



# Pacific I2I Regional Project: Ocean Health for Ocean Wealth - The Voyage to a Blue Economy for the Blue Pacific Continent

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

## Basic project information

**GEF ID**

10783

**Countries**

Regional (Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu)

**Project Name**

Pacific I2I Regional Project: Ocean Health for Ocean Wealth - The Voyage to a Blue Economy for the Blue Pacific Continent

**Agencies**

UNEP, ADB

**Date received by PM**

9/30/2022

**Review completed by PM**

11/23/2023

**Program Manager**

Steffen Hansen

**Focal Area**

International Waters

**Project Type**

FSP

**PIF**   
**CEO Endorsement**

**Part I ? Project Information**

**Focal area elements**

**1. Does the project remain aligned with the relevant GEF focal area elements as presented in PIF (as indicated in table A)?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

10/17/22 (ahume): Yes

Agency Response

**Project description summary**

**2. Is the project structure/design appropriate to achieve the expected outcomes and outputs as in Table B and described in the project document?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

10/17/22 (ahume): Partly.

1) Please include in Table B the specific outputs anticipated for each output. For example, under Output 1.2 and 1.3 do not articulate the number of countries. Likewise, the number of countries where pilots will be implemented in Component 2.

11.21.23 (SHansen): Addressed.

2) Please be sure the M&E outputs include the MTR and TE in Table B.

11.21.23 (SHansen): Addressed.

3) It is strongly suggested that M&E have its own component instead of scattered across all four current components.

11.21.23 (SHansen): Addressed.

4) Please also identify all participating countries in Part I, not just "Regional"

11.21.23 (SHansen): Please address the following comment:

12.13.23 (Shansen):

Addressed.

There are some small differences in the amounts when we compare Table B with the budget provided in Annex E. There is a @1 USD difference for component 1, \$2 USD difference on component 2 and \$3 USD difference on component 3. Please review and correct where necessary.

12.13.23 (Shansen):

Addressed.

## Agency Response

### Agency Response to: 10/17/22

- 1) Table B has been revised accordingly to include the number of countries and the names of the countries that will host the national SBE pilot projects (subject to confirmation)..
- 2) A new component, Component 4: Monitoring and Evaluation, has been incorporated into Table B, inclusive of MTR and TE outputs.
- 3) The regional project's M&E activities have been incorporated into a new component entitled 'Monitoring and Evaluation', Component 4.
- 4) All 14 PICs have been included in Part 1.

### Agency Response 12/08/2023

Table B and the Appendix 2a have been reviewed and corrected.

**3. If this is a non-grant instrument, has a reflow calendar been presented in Annex D?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request 10/17/22 (ahume): N/A

## Agency Response

### Co-financing

**4. Are the confirmed expected amounts, sources and types of co-financing adequately documented, with supporting evidence and a description on how the breakdown of co-financing was identified and meets the definition of investment mobilized, and a description of any major changes from PIF, consistent with the requirements of the Co-Financing Policy and Guidelines?**

#### Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

10/17/22 (ahume): No. Please address the following:

1) Please provide a cofinancing letter for ADB that clearly states the amount in Table C for GEF purposes. What was uploaded to portal is a long list of supporting documentation.

11.21.23 (SHansen): Cleared.

2) Please provide a co-financing commitment letter for Niue (\$36.7m).

11.21.23 (SHansen):

During implementation the project should work to mobilize additional co-financing investments from government and non-government sources, including with the development and implementation of the second round of SBE national projects under Component 3.  
Cleared.

3) Overall co-financing decreased from PIF (\$129,576,233) (1:8.64) ratio) down to \$101,220,804 (1:6.75 ratio). From the ~\$90m identified at PIF for country co-financing, \$60m is now listed coming from countries. Out of the 14 countries, only two recipient governments are listed providing co-financing (Cook Islands and Niue). Please consult again with all countries to identify co-financing.

11.21.23 (SHansen): During implementation the project should work to mobilize additional co-financing investments from government and non-government sources, including with the development and implementation of the second round of SBE national projects under Component 3. Cleared.

4) It is further noted there is no co-financing from the three governments now listed as project execution entities (Part I): Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. Please clarify why they are not providing PMC co-financing (or remove them from this executing list if this is an error).

11.21.23 (SHansen): Countries have been removed. Cleared.

5) Please spell out all Acronyms in Table C.

11.21.23 (SHansen): Cleared.

11. 21.23 (Shansen): Please address the below addition comments specific to co-finance:

1. The co-financing letters are dated in Aug-Sept 2022. Please consider including an updated estimation of the actual amount that the Agency (with the help of the co-financier if possible) think will really go to the project considering the timeframe of both the co-finance and the GEF project?.
2. Please submit the letter of co-financing for Palau as cofinancier.
3. In-kind is recurrent expenditures normally. Please revise the investment mobilized to recurrent expenditures where type of co-financing is indicated as in-kind?.

12.13.23 (Shansen): All points addressed.

## Agency Response

### Agency Response to: 10/17/22

1) A new CF letter form ADB has been appended in the portal. ADB co-financing has been increased from \$15 million in the PIF to \$28.5 million.

