

# GEF-8 PROJECT IDENTIFICATION FORM (PIF)

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## General Project Information

### Project Title

Women Ocean Guardians: Empowering Women for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Large Marine Ecosystems

### Region

Global

### GEF Project ID

11933

### Country(ies)

Global

### Type of Project

MSP

### GEF Agency(ies):

CI

### GEF Agency ID

### Executing Partner

Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)

### Executing Partner Type

Others

### GEF Focal Area (s)

International Waters

### Submission Date

4/22/2025

### Project Sector (CCM Only)

### Taxonomy

Influencing models, Transform policy and regulatory environments, Strengthen institutional capacity and decision-making, Convene multi-stakeholder alliances, Stakeholders, Indigenous Peoples, Private Sector, Financial intermediaries and market facilitators, SMEs, Individuals/Entrepreneurs, Beneficiaries, Local Communities, Civil Society, Community Based Organization, Non-Governmental Organization, Type of Engagement, Information Dissemination, Partnership, Participation, Consultation, Communications, Awareness Raising, Education, Public Campaigns, Behavior change, Capacity, Knowledge and Research, Enabling Activities, Capacity Development, Knowledge Exchange, Learning, Theory of change, Indicators to measure change, Adaptive management, Innovation, Knowledge Generation, Gender Equality, Gender Mainstreaming, Gender-sensitive indicators, Women groups, Sex-disaggregated indicators, Gender results areas, Knowledge Generation and Exchange, Access and control over natural resources, Participation and leadership, Access to benefits and services, Focal Areas, Biodiversity, Protected Areas and Landscapes, Coastal and Marine Protected Areas, Productive Seascapes, Community Based Natural Resource Mngt, Mainstreaming, Tourism, Fisheries, Biomes, Mangroves, Coral Reefs, Sea Grasses, Financial and Accounting, Payment for Ecosystem Services, Conservation Finance, International Waters, Coastal, SIDS : Small Island Dev States, Large Marine Ecosystems, Aquaculture, Marine Protected Area

### Type of Trust Fund

GET

### Project Duration (Months)

48

### GEF Project Grant: (a)

3,519,725.00

### GEF Project Non-Grant: (b)

0.00

### Agency Fee(s) Grant: (c)

316,775.00

### Agency Fee(s) Non-Grant (d)

0.00

### Total GEF Financing: (a+b+c+d)

### Total Co-financing

3,836,500.00	24,572,365.00
PPG Amount: (e)	PPG Agency Fee(s): (f)
150,000.00	13,500.00
PPG total amount: (e+f)	Total GEF Resources: (a+b+c+d+e+f)
163,500.00	4,000,000.00
Project Tags	
CBIT: No NGI: No SGP: No Innovation: No	

## Project Summary

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

Coastal and Marine Ecosystems face critical threats from overexploitation, habitat destruction, pollution, and climate change. Despite women's vital roles as stewards and knowledge holders, they remain excluded from marine governance, undermining conservation effectiveness and equity.

This global project enhances Large Marine Ecosystem conservation through gender-responsive ocean governance<sup>[1]</sup>. Building on the 2024 Coastal Women Leaders' Exchange<sup>[2]</sup>, it will establish the Women Ocean Guardians Network across three regions and implement scalable community pilots demonstrating transformational change.

The project applies six interlinked levers: policy development, capacity building, network establishment, sustainable livelihoods, finance access, and knowledge management. Five components operationalize this approach: (i) developing and piloting gender-transformative policy tools and assessment frameworks; (ii) establishing three regional WOG hubs and a pledge-based partnership platform; (iii) implementing gender-responsive marine livelihood pilots; (iv) producing knowledge products and engaging IW:LEARN; and (v) adaptive learning through robust M&E.

The project directly supports regional Strategic Action Programmes and existing governance mechanisms including the Caribbean Biodiversity Corridor, Nairobi Convention, and PEMSEA platforms. Participating countries will be selected during PPG based on criteria including transboundary environmental significance, regional cooperation mechanisms, policy readiness, women's organization presence, financial infrastructure, and scalability potential. Belize and Costa Rica are under consideration.

Expected results include improved management of approximately 203,079 hectares of MPAs/OECMs, directly benefiting 3,560 people (65% women), achieving IW:LEARN level 4 engagement, and demonstrating replicable models for gender-responsive ocean governance across transboundary marine systems. Letters of Endorsement from participating countries will be secured by CEO Approval.

<sup>[1]</sup> [ftnref1](#) The project uses the term “ocean governance” to refer sustainable use, management, and conservation of coastal and marine ecosystems

<sup>[2]</sup> [ftnref2](#) Held ahead of the UN Ocean Conference Pre-meeting “Immersed in Change,” the 2024 Coastal Women Leaders' Exchange was convened by WCS and CI with support from the governments of France and Costa Rica, the GEF, UNFPA, UNDP, UNESCO, MARFund, Movilizadorio, DIWO, IUCN, and Ocean Outcomes. It brought together 26 Women Ocean Guardians from 11 countries across the Americas and Caribbean, including fisherwomen, Indigenous leaders, MPA managers, rangers, and conservationists, culminating in a Call to Action and pledges of support from governments and international institutions.

## Indicative Project Overview

### Project Objective

To strengthen the sustainable use, management and conservation of Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs) by enhancing gender-responsive ocean governance, empowering women frontliners in coastal and marine ecosystems and implementing community-led solutions.

