

Beyond 30x30: Securing resilience in the Eastern Tropical Pacific through enhanced transboundary cooperation

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

11267

Countries

Regional (Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Panama)

Project Name

Beyond 30x30: Securing resilience in the Eastern Tropical Pacific through enhanced transboundary cooperation

Agencies

CI

Date received by PM

6/27/2024

Review completed by PM

1/16/2025

Program Manager

Andrew Hume

Focal Area

International Waters

Project Type

FSP

**PIF
CEO**

Part I - General Project Information

1. a) Is the Project Information table correctly filled, including specifying adequate executing partners?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

July 24 2024 (AH): Yes

Agency Response

b) Are the Rio Markers for CCM, CCA, BD and LD correctly selected, if applicable?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

July 24 2024 (AH): Yes

Agency Response

2. Project Summary.

a) Does the project summary concisely describe the problem to be addressed, the project objective and the strategies to deliver the GEBs or adaptation benefits and other key expected outcomes?

b) Does the summary capture the essence of the project and is it within the max. of 250 words?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request July 24 2024 (AH): Yes

Agency Response

3. Project Description Overview

a) Is the project objective statement concise, clear and measurable?

b) Are the components, outcomes, and outputs sound, appropriate and sufficiently clear to achieve the project objective and the core indicators per the stated Theory of Change?

c) Are gender dimensions, knowledge management, and M&E included within the project components and budgeted for?

- d) Are the GEF Project Financing and Co-Financing contributions to PMC proportional?
e) Is the PMC equal to or below 10% (for MSP) or 5% (for FSP)? If above, is the justification acceptable?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

July 24 2024 (AH): Yes. The project financing and PMC are at acceptable levels. Comments on project components are in Review Question 5 below.

Agency Response

4. Project Outline

A. Project Rationale

- a) Is the current situation (including global environmental problems, key drivers of environmental degradation, climate vulnerability) clearly and adequately described from a systems perspective and adequately addressed by the project design?
b) Have the role of stakeholders, incl. the private sector and local actors in the system been described and how they will contribute to GEBs and/or adaptation benefits and other project outcomes? Is the private sector seen mainly as a stakeholder or as financier?
c) If this is an NGI project, is there a description of how the project and its financial structure are addressing financial barriers?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

July 24 2024 (AH): The project outline is well presented but is lacking a clear presentation on the roles of key stakeholder groups, especially identification of specific private sector and CSOs. Please add a table that outlines the specific key stakeholders (not just general categories) that will be engaged in the project and their role.

6 October 2024 (AH): Addressed.

Agency Response

CI-GEF 9/19/2024:

The table with the key stakeholder description and roles, including private sector and CSOs has been included in Section B. Project Description - Stakeholders. The table outlines the specific key stakeholders (per general categories) that will be engaged in the project and their role. See section B. PROJECT DESCRIPTION ?*Stakeholders by type and role in the project.*?

In addition, the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) has been updated and contains a clear presentation of stakeholder groups, including specific stakeholders under each group, as well as their roles (please see SECTION III: Stakeholder Analysis in the SEP). The document has also been updated to include additional private sector stakeholders. The new version of the SEP is the Annexes.

5 B. Project Description

5.1 a) Is there a concise theory of change (narrative and an optional schematic) that describes the project logic, including how the project design elements are contributing to the objective, the identified causal pathways, the focus and basis (including scientific) of the proposed solutions, how they provide a robust approach? Are underlying key assumptions listed?

b) Is there a description of how the GEF alternative will build on ongoing/previous investments (GEF and non-GEF), lessons and experiences in the country/region?

c) Are the project components (interventions and activities) described and proposed solutions and critical assumptions and risks properly justified? Is there an indication of why the project approach has been selected over other potential options?

d) Incremental/additional cost reasoning: Is the incremental/additional cost reasoning properly described as per the Guidelines provided in GEF/C.31/12? Has the baseline scenario and/or associated baseline projects been described? Is the project incremental reasoning provisioned (including the role of the GEF)? Are the global environmental benefits and/or adaptation benefits identified?

e) Other Benefits: Are the socioeconomic benefits resulting from the project at the national and local levels sufficiently described?

f) Is the financing presented in the annexed financing table adequate and demonstrate a cost-effective approach to meet the project objectives? Are items charged to the PMC reasonable according to the GEF guidelines?

g) How does the project design ensure resilience to future changes in the drivers and adaptive management needs and options (as applicable for this FSP/MSP)?

h) Are the relevant stakeholders (including women, private sector, CSO, e.g.) and their roles adequately described within the components?

i) Gender: Does the gender analysis identify any gender differences, gaps or opportunities linked to project/program objectives and activities and have these been taken up in component design and description/s?

j) Are the proposed elements to capture and disseminate knowledge and learning outputs and strategic communication adequately described?

k) Policy Coherence: Have any policies, regulations or subsidies been identified that could counteract the intended project outcomes and how will that be addressed?

l) Transformation and/or innovation: Is the project going to be transformative or innovative? Does it explain scaling up opportunities?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

July 24 2024 (AH):

Overall, for most project components the specific activities listed under most each output need to be revised to much better explain what exactly will be done. The outputs should themselves also be closely inspected to ensure they are a measurable output and not a outcome. Please find additional comments per component as follows:

1. Component 1: The component does not appear to have a direct role in facilitating the discussions to ensure CMAR reaches consensus on a legally binding mechanism or advances formal decision making and consultation mechanisms that strengthen its governance. While the project is not requiring an Agreement per se as a project deliverable, the proposed outcomes/outputs do not appear to make any direct references for facilitating this goal. Please explain the logic here and ideally revise the project outputs as necessary. Additionally:

- a. Under Outcome 1.1, the narrative suggests an MSP will be developed (and other references throughout the document) but it is not included in the list of proposed activities under this Outcome nor elsewhere in the project description. Please clarify if a MSP is being conducted, integrate this properly into the project design, and provide detail on the current status of MSP in the ETP.
- b. For Output 1.1.3, this appears to be one of the key activities for strengthening the needs of MPA managers in the project. Based on the conversations we had in San Jose in June 2024 noting the importance of MPA manager capacity as key to project success, please ensure there are appropriate activities in the project to meet their management needs, including appropriate equipment and associated trainings. For example, in the proposed project budget, the entire equipment budget for this Outcome 1.1 is only \$8,886, suggesting insufficient attention to this issue. Please confirm MPA managers had direct input into designing this output.
- c. For Outcome 1.2, please revise to be more specific than "implemented" under Output 1.2.1. This output should better reflect Outcome 1.2 and the plan to secure long-term financial sustainability and raise an additional \$25m of regional funding. Please also explain why the decrease to the \$25m target from the \$50m target in the PIF? Why also is the PIF Output 1.2.2 on securing new donors no longer in the project? Relatedly, why isn't the cofinancing for this Component 1 at least the \$25 million that is expected to be raised under the component per Outcome 1.2? Additionally, the proposed activities identified under this Output do not seem well developed. For example, what is different between the project supporting the donor coordination and fundraising (first activity) and ?close? coordination with Pew and CMAR (second activity)? This Output 1.2.1 is critical to the project?s long-term success but the specific GEF ETP project?s role/added value is not clear and needs to be improved in a revised submission. Lastly, how will the financial activities developed under the blue economy Component (3) integrate into the sustainable financing planning here?

2. Component 2: As an IW project, the focus of the investments should be on climate change resilience, not adaptation. Please adjust the text as appropriate. The project also fails to identify the regional planning efforts of the GEF supported Pacific and Central American Large Marine Ecosystem (PACA-LME project).

- a. For Outcome 2.1, how will the activities proposed result in the Target 2.1 of 31,250,000 ha? Is this Target 2.1 the main spatial target for the entire project to

claim GEF Core Indicator 2.2 of improved management? What about the other strengthened management outcomes across Components 1 and 2?

- b. Under Output 2.1.1, is it unclear what the output is for ?Development of a gender-responsive Climate Vulnerability for CMAR.?? A word appears to be missing from this. For the second activity, the development of a Damage, Loss and Needs assessment is not part of the IW strategy. Please explain how this directly links to the specific MPAs focused under this project and the GEF-8 IW strategy?
 - c. Under Output 2.2.2, the identified activities need improvement. For example, what exactly will be done to achieve the last activity, ?Promotion of Regional cooperation?? This is far too vague.
 - d. The Indicator 2.2. and Target 2.2 for this measuring improved regional management under Outcome 2.2 seem unmeasurable considering Target 2.2.1 is only aiming for one assessment. What will be the baseline for comparison if only one assessment is not completed. Under Target 2.2.2, what will be the geographic distribution target for implementation of the interventions (i.e. which MPAs and which countries)?
 - e. It is unclear how the application of a management effectiveness tool (Output 2.2.1) will inform the key interventions under Output 2.2.2? How will the key interventions be prioritized to promote regional connectivity as per the focus of Output 2.2.1? Lastly, how does the how the application of a management effectiveness tool (Output 2.2.1) relate to the capacity needs assessment for MPA managers under Component 1? Will the two assessments speak to each other, and if so, how?
 - f. For Output 2.2.2, please provide a table of criteria that will be used to select where the key interventions will be conducted.
3. Component 3: Please revise references of blue economy and call them instead sustainable blue economy. Even if it's implicit by the project activities, there are plenty of unsustainable blue economy activities, so it is important the project is clear on the type of support. Further, please specifically identify in the project structure how the blue economy support is linked to the long-term financial sustainability activities under Component 1?
- a. Under Output 3.1.2, how will the project implement the selected blue economy business plans? Does this mean the GEF funding is going to new businesses? How will the allocation of GEF funds be decided (size and to which recipients)? Will the projects have equity in the businesses as a result of the investments? Please elaborate on the thinking behind these activities and include criteria for how the GEF resources will be allocated. What role would the financial mechanism under Output 3.2.1 play in supporting these businesses?
 - b. Outcome 3.2 needs improvement too. What type of financial mechanism is envisioned? Are there examples from other places that are being used as a model?