2) & 3) Despite all the attempts and consultations with the participating countries, it will not be possible to up the co-financing level including from Niue. Niue had over promised at PIF stage. Delivering the pledged co-financing would mean double counting amounts. Consequently, as described in Part II of the CEO ER with respect to the alignment with PI, please note that recipient country co-financing contributions have decreased from approximately \$90 million in the PIF to \$33,559,704 from Cook Islands (\$33,259,704) and Palau (\$300,000). Output 2.1 was modified during the PPG stakeholder consultations. At the PIF stage, at least six national SBE pilot project proposals were forecast under Component 2. However, only four SBE pilot projects were confirmed during the PPG phase including Cook Islands, Marshall Islands, Tonga, and Tuvalu. Other PICs were unable to commit to developing and hosting SBE pilot projects within the timeframe of the PPG phase. Although countries have indicated interest in the project, they have requested additional assistance and time to understand what SBE is and how to develop corresponding pilot projects. In response, Component 3 was revised to provide a clear connection between communication, knowledge sharing, capacity building and the development and growth of SBE in the region, including the development of at least four second round national pilot projects. It is anticipated that additional co-financing investments will be mobilized from government and non-government sources with the development and implementation of the second round of SBE national projects under Component 3. Palau has been identified as a priority for this second round of projects given initial co-financing agreed for development and implementation of an SBE under this project and SBE initiatives occurring at micro-level.

4) Palau and Cook Islands are providing their co-financing in support of Component 2 (Cook Islands & Palau) & 3 (Cook Islands) as well PMC (Cook Islands & Palau) as presented in the CEO document in the road map. The same cannot be shown in the portal due to portal limitations. ADB investments for Marshall Islands, Tonga, and Tuvalu through the Pacific Renewable Energy Investment Facility are to be considered as co-financing for Tonga, RMI and Tuvalu.

5) Acronyms have been spelled out in the footnote of Table C.

#### Agency Response 12/08/2023

1. Co-financing commitments for the Pacific I2I regional project were revisited with the Implementing Agencies (UNEP, ADB), Executing Agency (SPREP), and participating countries following revisions to the 2023 CEO Endorsement Request. Consequently, ADB and Palau provided updated co-financing letters dated Sept-Oct 2023, whereas UNEP, SPREP, and Cook Islands confirmed their original co-financing commitments as identified in co-financing letters dated Aug-Sept 2022. While the CEO Endorsement Request has been delayed one year, building and upscaling a sustainable blue economy remains a priority strategy for the region considering the many and diverse impacts that climate change, habitat degradation, overfishing, pollution, and unsustainable coastal development are having on Pacific Island countries.
2. The co-financing letter from Palau is included in Appendix 3. It is dated September 1, 2023.
3. The co-financing from UNEP and SPREP truly corresponds to in-kind investments mobilized through parallel initiatives which will complement the objective of the project but whose resources will not be managed directly with the GEF grant hence the 'in-kind' labeling as ultimately the project does not have control over the use of such resources. These resources are not recurring expenditures *per se* in the form of recurring staff time. Nothing was changed.

#### GEF Resource Availability

**5. Is the financing presented in Table D adequate and does the project demonstrate a cost-effective approach to meet the project objectives?**

#### Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

10/17/22 (ahume): No. The total GEF Project Financing and GEF Resources are incorrect. Please fix.

11.21.23 (SHansen): Cleared.

#### Agency Response

#### Agency Response to: 10/17/22

1. The Figures in Table D have been validated in the portal.

#### Project Preparation Grant

**6. Is the status and utilization of the PPG reported in Annex C in the document?**

## Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

10/24/22 (ahume): Please address the the following:

(1) Please define all "miscellaneous" costs in a footnote below table.

11.21.23 (SHansen): Annex C has been updated. Cleared.

(2) Provide additional detail on the role of the ADB "consultant"

11.21.23 (SHansen): Annex C has been updated. Cleared.

(3) It is noted there is still a lot committed and not yet spent. Please add as a footnote below the table and explanation for why this is the case.

11.21.23 (SHansen): Annex C has been updated. Cleared.

## Agency Response

**Agency Response to: 10/17/22**

1), 2) and 3) Annex C has been updated and revised accordingly.

## Core indicators

**7. Are there changes/adjustments made in the core indicator targets indicated in Table E? Do they remain realistic?**

## Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

10/17/22 (ahume): Changes have been made to the Core Indicators. Core Indicator 5 was decreased from 71m to 32.5m ha. For Core Indicator 11 (Direct Beneficiaries), the amount was adjusted downward from a 150,000/150,000 male/female split to 5,587/5,084. The rationale provide appears to be a desktop estimate using regional averages instead of based on stakeholder consultations and specific country by country input. Please recalculate based on these details. Further, please demonstrate that the average male/female split used for the calculations of this indicator is aligned with what was reflected in project stakeholder consultations.

11.21.23 (SHansen):

CI 5: Not cleared. Please note that a) in the explanation provided below the Marshall Island, Tonga and Tuvalu are also listed as contributing to CI 5, however, their contributions do not reflect in the portal CI section b) the Cook Island number of 200 M specific to Marae Moana Marine Park seems like a huge blanket number. Please develop a more accurate estimate and

include the methodology applied in the portal Core Indicator section. Note that the combined IW Focal Area CI 5 target for GEF-8 is set at 70 M.

12.13.2023 (SHansen): Cleared.

CI 11: cleared.

For each indicator that was changed, please provide a rationale in the table that describes changes since PIF.

11.21.23 (SHansen): Not cleared. Please provide a rational.

12.13.2023 (SHansen): Cleared.

