scale MPAs within national waters.

In addition to alignment with the IW Focal Area, the project further aligns with the overarching GEF-8 strategic positioning. The project contributes to the GEF-8 vision for the achievement of a healthy, productive, and resilient environment that underpins the well-being of human societies. With project activities anticipated to advance the effective and equitable protection of 1.8 billion hectares of ocean conservation area, or approximately 5% of the global ocean, the project will make significant contributions towards the KMGBF as detailed in the table below. Further, through the core partner model which leverages GEF funds with co-financing from private philanthropy and the advancing of innovative sustainable financing strategies, the project aligns with and will contribute to the GEF-8 strategic objective of increased coordination and resource mobilization across funding sources and the piloting of new mechanisms and innovative pathways to secure blended financing to advance GEF priorities, including increased engagement with the private sector/private capital markets.

Table 6: Alignment and contributions to KMGBF

KMGBF Target	Project Contribution
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Target 1: Plan and manage all areas to reduce biodiversity loss.	The project will advance the high-quality protection of ocean ecosystems, which will safeguard critical habitats and contribute to the protection of species and biodiversity.
Target 3: Conserve 30% of land, waters, and seas.	The project will support the designation of new ocean conservation areas and the more effective, equitable, and durable management of existing ocean conservation areas. Through this, the project will make meaningful direct contributions towards the 30% target and create enabling conditions to catalyze continued momentum and action for ocean conservation.
Target 8: Minimize the impacts of climate change on biodiversity and build resilience.	Ocean conservation areas have been shown to increase the resilience of the marine environment to climate change. The project will help to minimize the impacts of climate change on marine ecosystems and biodiversity through high-quality area-based protections.
Target 9: Manage wild species to sustainably benefit people.	The project will contribute to the sustainable management of marine species for the benefit of people through support for effective area-based protections which has been shown to improve marine productivity and replenish fisheries.
Target 19: Mobilize \$200 billion per year for biodiversity from all sources, including \$30 billion through international finance.	The project will support the mobilization of financial resources for biodiversity through the design, implementation, and resourcing of innovative sustainable financing strategies at site-based engagements.
Target 20: Strengthen capacity-building, technology transfer, and scientific and technical cooperation for biodiversity.	The project will contribute to strengthened capacity-building through the facilitation of professional development and knowledge sharing opportunities across the Alliance's partner network and through investment into the Global MPA Capacity Community of Practice.

D. POLICY REQUIREMENTS

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment:

We confirm that gender dimensions relevant to the project have been addressed as per GEF Policy and are clearly articulated in the Project Description (Section B).

Yes

Stakeholder Engagement

We confirm that key stakeholders were consulted during PIF development as required per GEF policy, their relevant roles to project outcomes and plan to develop a Stakeholder Engagement Plan before CEO endorsement has been clearly articulated in the Project Description (Section B).

Yes

Were the following stakeholders consulted during project identification phase:

Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities: Yes

Civil Society Organizations: Yes

Private Sector: Yes

Provide a brief summary and list of names and dates of consultations

While the project has not held formal consultations with stakeholders, inclusive of Indigenous Peoples and local community groups, about the project concept (PIF) at this time, feedback received from partners and stakeholders throughout implementation of the first phase of the Alliance was utilized to inform the project strategy and proposed processes. This

includes feedback from partners pertaining to safeguards and granting processes, partnership approach, and priorities for site-based engagement (e.g. reinvestment to deepen partnerships and support to select sites, increased focus on quality and management effectiveness post-designation). More extensive stakeholder engagement is planned for the PPG phase and results will be integrated into the final project document.

When selecting project geographies, the Alliance will evaluate all potential sites based on criteria which includes political will of decision-making authorities and/or Indigenous groups and the presence of local champions – inclusive of Indigenous communities, community organizations, local leaders, and/or coalitions – prepared to work with partners to drive the work forward through engagement with and participation of their local community. This criteria ensures that selected engagements have buy-in from local stakeholders, with consultation and engagement of these stakeholders continuing as an integral component of project development and implementation. In the case of Indigenous-led engagements, the presence of local champions will be considered more important than explicit government support.