How will this link to the sustainable financing under Component 1? How will this invest into the same businesses supported under Output 3.1.2?

- c. Similar to the cofinancing comment under Component 1, why isn't the cofinancing for Component 3 at least \$10 million to reflect the fundraising target under this Outcome 3.2?
4. Component 4: Please consider how project knowledge and communications can be used to help facilitate discussions among countries towards a regional transboundary Agreement. There should be closer integration between Components 1 and 4 for effective policy reforms.
- a. Output 4.1.1 should include more active participation in IW:LEARN than just sharing of knowledge products. All IW projects are expected to also actively participate in workshops, trainings, and the biannual IW conferences. Please also specifically improve the gender dimensions in Component 4, including in the proposed indicators and targets, such as Target 4.1.2. Also on Output 4.1.2, why is only one regional exchange being planned for this regional IW project? It would be expected that this number would be significantly higher, especially if linked with the stakeholder groups in Component 2 and Component 3.

Other comments:

5) Incremental Cost Reasoning: No incremental cost reasoning is presented. There are several key baseline projects and partners missing that should be included in the project to present a complete Incremental Cost approach. For example, the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, Charles Darwin Foundation, IUCN, and Jocotoco are all included as a cofinancing partner but their baseline programs/initiatives are not identified anywhere in the project description to justify what the GEF increment is building on (and as a result a justification of their cofinancing to the project). Similarly, the World Bank's development of the CMAR Regional Action Plan seems to be a key baseline but why then is the World Bank not providing any cofinancing?

Likewise, what specifically is the project doing to build on the outputs the PACA LME GEF investment? There are also several partners with relevant work that were expected to be identified, including MarViva in terms of facilitating scientific analysis and biodiversity connectivity and Friends of Cocos Island (FAICO). Please explain the rationale for why they are not identified.

6) Under policy coherence, Table 5-1 appears to be incomplete. As a list of MEAs, it also does not address the GEF definition of policy coherence. For the GEF, the focus on policy coherence is about how national policies are being harmonized towards a mutual goal at the national and regional level. Please remove Table 5-1 and focus on the GEF's interest in national and regional level policy coherence.

7) While gender perspectives are detailed in the project description, please also reflect the most salient gender dimensions in the Project Overview Table. Please aim for greater than 30% women's representation in specific indicators. Please ensure that women and other groups are not just targeted as users or beneficiaries, but also as key stakeholders in development of frameworks, plans, financial mechanisms and other related initiatives. To ensure that gender-specific results, best practices and lessons learned are monitored and reported on, under Component 5, M&E, ensure gender dimensions are integrated, reported and monitored, and that the Gender Action Plan is budgeted.

6 October 2024 (AH): Partly addressed. Please strengthen the logic behind the very short Incremental Cost Reasoning. This is a critical aspect of all GEF projects that defends why the GEF interventions are necessary. The current text fails to present a compelling justification for the GEF's incremental investments on top of other partner's baseline. Please revise.

Additionally, please note during implementation to:

- a) Continue to seek close coordination with relevant stakeholders and donor partners, including opportunities for additional cofinancing to be reported on an annual basis to the GEF.
- b) Please be sure to continue to seek opportunities to directly support MPA staff through the project.
- c) While it is noted that the 30% gender target is based on local context, please continue to seek greater than 30% engagement as much as possible.

15 November 2024 (AH): Addressed.

Agency Response

CI-GEF 11/07/2024

CI-GEF 11/07/2024

Incremental cost reasoning section has been added in page 65 of the Project document, and in the portal section Part II. Project Justification. B. PROJECT DESCRIPTION.

a ? b and c: noted. The IA, with EA and partners will continue to work for close coordination with other stakeholders in CMAR, ensuring direct support for MPA staff and increase the gender target as much as possible

CI-GEF 9/19/2024:

1. Yes. There is a role in facilitating the transboundary agreement of CMAR as needed/requested per countries. Language of Component 1 has been revised to directly address the role the project has on facilitating discussions aimed at strengthening CMAR's governance, particularly in advancing consensus towards a legally binding mechanism. To this end, outputs have also been reviewed and we can affirm the proposed activities promote formal decision-making processes, enhance consultation mechanisms, and support dialogue between the CMAR countries.

This strengthened approach ensures that Component 1 is directly contributing to the governance goals and lays the groundwork for future binding agreements, even if such agreements are not a direct project deliverable. This work will be done in alignment with other donors collaborating with CMAR for similar purposes. See this in section B. Project Description. In Prodoc in

Page 44 paragraph 53.

- a. No, a MSP is not being developed per se. As the CMAR Action Plan will account for MSP, the project will support MSP as a process that supports ocean governance, and it will be promoted by the project as a method to achieve the balance between protection and sustainable utilization of marine resources in the ETP region.

Instead, the focus will be on enhancing governance frameworks and decision-making processes that could, in the future, support such initiatives. The project aims to build the governance capacity necessary for CMAR to pursue comprehensive regional planning initiatives, including MSP, should they choose to do so.

Changed on Portal section. B. Project description (Theory of Change, Description Outcome 1.1.; description Output 2.2.1, **Outcome 3.1.**). In the ProDoc see these changes in pages: 41, 45, 51, 52, 54.

- b. Capacity under component 1 relates to governance of the region, including decision making, decisions informed by science, application of bylaws and regulations of CMAR. The budget has been revised to provide equipment and training to MPA managers under Outcome 1.1.

CMAR stated in the validation workshop in Panam? in March 2024, that not only capacities from MPA managers must be strengthened but also capacities from technical staff of the MPAs.

The majority of the budget of this component goes to design and delivery of training workshops for CMAR secretariat, ministerial committee, regional technical committee, and national commissions and other governance platforms of CMAR as needed, preparation and delivery of training workshops for regional technical working groups and MPA managers and key staff.

- c. Output 1.2.1 has been revised and changed from *?Financial instruments aligned with CMAR?s Financial Sustainability Strategy implemented?* to *"Operational tool to align existing and new investments in the ETP with the Financial Sustainability Strategy"* to better reflect project's efforts in ensuring alignment of new and existing resources and fundraising strategy that at PPG was stated

by countries to be an effort led by Pew under the PFP process. Changes in Results Framework and across the document have been made, in section B. Project Description (In Prodoc page 48, 49)

d. This was decided by CMAR countries during project consultations, as they viewed the \$50 M target as too ambitious and not realistic. Currently the ETP region has anticipated investment of approximately \$120 million from the donors' coalition however, the CMAR Secretariat does not have comprehensive oversight of these funds, including detailed tracking, timelines, and specific allocations. Furthermore, a small percentage has been materialized so far and CMAR Secretariat needs to support to track this but also engage with donors and meet the necessary requirements for the pledges to materialize. The GEF project is expected to help with this, building the capacities of the Secretariat to track the commitments and work with donor to materialize the funds for the region. As part of the consultations, Pew also advised for the target to be reduced, and based on the scoping of the financial instruments, it was said the level of ambition needed to be reduced to align with what they were developing under the financial strategy.

e. The cofinancing for Component 1 has been revised to align with the project target. It is expected that this number will increase during project implementation as other donors support CMAR and the financial sustainability strategy led by Pew becomes operational.

f. Changed due to changes in the output approach. See updates in Portal section B. Project Description (In Prodoc in page 49)

g. Output 1.2.1 has been modified to clarify the added value, which is to ensure CMAR Secretariat has capacities to track exiting and new resources through an operational tool. This will ensure that new resources are properly aligned and support the long-term financial sustainability of CMAR.

h. The financial mechanism under 3.2.1 has the intention to explore connection with financial mechanisms to support the scalability and financial sustainability of the implementation of blue economy interventions. This mechanism will be promoted in spaces of donor coordination and fundraising work.

The coordination with CMAR, the countries and Pacifico will ensure that the blue business that will be part of the project are well aligned with the financial strategy and can be aligned with the sustainable financing planning ensuring long term sustainability.

Additionally, by having PACIFICO as the executing agency, the project will secure synergies with other PACIFICO led projects which include financial sustainability investments. PACIFICO will hold its first workshop with the Pew Charitable Trust team, working on the design of a financial instrument (i.e PFP model) for the Eastern Tropical Pacific (with the support of GEF7). Likewise, PACIFICO is implementing two projects with investments in blue economy initiatives, as sources of sustainable financing for marine conservation (FFEM and KfW funded). Strategies and business opportunities identified and / or supported can be supported or scaled up with GEF resources under this collaboration with CI/GEF.

For component 2, focus has been changed from Adaptation to Resilience. We have modified the language to include resilience as part of the CCA Plan (has being updated to *Climate Resilience*

Plan) which is expected to include adaptation actions, contributing to climate resilience (as an end goal).