## Agency Response

### Agency Response to: 10/17/22

As explained below Table F, the Core Indicators were revised to more accurately reflect the realities on the ground including with participating countries under component 2:

- **Core indicator 5:** Area of marine habitat under improved practices to benefit biodiversity Cook Islands Marae Moana Marine Park (approximately 200 million ha.), Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI) (10,000 hectares, given the impact on improved practices on lagoons and near shore to islands); Tonga (20,000 ha - calculated on the assumption that the project improves practices for 25% of marine area within 5km of the Tongatapu coast), and Tuvalu (1,400 ha of the near shore areas on the four targeted Outer Islands).
- **Core indicator 11:** Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender is calculated based on the GEF definition ?Direct beneficiaries are all individuals receiving targeted support from a given project. Targeted support is the intentional and direct assistance of a project to individuals or groups of individuals who are aware that they are receiving that support and/or who use the specific resources?. The calculated number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender is 85,066; 42,278 (49.7%) are female. The calculation is based upon four factors, namely a) the number of direct beneficiaries in the four pilot project countries with due consideration to pilot project location and scope; b) the number of beneficiaries in each country targeted for capacity building and learning events organized by the project (i.e., 100 participants per country); c) the percentage of females in each country; and d) the percentage of females in each country over the age of 15 and targeted for capacity building and learning events organized by the project.
  - o **Cook Islands:** Pilot project (15,300 - Cook Islands population; 49.8% female); Capacity building and learning events: (100; 47% female).
  - o **Marshall Islands:** Pilot project (500 ? population at pilot sites across Majuro and smaller islands; 50% female); Capacity building and learning events: (100; 50% female).
  - o **Tonga:** Pilot project (66,866 - Tongatapu (main island pilot site) population; 49.8% female); Capacity building and learning events: (100; 38% female).
  - o **Tuvalu:** Pilot project (1,000 - Nukufetau, Nukulaelae, Nui, and Vaitupu (outer island pilot sites populations; 50.5% female); Capacity building and learning events: (100; 47% female).
  - o **10 PICs:** Regional capacity building and learning events: (1,000; 48% female).

### Agency Response 12/08/2023



A conservation fund for Marae Moana Marine Park would encompass the management plan for the entire park, some 200 million hectares of ocean area. However, recognizing that the fund would be developed and implemented over time and in parallel to the development and implementation of the Marae Moana Marine Spatial Plan, the SBE pilot project will be focus of the island of Rarotonga, and its estimated 2,694,000 ha. marine conservation area, established under Section 24 of the Marae Moana Act (2017). The areal extent of the marine conservation zone is measured from the Rarotonga coastline out to 50 nautical miles (92.6 km). The assumption is that the project improves management practices for 25% of the marine conservation area or 673,460 ha.

The population of Rarotonga is 10,900, or 75% of the population of Cook Islands. Core Indicator 5 and Core Indicator 11 have been modified accordingly in the document, inclusive of Marshall Islands, Tonga, and Tuvalu.

## **Part II ? Project Justification**

**1. Is there a sufficient elaboration on how the global environmental/adaptation problems, including the root causes and barriers, are going to be addressed?**

### Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

10/17/22 (ahume): No. As mentioned elsewhere in the review, the global problems, root causes and barriers need to be revised for closer alignment with existing national baselines and closer alignment with transboundary issues associated with Western Pacific Warm Pool SAP.

11.21.23 (SHansen): Not cleared. Please include reference to alignment with transboundary issues associated with Western Pacific Warm Pool SAP.

12.13.2023 (SHansen): Cleared.

### Agency Response

**Agency Response to: 10/17/22**

Part II. Project Justification has been revised/rewritten accordingly.

**Agency Response 12/08/2023**

Section 1.a.2 Regional Ocean context and environmental problems has been modified to include the following statement: ?The Pacific Islands region faces the same challenges for blue economy development as other regions of the West Pacific Warm Pool. As Small Island Developing States (SIDS) surrounded by the world?s largest ocean, the significance of coastal and marine resources and the importance of ocean health is much greater for Pacific Island peoples than for most of the rest of the world, specifically regarding natural disasters and climate change, degradation of marine and coastal resources and ecosystems, overexploitation of ocean and coastal fisheries, and pollution. The priority issues of the Pacific Islands region are directly aligned with transboundary priorities of the Western Pacific Warm Pool Strategic Action Plan.?

**2. Is there an elaboration on how the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects were derived?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

10/17/22 (ahume): No.

1) Please articulate the specific blue economy baseline(s) work in each country with respect to proposed project activities. The information in Table 2 is very general information on SDG 14 progress (and appears outdated). The Country Information Sheets, while helpful, are an exhaustive overview. The project baseline should reflect the specific initiatives and organizations that are resulting in project co-financing.

11.21.23 (SHansen): Not cleared. Please note that appendix 6 looks partly incomplete - this appendix should be fully updated as part of project inception phase. For table 2 and 3, please indicate in yellow text the information included specific to regional baseline activities (table 2) and ongoing/planned projects in countries that contribute to SBE transformation (table 3). Currently it is not clear where this text has been added.

12.13.23 (SHansen): Cleared.

2) Please also add an explanation of the specific regional baseline activities supporting the health of the ocean ecosystems of the Western Pacific Warm Pool.

11.21.23 (SHansen): cleared.

Agency Response

**Agency Response to: 10/17/22**

1) The regional and national baseline scenarios have been revised. Table 2 has been revised to include regional baseline activities that are ongoing/planned that contribute to SBE transformation. Likewise, Table 3 identifies ongoing or planned projects in countries that contribute to SBE transformation.

2) An explanation has been provided, primarily emphasizing the improvement in regional ocean governance over the years since the SAP was adopted.

**Agency Response 12/08/2023**

In the section entitled, Coordination with other projects/initiatives, the document identifies 7 ongoing and planned projects at the regional level that have relevant links to the Pacific I2I SBE targets outputs and activities (e.g., climate change, renewable energy, marine conservation, pollution reduction). In addition, the document cites 6 projects being implemented in Cooks Islands, Marshall Islands, Tonga, and Tuvalu. These initiatives are further detailed in Appendix 6.