Once project geographies are identified, consultations and engagement with relevant stakeholders, inclusive of Indigenous Peoples, local community groups, artisanal fishers, relevant local fishers, and community-based organizations, will be completed as part of the engagement framework and/or regional strategy framework development process and, in alignment with first phase of project implementation, a limited ESIA and safeguard packet (consisting of stakeholder engagement, gender mainstreaming, and grievance redress plans) will be completed for each engagement prior to the start of project activities.

Where feasible, local community-based organizations, coalitions, and/or Indigenous groups will be selected as implementing partners and, when beneficial, engagements will include activities to support the institutional capacity building of these partners. Examples of engagements from the first phase of project implementation led by local community-based organizations, coalitions, and/or Indigenous groups include:

- Canada's Great Bear Sea led by Coast Funds, the world's first Indigenous-led conservation finance organization, and Coastal First Nations.
- Chile's offshore large-scale marine protected areas advanced through partnership with the Rapa Nui Local Sea Council and Organización Funcional Comunitaria Mar de Juan Fernandez.
- Gulf of Guinea advanced through partnership with WCS and community fishing cooperatives.
- Mariana Islands led by the Northern Marianas College Natural Resources Management Program to integrate Indigenous and traditional ecological knowledge into marine management.
- Mexico's Dos Mares Biosphere Reserve advanced through partnership with DEPESCA, a local artisanal fishing association.
- New Caledonia's Natural Park of the Coral Sea advanced through partnerships with the Customary Senate of New Caledonia and the Kanak Customary Authorities College of the PNMC.
- Western Indian Ocean led by the Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association with activities to establish and secure legal recognition for community-based and locally managed marine areas.

Across engagements where Indigenous Peoples are partners and/or stakeholders, the project will strive to integrate activities pertaining to Indigenous Peoples governance, traditional and local knowledge, and capacity building into project interventions and learning. Project activities which integrate Indigenous Peoples are guided by and will adhere to the social principles described in the Blue Nature Alliance's Code of Conduct. Further, the Alliance, through its global enabling conditions workstream, works to elevate Indigenous Peoples governance, traditional and local knowledge, and access to capacity building resources on a global scale. Examples of this from the first phase of project implementation include empowering local and Indigenous rights and practices in the scaling of marine management capacity, partnering to share experience incorporating Indigenous knowledge in protected area design and management, supporting partners (e.g. Polynesian Voyaging Society) to preserve and perpetuate traditional practices, and advancing research and education opportunities pertaining to the human dimensions of ocean conservation.

Integration of monitoring indicators for integration of vulnerable communities and Indigenous peoples governance, traditional knowledge, capacity building, and number of Indigenous Peoples beneficiaries will be considered during PPG, including monitoring of engagement with and participation of these groups in project development. Further, site-based engagement specific monitoring indicators will be considered and adopted where appropriate through the completion of the limited ESIA and safeguard packet, consisting of stakeholder engagement, gender mainstreaming, and grievance redress plans. In cases where Indigenous Peoples are present in the project area and risks are assessed as high with potential for negative impacts through the limited ESIA and safeguard screening form, a dedicated Indigenous Peoples plan and associated monitoring indicators will be developed for the site-based engagement.