Adaptation has been substituted by Resilience on the portal section A. Project Rationale through this component, specially in output 2.1.1, in the risk section, in the section of socio-economic benefits, Annex C. Project results framework. As well these changes have been made in the safeguards screening, Safeguard screening Form page 48; SEP page 43; Section V page 5; Section III (Gender Action Plan) page 62, 75; Annex K: page 91-100. In Prodoc these changes can be seen in pages: 4, 20, 32, 39, 42, 50, 51, 76, 85, 91;

a. In the section A. PROJECT RATIONALE, subsection **Associated Baseline Projects** (in Prodoc see Page 37), it includes an overview of all the regional initiatives relevant to this project, including PACA. It reads as follows:

The GEF Pacific Central American Coastal Large Marine Ecosystem (PACA) project, will be developing a Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis/Strategic Action Programme (TDA/SAP) that will include all ETP countries (exception Colombia and Nicaragua (though per UNDP, the Implementing Agency for PACA, there are informal conversations with Colombia regarding the TDA/SAP development). As the central ETP corridor comprises a subset of the PACA countries and to avoid a duplication of resources and effort, this CMAR project will not undertake a TDA/SAP. It will, however, benefit from the learning process and information gathered through the PACA TDA/SAP.

We have included the reference of the PACA project under Component 2, in Portal Section A. Project Rational.

b. For Core Indicator 2.2, the way the project will account for improved management, is whether each of the MPAs within the ETP improve their management score using the tool developed by the project. For each MPA that accomplishes that, its area will count towards the target.

Similar to that approach, for Target 2.2.2, core CMAR MPAs will implement at least one action in its territory. For each MPA that accomplishes that, its area will count towards the target.

Thus, Target 2.1 is not the main spatial target for the entire project to claim GEF Core Indicator 2.2 of improved management, but it is supported by various targets under.

c. To answer the following comment: ***Under Output 2.1.1, is it unclear what is the output is for ?Development of a gender-responsive Climate Vulnerability for CMAR.?? A word appears to be missing from this.***

The text has been modified. The text now read: ?Development of a gender-responsive Climate Vulnerability Analysis for CMAR? in section A. Project Description.

For the second activity, the development of a Damage, Loss and Needs assessment is not part of the IW strategy. Please explain how this directly links to the specific MPAs focused under this project and the GEF-8 IW strategy?

The Loss and Damage and needs assessment is part of the analysis of climate change impacts, thus it is part of the CCA Plan analysis, which will further provide information for climate resilience of the ETP. This directly links to the specific MPAs focused under the project, as they will benefit from the improved resilience. It is aligned with the GEF-8 IW strategy, as to sustain healthy blue ecosystems, GEF support will focus on addressing climate change impacts. The L&D also links to the Financial Strategy and Component 3 of Blue Economy by providing an estimation of the financial needs for the ETP to address climate change impacts.

d. To clarify what will be done under each likely activity, we have moved the text from the Output description into each activity (see portal section A. Project description). For example, in the case of the 'Promotion of Regional cooperation', includes that this activity will 'organize gender sensitive regional meetings and workshops with 50% women participations target to share good practices, lessons learned and experiences between CMAR countries from the effectiveness evaluation. This is intended to facilitate cooperation and knowledge exchange between CMAR countries to promote the coordinated implementation of key interventions.' Page 52

e. Target 2.2.1 has been modified to read 'At least three (3) regional assessment implemented'.

Under Target 2.2.2, the geographic distribution target for implementation of the interventions (i.e. which MPAs and which countries) will be CMAR core MPAs: Cocos (Costa Rica), Coiba (Panama), Malpelo, Gorgona (Colombia) and Galapagos (Ecuador).

f. It is unclear how the application of a management effectiveness tool (Output 2.2.1) will inform the key interventions under Output 2.2.2? How will the key interventions be prioritized to promote regional connectivity as per the focus of Output 2.2.1? The results of the management effectiveness tool (Output 2.2.1) will inform the interventions under Output 2.2.2, as it will reveal areas of improvement under each MPA Management Plan. Included on section B. Project Description (In prodoc see changes in page 51, 52).

Lastly, how does the how the application of a management effectiveness tool (Output 2.2.1) relate to the capacity needs assessment for MPA managers under Component 1? Will the two assessments speak to each other, and if so, how?

The application of a management effectiveness tool (Output 2.2.1) will be informed by the capacity needs assessment for MPA managers under Component 1, as the results under Component 1 will provide more detailed in-context information relatively to the information captured by the management effectiveness tool. Included on Section B. Project Description (In ProDoc in page 51, 52).

f. Criteria that will be used to select the key interventions that will be conducted on the ETP is included as on Annex O (in the Prodoc section, pages 117-121)

Component 3. **Please revise references of blue economy and call them instead sustainable blue economy. Even if it's implicit by the project activities, there are plenty of unsustainable blue**

economy activities, so it is important the project is clear on the type of support. Text has been modified to include the word 'sustainable' as part of the blue economy.

Further, please specifically identify in the project structure how the blue economy support is linked to the long-term financial sustainability activities under Component 1?

The sustainable blue economy support under Component 3 is inherently linked to the long-term financial sustainability efforts in Component 1. The financial sustainability alignment and donor coordination enhanced under Component 1 will serve to ensure the continued support, funding, and growth of sustainable blue economy initiatives, particularly in fisheries and tourism sectors, thereby contributing to the long-term financial sustainability of CMAR's marine conservation efforts.

This connection ensures that the sustainable blue economy investments not only promote economic growth but are also integrated into the broader financial sustainability strategy, supporting the overall resilience of the CMAR marine corridor.

Additionally, by integrating gender-focused on sustainable blue economy technical expertise, the project also ensures that financial sustainability is inclusive, benefiting a broad range of stakeholders across the CMAR region.

a.

- ***How will the project implement the selected blue economy business plans? Does this mean the GEF funding is going to new businesses?*** Yes, scoping will be performed in each country, coastal communities in the influence areas of Coiba and Gorgona as well as in communities in the Galapagos and Costa Rica that interact with highly migratory endangered species. Businesses will be assessed and selected to either be improved, in the case they are existing ones or will be designed in the case for the new ones. Potential businesses will be identified in a participatory manner with CMAR countries in the first year of implementation. See Section B. Project Description. (In Prodoc Page 54).

- ***How will the allocation of GEF funds be decided (size and to which recipients)?*** The allocation of GEF Funds will be decided using the following criteria and further developed in the first year of implementation: Environmental sustainability (30%); economic viability (25%); social impact (20%); alignment with CMAR regional goals (15%); innovation and replicability (10%). See Section B. Project Description. (In Prodoc Page 54).

- ***Will the projects have equity in the businesses as a result of the investments?*** The project will focus on evaluating the feasibility and potential to increase revenue in small scale or local blue businesses. Small scale or local blue businesses have traditionally been the hardest to support in the region but also are the ones which have a high accumulated impact from the fishing practices while they retain little revenue from, they often used sustainable practices. The project will focus on these businesses and stakeholders to create success investable examples of use of the benefits of CMAR. The feasibility of potential will not have equity, as for some it will only finance for technical assistance to develop and implement business plans. For a selected number of businesses, it will provide grants to implement those business plans. See Section B. Project Description. (In Prodoc Page 54 and 55)

- ***What role would the financial mechanism under Output 3.2.1 play in supporting these businesses?*** The project budget allocated will cover the implementation of selected business plans under 3.1.2. The financial mechanism under 3.2.1 may finance those business plans not selected for implementation or finance new business plans beyond what is budgeted under the project. This will be determined during project implementation mapping what already exists and Pacifico's initiatives that complement the work under 3.2. and ensuring alignment with the financial sustainability strategy. See Section B. Project Description. (In Prodoc Page 55)

b.

- ***What type of financial mechanism is envisioned?*** The project document has been modified to include a more detailed description of the types of instruments and financial mechanisms. First, it coordinated with Pew and the Financial Strategy. Once the financial instruments have been identified that support Blue Economy, the project will prioritize one and will implement it. Some of the financial instruments include Blue Bonds, Trust funds, etc. See Section B. Project Description. (In Prodoc Page 56)

- ***Are there examples from other places that are being used as a model?*** Some examples of similar experiences have been included under Outcome 3.2.

- ***Related to: How will this link to the sustainable financing under Component 1?*** The donor coordination and fundraising work under Output 1.2.1 will serve as a platform to promote the grant mechanism under Output 3.1.2. The text has been updated to reflect that.

- ***Related to: How will this invest into the same businesses supported under Output 3.1.2?*** The project budget allocated will cover the implementation of selected business plans under 3.1.2. The financial mechanism under 3.2.1 may finance those business plans not selected for implementation or finance new business plans beyond what is budgeted under the project.

c. Co-financing has been revised for Component 3 to align with the target.

Component 4

a. Output 4.1.1 should include more active participation in IW:LEARN than just sharing of knowledge products. All IW projects are expected to also actively participate in workshops, trainings, and the biannual IW conferences.

Text has modified in output 4.1.1 to explicitly say that stakeholders will not only be engaged in information disclosure but it will also be ensured that they fully participate in meetings, workshops, etc. The budget for Component 4 has been modified accordingly. Please also see Section V of the SEP, which includes provisions to ensure that all stakeholders participate in all relevant stages of the implementation phase. See Section B. Project Description. (

Please also specifically improve the gender dimensions in Component 4, including in the proposed indicators and targets, such as Target 4.1.2.

The GMP includes gender-specific indicators throughout Component 4. For instance, it considers KP products with gender-sensitive content, facilitates regional exchanges tailored to the specific needs of women, and tracks the percentage of women's participation in these activities.

Specifically for indicator 4.1.2, the GAP includes the following indicators and targets:

4.1.2.1a Implementation of gender-sensitive regional exchange based on women's needs =1

4.1.2.1b % of women participation=between 30% and 50% are women, if 50% is affordable.

Target 4.1.2 has been updated in the main document. See Section B. Project Description.

Related to ?Also on Output 4.1.2, why is only one regional exchange being planned for this regional IW project? It would expected that this number would be significantly higher, especially if linked with the stakeholder groups in Component 2 and Component 3.?