As an example, the document (Project Components, Outcomes and Outputs: Outcome 1) highlights the collaboration with the LDCF-supported project entitled Blue Pacific Finance Hub (BPFH): Investing in Resilient Pacific SIDS Ecosystems and Economies (GEF Project ID 10986), implemented by ADB. The BPFH Outcome 1 is focused on strengthening capacity and governance to finance sustainable, resilient blue economies in Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Timor Leste, and Tuvalu. The Pacific I2I Outcome 3 will build on the economic and financing analyses and mechanisms developed in the BPFH project to develop, promote, and leverage investments in upscaling the blue economies of participating countries.

At the national level, the section identifies 6 project initiatives that are closely linked to the SBE pilot projects in the four countries, covering protected area management (Cook Islands) and climate change adaptation, food security, and renewable energy (Marshall Islands, Tonga, and Tuvalu). Information from these projects will contribute to the planning and implementation of the respective pilots.

Table 2 and 3 are new tables that were prepared during the one-year project extension for the October 2023 submission. Information has been integrated into each table to highlight the regional baseline linkages (Table 2) and contributions to SBE transformation (Table 3).

**3. Is the proposed alternative scenario as described in PIF/PFD sound and adequate? Is there sufficient clarity on the expected outcomes and components of the project and a description on the project is aiming to achieve them?**

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

10/17/22 (ahume): No, please see comments for Table B. Further, for the portal upload, please revise the Table 3 so it fits within the margins.

11.21.23 (SHansen): Table B comments have been addressed. Cleared.

Agency Response

**Agency Response to: 10/17/22**

Table B has been revised and the alternative scenario has been rewritten to conform with revisions in Table B.

All tables fit within the margins.

**4. Is there further elaboration on how the project is aligned with focal area/impact program strategies?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

10/17/22 (ahume): Yes.

Agency Response

**5. Is the incremental reasoning, contribution from the baseline, and co-financing clearly elaborated?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

10/17/22 (ahume): No. As mentioned above, it is unclear how the proposed project activities are leveraging existing/planned baseline initiatives, especially at the country level. This is also evident by the lack of country-level co-financing identified for most countries. Please provide (in a new table is fine) the specific baseline efforts the project is leveraging at the regional and country level. Ideally this also leads to the identification of additional country level co-financing.

11.21.23 (SHansen): Not cleared.

A) please in the agency response indicate **if a new table containing specific baseline efforts at the regional and country level has been produced and uploaded?** GEF notes that the institutional arrangement section includes a good overview of ongoing/planned initiatives.

12.13.23 (SHansen): Cleared.

Agency Response

**Agency Response to: 10/17/22**

Section 5 has been rewritten.

**Agency Response 12/08/2023**

As noted previously, Table 2 and 3 are new tables that were prepared during the one-year project extension for the that October submission. A column has been added to each table to highlight the regional baseline linkages (Table 2) and contributions to SBE transformation (Table 3). These are further elaborated on in the section entitled, Coordination with other projects/initiatives. In that section the document identifies 7 of the ongoing and planned projects at the regional level that have relevant links to the Pacific I2I SBE targets outputs and activities (e.g., climate change, renewable energy, marine conservation, pollution reduction). In addition, the section identifies 6 country projects in Cooks Islands, Marshall Islands, Tonga, and Tuvalu that will provide important input to the four SBE pilot projects.

**6. Is there further and better elaboration on the project's expected contribution to global environmental benefits or adaptation benefits?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

10/17/22 (ahume): No. Please update this section to present a coherent narrative that includes the actual values for each Core Indicator identified by the project.

11.21.23 (SHansen): Please revise this section based on the new CI 5 target.

12.13.23 (SHansen): Cleared.

Agency Response

**Agency Response to: 10/17/22**

Section 6 has been rewritten.

**Agency Response 12/08/2023**

Section 6 has been revised in accordance with the changes to CI 5 and CI 11.

**7. Is there further and better elaboration to show that the project is innovative and sustainable including the potential for scaling up?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

10/17/22 (ahume): Yes.

Agency Response

**Project Map and Coordinates**

**Is there an accurate and confirmed geo-referenced information where the project intervention will take place?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

10/17/22 (ahume): Yes, general country-level information is provided. Please aim to provide specific pilot selection geo-reference detail for SBE pilots and MPA/MSP activities during project implementation as they become available.

Agency Response

**Agency Response to: 10/17/22**

Specific geo-reference details for SBE pilots have been provided in section 1b.

**Child Project**

**If this is a child project, is there an adequate reflection of how it contributes to the overall program impact?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

10/17/22 (ahume): N/A

## Agency Response

### Stakeholders

**Does the project include detailed report on stakeholders engaged during the design phase? Is there an adequate stakeholder engagement plan or equivalent documentation for the implementation phase, with information on Stakeholders who will be engaged, the means of engagement, and dissemination of information?**

#### Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

10/17/22 (ahume): No, a detailed report on stakeholders engaged during the design phase was not provided. Please insert a list of stakeholders consulted during full project design.

11.21.23 (SHansen):

Not addressed. Please address below comments:

A) The agency has not fulfilled guidance set forth in the Guidelines to implement GEF Policy on Stakeholder engagement. It references consultation with "affected" stakeholders, but does not really consider the meaningful participation, and the consultations/engagement necessary to seek their inputs and feedback on the approach and design of the project. The project provides a draft Stakeholder Engagement Plan which only provides information on expected roles and responsibilities of broad stakeholder groups to be validated during project implementation. Considering the limited engagement and consultation with important CSOs and local community groups in the project development, this project should provide a more detailed plan

and timeline to ensure that their interests and contributions to project are adequately taken into consideration in project implementation.