Table 7: Stakeholder Engagement

Date	Stakeholders Consulted / Workshop or Meeting Title	Outcome of the consultation relevant to the PIF
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<p>Sept. 23-26, 2024</p>	<p>IWC10 Sessions: 'Towards the 30x30 Target Across the Globe' & 'Striving for Social and Economic Equity in LMEs and MPAs'</p> <p>The Alliance co-hosted and facilitated two sessions at IWC10 which gathered input from fellow IW projects on the activities needed to advance effective and equitable progress towards KMGBF Target 3.</p>	<p>The input from these sessions served to guide the project's priorities and approach, while also identifying opportunities for continued engagement and strategic alignment with other GEF IW projects.</p>
<p>Oct. 2024</p>	<p>Midterm Review for: Blue Nature Alliance to expand and improve conservation of 1.25 billion hectares of ocean ecosystems</p> <p>Conducted by EcoAdvisors, the MTR included input on the efficacy and success of the first phase of the Alliance from 34 interviews with Alliance implementing, technical, and leverage partners. EcoAdvisors, further, conducted site visits to two Alliance engagements – Revillagigedo National Park & NACES MPA.</p>	<p>The findings of the MTR, inclusive of project strengths and the unique value-added of the Alliance, have informed project design, guiding decisions pertaining to priorities and areas of focus.</p> <p>The project has also sought to respond to recommendations made by the evaluators in the design of this project.</p>
<p>Nov. 2025</p>	<p>Blue Nature Alliance: Funding Landscape and Orientation Analysis</p> <p>Conducted by CEA Consulting, the analysis included a literature review and interviews with 14 peer funders, 5 partners, and 3 technical experts to inform a funding landscape analysis of marine area-based conservation funders and coinciding orientation of the Alliance within this landscape based on areas of need within the landscape and the Alliance's strengths/contribution to the field.</p>	<p>The findings of the analysis have informed project design, guiding decisions based on priorities and areas of focused based on the Alliance's unique approach and value-add among peer funders.</p> <p>Based on the findings of the analysis, the project has directed efforts towards the areas of work that allow the Alliance to have the greatest impact within the field of marine area-based conservation.</p>
<p>Dec. 9-11, 2024</p>	<p>Blue Nature Alliance Visioning Workshop</p> <p>This workshop brought together leadership and technical experts from within the Alliance to conduct visioning exercises based on their experience working within the Alliance, input gathered from Alliance partners, and subject matter expertise.</p>	<p>The visioning from this workshop was built upon the findings of the assessments above and incorporated further input from Alliance partners to guide the initial planning for the scope of work detailed under this project.</p>
<p>Jan-May, 2025</p>	<p>Alliance Implementing Partner Interviews</p> <p>Alliance regional lead conducted interviews with site-based implementing partners to gain further insight on their perspective of the strengths, challenges, and areas in need of improvement across the Alliance. These interviews were conducted in-person, as stand-alone virtual meetings, or as part of periodic reporting check-ins.</p>	<p>The findings of these interviews helped to inform the priorities and approach of this project. Partner inputs will continue to be utilized to guide the project and its operations as the Alliance strives to be an active and flexible partner of choice.</p>
<p>May 20-21, 2025</p>	<p>Steering Council Visioning Workshop</p> <p>This workshop brought together the Alliance Steering Council (inclusive of the GEF) and leadership to conduct continued visioning and planning for the second phase of the Blue Nature Alliance.</p>	<p>Input from the Steering Council has directed priorities and target setting for the scope of work detailed under this project. The engagement of the core partners through the Steering Council has also guided budget setting and will continue to support the Alliance in fundraising and the securing of co-financing commitments.</p>
<p>Jun. 9-13, 2025</p>	<p>UN Ocean Conference</p> <p>Over the course of the conference, Alliance staff held numerous 1:1 conversations with partners, peer funders, and aligned initiatives to solicit input to guide planning for the second phase of the Blue Nature Alliance.</p>	<p>The findings from these conversations have helped to inform the priorities and approach of this project, providing additional insight into the niche and unique role of the Alliance within the field of ocean conservation.</p>

Future Stakeholder Engagement: The project will conduct further stakeholder engagement throughout the PPG phase which will include but not be limited to engagement of stakeholder groups in project geographies as identified, convening of Alliance partners in alignment with global events and conferences (e.g. IMPAC6, IWC11), and further coordination and discussion with ongoing projects and initiatives.

(Please upload to the portal documents tab any stakeholder engagement plan or assessments that have been done during the PIF development phase.)

Private Sector

Will there be private sector engagement in the project?

Yes

And if so, has its role been described and justified in the section B project description?

Yes

Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS) Risks

We confirm that we have provided indicative information regarding Environmental and Social risks associated with the proposed project or program and any measures to address such risks and impacts (this information should be presented in Annex D).