## Project Components

### Component 1: Gender-transformative Policies for Sustainable Ocean Governance

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
492,762.00	3,440,132.00

Outcome:

**Outcome 1.1:** Local and regional ocean governance policies and frameworks integrate gender-transformative approaches, ensuring the inclusion of women frontliners in decision-making processes for coastal and marine ecosystems

**Indicator 1.1:** *Number of gender-transformative policy and governance frameworks adopted on national or regional level*

**Target 1.1:** *At least one gender-transformative policy and governance framework is adopted on national or regional level*

Output:

**Output 1.1.1:** A policy development package for gender-transformative ocean governance developed

**Indicator 1.1.1:** *Number of policy development packages developed*

**Target 1.1.1:** *One policy development package developed*

**Output 1.1.2:** An Ocean Governance Assessment Tool to support the implementation of gender-transformative marine policies developed.

**Indicator 1.1.2:** *Number of assessment tools developed*

**Target 1.1.2:** *One assessment tool developed*

**Output 1.1.3:** The Policy Development Package and the Ocean Governance Assessment Tool are implemented

**Indicator 1.1.3:** *Number of countries in which the policy package and the assessment tool implemented*

**Target 1.1.3:** *The policy package and the assessment tool are implemented in at least one country*

### Component 2: Establishing the Women Ocean Guardians Network

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET

GEF Project Financing (\$)

739,142.00

Co-financing (\$)

5,160,197.00

Outcome:

**Outcome 2.1:** A global Women Ocean Guardians Network is established and positioned for long-term sustainability

**Indicator 2.1:** *Number of active network members of the Women Ocean Guardians*

**Target 2.1:**

*1 fully operational global Women Ocean Guardians Network with at least 1000 active members established by end of project*

**Outcome 2.2:** Enhanced capacity of women to effectively engage in ocean governance, leadership, and decision-making to sustain healthy marine ecosystems

**Indicator 2.2:** *% of women reporting improved leadership and engagement in decision-making, with supporting qualitative feedback on confidence and influence (pre-post assessment)*

**Target 2.2:** *At least 65% report improved leadership and engagement, with qualitative feedback of increased confidence and influence by project end.*

Output:

**Output 2.1.1:** Regional Women Ocean Guardians Hubs established in partnerships with international and regional institutions.

**Indicator 2.1.1:** *Number of regional hubs established*

**Target 2.1.1:** *3 regional hubs established*

**Output 2.1.2:** Structures and execution arrangements established to make Women Ocean Guardians a sustainable network beyond the duration of the project

**Indicator 2.1.2:** *Number of formal partnership agreements signed for network sustainability*

**Target 2.1.2:** *At least 3 formal partnership agreements with donors, institutions, and stakeholders established to ensure Women Ocean Guardians Network sustainability beyond project duration by project end*

**Output 2.1.3:** Women Ocean Guardians Pledge launched as a voluntary commitment for governments, private sector, civil society, and other stakeholders and shared through the WOG network

**Indicator 2.1.3:** *Number of entities signing the pledge*

**Target 2.1.3:** *At least 200 entities sign the pledge by the end of the project duration*

## Output 2.2.1: Leadership training and mentorship programs co-designed and delivered

**Indicator 2.2.1.1:** Design of leadership training and mentorship programs

**Target 2.2.1.1:** Leadership training and mentorship programs are co-designed and available for delivery

**Indicator 2.2.1.2:** Number of women frontliners trained

**Target 2.2.1.2:**

500 women frontliners are trained

## Component 3: Community-level, evidence-based implementation

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
1,275,482.00	8,846,051.00

Outcome:

**Outcome 3.1:** Enhanced ocean governance through gender-responsive marine conservation and sustainable livelihoods

**Indicator 3.1:** Marine OECMs supported (ha)

**Target 3.1:**

TBD

Output:

**Output 3.1.1:** A pilot implemented to demonstrate and scale gender-responsive marine conservation and sustainable livelihood models linked to MPAs and OECMs

**Indicator 3.1.1:** Number of pilots implemented

**Target 3.1.1:** One pilot implemented

**Output 3.1.2:** Partnerships developed with financial institutions and private sector to enhance financing access for women-led enterprises and sustainable livelihoods linked to MPAs and OECMs

**Indicator 3.1.2:**

Number of partnerships formalized ( e.g. through an MoU) with financial institutions

**Target 3.1.2:** At least 2 partnerships formalized

## Component 4: Knowledge Management & Learning

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GET

GEF Project Financing (\$)

668,748.00

Co-financing (\$)

4,668,749.00

Outcome:

**Outcome 4.1:** Improved knowledge management and sharing of best practices on gender-responsive and gender-transformative ocean governance

**Indicator 4.1:** *Number of knowledge management products and platforms created and utilized*

**Target 4.1:** *At 1 operational knowledge-sharing platform created, and 10 knowledge products shared*

Output:

**Output 4.1.1:** Gender-responsive and gender-transformative ocean governance practices are documented and shared across LMEs through the Women Ocean Guardians Network, regional learning exchanges, and global knowledge-sharing platforms

**Indicator: 4.1.1:**

*Number of best practices documented and shared*

**Target 4.1.1:**

*At least 5 best practices are documented and shared*

**Output 4.1.2:** Women Ocean Guardians knowledge platform established

**Indicator 4.1.2:**

*Existence and functionality of the knowledge platform*

**Target 4.1.2:** *Women Ocean Guardians knowledge platform established and functional by year 2*

**Output 4.1.3:** Project knowledge and experiences are documented and disseminated through active participation in IW:LEARN, including the development of knowledge products and engagement in portfolio learning events