The regional exchanges only refer to those financed under Component 4. There are other regional exchanges (output 1.1.3, 1.1.2, outcome 3.1) under the other components.

On other comments:

The incremental cost reasoning was included in the document. See Section B. Project Description. In ProDoc changes on page 59.

GEF Comment: *There are several key baseline projects and partners missing? For example, the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, Charles Darwin Foundation, IUCN, and Jocotoco are all included as a cofinancing partner but their baseline programs/initiatives are not identified anywhere in the project description to justify what the GEF increment is building on (and as a result a justification of their cofinancing to the project).*

Please note that in Annex M ?Associated Baseline projects? includes the following projects:

- ?Ensuring Marine Biosecurity in Costa Rica?s Cocos Island? implemented by **Charles Darwin Foundation** (included in Costa Rica Baseline projects).
- ?Rewilding the Gal?pagos Marine Reserve? implemented by ?Fundaci?n Jocotoco and WildAid? is included in the Ecuador Baseline projects.
- **IUCN** project titled ?Achieving 30x30 and recognizing fair and effective protected and conserved areas through the IUCN Green List Standard? has been included in Table 7-3 (Related CMAR baseline projects).
- **Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute** projects for the ETPS have been included in Annex P, pages 121-136

GEF Comment: the World Bank's development of the CMAR Regional Action Plan seems to be a key baseline but why then is the World Bank not providing any cofinancing?

Yes, the World Bank has committed co-financing. The letter is included in the Annex.

GEF Comment: *Likewise, what specifically is the project doing to build on the outputs the PACA LME GEF investment?*

PACA LME GEF: In Section A. Project Rationale (In prodoc Page 37) includes an overview of all the regional initiatives relevant to this project, including PACA. It reads as follows:

The GEF Pacific Central American Coastal Large Marine Ecosystem (PACA) project, will be developing a Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis/Strategic Action Programme (TDA/SAP) that will include all ETP countries (exception Colombia and Nicaragua (though per UNDP, the Implementing Agency for PACA, there are informal conversations with Colombia regarding the TDA/SAP development). As the central ETP corridor comprises a subset of the PACA countries and to avoid a duplication of resources and effort, this CMAR project will not undertake a TDA/SAP. It will, however, benefit from the learning process and information gathered through the PACA TDA/SAP.

The project document has been modified to include the reference of the PACA project under Component 2 on how it builds on the PACA LME GEF outputs and results (See component 2 in Section B. Project Description)

GEF Comment: *There are also several partners with relevant work that were expected to be identified, including MarViva in terms of facilitating scientific analysis and biodiversity connectivity and Friends of Cocos Island (FAICO). Please explain the rationale for why they are not identified.*

Both MarViva and FAICO have indeed been identified as stakeholders and are included in the SEP. Please see the SEP for more details.

6) Table 5-1 is not meant to justify policy coherence but provide the general context and alignment of each country to MEAs, as not all countries in the TEP adhere to all the MEAs. Thus, Table 5-1 provides background information to the reader, before focusing on how national policies are being harmonized towards mutual goals at the national and regional level. The introduction to this section has been modified to clarify this. (See changes in B. Project Description, subsection Policy Coherence).

The policy coherence section is in page 64 and on showing the policies at national and regional level and the relevance these have for the project.

Additionally, this section provides information about the governance framework (both international and national) for Costa Rica, Colombia, Ecuador and Panama contributing to the actions of this project. In this context, the project does not seek to influence national policy change, but rather to strengthen regional governance based on national and international policies and behaviors acquired by the four countries. For example, under Outcome 2.2, the project will support the creation of a regional tool for monitoring connectivity and governance, which will allow harmonizing regional M&E methodologies. (See in Portal section B. Project Description). The section has been modified to include this type of examples, and clarify the extent of the project intervention regarding policies.

7) While gender perspectives are detailed in the project description, please also reflect the most salient gender dimensions in the Project Overview Table. The project outcomes have been updated throughout the document with the requested gender perspective. See changes on the project Outputs, outcomes in section B. Project Components. Please note that gender-specific activities, indicators and targets are presented in the annex on Gender Mainstreaming Plan (GMP).

Please aim for greater than 30% women's representation in specific indicators. The 30% target has been deliberated with CMAR, particularly considering the low percentage of female park rangers (refer to Figures 1 to 3 in the GMP-Gender Mainstreaming Plan). Consequently, a minimum of 30% female participation has been incorporated into the GAP-Gender Action Plan- activities, with the potential for this percentage to increase.

To ensure that gender-specific results, best practices and lessons learned are monitored and reported on, under Component 5, M&E, ensure gender dimensions are integrated, reported and monitored, and that the Gender Action Plan is budgeted

The GMP is structured into three sections: Assessment, Action Plan, and Monitoring and Evaluation. The Action Plan highlights the involvement of men and women as key contributors in the development of frameworks, plans, mechanisms, and related activities, with an integrated budget outlined accordingly. In the Monitoring and Evaluation section, the gender dimensions and the measurement indicators proposed in the Action Plan are fully integrated. The indicators and targets established in the GMP are included in the project's monitoring and evaluation activities (including PIRs, MTRs and TEs), that are part of Component 5.

Please ensure that women and other groups are not just targeted as users or beneficiaries, but also as key stakeholders in development of frameworks, plans, financial mechanisms and other related initiatives.

To ensure that women and other groups are not just targeted as users or beneficiaries, but also as key stakeholders in the development of frameworks, plans, financial mechanisms and other related initiatives, the GMP includes specific actions to address this. For example, there are quotas in the

different working groups, as well as gender mainstreaming in frameworks, plans, financial mechanisms, etc.

Some indicators and actions already included in the GMP include:

-CMAR Operations Manual includes a gender mainstreaming approach

-A Gender Policy and a Gender Action Plan for CMAR developed and implemented

-M&E Mechanism designed for CMAR with a gender perspective

-A Climate Resilience Plan developed considering measures to address gender inequalities.

5.2 Institutional Arrangements and Coordination with Ongoing Initiatives and Project

a) Are the institutional arrangements, including potential executing partners, outlined on regional, national/local levels and a rationale provided? Has an organogram and/or funds flow diagram been included?

b) Comment on proposed agency execution support (if agency expects to request exception). Is GEF in support of the request?

c) Is there a description of coordination and cooperation with ongoing GEF and non-GEF financed projects/programs (such as government and/or other bilateral/multilateral supported initiatives in the project area, e.g.).

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

July 24 2024 (AH):

1) It is noted that the current MoU between Pacifico and CMAR will lapse during the duration of this 5 year project. Will a new or updated 5 year MoU be established between the two organizations at the start of this project to ensure a consistent timeline?

2) It is noted that CI is proposing the also execute work under Outcome 3.1. This is also the largest budget by Outcome. Please specify exactly how much of the \$3.27 million under this Outcome 3.1 is being retained by CI. Please provide documentation by the four OFPs that the countries are supportive of this proposed arrangement.

3) Please clarify which secretariat is being referred to in the sentence, "The PMU will be hosted in the country where the Permanent Secretariat will be based." Please also explain where (which organization) the PMU will be based in Colombia. With Smithsonian providing cofinancing to the project, presumably due to its role in temporarily hosting the CMAR Secretariat, what role will they have regarding the project institutional arrangements?

4) It is noted that the PSC is proposed to be, "... chaired by the technical Secretary of CMAR and the Project Lead hired by Fundaci?n Pacifico for this project." As Pacifico is the executing agency and the main recipient of the GEF funds, it should not also have a decision-making role on the PSC to maintain proper firewalls.

5) While an annex is provided, please provide a summary table in the main text that shows the top ~5-8 projects that this GEF project is closely coordinating with.

6 October 2024 (AH): Addressed.

Agency Response

CI-GEF 9/19/2024:

1. PACIFICO has worked with CMAR based on formal agreements which set priorities and road maps for five-year periods, allowing for long lasting collaboration of a political strategy and a conservation trust fund as financial facilitator for the joint initiatives of four countries. PACIFICO and CMAR signed its second MoU in March 2023, with a five-year duration. In 2027, Pacifico and CMAR will redefine priorities and lines of work for the next MoU to be signed in 2028. The project annual workplans will be aligned with this updated MoU and ensure the project targets are included. See portal section Institutional Arrangement and Coordination with Ongoing Initiatives and Project. (In Prodoc see Paragraph 112, page 70).

2. During PPG countries requested CI to support the project execution by being the technical delivery partner of outcome 3.1. The budget has been revised (see budget annex) and it is expected that CI works with partners through subgrants and consultancies, which constitutes 44% of the CI budget. The rationale for CI leading outcome 3.1 as delivery partner is that Conservation International (CI) is the only regional organization that has consistently supported CMAR since its start in 2004. We have a strong technical presence and expertise across the region and in each of the CMAR countries, with highly experienced field staff specializing in a wide range of areas, including MPA management, fisheries, blue economy, sustainable financing, and marine ecology. While Panama is the only country where we currently do not have an office, we have worked there for over 25 years, building a strong network of local partners and a deep understanding of the country and its stakeholders. This extensive experience allows CI to operate effectively at all levels, from high-level national authorities to support and influence policy making to local communities with whom we work directly to achieve impact and improve livelihoods.

CI is also the executing partner for an IKI-funded, GIZ-led project that overlaps with CMAR, providing \$4 million in co-financing reported by GIZ. This adds significant value to CI's involvement in this project. Moreover, CI's longstanding relationship with CMAR and the trust we have built with national authorities which supports the work of the GEF project complementing other efforts that CI has in the ETP. With a vast network of partners and strong regional relationships, CI is well-positioned to act as the technical partner of Component 3, a role proposed by the participating countries. We have communications from all GEF OFPs supporting this role from CI.