Yes

Overall Project/Program Risk Classification

PIF	CEO Endorsement/Approval	MTR	TE
Medium/Moderate			

E. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Knowledge management

We confirm that an approach to Knowledge Management and Learning has been clearly described in the Project Description (Section B)

Yes

ANNEX A: FINANCING TABLES

GEF Financing Table

Indicative Trust Fund Resources Requested by Agency(ies), Country(ies), Focal Area and the Programming of Funds

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Grant / Non- Grant	GEF Project Grant(\$)	Agency Fee(\$)	Total GEF Financing (\$)
CI	GET	Global	International Waters	International Waters: IW-1	Grant	18,148,625.00	1,633,375.00	19,782,000.00

Total GEF Resources (\$)		18,148,625.00	1,633,375.00	19,782,000.00
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Project Preparation Grant (PPG)

Is Project Preparation Grant requested?

true

PPG Amount (\$)

200000

PPG Agency Fee (\$)

18000

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Grant / Non- Grant	PPG(\$)	Agency Fee(\$)	Total PPG Funding(\$)
CI	GET	Global	International Waters	International Waters: IW-1	Grant	200,000.00	18,000.00	218,000.00
Total PPG Amount (\$)						200,000.00	18,000.00	218,000.00

Please provide justification

Sources of Funds for Country Star Allocation

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Sources of Funds	Total(\$)
Total GEF Resources					0.00

Indicative Focal Area Elements

Programming Directions	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing(\$)	Co-financing(\$)
IW-1-1	GET	18,148,625.00	187424934
Total Project Cost		18,148,625.00	187,424,934.00

Indicative Co-financing

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount(\$)
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Civil Society Organization	Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation	Grant	Investment mobilized	20815831
Civil Society Organization	Conservation International	Grant	Investment mobilized	5000000
Civil Society Organization	Pew Charitable Trust	Grant	Investment mobilized	30000000
Civil Society Organization	Private Foundations	Grant	Investment mobilized	131609103
Total Co-financing				187,424,934.00

Describe how any "Investment Mobilized" was identified

The full scope of work described under the proposed project is anticipated to require a total of USD \$205,573,559 in project capital. The Blue Nature Alliance has set a collective USD \$210,000,000 fundraising target that is anticipated to be met through continued commitment of existing core partners and the securing of additional core partners. Of this, an estimated USD \$4,184,169 will be utilized for planning and partner cultivation in 2026-2027 and, as these activities will take place prior to the anticipated project start date, their associated costs are not reflected in the proposed project budget.

Initial commitments to participate in the second phase of the Blue Nature Alliance have been made by Conservation International, The Pew Charitable Trusts, and the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation. Fundraising efforts will continue through the PPG phase with the goal of securing the full fundraising target of USD \$210,000,000 by January 1, 2028. A minimum fundraising target of USD \$150,000,000 has been set. If between USD \$150,000,000 and \$210,000,000 is raised by the end of 2027, the scope of work will be renegotiated with the Core Partners to amend outcomes to be commensurate with the available budget.

The grant from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation is for \$25,000,000 with an estimated \$4,184,169 to be utilized during the PPG phase. As a result, this portion of the grant is not included as indicative co-financing.

Prospects being explored include current core partners Minderoo Foundation and the Rob Walton Foundation, private foundations, individuals, governments, and the private sector.

ANNEX B: ENDORSEMENTS

GEF Agency(ies) Certification

GEF Agency Type	Name	Date	Project Contact Person	Phone	Email
GEF Agency Coordinator	Orissa Samaroo				osamaroo@conservation.org
Project Coordinator	Free de Koning				fdekoning@conservation.org

Record of Endorsement of GEF Operational Focal Point (s) on Behalf of the Government(s):

Name	Position	Ministry	Date (MM/DD/YYYY)

ANNEX C: PROJECT LOCATION

Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place

The project will invest in an anticipated 20-50 sites around the world. Project sites will be identified during the PPG phase and into early project implementation. The project anticipates reinvesting into a proportion of the sites that are currently part of the site portfolio developed during the first phase of project implementation. The table below provides geo-location information for all sites in the current Alliance site portfolio. While not all geographies will continue into the proposed project and additional geographies – particularly under Component 2: New Designations in Key Ocean Geographies – will be scoped for investment, the map and table below provide context on the scope and potential geographies of the project.