**Indicator 4.1.3:**

*Number of knowledge products are disseminated through IW:Learn*

**Target 4.1.3:**

*At least 5 knowledge products are disseminated through IW:Learn*

## M&E

Component Type

Technical Assistance

Trust Fund

GET

GEF Project Financing (\$)

175,986.00

Co-financing (\$)

1,228,618.00

Outcome:



## Outcome 5.1: A functional M&E system that supports continuous improvement of the project

Output:

**Output 5.1.1:** Periodic M&E reports submitted to CI-GEF Agency

**Indicator 5.1.1:** *Quarterly and Annual Reports generated and reviewed*

**Target 5.1.1:** *16 Quarterly and 4 Annual M&E reports generated and reviewed for decision-making and adaptive management*

**Output 5.1.2:** An independent Mid-Term Review (MTR) and Terminal Evaluation (TE) are conducted

**Indicator 5.1.2:** *MTR and TE completed*

**Target 5.1.2:** *1 MTR completed by project mid-point; 1 TE completed*

## Component Balances

Project Components	GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
Component 1: Gender-transformative Policies for Sustainable Ocean Governance	492,762.00	3,440,132.00
Component 2: Establishing the Women Ocean Guardians Network	739,142.00	5,160,197.00
Component 3: Community-level, evidence-based implementation	1,275,482.00	8,846,051.00
Component 4: Knowledge Management & Learning	668,748.00	4,668,749.00
M&E	175,986.00	1,228,618.00
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>3,352,120.00</b>	<b>23,343,747.00</b>
Project Management Cost	167,605.00	1,228,618.00
<b>Total Project Cost (\$)</b>	<b>3,519,725.00</b>	<b>24,572,365.00</b>

Please provide justification

## PROJECT OUTLINE

### A. PROJECT RATIONALE

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

### **Challenges of coastal and marine ecosystems and communities**

1. Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs) are among the most ecologically and economically productive areas of the world's oceans. They support critical biodiversity, global fisheries, and the livelihoods of hundreds of millions of people<sup>[1]</sup>. However, LMEs are increasingly under threat from a combination of environmental pressures, including overexploitation of marine resources, habitat degradation, pollution, and climate change.
2. Unsustainable human activities, including destructive fishing methods, coastal development, and land-based pollution, severely degrade marine ecosystems such as coral reefs, mangroves, and seagrass beds. These vulnerable ecosystems serve as essential nurseries for diverse marine species, protect coastal communities from extreme weather, and support sustainable livelihoods.<sup>[2]</sup>
3. Across LMEs, the cumulative impact of overfishing, pollution, habitat degradation, and climate change is accelerating biodiversity loss and ecosystem decline. Coral bleaching, mangrove deforestation, and hypoxic zones are undermining habitats critical for fish reproduction and coastal protection. Climate-related stressors such as salinization, warming seas, and more intense storms further diminish water quality and fisheries productivity. As ecosystem services collapse, vital sectors like small-scale fisheries, aquaculture, and marine tourism are threatened, undermining both food security and local economies.<sup>[3]</sup>
4. These ecological disruptions translate into heightened socio-economic vulnerability for coastal communities. Millions of people - particularly those engaged in small-scale or subsistence livelihoods - depend directly on marine ecosystems for income, nutrition, and cultural identity. As marine resources decline, competition over access intensifies, disproportionately affecting Indigenous peoples, women, and marginalized groups with limited tenure rights or decision-making power. These pressures undermine social resilience and reduce communities' ability to adapt to environmental change. Critically, they also limit the capacity of those who serve as frontline stewards of transboundary marine systems to protect and sustain the ecosystems on which we all depend.

### ***Role and limitations of MPAs and OECMs***

5. Addressing marine ecosystem challenges requires coordinated, systemic responses. Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) are central tools for safeguarding biodiversity, supporting ecosystem services, and building social-ecological resilience. As momentum for area-based conservation grows, MPAs serve as vital refuges for species recovery, fish stock replenishment, and habitat restoration. OECMs – including community-managed fisheries and locally managed marine areas – complement formal MPAs by integrating conservation goals with traditional knowledge and sustainable use practices.<sup>[4]</sup>
6. MPAs and OECMs contribute to climate adaptation by maintaining ecosystems that buffer coastal areas from sea level rise and erosion.<sup>[5]</sup> However, their potential remains largely unrealized due to weak enforcement, fragmented legal frameworks, inadequate financing, and limited capacities. Critically, the absence of meaningful local participation undermines their legitimacy and effectiveness, leading to resource conflicts, uneven benefit distribution, and reduced compliance.<sup>[6]</sup>
7. These limitations are particularly pronounced when gender considerations are absent. Women, who play essential but often unrecognized roles in marine resource use and stewardship, are frequently excluded from the governance of MPAs and OECMs. Globally, women represent only approximately 3% to 11% of the ranger

workforce, including roles in MPAs.<sup>[7]</sup> Their knowledge, leadership, and contributions are overlooked, weakening the social foundations necessary for effective and equitable conservation. Conservation efforts that fail to address existing power imbalances risk reinforcing inequalities and overlooking the potential of inclusive, community-driven solutions.