3. CMAR's Pro Tempore Secretariat regularly rotates among member governments. It is currently hosted by the Government of Panama and it is expected that the Secretariat moves to Colombia in 2024. Having the PMU of the GEF/CI project in the same city and country of the Secretariat brings the possibility of a closer coordination with CMAR, which is especially important during the kick off and project inception phases.

As a regional initiative, PACIFICO was established by four conservation trust funds with work on the Pacific Ocean: Costa Rica Forever, Fundación Natura Panamá, Fondo Patrimonio Natural Colombia and Fondo Acción Colombia. To reduce bureaucracy and reduce operational costs, Pacifico relies on the experience, knowledge, tools and- in its current projects -on the back office services provided by its founding members.

The founding member which holds the position of President of the Board is the one assuming most of the back-office support. Currently the President of the Board is Natalia Arango, Executive Director of Fondo Acción and Fondo Acción is based in Bogotá Colombia.

Finally, PACIFICO's KfW project management unit will also operate from Bogotá. Having the two teams in the same country brings more coordination opportunities to the region.

4. A paragraph referring to the EA recusing themselves in decision making moments to avoid conflict in interest has been included. See this in portal section Institutional Arrangement and Coordination with Ongoing Initiatives and Project, subsection Steering committee. (In Prodoc see Paragraph 127, page 72).

A Table has been included in the section of B. Project Description, subsection Associated Baseline Projects, with Implementation arrangements and Coordination with Ongoing Initiatives and Project with the top projects. In Prodoc see this in Page 58.

5.3 Core indicators

a) Are the identified core indicators calculated using the methodology and adhering to the overarching principles included in the corresponding Guidelines (GEF/C.62/Inf.12/Rev.01)?

b) Are the project's targeted contributions to GEBs (measured through core indicators and additional listed outcome indicators) /adaptation benefits reasonable and achievable?

Are the GEF Climate Change adaptation indicators and sub-indicators for LDCF and SCCF properly documented?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

July 24 2024 (AH):

1) It is noted that the project objective is targeting at least 31,250,000 ha but CI-2 is targeting slightly less, 31,246,463. Why this discrepancy?

2) For CI-8 on fisheries, the project notes that the indicator has not been included as various marine fisheries are not qualified as over-exploited. Please identify the specific fisheries that were analyzed and deemed not to qualify as over-exploited. Please explain why the focus of the blue economy investments under Component 3 cannot include criteria that targets certain over-exploited fisheries, similar to an impact investment? It would seem reasonable that the project can identify a modest estimate for CI-8 based that can then be used to help guide (and be part of the criteria) for deciding which blue economy business will be supported. This comment on presenting selection criteria is also noted in the comments above for Component 3.

6 October 2024 (AH): Not addressed. Please note the Agency justification that the project will not target over-exploited species is based on the IATCCC, which is only for tuna. What about other non-Tuna species? As previously requested, please provide a list of the specific fisheries fished by the small, artisanal, and coastal fisherfolk targeted by Component 3.

15 November 2024 (AH): Addressed. During implementation, as noted by in the Agency response, in Y1 of implementation, the delivery partner and EA will work with CMAR countries to have a proper engagement with fisheries and create a baseline for the blue economy work.

Agency Response CI-GEF 11/07/2024

Additional information requested has been added in the portal Part II. Project Justification. B. PROJECT DESCRIPTION in the section related to Global Environmental Benefits. In the Prodoc this information is included in pages 67, 68, 69 and 70. Regarding the information on the specific fisheries, in the PPG phase no further engagement with fisheries was undertaken as the effort was put in engagement with CMAR countries, other donors and partners of CMAR Secretariat. During Y1 of implementation, the delivery partner and EA will work with CMAR countries to have a proper engagement with fisheries and create a baseline for the blue economy work. .

CI-GEF 9/19/2024:

1. The value has been adjusted to 31,246,463, which is the addition of the 50% of the total areas of the MPAs and other areas included under this project. This is also reflected in the GEF-8 Results Measurement Framework Worksheet. See this change in Core Indicator section and through the rest of the project components.

2. ***GEF Comment: For CI-8 on fisheries, the project notes that the indicator has not been included as various marine fisheries are not qualified as over-exploited. Please identify the specific fisheries that were analyzed and deemed not to qualify as over-exploited.*** The decision not to include CI-8 on fisheries is based on the fact that the marine fisheries targeted by the project

are not currently classified as over-exploited, which was determined through consultations of the last reports of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATCC). Reference included on the section Global Environmental Benefits (In Prodoc see page 61).

The text included reads as follow:

?In this context, it is important to mention that during the PPG phase the project evaluated the inclusion of Core Indicator 8 ?Globally over-exploited marine fisheries moved to more sustainable levels?. The indicator was not included, as it did not fit the detailed activities developed under component 3.?

GEF Comment: *Please explain why the focus of the blue economy investments under Component 3 cannot include criteria that targets certain over-exploited fisheries, similar to an impact investment? It would seem reasonable that the project can identify a modest estimate for CI-8 based that can then be used to help guide (and be part of the criteria) for deciding which blue economy business will be supported. This comment on presenting selection criteria is also noted in the comments above for Component 3.*

Additionally, the sustainable blue economy investments under Component 3 are designed to support businesses that align with sustainable practices, and will support small, artisanal and coastal fisheries. The project?s approach is to promote regional fishing businesses that contribute to economic growth while adhering to sustainable practices, thus indirectly supporting the overall health and sustainability of marine resources in the region.

5.4 Risks

- a) Is there a well-articulated assessment of risk to outcomes and identification of mitigation measures under each relevant risk category? Are mitigation measures clearly identified and realistic? Is there any omission?**
- b) Is the rating provided reflecting the residual risk to the likely achievement of intended outcomes after accounting for the expected implementation of mitigation measures?**
- c) Are environmental and social risks, impacts and management measures adequately assessed and rated and consistent with requirements set out in SD/PL/03?**

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

July 24 2024 (AH): The risk table in the Portal CEO End doc is empty. Please complete this table.

6 October 2024 (AH): Addressed

Agency Response

CI-GEF 09/18/2024

The risk table in the CEO End doc and in portal is now completely filled.

5.5 For NGI Only: Is there a justification of the financial structure and of the use of financial instrument with concessionality levels?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Agency Response

6 C. Alignment with GEF-8 Programming Strategies and Country/Regional Priorities

6.1 a) Is the project adequately aligned with Focal Area objectives, and/or the LDCF/SCCF strategy?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request July 24 2024 (AH): Yes.

Agency Response

6.2 Is the project alignment/coherent with country and regional priorities, policies, strategies and plans (including those related to the MEAs and to relevant sectors).

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request July 24 2024 (AH): Yes.

Agency Response

6.3 For projects aiming to generate biodiversity benefits (regardless of what the source of the resources is - i.e., BD, CC or LD), does the project clearly identify which of the 23 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework the project contributes to and how it contributes to the identified target(s)?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

July 24 2024 (AH): No. Please identify relevant alignment with KM-GBF Targets.

6 October 2024 (AH): Addressed.

Agency Response

CI-GEF 9/19/2024:

In the section on Global Environmental Benefits (In ProDoc Under paragraph #89 (page 60), KM-GBF Targets have been included. The following KM targets are mentioned:

? TARGET 1: Plan and Manage all Areas To Reduce Biodiversity Loss

? TARGET 3: Conserve 30% of Land, Waters and Seas

? TARGET 8: Minimize the Impacts of Climate Change on Biodiversity and Build Resilience

? TARGET 11: Restore, Maintain and Enhance Nature's Contributions to People

? TARGET 14: Integrate Biodiversity in Decision-Making at Every Level

? TARGET 20: Strengthen Capacity-Building, Technology Transfer, and Scientific and Technical Cooperation for Biodiversity

•TARGET 23: Ensure Gender Equality and a Gender-Responsive Approach for Biodiversity Action

7 D. Policy Requirements

7.1 Are the Policy Requirement sections completed?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request July 24 2024 (AH): Yes.

Agency Response

CI-GEF 9/19/2024:

This was done, please refer to the responses above for more details.

7.2 Is the Gender Action Plan uploaded?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request July 24 2024 (AH): Yes, a Gender Mainstreaming Plan was uploaded with the initial submission. Please note gender comments above regarding project design and incorporate into the GMP, as needed.

Agency Response

7.3 Is the stakeholder engagement plan uploaded?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request July 24 2024 (AH): Yes a Stakeholder Engagement Plan was uploaded with the initial submission.

Agency Response

7.4 Have the required applicable safeguards documents been uploaded?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request July 24 2024 (AH): Yes.

Agency Response

8 Annexes

Annex A: Financing Tables

8.1 GEF Financing Table and Focal Area Elements: Is the proposed GEF financing (including the Agency fee) in line with GEF policies and guidelines? Are they within the resources available from (mark all that apply):
STAR allocation?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request July 24 2024 (AH): Yes.

Agency Response

Focal Area allocation?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request July 24 2024 (AH): Yes.

Agency Response

LDCF under the principle of equitable access?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Agency Response

SCCF A (SIDS)?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Agency Response

SCCF B (Tech Transfer, Innovation, Private Sector)?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Agency Response

Focal Area Set Aside?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request N/A

Agency Response

8.2 Project Preparation Grant (PPG)

a) Is the use of PPG attached in Annex: Status of Utilization of Project Preparation Grant (PPG) properly itemized according to the guidelines?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

July 24 2024 (AH): No. Please include more detail under each line item. For example, how many personal, consultants, and meetings?