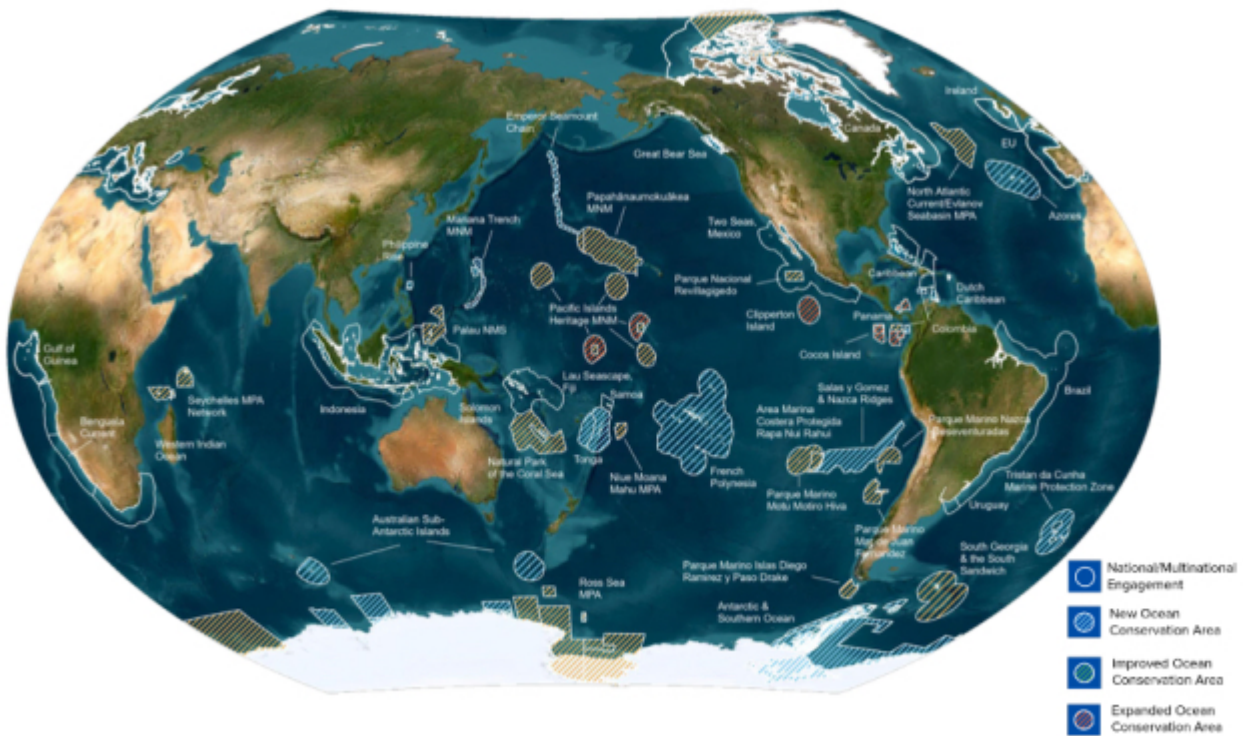


Figure 3. Blue Nature Alliance Engagement Map. This map displays the Blue Nature Alliance’s current (as of Jan. 2026) portfolio of site-based engagements developed during the first phase of project implementation. As the project anticipates reinvesting in a subset of these engagements, the map provides context on the scope and potential geographies of the project but does not represent final project locations.

Table 9: Geo-Location Information – Blue Nature Alliance Phase I Site Portfolio					
Blue Nature Alliance to expand and improve conservation of 1.25 billion hectares of ocean ecosystems					
ALLIANCE ENGAGEMENT NAME	COUNTRY(S)	GEO NAME ID	LOCATION NAME	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE
Name of engagement in Blue Nature Alliance internal systems.	Country(s) pertaining to the engagement site.	Provide the location’s Geo Name ID in a numerical format. IDs are available in the GeoNames’ geographical database covering all countries and containing millions of placenames with free access at: http://www.geonames.org	Name of the geographic locations in which the activity is taking place. In instances when a GeoNames ID is provided above, the name of the said ID should be reflected. Otherwise, the location name provided will be considered as an exact location.	Provide locations in Decimal Degrees WGS84 format, a notation expressing geographic coordinates as decimal fractions of a degree. Include at least four decimal points.	Provide locations in Decimal Degrees WGS84 format, a notation expressing geographic coordinates as decimal fractions of a degree. Include at least four decimal points.
Antarctica's Southern Ocean	High Seas	4036624	Weddell Sea	-73.0000	-45.0000
Australian Sub Antarctic Islands	Australia	12097293	Macquarie Island Marine Park	-55.8824	161.3308