8. To unlock the full potential of MPAs and OECMs, governance frameworks must evolve to become more inclusive, equitable, and gender-responsive. Strengthening community engagement – particularly through the empowerment of coastal women – can significantly enhance the effectiveness, legitimacy, and long-term sustainability of area-based conservation.

### **Disproportionate impact on women**

9. While environmental degradation affects entire coastal communities, its impacts are not experienced equally. Coastal women, particularly those from Indigenous groups, small-scale fishing households, and marginalized rural areas, often face disproportionate burdens due to existing gender inequalities, limited access to resources, and exclusion from decision-making processes.<sup>[8]</sup> These disparities compound their vulnerability to environmental shocks and restrict their ability to contribute to, and benefit from, conservation and resilience-building efforts.
10. In many marine-dependent communities, women play essential though often invisible roles in fisheries and aquaculture – participating in post-harvest processing, gleaning, marketing, and managing household food security. They are also active in small-scale tourism, community-based resource management, and informal conservation practices. Despite this, women are frequently excluded from marine governance structures, including the management of MPAs and OECMs, where decision-making roles are typically dominated by men.
11. As ecosystems decline and resource competition intensifies, women's access to marine resources is often the first to be restricted due to customary norms or institutional biases. Environmental shocks – such as storm surges, coral bleaching, or declining fish stock – can increase women's unpaid care burdens, force shifts to lower-income livelihoods, or lead to displacement and loss of social networks. In some contexts, these stressors can also heighten the risk of gender-based violence (GBV), particularly when social protection systems are weak or breakdowns in community structures occur.<sup>[9]</sup> These impacts are magnified by intersecting factors such as age, ethnicity, marital status, and education level, which shape women's agency, resilience, and access to adaptation support.

### **Women as essential stewards of Blue Economy**

12. The GEF's Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) defines a sustainable blue economy as 'a concept that seeks to promote economic growth, social inclusion, and the preservation or improvement of livelihoods while ensuring environmental sustainability of the oceans and coastal areas.'<sup>[10]</sup> Within this framework, women serve as vital, yet often unrecognized, contributors through their diverse and essential roles in coastal and marine ecosystems.
13. Women are key contributors to the blue economy, and their empowerment is a catalyst for sustainability. When empowered, women bring unique knowledge of ecosystems, risk management, and community dynamics that is vital for the sustainable use and protection of marine and coastal resources.<sup>[11], [12], [13]</sup> Their participation enhances the social legitimacy of conservation initiatives and increases community buy-in, particularly in regions where traditional or community-led governance structures prevail. Evidence consistently shows that conservation efforts are more effective when women's perspectives and priorities are actively integrated.<sup>[14]</sup> This growing recognition is reflected in global commitments such as the Chitwan Declaration of the 2019 World Ranger Congress, which acknowledges 'the significant gender gap that currently exists in the Ranger profession' and calls for equal opportunities, equal wages, and workplace measures to support female rangers.<sup>[15]</sup>

## Drivers, barriers, and opportunities for change

14. This project adopts the definition of “Gender Transformative Project” from the GEF IEO, which is: “Gender transformative project goes beyond gender mainstreaming and facilitates a “critical examination” of gender norms, roles, and relationships; strengthens or creates systems that support gender equity; and/or questions and changes gender norms and dynamics.” As such, it is aimed to lead [ ] behavioral changes toward gender norms and dynamics in the systems targeted by and systems beyond the project.<sup>[16]</sup>
15. The challenges outlined in previous sections are rooted in systemic drivers that continue to undermine conservation, resilience, and equity. While these barriers are persistent, they are neither inevitable nor irreversible. A shift toward governance models that are inclusive, equitable, and grounded in the lived realities of coastal communities – particularly women – is both necessary and achievable. Gender-responsive and gender-transformative<sup>[17]</sup> solutions that address unequal power dynamics and institutionalize women’s leadership provide a strategic pathway to strengthen marine governance, improve biodiversity outcomes, and advance social equity. This approach lays the foundation for unlocking the full potential of sustainable ocean governance through inclusive design, participatory implementation, and institutional reform. The table below outlines the underlying drivers, root causes, key challenges, and opportunities for change.

**Table 1.** Drivers, root causes, barriers and opportunities for change

Underlying Drivers	Root Causes	Challenges	Opportunities for Change
<b>Barrier 1: Limited representation of women in ocean governance and decision-making bodies</b>			
The exclusion of women and marginalized groups from marine governance limits diversity and inclusiveness in decision-making.	Deep-rooted gender norms, male-dominated leadership spaces, and limited recognition of women’s roles, compounded by a lack of enabling mechanisms like quotas or inclusive consultations.	Governance processes often lack gender-responsiveness and community representation, resulting in decisions that overlook the needs and knowledge of women and marginalized groups.	The project can strengthen inclusive ocean governance by promoting institutional reforms, gender-responsive consultations, and tailored leadership pathways for women frontliners.
<b>Barrier 2: Lack of gender-transformative policies and frameworks for MPAs and OECMs</b>			
Weak governance and institutional fragmentation hinder inclusive and coherent marine policy development.	Limited institutional capacity and tools to implement gender-transformative approaches; siloed operations across sectors and unclear mandates further weaken coordination.	Overlapping mandates and fragmented frameworks limit the effectiveness of MPAs and OECMs to address ecological and social priorities in an inclusive and equitable way.	The project can foster cross-sectoral coordination, clarify institutional mandates, and promote integrated governance to enable gender-transformative conservation strategies.
<b>Barrier 3: Insufficient networking and knowledge-sharing among women frontliners in coastal and marine ecosystems globally</b>			
The absence of structured, women-led networks limits opportunities for connection, visibility, and collective influence in marine conservation and governance.	Limited recognition of women’s leadership, geographic distance, and absence of formal platforms for exchange, mentorship, and advocacy.	Women frontliners often remain isolated, with limited access to shared knowledge or strategic alliances, reinforcing the sense that their challenges are local rather systemic.	Growing recognition of women’s roles presents an opportunity to build dedicated networks that amplify voices, strengthen leadership, and catalyze collective action in ocean governance.
<b>Barrier 4: Limited access to financing and capacity building opportunities for women-led conservation and sustainable livelihoods</b>			