B) In table 4 please include dates specific to each stakeholder consultation.

**12.13.23 (SHansen): All comments cleared.**

#### Agency Response

**Agency Response to: 10/17/22**

The Stakeholder section 2 has been revised to integrate the work of UNEP/SPREP and ADB. Table 4 has been inserted into this section. It identifies the various interactions with countries and other organizations from PIF to completion of the CER. Information has been incorporated into Appendix 9b.

**Agency Response 12/08/2023**

A) It would be an academic exercise to develop a more detailed Stakeholder Engagement Plan at this point in time. Consultations with CSOs and other concerned non-government organizations have not been comprehensive at the national and local level for reasons stated in the document.

Alternatively, it is proposed that the draft Stakeholder Engagement Plan be further developed during the Project Inception Phase and submitted to the Project Inception Workshop for review and approval. During the 6-month inception phase, focused consultations will be scheduled to better define the stakeholders, their roles, capacities, and information needs. Furthermore, Outcome 1 of the project will provide a detailed stakeholder analysis, capacity needs assessment and gender analysis for each country, which can then be incorporated into the Stakeholder Engagement Plan as part of an annual review, assessment, and update during the Project Implementation Review (PIR) process.

B) Consultation dates are included in Table 4

#### **Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment**

**Has the gender analysis been completed? Did the gender analysis identify any gender differences, gaps or opportunities linked to project/program objectives and activities? If so, does the project/program include gender-responsive activities, gender-sensitive indicators and expected results?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

10/17/22 (ahume): Partly. The gender analysis in the CEO End and appendix provide a sufficient background for production of a Gender Action Plan. However, there are no mentions of gender equality or women's empowerment activities in the alternative scenario or Table B. Please revise accordingly. Please also ensure the Gender Action Plan integrates the UNEP and ADB plans specific to this project for a cohesive project plan so all project partners are informed and supportive.

11.21.23 (SHansen): The project results framework has been updated to include relevant gender elements. However, please address the below additional comment:

Please ensure engagement of women's groups and incorporation/reflection of gender perspectives in Outputs 2.2, 3.1.

12.13.23 (SHansen): Cleared.

#### Agency Response

**Agency Response to: 10/17/22**

Table B has been revised to include women empowerment and gender equality. Activities have been incorporated into all components of the alternative scenario to ensure gender balance.

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment section has been rewritten to integrate UNEP / SPREP and ADB efforts on gender equality.

**Agency Response 12/08/2023**

Output 2.2 has been modified as follows: Four SBE pilot projects set up and implemented in partnership with key partners from government and non-government sectors, including local communities and women's organizations.

Output 3.1 has been modified as follows: Knowledge Management and Communication Strategy developed and executed, raising awareness, and transferring core skills and enabling conditions to Pacific I2I project stakeholders, inclusive of governments, communities, women's organizations, and the private sector.

Existing activities, indicators, and targets identified for Outputs 2.2 and 3.1 incorporate/reflect the relevance of women's organizations and gender perspectives.

#### **Private Sector Engagement**

**If there is a private sector engagement, is there an elaboration of its role as a financier and/or as a stakeholder?**



### Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

10/17/22 (ahume): Yes, but it would be helpful if additional detail is provided on the specific sectors that are planned to be invited (such as in Component 1). Does this include specific organizations, industry platforms, and will this be national or regional?

11.21.23 (SHansen): Cleared. During inception, please consider to collect more detailed information for integrated into an updated stakeholder engagement strategy.

### Agency Response

#### Agency Response to: 10/17/22

Table 12 has been inserted into the section to identify 'potential' opportunities for private sector in each of the pilot projects, covering investment, management, and technical operations matters.

#### Risks to Achieving Project Objectives

**Has the project elaborated on indicated risks, including climate change, potential social and environmental risks that might prevent the project objectives from being achieved? Were there proposed measures that address these risks at the time of project implementation?**

### Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

10/17/22 (ahume): No. There is no coordinated presentation of the project's risks, only a presentation of two general independent Agency risk systems. Please integrate this. Because of the two Implementing Agencies, articulate which organization is responsible for each risk in the risk matrix in the CEO End - either in the mitigation measure or as a new column. The current Risk Table says it is presented for both agencies, so it is unclear who is responsible for what. If UNEP, as lead IA, is responsible for all risks, then state this at the top of the section in the CEO End.

11.21.23 (SHansen): Cleared.

The Risk Management Plan (Appendix 12a) is empty of content and appears to just be a template. Why is none of the specific risks from the Risk Matrix not already included in here? For Appendix 12b, the sheet says it is only for FSM. What about the other countries? There is also no reference to this Appendix 12b in the CEO End text. What is its function and what agency is responsible for using it?

11.21.23 (SHansen): Cleared.

## Agency Response

**Agency Response to: 10/17/22**

Table 12 has been revised to include an independent risk assessment for the project.

The text for this section has been revised to specify that UNEP / SPREP has overall responsibility for risk assessment and risk mitigation, whereas ADB is responsible for the 3 pilot projects.

Appendix 12a is a Risk Management Plan for the project. Appendix 12b provides comprehensive risk summary for the project.

Appendix 12b has now been referenced in the CER narrative.