6 October 2024 (AH): Addressed.

Agency Response

CI-GEF 9/19/2024:

Additional details have been included in the PPG utilization table. ??

8.3 Source of Funds

Does the sources of funds table match with the amounts in the OFP's LOE?

Note: the table only captures sources of funds from the country's STAR allocation

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestN/A

Agency Response

8.4 Confirmed co-financing for the project, by name and type: Are the amounts, sources, and types of co-financing adequately documented and consistent with the requirements of the Co-Financing Policy and Guidelines?

e.g. Have letters of co-finance been submitted, correctly classified as investment mobilized or in-kind/recurring expenditures? If investment mobilized: is there an explanation below the table to describe the nature of co-finance? If letters are not in English, is a translation provided?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

July 24 2024 (AH): No. There are several missing letters of cofinancing that were not found in the Portal, including: 1) Pew, 2) Government of Ecuador, and 3) Smithsonian. Please submit letters of cofinancing support from PEW amount of \$10,000,000 and from Government of Ecuador for amount of \$5,578,150.00 and from STRI for amount of \$731,000.

6 October 2024 (AH): Addressed.

Agency Response

CI-GEF 9/19/2024:

pending co-financing letters were uploaded in the portal

Annex B: Endorsements

8.5 a) If ? and only if - this is a global or regional project for which not all country-based interventions were known at PIF stage and, therefore, not all LOEs provided:

Has the project been endorsed by the GEF OFP/s of all GEF eligible participating countries and has the OFP name and position been checked against the GEF database at the time of submission?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

July 24 2024 (AH): The Annex B table for OFP endorsements is empty. Please complete this table.

6 October 2024 (AH): Not addressed. As previously commented, please complete Annex B.

15 November 2024 (AH): Addressed.

Agency Response

CI-GEF 11/07/2024

The endorsement letters have been uploaded in the portal section. A. Record of Endorsement of GEF Operational Focal Point (s) on Behalf of the Government(s).

b) Are the OFP endorsement letters uploaded to the GEF Portal (compiled as a single document, if applicable)?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request July 24 2024 (AH): Yes, LOEs were included in PIF approval.

Agency Response

c) Do the letters follow the correct format and are the endorsed amounts consistent with the amounts included in the Portal?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request July 24 2024 (AH): Yes

Agency Response

Annex C: Project Results Framework

8.6 a) Have the GEF core indicators been included?

b) Have SMART indicators been used; are means of verification well thought out; do the targets correspond/are appropriate in view of total project financing (too high? Too low?)

c) Are all relevant indicators sex disaggregated?

d) Is the Project Results Framework included in the Project Document pasted in the Template?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

July 24 2024 (AH): Many of the baselines presented in the RF are not quantified or seem unmeasurable. For example, Outcome 1.1 has no value from which a 20% increase could be measured. Please carefully revise the baseline to ensure that project results can be tracked per SMART indicator standards.

6 October 2024 (AH): Addressed.

Agency Response

CI-GEF 9/19/2024:

Please note that Annex K provides details in terms of how the project indicators will be quantified. These are the only two indicators that do not have a quantified baseline (Outcome 1.1 and Indicator 2.2), because the corresponding baselines will be determined with tools developed by the project and assessments in Y1 to establish the baseline. In the case of Outcome 1.1, the quantification will be based on governance assessment. The same case if for Indicator 2.2 (Percentage (%) of improvement of regional MPA connectivity and management from Y1 baseline), its baseline will be quantified using the tool developed by the project to estimate the change (%) in regional MPA connectivity.

Annex E: Project map and coordinates

8.7 Have geographic coordinates of project locations been entered in the dedicated table? Are relevant illustrative maps included?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

July 24 2024 (AH): Partly. The current map seems to be copied from another document and does not give enough information specific to this project's activities. Please add a map that identifies the specific sites the project will be working in.

6 October 2024 (AH): Addressed.

Agency Response

CI-GEF 9/19/2024:

Updated map with a better resolution has been included in the portal.

Annex G: GEF Budget template

8.8 a) Is the GEF budget template attached and appropriately filled out incl. items such as the executing partner for each budget line?

b) Are the activities / expenditures reasonably and accurately charged to the three identified sources (Components, M&E and PMC)?

c) Are TORs for key project staff funded by GEF grant and/or co-finance attached?

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

July 24 2024 (AH): The budget table in the Portal CEO End doc is not property formatted and runs off the screen. While a full budget as been uploaded also to the Portal, the full review of the project budget will only be done once the the budget can be properly reviewed using the correct GEF template in the Portal CEO End doc. Additional comments may be added to the initial below comments once the budget is correctly presented.

Initial budget comments:

- 1) Overall many of the line items contain just a single word or two that do not provide sufficient information to assess. For example, the line may read just "Blue Economy". Please add more information to these so that we can understand what actually is being proposed.
- 2) It seems \$1.296 million of the project funding is going to 18 CI staff under Outcome 3.1. With a total of \$3.266 million, this is nearly 40% of the Outcome budget going towards existing CI staff, including many senior staff. This seems quite excessive for a single outcome of a project and should be revisited and reduced accordingly.
- 3) It is noted that "Rent" is being charged across all the components. This should be charged to the PMC.
- 4) Please explain what \$174,088 for "PASC Allocation" is for?
- 5) There is a reference to a "Registration for the organic-hydrolyzed fish fertilizer transformation plant and the registration of fish hydrolysate (Agrocalidad and ABG)" under Outcome 3.1 (CI activity). However, this outcome is focused on developing business plans. This already very specific budget item that is not referenced anywhere else in the project suggests that decisions are already being made as to where this funding is going. Please explain the justification for this expense - and also why it was decided to be included in the budget now and not part of a larger and transparent process on supporting implementation of business plans?
- 6) It appears in the budget that the annual project audit has been charged to component 2. The project audit must be covered with the PMC. Please revise.
- 7) It is not clear if the proposed activities (Project coordinator to CMAR countries, Project Lead Coordination - Panama activities, and Project Lead for Monitoring and coordination programs in CMAR countries) are costs related with travel, meetings and workshops (as categorized in the budget) or personnel and professional services. Please clarify and revise as needed for correct categorization.
- 8) A number of positions (Project Lead, Regional Operations Director, National Project Lead Managers, Technical coordinator, etc..) are being charged across components. Per GEF 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. When the situation merits (i.e. not enough co-financing funds - which for this projects is not the case), the project's staff could be charged to the project's components with clear Terms of Reference describing unique outputs linked to the respective component? (see paragraph 4 ? page 42 of the GEF Guidelines). For this project, the co-financing portion allocated to PMC is 2.8 Million, in a project citing over 24 million of grant cofinancing , suggesting there is ample cofinancing to supporting costs for PM costs beyond the project PMC. Please review and make the necessary adjustments.

6 October 2024 (AH): Partly addressed.

0) As previously requested, please upload the budget correctly to the Portal so that the entire table is visible in the Portal documents. Please note that this is the document that is web posted once the project is endorsed ? due to this reason, please also remove the yellow shadowed sections.

1) Addressed. Additional detail has been added.

2) Addressed.

3 & 4) Regarding rent being charged to technical components, please identify the specific rent that is being proposed to be paid by GEF funds for technical activities. What buildings will this cover that are not with the PMU? Further, if PASC includes rent per the Agency response below, please explain why rent is being charged twice for the CI self-executed activities of Outcome 3.1?

5) Regarding the comment on organic fish fertilizer, please respond to the previous comment: "Please explain the justification for this expense - and also why it was decided to be included in the budget now and not part of a larger and transparent process on supporting implementation of business plans? "

6) Partly addressed. Please explain why a separate audit is being proposed for the CI self-executed Outcome 3.1. Why is this not included with the overall project audit. The project should have a single financial audit charged to PMC, not multiple audits.

7) Partly addressed. If the proposed travel is related to "to check regularly on local partners for supervision execution" as per the Agency response, then this is what PMC is intended to cover. Please explain why the Project Management Cost is not being used to cover project management obligations by CI?

8) Not addressed. No TORs can be identified in the Portal or the CEO Endorsement document. The justification for why co-financing cannot cover a portion of these costs is insufficient. Please explain which co-financing partners are providing PMC co-financing and why this cannot support the proposed positions. Please further note that the agency explanation is contradictory with the confirmed co-financing composition because according to what the Agency reports in the co-financing table, US\$17,300,000 (27.3% of the co-financing) are represented in grants. Therefore, there should be room for using co-financing resources for the Project's staff as indicated in GEF Guidelines document. We will review the TORs when the project is resubmitted with a readable budget table and the allocation of resources to cover the positions.

15 November 2024 (AH): Not fully addressed yet.

0) The uploaded budget table in the CEO Endorsement Document is still cut off and not legible. The online Portal version is also missing and only a link is provided. The GEF budget table needs to be fully viewable in both versions. This is not just an issue of formatting. As a public and stand-alone document, it is important that there is full visibility on the entire project in the CEO Endorsement. Please revise and resubmit with the correct formatting as previously requested.

1) Previously addressed.

2) Previously addressed.

3 & 4) Addressed.

5) Addressed.

6) Addressed.

7) Addressed. However, please modify the text so that it no longer references "check regularly on local partners for supervision execution" and, instead, aligns with the agency response for "... ensuring integration and a regional perspective in addressing coastal blue business opportunities."