Conservation finance systems often fail to address the structural exclusion of women frontliners from economic systems and decision-making spaces.	Gender-blind financing and training programs as well as cultural, bureaucratic, and educational barriers limit women's access, support, and recognition in conservation.	Women frontliners often face restricted access to finance, mobility, and capacity-building, limiting their role in conservation and ability to benefit from sustainable ocean governance.	There is an opportunity to develop gender-responsive financing and training mechanisms to strengthen women's leadership and livelihoods in marine conservation.
Barrier 5: Social, cultural and institutional barriers to women's participation, e.g. restrictive gender norms, economic exclusion, and limited recognition of women's knowledge and contributions			
Deep-rooted norms and institutional biases continue to undervalue women's roles and restrict their participation in marine governance and conservation.	Gender norms and power structures often exclude women from leadership, with limited recognition of their ecological knowledge and few policies to advance gender equity.	Women remain underrepresented in leadership and policy spaces, limiting their ability to influence marine governance and benefit from conservation efforts.	Gender-responsive governance and culturally appropriate engagement can make marine decision-making more equitable and effective.

## Baseline initiatives and success stories

16. While critical gaps remain in the inclusiveness and effectiveness of marine governance, a growing number of initiatives around the world are demonstrating that gender-responsive, community-led approaches can strengthen sustainable ocean governance. These efforts highlight the importance of recognizing women frontliners as active stewards of marine ecosystems, integrating local knowledge, and fostering more equitable governance systems. By building on these emerging examples, the proposed project seeks to amplify what works, accelerate progress, and scale impact across LMEs.
17. Notable initiatives that reflect the potential of gender-responsive ocean governance and community-driven conservation include efforts that span leadership development, inclusive MPA governance, sustainable livelihoods, integration of traditional knowledge, and gender-responsive financing. These examples offer tested models and lessons that the proposed project can build upon, adapt, and scale:
- **IW:LEARN:** GEF International Waters Learning Exchange and Resource Network: The global knowledge-sharing platform for international waters projects, fostering peer-to-peer learning, good practice exchange, and capacity-building.<sup>[18]</sup>
  - **The MPACONnect network in the Caribbean:** Focused on professional capacity-building for MPA managers, this initiative has increasingly integrated gender considerations into its training modules and management tools.<sup>[19]</sup>
  - **Blue Ventures' Gender Equality Program:** This marine conservation organization collaborates with coastal communities in countries such as Belize, Madagascar, Philippines to support equitable engagement in marine conservation, recognizing the crucial roles of women and girls in traditional fisheries. Their approach enhances conservation effectiveness by fostering collaboration, compliance, and accountability.<sup>[20]</sup>
  - **More Women, More Nature Program, Costa Rica:** This national initiative recognizes and strengthens the leadership of rural and Indigenous women in ecosystem restoration and conservation. By supporting women-led projects, building capacity, and securing financial mechanisms for nature-based solutions, the program enhances gender equality while promoting sustainable resource management. It demonstrates how empowering women can accelerate biodiversity recovery and community resilience.<sup>[21]</sup>
  - **Women in Fisheries Association (WIFA), Belize:** Aims to amplify the voices of women in Belize's fisheries sector by promoting leadership, visibility, and participation in marine resource management. The association provides training, networking opportunities, and advocacy support to empower women fishers and ensure their representation in policy dialogues and co-management bodies.<sup>[22]</sup>
  - **Nairobi Convention's Efforts on Gender Inclusivity:** The Nairobi Convention, a regional platform for the protection, management, and development of the Western Indian Ocean, has implemented initiatives that promote gender-inclusive ocean governance. Through projects such as WIOSAP and SAPPHERE, the Convention

has supported gender-mainstreamed marine spatial planning, community-led MPA management, and the inclusion of women and marginalized groups in consultations and capacity-building. These efforts have integrated coastal community needs and gender considerations into sustainable fisheries and marine conservation practices.<sup>[23]</sup>