### **Coordination**

**Is the institutional arrangement for project implementation fully described? Is there an elaboration on possible coordination with relevant GEF-financed projects and other bilateral/multilateral initiatives in the project area?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

10/17/22 (ahume): No. The institutional arrangement needs improvement. It is unclear why Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu are identified in the Project Executing Entities section (Part I - Project Information). These countries are not identified in the institutional arrangement sections. Please clarify their role in GEF project execution or remove them from this section.

Further, Appendix 7 states, "The PEA / RPCU will report on technical and financial progress of the Project quarterly to UNEP or as per an agreed-to schedule with the IAs." Please clarify if/how ADB will be advised on more frequent project implementation outside of the Project Steering Committee.

Please also clarify how the ADB Implementation Arrangements for sub-projects intersect with the GEF project. The illustrative figure (also Figure 4 in CEO End.) suggests there is no interaction among the projects.

Also, please note in Figure 5 on project organizational structure, the reporting goes to the GEF Secretariat, not "GEF Secretariat IW"

Lastly, elaboration on the planned coordination with other relevant GEF-financed projects and other initiatives in these countries is missing. Please identify and articulate coordination with these other GEF projects and other key investments.

11.21.23 (SHansen): It seems in the resubmission Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu have been removed from the Project Executing Entities section (Part I - Project Information). GEF also

notes that an **Interagency Coordinating Committee** will be established to secure due coordination across the two IA.

12.13.23 (SHansen): Further to the above, the lead agency has confirmed that ADB will not perform any executing functions.

#### Agency Response

**Agency Response to: 10/17/22**

Section 6 and appendix 7 have been amended to address/clarify all points

**Agency Response 12/08/2023**

Indeed, **while not yet selected**, in close collaboration with the concerned government agencies, ADB will be responsible for procurement, contracting and recruitment related to planning, implementation, and reporting the progress and results of national SBE pilot projects in Marshall Islands, Tonga, and Tuvalu (Component 2), in line with ADB policy and procedures and GEF reporting requirements and schedules (see Section 9, Monitoring and Evaluation).

#### Consistency with National Priorities

**Has the project described the alignment of the project with identified national strategies and plans or reports and assessments under the relevant conventions?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

10/17/22 (ahume): Yes, but please adjust Table 15 in the portal to be within margins.

11.21.23 (SHansen): Cleared.

#### Agency Response

**Agency Response to: 10/17/22**

The document has been adjusted and all tables are within margins.

**Knowledge Management**

**Is the proposed Knowledge Management Approach for the project adequately elaborated with a timeline and a set of deliverables?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

10/17/22 (ahume): No. KM is a major focus of Component 3, including participating in IW:LEARN. However, it would be helpful if these activities are summarized in a table with budget, key deliverables, and anticipated timeline for KM activities. Please also remove references to IW:LEARN 1% as a "fee".

11.21.23 (SHansen): not addressed. The agency is requested to indicate in the KM&L section that "at least 1% of budget has been allocated to support IW:Learn activities" without using the word "fee" as was also mentioned by the PM.

12.13.23 (SHansen): Cleared.

Agency Response

**Agency Response to: 10/17/22**

Table 8 has been inserted into the section on Knowledge Management and includes budget allocations for each of the identified activities / events.

Reference to a 1% fee has been deleted.

**Agency Response 12/08/2023**

The following sentence has been added to the Knowledge Management section: At least 1% of the project budget has been allocated to support project input to and participation in IWLEARN activities.

Table 8 indicates that a budget \$140,000 has been earmarked for project participation in IW Learn activities.

**Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS)**

**Are environmental and social risks, impacts and management measures adequately documented at this stage and consistent with requirements set out in SD/PL/03?**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

?10/17/22 (ahume): In the CEO End, the ADB safeguard process is documented, but there appears to be no information from UNEP. However, Appendix 8 includes as UNEP safeguards sheet (SRIF) and no reference to ADB. Please present a coherent ESS plan for the project.

Further, the project states, "It is envisaged that all sub-projects will be category C for IP safeguards". But the Table 13 (adb Sub-project safeguards) states several instances of B category. What is the categorization of the project and which agency is responsible?

Please clarify in the CEO End how each organization's safeguards apply to the project and how necessary mitigation measures will be coordinated throughout implementation.

11.21.23 (SHansen): All above comments cleared.

## Agency Response

### Agency Response to: 10/17/22

Section 11 has been included in the CER, entitled Environmental and Social Safeguards.

UNEP and ADB roles in ESS have been incorporated into the narrative.

Appendix 8 has been revised to serve as the ESMP for the entire project, with Annex 3 identifying ADB's additional ESS requirements for the 3 pilot sites.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

**Does the project include a budgeted M&E Plan that monitors and measures results with indicators and targets?**

### Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

10/17/22 (ahume): No. As mentioned above, it is strongly recommended that M&E have its own component. One of the outputs for this M&E component should include the MTE and TE. Further, the M&E Plan (Appendix 13) is an informational guide that refers to the Results Framework (Annex A), the table in the CEO End is a mixture of specific numbers and vague references, and the overall project budget only includes a few specific items separated out that does not match the other tables. It is also unclear what M&E is for the project and what is entirely separate for the ADB sub-projects. For example, what is the \$481,445 budgeted Activity 2.3.1? And how does this relate to the \$440,000 for "Data collection, processing and data management". Please provide a budgeted M&E plan that is consistent across these sections and cleanly presented as a separate component.

11.21.23 (SHansen): Not cleared. The table B has been updated to include a dedicated M&E component. Please note the CEO Endorsement portal submission states that "appendix 13 includes the initial design of the monitoring system", however the appendix 13 appears to be a list of consultancies and subcontracts. Please advise where the M&E plan can be found (?) and amend the CEO portal text as needed.