8) Thank you for the response. However, as previously requested, please identify the sources of the \$2.85 million in PMC cofinancing presented and justify why these cannot support some of the requested costs for the two PMC positions. Please also include the TORs in the CEO Endorsement document as an annex. And in each TOR, please include the % of proposed funding coming from PMC and technical components, being mindful that we still fully expect some of the stated \$2.85 million in PMC cofinancing to support these positions.

17 December 2024 (AH):

0) Addressed. Thank you for providing a budget that can finally be reviewed in full. Please see below budget comments under #8.

1-7) Previously addressed,

8) Still not addressed. The agency explanation is not consistent with the composition of the cofinancing that has around US\$17 million in grants. Also, it is not understandable how the co-financing supports the overall management and operational needs mentioned in the agency

response. In absence of co-financing, and after finally having the definitive budget table in the CEO Endorsement Portal view, please address the following:

- a. Regarding Annex Q TORs, please explain the high cost for the Project Lead position. Compared to PMUs in similar projects, the proposed salary for this position is exceptionally high. Please amend. Likewise, the following positions are all very high: Financial Officer (US\$ 380 K); MEL Specialist (US\$ 402K); Safeguards and Gender Specialist (US\$ 357K); KM and Communications (US\$ 386K); plus a series of Technical Personnel / Technical lead (11 positions) costing each one around US\$ 350K. The cost for each of these position is too high. Please amend the budget with more realistic cost amounts.
- b. The GEF Agency, CI, is shown as the Responsible Entity for 15 positions and a significant portion of the overall GEF grant. However, GEF approval was not granted for CI to carry out executing functions. CI is also not included as an execution partner in the General Project Information Table. No CI staff or consultant can be financed with GEF funds for this project without advance GEF Sec Managerial approval. Please amend.
- c. Overall, the positions mapped to the execution of this project are nearly 30 positions, costing around US\$ 6.31 million (44% of the project financing) ? with consultants the cost goes to nearly US\$ 8 million. There is no justification for having 30 executing positions for this project, neither for such extremely high cost. Please amend the proposed budget based on the above to ensure the maximum amount of funding is going to where it is needed most.

14 February 2025 (AH):

8) Addressed. The Agency (CI) further explained the identified cofinancing sources in relation to the PMC. This issue has been approved by GEF management.

8b) CI has submitted the necessary country support documentation and justification for their execution of activities under Component 3, in particular to support CMAR, the regional secretariat. This request is approved by GEF management. The General Project Information Table now identifies CI as an execution partner.

8a & 8c) Not addressed. Per meeting with GEF Agency on 13 February 2025, recommendations for addressing budget are as follows:

- Please reassess the need of having three Technical Leads for components 1, 2 and 3 (each costing US\$ 344,534), when on top there is a Project Lead (US\$ 479,881) who, according to the TORs? ?? will develop and oversee the technical and administrative processes of the project for its effective and transparent operation?.

- Please reassess the need of having a Technical Coordinator (US\$ 367,478) when there is an extremely costly Project Lead (US\$ 479,881). Additionally, there are 4 Country Technical Liaison (each one costing US\$ 259,052, excepting that for Colombia whose cost is US\$ 222,045) ? several Regional projects function well without the need of having Technical Liaisons in each participant countries.

- Please reassess the need of having three positions related with financial / administrative issues namely Financial Officer (US\$ 319,419), Administrative Accountant (US\$ 146,191), and Grants and Contracts Officer (US\$ 369,284) + two additional CI positions (even if partial) namely Finance and Operations Director (US\$ 74,500), and Grants and Contract Team (US\$ 57,735). On top of this, there is a Consultancy for Design and implementation of Financial Mechanism (US\$ 121,878).

- Regarding the personnel managed by CI, considering that there are no TORs, it is not possible to understand why ?for instance? a position namely ?Manager of Sustainable Blue Economy (Panama)? costs US\$ 206,011, another position namely ?Personnel - Vice President of Oceans (Costa Rica)? costs US\$ 140,771, while other positions are having a different cost.

- Similarly, please reconsider having three CI positions (even if partial) in Costa Rica namely Executive Director (US\$ 32,508), Marine Manager (US\$ 47,914), and Vice President of Oceans (US\$ 141,771), as well as it is the case for Colombia with three CI positions (even if partial) namely Coordinator of Azul Economy (US\$ 8,566), Program Assistant (US\$ 5,642) and Director of Ocean Governance (US\$ 38,155)

- Please reassess the need of having a Consultancy to Develop Implement a Gender Policy and Gender Action Plan (US\$ 32,400) when there is a Safeguards and Gender Specialist (US\$ 357,672)

- Please reassess the need of having a Consultancy for a Blue Economy and Investment Management (US\$ 174,960) when there is a Manager of Sustainable Blue Economy (US\$ 206,011)

- MEL Specialist (US\$ 402,999) does not seem to have specific TORs ? please reassess.

- Please explain what the budget line ?PASC Allocation for US\$ 125,265? entails

(21 March 2025)

The budget for personnel and professional services (consultants) was reduced from \$7,427,353 to \$6,453,672 in this revised submission. This is 44.8%% of the total project budget (\$14,378,899), which continues to exceed the 30% limit for all personnel and consultants in GEF projects. The project needs to make further meaningful efforts to reduce the budget. There are multiple examples of proposed budget lines that could be removed and counted as co-financing, such as senior CI staff (Executive Director (Costa Rica), Vice President of Oceans (Costa Rica), etc), CI finance and grants roles. Or examples for potential to merge roles in the Pacifico budget, including duplication of efforts with technical leads and country technical liaisons or redundancy in financial officer and a grants and contracts officer roles.

(14 April 2025)

CI has decreased the overall staff budget (personnel and consultants) from 45% down to 36% of the total project budget.

Agency Response

CI GEF - April 14, 2025:

We have made further meaningful efforts to reduce the budget via reducing the budget for professional services. Please see new project budget uploaded.

CI GEF, March 07, 2025:

8): N/A

8b): N/A

8a & 8c):

1. After reviewing the PMU structure further, the Technical Lead for Component 2 has been removed and part of this role included in the component 1 positions. The funds were reallocated to the travel and grant categories of the budget. Also, reductions in the personnel budget have been made by decreasing the allocation for most technical positions by at least 10%.

2. The project complexity considering the technical, political and logistic challenges a regional project that includes four countries, entails demands a strong project management unit that can coordinate actions at the national and regional level.

The project lead will have a technical and political role and will coordinate the many organizations, governments and actors in the ETP region in a higher level, meanwhile the technical coordinator will work within the CMAR Secretariat ensuring all technical actions are aligned and contribute to making the Secretariat a stronger governance body, it is expected that the technical coordinator is based in the permanent Secretariat of CMAR.

The country technical liaisons were a specific request from both the countries and the Secretariat during the PPG phase to ensure coordination and national level inputs in the regional execution. This role will have permanent dialogue with the relevant Ministries, protected areas authorities, technical organizations, national commissions and others relevant to each country. Given the need to closely support the technical counterparts from each government that are part of the CMAR technical committee and the Secretariat itself, we think it is necessary to have these positions in each country to ensure activities are timely completed.

3. It is typical for an FSP (especially over \$10M) to have a finance and administrative team included in the budget. Most projects have personnel dedicated to finance, grants and contracts, and administration as they serve different functions in the project. CI has two additional positions because CI and Fundación Pacífico are not the same organization. They are separate entities with their own finance, operations, and administrative personnel to comply with administration of monitoring of funds, grants and procurement in line with the GEF Minimum Fiduciary Standards.

The consultancy for Design and implementation of Financial Mechanism is unrelated to the day-to-day financial management of the project. The consultancy pertains to the development of the financial mechanism under Output 3.2.1.

4. The Manager of Sustainable Blue Economy oversees daily activities ensuring the quality and timeliness of products coordinating administrative and technical activities in coordination with the four countries and the PMU team; meanwhile the Vice President of Oceans will provide high-level technical guidance ensuring that the outputs resulting from the project have the required specialized knowledge and experience from a regional perspective and in line with CI's Oceans work and ETP work specifically. The budget for the VP of Oceans was reduced by 35%.

5. The three roles in Costa Rica differ and complement each other. The Oceans Vice President has a high-level technical role for Oceans work in the Americas as a regional role, the Executive Director has a high-level role nationally coordinating relationships with partners, governments and fishing communities and the marine manager is in charge of technical activities such as the development of action plans in local fishing communities in the Gulf of Nicoya in Costa Rica.

In a similar way, the roles in Colombia are different considering that the Senior Director of Oceans will participate and oversee the integration of the Regional Blue Economy Strategy into the CMAR Regional Action Plan in Colombia ensuring inputs from multiple national

stakeholders are considered, the Blue Economy Coordinator will lead the development of the blue economy business plans in fisheries and tourism sectors in Colombia and the Program Assistant will assist in administrative and logistical procedures in accordance with CI and GEF policies.

6. The consultancy to Develop and Implement a Gender Policy and Gender Action Plan has been removed from the budget. The Safeguards and Gender Specialist will be responsible for this activity.

7. The Blue Economy and Investment Management consultancy is focused on developing sustainable blue economy initiatives based on national interventions with regional articulation and impact. The Manager of Sustainable Blue Economy will be the technical lead responsible of coordinating these actions ensuring communication between all relevant stakeholders and coordination with the CMAR Secretariat and the countries.

8. The budget allocation for the MEL Specialist has been decreased, and the TOR for the MEL Specialist is included in recent Project Document uploaded.

9. This comment was in the first review sheet and addressed during this time. PASC are costs for CI that include utilities, rent, HR, and internet services. The second review sheet expanded on this comment, adding: Regarding rent being charged to technical components, please identify the specific rent that is being proposed to be paid by GEF funds for technical activities. What buildings will this cover that are not with the PMU? Further, if PASC includes rent per the Agency response below, please explain why rent is being charged twice for the CI self-executed activities of Outcome 3.1?