- **Tanzania’s Seaweed Farming Cooperatives:** These women-led enterprises demonstrate the dual benefits of sustainable marine livelihoods and strengthened economic agency, providing a replicable model for integrating conservation and empowerment.<sup>[24]</sup>
- **Cash Blue and Parity MPA Governance, Madagascar:** Led by WCS and its Ravaka initiative, this project integrates gender parity into the governance of MPAs while enhancing local livelihoods through cash-based incentives. By promoting equal participation of women and men in MPA decision-making structures and linking conservation with direct socio-economic benefits, the initiative successfully strengthens community engagement, fosters co-management, and advances gender-equitable marine conservation.
- **Women Rangers in Maningrida, Australia:** In Maningrida, an all-female crew of Indigenous rangers has taken leadership roles in marine conservation, excelling in biosecurity, marine debris removal, and cultural preservation, showcasing the effectiveness of women-led conservation efforts.<sup>[25]</sup>
- **Pacific Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) in Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture:** This initiative provides tailored guidance on integrating GESI principles into coastal fisheries and aquaculture across the Pacific. Through region-specific tools, trainings, and policy support, it strengthens the capacity of fisheries institutions and communities to promote inclusive and equitable participation – particularly by women and marginalized groups – in the management and development of marine resources.<sup>[26]</sup>
- **Sea Women of Melanesia:** This organization trains indigenous women in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands to monitor and manage coral reefs, effectively integrating traditional knowledge with marine science to establish and restore marine protected areas.<sup>[27]</sup>
- **San Waddy Community-Led Conservation, Myanmar:** Supported by the Myanmar Biodiversity Fund, the San Waddy initiative demonstrates how inclusive, community-led conservation can protect coastal ecosystems while improving local livelihoods. Women in the community have taken active roles in the co-management of a Locally Managed Marine Area (LMMA), contributing to mangrove restoration, sustainable fisheries, and environmental education.<sup>[28]</sup>
- **Coral Catch, Indonesia:** Award-winning scholarship program that empowers women to pursue careers in marine conservation. Through a training program, participants from local communities gain hands-on experience in coral restoration, marine science education, and leadership skills. The initiative aims to create a network of 100 female leaders dedicated to protecting and restoring Indonesia's coral reefs by 2030.<sup>[29]</sup>
- **Oceans for Prosperity Project, Indonesia:** Launched in 2023, this initiative focuses on improving MPA management and surrounding fisheries. A significant component is enhancing economic opportunities for local communities, with a particular emphasis on women's empowerment.<sup>[30]</sup>

18. These examples point to a growing recognition of the central role women play in marine resource stewardship. They also show that when governance systems are designed to be inclusive and gender-responsive, both environmental and social outcomes improve. The proposed project builds directly on this momentum, including the Coastal Women Leaders’ Exchange organized in June 2024 ahead of the UN Ocean Conference Pre-meeting, “Immersed in Change.” Led by WCS and CI – in partnership with the governments of France and Costa Rica, the GEF, UNFPA, UNDP, UNESCO, MARFund, Movilizadorio, DIWO, IUCN, and Ocean Outcomes – the exchange convened 26 Women Ocean Guardians from 11 countries across the Americas and Caribbean representing Indigenous women, fisherwomen, park rangers, MPA managers, and conservationists. The event culminated in a Call to Action for centering women’s voices in marine conservation and the blue economy, and was met with pledges of support from governments and multilateral institutions.

19. To advance this agenda, the project will institutionalize the Women Ocean Guardians network, catalyze inclusive policy reform, and demonstrate scalable, community-led solutions for sustainable ocean governance. During the PPG phase, related initiatives will be further examined to ensure the project builds on existing lessons and momentum – providing the tools, networks, and institutional support needed to scale these practices. In doing



so, the project aims to move from scattered success stories to systemic, sustainable change across regions and levels of governance.

20. Building on this foundation, the proposed project will be executed by WCS, which has been selected as the Executing Entity based on its demonstrated leadership in gender-responsive ocean governance and its proven implementation capacity. As the co-organizer of the 2024 Coastal Women Leaders' Exchange, WCS showcased its ability to convene diverse stakeholders and advance a shared vision for inclusive marine conservation. The organization brings extensive experience implementing large-scale marine and coastal initiatives across Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, and South Asia, and has built strong partnerships with governments, local communities, and regional institutions. WCS is well-positioned to execute this project and scale gender-transformative conservation solutions across multiple regions. During the PPG phase and following the selection of pilot countries, specific institutional arrangements will be further developed. This will include defining collaboration frameworks with national and regional entities, which will be detailed in the full project document. WCS will also establish a dedicated Project Management Unit (PMU) to lead the day-to-day coordination and delivery of project activities. The PMU will work in close collaboration with national and regional stakeholders to ensure that implementation remains responsive to local contexts while supporting global learning and policy coherence.

## Beneficiaries, stakeholders and their roles

21. The project engages a broad and interconnected set of stakeholders, including coastal communities, national and regional government institutions, women frontliners, civil society organizations, financial institutions, private sector actors, and regional and global partners. These groups are both contributors to and beneficiaries of the project, which aims to enhance the conservation of LMEs through gender-responsive ocean governance:

- **Women frontliners in coastal and marine ecosystems** are at the heart of this initiative. This group includes women rangers, small-scale fishers, business owners, conservation practitioners, tourism workers, and community leaders – all of whom play vital but often unrecognized roles in marine resource management and environmental stewardship. The project will support their leadership, technical capacity, and access to sustainable livelihood opportunities through training, mentorship, enterprise support, and participation in the Women Ocean Guardians Network. Their empowerment is fundamental to achieving effective, inclusive, and resilient ocean governance.
- **Coastal communities** are both beneficiaries and implementation partners. By centering women's leadership within these communities, the project contributes to broader community well-being and enhances local capacity to manage marine resources sustainably. Supportive and sensitized men and youth are also essential enablers of gender-transformative change and will be actively engaged throughout implementation, recognizing that inclusive governance benefits entire communities and ecosystems.
- **Government institutions** at national and subnational levels are key enablers of change. Ministries and agencies responsible for environment and protected areas, fisheries, planning, and gender equality will be engaged to co-develop and pilot policy tools that institutionalize inclusive governance. Their participation is essential to ensure that gender-transformative approaches are integrated into the management of MPAs, OECMs, and broader ocean governance systems.
- **Regional institutions and intergovernmental platforms**, including the Caribbean Biodiversity Corridor, Cartagena Convention, the Nairobi Convention, and PEMSEA, will support regional adaptation and scaling of tools and practices. These entities are expected to include Women Ocean Guardians representatives in their governance structures and support the regional hubs and serve as regional conveners for peer learning, capacity building, and policy advocacy.
- **Civil society organizations and community-based groups**, including local and international rangers' associations, fisherfolk cooperatives, Indigenous governance structures, and women's collectives, will be central to co-designing and delivering project activities. These actors provide invaluable local knowledge, legitimacy, and continuity, ensuring that the project remains grounded in realities and community priorities.