Azores	Portugal	3411865	Azores	37.80847	-25.47466
Benguela Current	South Africa, Namibia, Angola	3351663	Benguela	-12.5763	13.4055
Brazil	Brazil	3457584	Ilhas Martin Vaz	-20.48483	-28.84714
Canada's Arctic & Atlantic	Canada	5978134	Hudson Bay	60.0004	-85.9998
Caribbean	Bahamas, Dominican Republic	7729891	Caribbean	20.3858	-72.3340
Chile Portfolio of MPAs	Chile	3886788	Archipiélago Juan Fernández	-33.6706	-78.8770
Clipperton	France	4020092	Clipperton Island	10.304077	-109.21686
Cocos Island, Costa Rica	Costa Rica	3624182	Isla del Coco	5.5280	-87.0628
Colombia	Colombia	3675570	Isla Malpelo	4.0033	-81.6072
Cordillera de Coiba, Panama	Panama	3712093	Isla de Coiba	7.4661	-81.7884
Dutch Caribbean	Aruba, Curaçao	7729891	Caribbean	12.178583	-69.056663
Emperor Seamount Chain	High Seas	2130876	Emperor Seamounts	42.00024405	169.999938
European Union	Spain, Portugal, Germany, Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden	6255148	Europe	48.6910	9.1406
French Polynesia	France	4030656	French Polynesia	-15	-140
Great Bear Sea, Canada	Canada	6115071	Queen Charlotte Sound	51.4996	-128.5033
Gulf of Guinea	Gabon, Republic of Congo	2363255	Gulf of Guinea	2.0000	2.5000
Indonesia	Indonesia	1643084	Republic of Indonesia	-5.0000	120.0000
Ireland	Ireland	2963597	Ireland	53.0000	-8.0000
Islas Diego Ramirez, Chile	Chile	3892449	Islas Diego Ramirez	-56.4830	-68.7226
Lau Seascape, Fiji	Fiji	4036132	Lau Province	-18.2049	-178.7925
Mariana Trench Marine National Monument	United States	2113272	Mariana Trench	15.18739414	145.753067
Natural Park of the Coral Sea, New Caledonia	France	2139685	New Caledonia	-21.5000	165.6000
Niue	Niue	4036232	Niue	-19.0333	-169.8667
North Atlantic Current & Evlanov Seabasin (NACES MPA)	High Seas	3411923	North Atlantic Ocean	40.0000	-40.0000
Pacific Islands Heritage National Marine Monument	United States	7576242	Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument	16.7200	-169.5030
Palau National Marine Sanctuary	Palau	1559582	Republic of Palau	7.5030	134.6210
Panama's Caribbean	Panama	3715208	Volcan Bank	9.5667	-80.3833
Papahānaumokuākea	United States	7122498	Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument	25.41667	-170.5833
Philippine Rise	Philippines	1880100	Benham Plateau	16.284083	124.055205
Revillagigedo, Mexico	Mexico	3988751	Revillagigedo Islands	18.5784	-112.5075
Ross Sea, Antarctica	High Seas	4036625	Ross Sea	-75.0000	-175.0000
Salas y Gomez & Nazca Ridges	High Seas	3948654	Nazca Ridge	-26	-92
Samoa	Samoa	4034894	Samoa	-12.513586	-172.603252
Seychelles	Seychelles	241170	Republic of Seychelles	-4.5833	55.6667
Solomon Islands	Solomon Islands	2103350	Solomon Islands	-8.0000	159.0000
South Georgia & Sandwich Islands	United Kingdom	3474415	South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands	-56.0000	-33.0000
Tonga	Tonga	4032283	Kingdom of Tonga	-19.313798	-174.732471
Tristan da Cunha	United Kingdom	3370684	Tristan da Cunha	-37.1128	-12.2834

Two Seas, Mexico	Mexico	4016118	Gulf of California	26.7750	-110.5664
Uruguay	Uruguay	3439705	Oriental Republic of Uruguay	-33.0000	-56.0000
Western Indian Ocean	Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Tanzania, South Africa	8426502	Mozambique Channel	-19.0000	41.0000

ANNEX D: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS SCREEN AND RATING

(PIF level) Attach agency safeguard screen form including rating of risk types and overall risk rating.