Our response was the following: Rent is only being charged to buildings used by project personnel. No other buildings are included in the rent lines.

There are two rent lines because they are for different entities. The initial line for rent is allocated to Fundaci?n Pacifico staff, the second line for PASC, which includes rent, is for CI staff. This is marked on the budget annex. Please note Outcome 3.1 includes costs for Fundaci?n Pacifico and CI as indicated on the budget.

The questions/comments were cleared on the subsequent review sheet.

CI GEF. January 10, 2025:

8) Grant co-financing from PEW and Bezos Earth Fund is parallel co-financing. The funds are for related projects from these organizations that contribute to the goals of this project. The project activities are connected, but the funds will stay with the organizations and funding staff implementing those activities; funding does not flow to Pacifico or CI to pay for the staff currently budgeted under this GEF project.

Other grant co-financing provided by CI is focused on delivering activities that contribute to this project such as Strengthening and expanding community-based mangrove conservation and management to reduce deforestation and increase mangrove restoration, and Implementation of mitigation and adaptation strategies in 64,913 ha of mangroves located in Protected Areas, specifically in Ecuador, which aligns with the GEF project on complementing the interventions expected in Component 2. The funds under the other CI project pay for staff, sub-grants, equipment, travel and workshops, professional services, etc. as it relates to that project.

Thus, while CI and partners are providing grants as investment mobilized that contribute to the goals and greater impact of this project, they are covering separate costs.

a. Per GEF feedback, the budget has been amended to reduce costs for the Project Lead and technical staff. The Project Lead is a critical role; the candidate will need an exceptionally high level of skills and experience. Considering the level of effort, we believe the amount is warranted. Decreasing the costs further would jeopardize the effectiveness of implementation.

b. CI executing role in support of blue economy work (outcome 3.1) was requested by the CMAR countries based on the technical expertise and over 20 years of experience in the region. Letters from the countries supporting the execution role have been included in the submission. A separate document to justify in detail CI executing role has been included. Considering the feedback, CI has reduced the number of staff and overall budget. Funding for CI has decreased from \$3.1M to \$2.76M. We have amended the General Project Information Table to include CI as an execution partner.

c. The project budget was amended to decrease the number of staff and, in turn, the cost of personnel. Funding is properly allocated to ensure a successful project

CI GEF ? November 22, 2024:

0) Budget table adjusted and the online version of the budget has been uploaded.

1) clearance noted

2) clearance noted

3 & 4) clearance noted

5) clearance noted

6) clearance noted

7) Budget adjusted.

8) Please note that while there is \$2.85M in PMC co-financing, this is mostly in-kind. The EA and project partners provided PMC co-financing to cover the additional effort required to ensure effective administration and operational support of the project. This co-financing provides essential management resources, but it does not constitute direct co-financing for this project's activities. Therefore, it is important to clarify that the co-financing supports the overall management and operational needs, rather than directly funding the project.

The Terms of Reference for positions charging to both PMC and Components over the 5-year duration, have been included in the CEO Endorsement document under Annex Q. Here is a percentage breakdown of funding:

Project Lead

\$485,108 (96%) is charged to components

\$20,377 (4%) is charged to PMC

Grants and Contracts Officer

\$332,356 (90%) is charged to components

\$36,928 (10%) is charged to PMC

This breakdown is following the GEF policies while keeping the PMC % at the level allowed for a FSP.

CI-GEF 11/07/2024

0) In Portal section Annex G we have uploaded the project budget. Please note that the portal only lets us upload the budget in a word document, not in an excel. Nevertheless, in addition, we have added the same budget in an excel file, as an additional file uploaded in

the roadmap section.

*Project Budget Table only supports .docx file

1) No action needed

2) No action needed.

3) No action needed.

4) Rent is only being charged to buildings used by project personnel. No other buildings are included in the rent lines.

There are two rent lines because they are for different entities. The initial line for rent is allocated to Fundaci?n Pacifico, the second line for PASC, which includes rent, is for CI. This is marked on the budget annex. Please note Outcome 3.1 includes costs for Fundaci?n Pacifico and CI as indicated on the budget.

5) The fish silage process is currently in an advanced stage, representing an opportunity that requires less time to achieve the proposed objectives. Recently an evaluation was conducted, including the inputs, production process, costs, initial assessments of the product's usefulness, and ideas on market potential, although no formal business planning has been established. Its inclusion in the EcoGourmet component is directly linked to facilitating commercial partners involved in fish purchasing to report the delivery of by-products to a group that will manage these wastes as part of a blue economy venture, complementing the overall use of fishery resources. Delaying this investment until a more extensive process is advanced might result in a missed opportunity and this is why it has been included in the budget now as it is building on on-going work. Overall, we believe that the fish silage initiative has a solid foundation and is well-positioned for success. However, during implementation it will be ensured that these expenses are integrated within a broader framework to ensure greater transparency and alignment with the long-term implementation of business plans.

6) CI and Fundaci?n Pacifico (FP) are separate entities with different audit processes and procedures. Per the executing arrangements, CI-GEF will have separate grants for CI and FP and therefore, will have separate audits. All audits are charged to PMC.

7) Travel expenses are primarily focused on ensuring integration and a regional perspective in addressing coastal blue business opportunities. While CI will collaborate with local organizations to develop activities to ensure alignment. The travel costs are not under PMC because they relate to the interventions planned under Component 3.

8) TORs have been uploaded to the portal.

There is no mechanism for grant co-financing from the other partners to pay for the costs in the budget. The grant co-financing from those partners' funds are separate activities that *contribute* to the overall goals of this project and cannot be used to cover the costs of this project

CI-GEF 9/19/2024:

1. Budget has been revised to include detailed descriptions.
2. Budget for CI staff of 3.1 was reduced to \$1,064,237 as well as number of staff (15) and senior positions (3 positions). As a result, staff is now 34.5% of CI's Outcome 3.1 budget.
3. Rent is charged across components and PMC as technical and financial support are necessary to effectively carry out the project. We believe this is consistent with best practices in resource allocation based on personnel level of effort and direct use in the various technical and administrative aspects of the project.
4. PASC are costs for CI that include utilities, rent, HR, and internet services.
5. Item is part now of the consultancy: Analysis of organic fertilizer.
6. The annual project audit is budgeted on the row labeled "Auditing- Project audit" under PMC. The audit for the funds retained by CI is budgeted to O3.1 as CI will only retain funds under this outcome.
7. All three CI budget lines are related to travel, meetings, and workshops and are included in this category.

Project Coordinator to CMAR countries is related to travel.

Project Lead coordination-Panama activities is a cost related to travel. The amount includes trips that the Project coordinator for 3.1 will make to Panama, as CI will have to check regularly on local partners for supervision execution of outcome 3.1.

Project Lead for Monitoring and coordination programs in CMAR countries is a cost related to travel. The amount includes trips that the Project coordinator for 3.1 will make to the 4 CMAR countries to check execution of activities closely.

8. The personnel roles will contribute to components and PMC. Terms of reference for personnel charging to components and PMC (Project Lead and Grants and Contracts Manager) are attached. PMC co-financing is in-kind and unable to support the positions.

Annex H: NGI Relevant Annexes

8.9 a) Does the project provide sufficient detail (indicative term sheet) to assess the following criteria: co-financing ratios, financial terms and conditions, and financial additionality? If not, please provide comments.

b) Does the project provide a detailed reflow table to assess the project capacity of generating reflows? If not, please provide comments.

c) Is the Agency eligible to administer concessional finance? If not, please provide comments.

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement RequestN/A

Agency Response

Additional Annexes

9. GEFSEC DECISION

9.1.GEFSEC Recommendation

Is the project recommended for approval

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

July 24 2024 (AH): No. Please address the above comments and resubmit.

6 October 2024 (AH): No. Please address above comments are resubmit.

15 November 2024 (AH): No. Please address the remaining few issues and resubmit. Please also note, for the CEO Endorsement Document, as an official document, please kindly remove all yellow highlighting. You can included highlighted version of the document as a separate portal upload.

17 December 2024 (AH): No. Please address budget comments above and resubmit. Please also note, for the CEO Endorsement Document, as an official document, please kindly remove all highlighting and included a highlighted version of the document as a separate portal upload.

14 February 2025 (AH): No. Please address budget comments above and resubmit.

21 March 2025 (AH): No. Please address budget comment above and resubmit.

9.2 Additional Comments to be considered by the Agency during the inception and implementation phase

Secretariat comment at CEO Endorsement Request

a) Continue to seek close coordination with relevant stakeholders and donor partners, including opportunities for additional cofinancing to be reported on an annual basis to the GEF.

b) Please be sure to continue to seek opportunities to directly support MPA staff through the project.

c) While it is noted that the 30% gender target is based on local context, please continue to seek greater than 30% engagement as much as possible.

d) As noted in the above comment and Agency response, please ensure during Y1 of implementation that the delivery partner and EA will work with CMAR countries to have a proper engagement with fisheries and create a baseline for the blue economy work.

e) Please continue to seek co-financing as support the PMC during project implementation.

9.3 Review Dates

	CEO Approval	Response to Secretariat comments
First Review	7/29/2024	9/19/2024
Additional Review (as necessary)	10/8/2024	11/7/2024
Additional Review (as necessary)	11/18/2024	11/22/2024
Additional Review (as necessary)	12/17/2024	1/10/2025
Additional Review (as necessary)	4/14/2025	3/7/2025