- **Financial institutions and private sector actors** will be engaged to promote inclusive economic opportunities linked to sustainable ocean governance. The project will facilitate dialogue between women frontliners, coastal enterprises, and financial actors to co-develop tailored financial products and market linkages, particularly in sectors such as eco-tourism, seaweed farming, and circular economy innovations.
- **Global partners and knowledge platforms**, including donors, development agencies, and IW:LEARN, will support visibility, learning, and replication of successful models. Their engagement will contribute to mainstreaming gender-responsive ocean governance across the GEF International Waters portfolio and beyond. The project will also engage women's caucuses and advocacy networks involved in advancing gender equality under relevant international environmental frameworks, such as the CBD, to strengthen policy coherence and alignment with global gender-related commitments.

22. A wide range of stakeholders have been consulted in preparation of the project concept. Below table provides an overview of those consultations.

Entity and date	Scope of discussions
Multiple Entities- including UNFPA, UNDP, UNESCO, MARFund, Movilizadorio, DIWO, IUCN, Ocean Outcomes (June 2024)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Immersed in Change" meeting led by WCS and CI convened 26 Women Ocean Guardians from 11 countries across the Americas and Caribbean representing Indigenous women, fisherwomen, park rangers, MPA managers, and conservationists. The event served to have a deep dive on challenges by women frontliners in coastal and marine ecosystems, and culminated in a Call to Action for centering women's voices in marine conservation and the blue economy.</li> </ul>
Caribbean Biodiversity Corridor (Multiple consultations from February to April 2025)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CBC is an intergovernmental platform connecting marine ecosystems across the Caribbean region.</li> <li>• CBC expressed strong interest in the project, emphasizing the alignment between CBC priorities and focus of the project.</li> <li>• Collaboration prospects include introducing WOG as a strong stakeholder in policy-level discussions, and offering a platform to the project and the WOG in presenting the policy package and assessment tools in the Ministerial Committee of the CBC.</li> <li>• CBC gave positive feedback to the project scope and design, indicating that the project is timely and needed.</li> </ul>
MarFund (12 Mar 25)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MarFund is a Regional Conservation Trust Fund operating in the Caribbean that supports marine conservation efforts.</li> <li>• The consultation involved a comprehensive presentation of the project and an in-depth dialogue on the importance of integrating gender perspectives into sustainable conservation efforts.</li> <li>• MARFund has been working on initiatives focused on women and women's ventures, and is now formalizing these efforts into a structured project within their organization.</li> <li>• The proposed project was found relative, well-structured and needed.</li> </ul>
FundeCooperation (12 Mar 25)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FundeCooperation is a financial institution based in Costa Rica, providing targeted credit lines for women experiencing extreme poverty, particularly in rural coastal areas.</li> <li>• The discussions explored opportunities for cooperation to enhance community-level access to finance, aligning closely with the project's geographical and thematic focus.</li> <li>• The institution affirmed the project's relevance, emphasizing its potential to significantly impact under-supported communities.</li> </ul>
WCS Headquarters (Multiple meetings from February to April 2025)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultations held with various experts on the overall project design and the needs of the gender-transformative and gender-responsive policies, sustainable livelihoods and network development.</li> </ul>
WCS Belize Office (3 Apr 25)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation to identify ongoing initiatives in Belize and their potential linkages with the project, as well as to receive feedback on the project scope.</li> </ul>