Title

20260223 Preliminary ESS Screening Report BNA II

ANNEX E: RIO MARKERS

Climate Change Mitigation	Climate Change Adaptation	Biodiversity	Land Degradation
No Contribution 0	Significant Objective 1	Principal Objective 2	No Contribution 0

ANNEX F: TAXONOMY WORKSHEET

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Focal Area/Theme	x Biodiversity		
		X Protected Areas and Landscapes	
			X Productive Seascapes
			Productive Landscapes
			X Coastal and Marine Protected Areas
			X Community Based Natural Resource Management
			Terrestrial Protected Areas
		X Species	
			Livestock Wild Relatives
			X Threatened Species
			Plant Genetic Resources
			X Wildlife for Sustainable Development
			Animal Genetic Resources
			Illegal Wildlife Trade
			Invasive Alien Species (IAS)
			Crop Wild Relatives
		Supplementary Protocol to the CBD	
			Access to Genetic Resources Benefit Sharing
			Biosafety
		X Financial and Accounting	
			X Payment for Ecosystem Services
			X Conservation Finance

			X Conservation Trust Funds
			X Natural Capital Assessment and Accounting
		Mainstreaming	
			Agriculture C agrobiodiversity
			Certification (National Standards)
			Tourism
			Certification (International Standards)
			Infrastructure
			Fisheries
			Extractive Industries (oil, gas, mining)
			Forestry (Including HCVF and REDD+)
		X Biomes	
			X Mangroves
			X Sea Grasses
			Tropical Dry Forests
			Paramo
			Rivers
			Lakes
			X Coral Reefs
			Temperate Forests
			Tropical Rain Forests
			Grasslands
			Wetlands
			Desert
	Forest		
		Forest	
			Amazon
			Congo
			Drylands
		Forest and Landscape Restoration	
			REDD/REDD+
	X International Waters		
		X Fisheries	
		Ship	
		Freshwater	
			Aquifer
			Lake Basin
			River Basin
		Pollution	
			Persistent toxic substances
			Plastics
			Nutrient pollution from wastewater
			Nutrient pollution from all sectors

			except Wastewater
		Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis and Strategic Action Plan Preparation	
		X Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction	
		X Strategic Action Plan Implementation	
		X Coastal	
		X Biomes	
			X Polar Ecosystems
			X Coral Reefs
			X Mangrove
			X Seagrasses
			Constructed Wetlands
		X Marine Protected Area	
		Aquaculture	
		X Learning	
		X SIDS : Small Island Dev States	
		X Large Marine Ecosystems	
	X Climate Change		
		United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change	
			Enabling Activities
			Paris Agreement
			Nationally Determined Contribution
			Capacity Building Initiative for Transparency
		X Climate Change Adaptation	
			Private Sector
			Community-based Adaptation
			Livelihoods
			Disaster Risk Management
			X Least Developed Countries
			Adaptation Tech Transfer
			Sea-level rise
			X Climate information
			National Adaptation Plan
			X Innovation
			Climate Finance
			X Small Island Developing States
			National Adaptation Program of Action
			Ecosystem-based Adaptation
			Complementarity
			X Climate Resilience
			Mainstreaming Adaptation
		Climate Change Mitigation	
			Agriculture, Forestry, and other Land Use
			Sustainable Urban Systems and Transport

			Energy Efficiency
			Technology Transfer
			Renewable Energy
			Financing
	Land Degradation		
		Land Degradation Neutrality	
			Land Cover and Land cover change
			Land Productivity
			Carbon stocks above or below ground
		Sustainable Land Management	
			Ecosystem Approach
			Sustainable Fire Management
			Income Generating Activities
			Sustainable Forest
			Drought Mitigation
			Sustainable Pasture Management
			Integrated and Cross-sectoral approach
			Restoration and Rehabilitation of Degraded Lands
			Improved Soil and Water Management Techniques
			Community-Based Natural Resource Management
			Sustainable Livelihoods
			Sustainable Agriculture
		Food Security	
	Sustainable Development Goals		
	Chemicals and Waste		
		Open Burning	
		Eco-Efficiency	
		Waste Management	
			e-Waste
			Industrial Waste
			Hazardous Waste Management
		Emissions	
		Pesticides	
			DDT - Other
			DDT - Vector Management
		Ozone	
		Persistent Organic Pollutants	
			Polychlorinated Biphenyls
			Unintentional Persistent Organic Pollutants
			New Persistent Organic Pollutants
		Disposal	
		Sound Management of chemicals and Waste	