12.13.23 (SHansen):

Cleared.

### Agency Response

**Agency Response to: 10/17/22**

A separate M& E component has been included in Component 4.

Further action is required to prepare an M&E plan and budget (Appendix 13). The M&E process currently identified in Appendix 13 will be shifted to Appendix 13b.

**Agency Response 12/08/2023**

This was a typo. After finalization of the resubmission, appendix numbers were adjusted. There is no M&E appendix per se, the M&E process is described under Component 4.

### Benefits

**Are the socioeconomic benefits at the national and local levels sufficiently described resulting from the project? Is there an elaboration on how these benefits translate in supporting the achievement of GEBs or adaptation benefits?**

### Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

10/17/22 (ahume): No. The section is too general and lacks national context. Please revise.

11.21.23 (SHansen): Cleared.

### Agency Response

**Agency Response to: 10/17/22**

The section has been revised accordingly.

### Annexes

**Are all the required annexes attached and adequately responded to?**

## Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

The following annexes were missing in the portal. Please upload.

Annex B: Response to Project Reviews - especially Agency response to Council comments from Germany, Denmark, and United States Council members.

11.21.23 (SHansen): Not cleared.

1. On Germany comment: please amend text to specify that all relevant information can be found in annex 9A and 9B.

2. On Norway/Denmark comment:

A) Please in the portal submission and PRODOC include direct reference in the text to anticipated coordination with the GEF SIDS project in the Caribbean.

B) The agency response references Outcome 5, however, its seems outcome 5 under this project has been removed. Also, please revise the agency response to clearly indicate how coordination with PROFISH multi-donor trust fund is happening under this project?

3. United States comment:

Please answer the United States comment listed below. In the response, please be clear on plans and anticipated actions to secure involvement of local communities in pilot activities.

"The proposal is insufficiently clear regarding how additional consultations will be undertaken with local communities, CSOs, the private sector, academia, and other organizations given current travel restrictions and the on-going impact of COVID-19. These engagements are critical for project success. "

4. STAP: Please revise the agency text to include mentioning of the appendix 9, while explaining how the stakeholders? roles, and how their combined roles contribute to robust project design, to achieving global environmental outcomes, have been analyzed during PPG?

12.13.23 (SHansen): Cleared. Considering the challenges faced by this project, and subsequent limited engagement with stakeholders at the local level during PPG, it will be strongly expected that the project further develop the Stakeholder Engagement Plan during the Project Inception Phase and for submission to the Project Inception Workshop for review and approval. GEF notes that a process is in place to secure engagement of relevant stakeholders prior to pilot implementation.

Annex F: GEF 7 Core Indicator Worksheet

11.21.23 (SHansen): Not cleared. Please update the worksheet to include the updated CI 5 targets.

12.13.23 (SHansen): Cleared.

#### Annex G: GEF Project Taxonomy Worksheet

11.21.23 (SHansen): Cleared.

Budget: Please revise "other" rows to specifically identify costs. There is currently \$267,380 budgeted towards other operating costs. Please also revise budget to include M&E as a new component.

11.21.23 (SHansen): Not cleared. The budget "operating and other costs" section still includes \$253,432 under "other". 12.13.23 (SHansen): Cleared. Further, please address the following additional budget related comments:

1. Please paste a budget table that is readable ? in the meantime, please see the below observations:
2. Please include a column stipulating the responsible entity receiving funds to execute each activity.
3. Project Manager is being charged across components and PMC. Per Guidelines, the costs associated with the project's execution have to be covered by the GEF portion and the co-financing portion allocated to PMC. This project allocated nearly 3.2 million from co-financing to PMC and includes nearly 39 million in investment mobilized. Please revise.
4. A line for Consultants & Experts (UNEP) is being charged across components for an amount of \$ 1,758,914. Salaries and fees for GEF Agency staff or consultants are ineligible activities except when they are approved by the GEF Secretariat to carry out executing functions and requested/supported by the OFP. Please remove these expenditures and reallocated these funds among eligible expenditures.
5. In-country costs is not an eligible category ? please provide information on what grants out to end beneficiaries entail.

12.13.2023 (SHansen): All comments cleared.

#### Agency Response



## Agency Response to: 10/17/22

All Annexes and Appendices were uploaded and dated accordingly.

## Agency Response 12/08/2023

Annex B has been revised in response to comments from Germany, Norway, United States and STAP.

Annex F has been revised to include updated CI5 and CI 11 targets.

?Other costs? budget of \$267,380 has been reallocated.

1. The readability of the budget table is constrained by the portal layout limitations. The table is sizeable but the complete file is in the road map.

2. The budget tables follow the IA format. We do not usually add partners as the final selection is subject to the procurement process by the executing agency. Pre-selection is not allowed.

3. As described in Appendix 13, the Project Manager serves two main functions, namely project manager and administrator for the project execution and technical advisor and coordinator for the planning, implementation, monitoring, and assessment of the project, including guiding and overseeing the work of the international and national consultants. These two functions of the project manager are essential for the cost-efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the project's operation. Appendix 13 describes and details the breakdown of the PM's time allocations for project execution and technical duties.

The co-financing PMC has been revised to \$1,828,460, which represents 5% of the committed investment co-financing (\$38,397,650). The investment co-financing will be managed by ADB (\$28,500,000) and Cook Islands (\$9,897,650) and the PMC (5%) has been allocated respectively.

4. The qualification in bracket was used to clarify that the budget allocation was being directed to UNEP to procure the services of international consultants and experts.

To avoid further confusion, the UNEP qualification has been removed from the budget line.