		Plastics	
		Best Available Technology / Best Environmental Practices	
		Green Chemistry	
		Industrial Emissions	
		Mercury	
			Cement
			Artisanal and Scale Gold Mining
			Coal Fired Power Plants
			Non-Ferrous Metals Production
			Coal Fired Industrial Boilers
Influencing Models			
	X Transform policy and regulatory environments		
	X Deploy innovative financial instruments		
	X Strengthen institutional capacity and decision-making		
	X Convene multi-stakeholder alliances		
	X Demonstrate innovative approaches		
Stakeholders			
	X Private Sector		
		SMEs	
		X Financial intermediaries and market facilitators	
		X Capital providers	
		X Individuals/Entrepreneurs	
		X Large corporations	
		X Non-Grant Pilot	
		X Project Reflow	
	X Type of Engagement		
		X Partnership	
		X Participation	
		Consultation	
		X Information Dissemination	
	X Civil Society		
		X Community Based Organization	
		X Non-Governmental Organization	
		Trade Unions and Workers Unions	
		X Academia	
	X Communications		
		X Awareness Raising	
		X Strategic Communications	
		X Education	
		X Behavior Change	
		X Public Campaigns	
	X Indigenous Peoples		
	X Beneficiaries		
	X Local Communities		

X Gender Equality			
	X Gender Mainstreaming		
		X Women groups	
		X Sex-disaggregated indicators	
		X Gender-sensitive indicators	
		X Beneficiaries	
	X Gender results areas		
		X Capacity development	
		Access and control over natural resources	
		X Awareness raising	
		Access to benefits and services	
		X Participation and leadership	
		X Knowledge generation and exchange	
	Food Security in Sub-Sahara Africa		
		Small and Medium Enterprises	
		Integrated Land and Water Management	
		Diversified Farming	
		Crop Genetic Diversity	
		Gender Dimensions	
		Land and Soil Health	
		Multi-stakeholder Platforms	
		Food Value Chains	
		Resilience to climate and shocks	
		Sustainable Production Systems	
		Agroecosystems	
		Smallholder Farming	
	Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration		
		Integrated Landscapes	
		Sustainable Food Systems	
		Food Value Chains	
		Sustainable Commodity Production	
		Comprehensive Land Use Planning	
		Smallholder Farming	
		Landscape Restoration	
		Deforestation-free Sourcing	
	Sustainable Cities		
		Transport and Mobility	
		Integrated urban planning	
		Green space	
		Urban sustainability framework	
		Buildings	
		Global Platform for Sustainable Cities	
		Urban Food Systems	
		Energy efficiency	
		Urban Resilience	

		Municipal Financing	
		Municipal waste management	
		Urban Biodiversity	
	Commodity Supply Chains		
		Deforestation-free Sourcing	
		Adaptive Management	
		Sustainable Commodities Production	
		High Conservation Value Forests	
		Financial Screening Tools	
		Oil Palm Supply Chain	
		Beef Supply Chain	
		Soybean Supply Chain	
		High Carbon Stocks Forests	
		Smallholder Farmers	
X Capacity, Knowledge and Research			
	X Enabling Activities		
	X Learning		
		X Adaptive Management	
		X Indicators to Measure Change	
		X Theory of Change	
	X Knowledge Generation		
		X Professional Development	
		Master Classes	
		X Training	
		X Workshop	
		X Course	
		X Seminar	
	X Innovation		
	X Capacity Development		
	X Knowledge Exchange		
		X Twinning	
		X Conference	
		X Field Visit	
		Exhibit	
		X Peer-to-Peer	
		North-South	
		South-South	
	X Targeted Research		
Focal Area/Theme			