5. In country costs have been reprofiled to ?Meeting Costs? in the revised budget, Appendix 2a.

In Appendix 2a, the budget allocation under BL ?Grants out to beneficiaries? has been reprofiled to BL ?Contract Services?, with a budget allocation for Cooks Islands (\$1,395,982) and budget allocation for Pilot Project Upscaling - 4 pilot sites (\$2,791,968).

## Project Results Framework

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

10/17/22 (ahume): In Annex A (RF), all the indicators and baseline information is qualitative and far too much text. Can this not be quantified and the text moved to a "note/comment" section?

Also, the output level tracking in each component does not seem to map back to the overall GEF Core Indicators, even though they are presented as being linked to the specific outputs. It would seem these indicators should be consistent or track sub-level info that can roll up into the GEF Core indicators. For example, it is unclear how the indicator for Output 2.1 (Scoping and evaluation of SBE..." feed into GEF Core Indicator 5?

Please also adjust the margins for the RF in the portal upload.

11.21.23 (SHansen): Cleared.

#### Agency Response

**Agency Response to: 10/17/22**

The RF has been refined accordingly and margins fixed in portal

#### GEF Secretariat comments

#### Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

10/24/22 (ahume): Please provide in a response matrix that explains how the project addressed GEF Secretariat Comments at PIF stage that were flagged to be addressed by CEO Endorsement.

11.21.23 (SHansen): not cleared. The agency responses to GEF SEC comments appear to be dated 28 April 2021. To the extent that there were GEF SEC comments to be addressed by CEO Endorsement stage then please detail how these comments were addressed during PPG.

12.13.2023 (SHansen): Cleared.

#### Agency Response

**Agency Response to: 10/17/22**

Annex B has been adjusted accordingly.

**Agency Response 12/08/2023**

Annex B was amended accordingly.

#### **Council comments**

##### Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

10/24/22 (ahume): Please provide in a response matrix that explains how the project has addressed GEF Council comments by CEO Endorsement.

11.21.23 (SHansen): Please see prior comment on GEF council comments.

12.13.2023 (SHansen): cleared.

##### Agency Response

**Agency Response to: 10/17/22**

Annex B has been adjusted accordingly.

**Agency Response 12/08/2023**

Annex B was amended accordingly.

#### **STAP comments**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request 10/24/22 (ahume): No STAP comments for CEO Endorsement

##### Agency Response

**Convention Secretariat comments**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request 10/24/22 (ahume): No Convention comments for CEO Endorsement

##### Agency Response

**Other Agencies comments**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request 10/24/22 (ahume): No Agency comments for CEO Endorsement

## Agency Response

### CSOs comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request 10/24/22 (ahume): No CSO comments for CEO Endorsement

## Agency Response

### Status of PPG utilization

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

10/24/22 (ahume): As noted above, please address the the following:

- (1) Please define all "miscellaneous" costs in a footnote below table.
- (2) Provide additional detail on the role of the ADB "consultant"
- (3) It is noted there is still a lot committed and not yet spent. Please add as a footnote below the table and explanation for why this is the case.

11.21.23 (SHansen): Please address the below comment:

Status of utilization of PPG: (i) Agency personnel is not an eligible category to be covered by GEF funds ? these funds have to be returned to the Trustee; (ii) the sum of amount spent + amount committed does not equal the budgeted amount ? please revise.

12.13.2023 (SHansen): Cleared.

## Agency Response

### Agency Response to: 10/17/22

Annex C has been adjusted accordingly.

### Agency Response 12/08/2023

Agency personnel are not being charged to the PPG resources. The "ADB" qualification indicates the portion of the PPG that was allocated to ADB versus the portion allocated to UNEP, and the amount of funding that has been committed and utilized to date.

The Annex C table has been revised to remove these qualifications.

All contracts were issued to international and national consultants in accordance with the procurement rules of ADB and SPREP.

The Annex C table provides a summary of the amount of grant committed (\$255,831), the amount spent to date (\$237,722.09), and the amount committed but not dispersed (payments pending final review of CEO Endorsement Request \$18,108.91). The Table indicates that \$44,169 of the \$300,000 grant was not yet committed during the PPG phase, of which \$20,569 was apportioned to ADB and \$23,600 was apportioned to UNEP.

**Project maps and coordinates**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request 10/24/22 (ahume): Yes.

Agency Response

**Does the termsheet in Annex F provide finalized financial terms and conditions? Does the termsheet and financial structure address concerns raised at PIF stage and that were pending to be resolved ahead of CEO endorsement? (For NGI Only)**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

10/17/22 (ahume): N/A

Agency Response

**Do the Reflow Table Annex G and the Trustee Excel Sheet for reflows provide accurate reflow expectations of the project submitted? Assumptions for Reflows can be submitted to explain expected reflows. (For NGI Only)**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request 10/17/22 (ahume): N/A

Agency Response

**Did the agency Annex H provided with information to assess the Agency Capacity to generate and manage reflows? (For NGI Only)**

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request 10/17/22 (ahume): N/A

Agency Response

**GEFSEC DECISION**

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Is CEO endorsement recommended? (applies only to projects and child projects)**

**Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request**

?10/25/22 (ahume): No. This project requires substantial revisions. Please revise based on initial comments

11/21/23 (SHansen): Please address comments and resubmit.

12.13.2023 (SHansen): Recommended by PM for CEO Endorsement.

**Review Dates**

	<b>Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement</b>	<b>Response to Secretariat comments</b>
<b>First Review</b>		<b>11/17/2023</b>
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>		
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>		
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>		
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>		

**CEO Recommendation**

**Brief reasoning for CEO Recommendations**