CI (Multiple meetings from February to April 2025)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussions held not only as the GEF Agency for the project but with various experts from CI on their respective technical fields on conservation, communities and gender.</li> </ul>
FAO (9 April 2025)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The FAO is a specialized agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger and improve nutrition and food security.</li> <li>Discussions served to explore collaboration prospects with the project, and exploring potential co-financing</li> </ul>
Movilizadorio (10 Mar 25)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Movilizadorio is a lab dedicated to activating citizen power to drive social and environmental justice.</li> <li>The Organization works with various stakeholders to foster influence in civic and political processes, including environmental issues and coastal communities.</li> <li>The consultation covered strategies for fostering community-based sustainable livelihoods in coastal and marine ecosystems, as well as potential collaborative initiatives during project execution. Stakeholders emphasized the project's timely focus on community empowerment and gender equity in conservation.</li> </ul>
Tinta (17 Mar 25)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tinta is an organization that connects indigenous leaders and fisher communities globally, focusing on gender-focused work and addressing challenges faced by women in frontline fishing communities.</li> <li>The discussion focused on exchanging experiences and exploring potential collaboration with Tinta's gender-focus work in the fisher communities and the challenges faced by women frontliners in Africa, Latin America and Asia.</li> </ul>
PROCARIBE+ (19 Mar 25)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Procaribe+ is interested in putting together a Gender Working group as a part of the development of a new SAP. Women Ocean Guardians could participate as a formal stakeholder.</li> <li>Potential for WOG to have a seat at the Ocean Coordination Mechanism, recently developed by Procaribe+</li> <li>Procaribe+ has a small grant component, where projects focused on Blue Economy are funded. 30% of these funds are destined for Women-led or Youth-led projects.</li> </ul>
Caribbean Biodiversity Fund (CBF) (21 Mar 25)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A regional fund in the Caribbean Region. The CBF has a specific women's facility and provides investments in various Caribbean countries, including Belize.</li> <li>Suggested to focus on aquaculture value chains like queen conch and sea moss, which address conservation, food security, and local food production (in general to consider pilot projects that help increase local food production in the Caribbean, where 80-90% of food is currently imported).</li> <li>Recommended to explore community-based tourism models, similar to Costa Rica's ecotourism approach, that benefit local communities and support marine conservation</li> <li>CBF is open to further consultation and was supportive of the project, expressing openness to discuss potential roles and offering specific regional insights</li> </ul>

## Justification for the project

23. The proposed project responds to the urgent need for more inclusive and effective marine conservation in LMEs, where ecological degradation and gender inequality intersect to undermine resilience and sustainability. Despite the promise of MPAs and OECMs, their potential remains unrealized due to governance gaps, fragmented institutions, and the systematic exclusion of women from decision-making, particularly in transboundary marine systems where coordinated, equitable governance is critical.
24. This project offers a timely, strategic intervention to address these systemic barriers by enabling gender-responsive ocean governance. Rather than treating women's empowerment as a standalone objective, it positions the leadership of women frontliners as essential to achieving durable, legitimate, and context-responsive conservation outcomes. By tackling structural drivers of exclusion - such as weak policy frameworks, underrepresentation, and limited access to resources - the project opens new pathways for community leadership, policy reform, and institutional innovation.

25. Without GEF support, the structural barriers that exclude women from ocean governance would persist, and the governance and management of LMEs would continue to fall short of inclusive, effective, and sustainable practice. Existing efforts would remain fragmented, and opportunities for scaling successful models of women-led stewardship would likely be lost. Moreover, there is a risk that current gains could stagnate or even regress, further entrenching exclusion from governance processes and leaving small-scale, locally led innovations isolated and unsupported.

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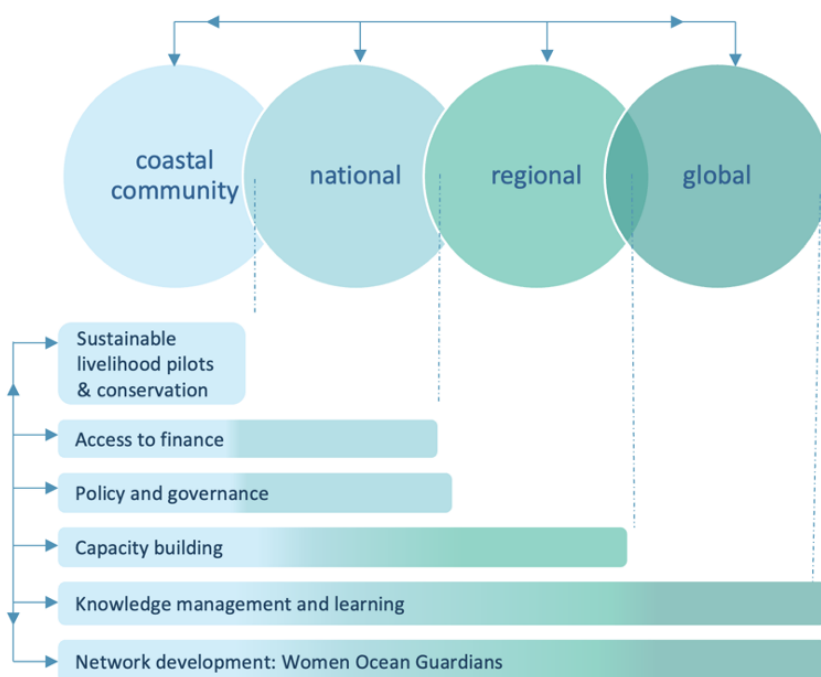
## B. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### Project description

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

### Theory of Change

1. This global project is designed to operate across multiple, interconnected levels. At the community level, it advances sustainable livelihoods and conservation, and strengthens women's capacities through localized engagement. At the national level, it supports the development and institutionalization of policies and governance mechanisms and support access to finance of gender-responsive sustainable livelihoods linked to MPAs and OECMs. On the regional level, it offers customized capacity building through the Women Ocean Guardians Network. At the global level, it builds robust inter-regional networks and knowledge systems that amplify local voices and ensure that lessons learned are shared across geographies and institutions. These enablers work in synergy to reinforce sustainability, replication, and continuous adaptation across the full arc of sustainable ocean governance.



**Figure 1.** Project approach: Enables through multiple levels

2. The project aims to enhance the conservation of LMEs by supporting gender-responsive ocean governance. It will create enabling conditions for the empowerment of women frontliners in coastal and marine ecosystems, increase their participation in decision-making, and improve community well-being and marine sustainability. The project recognizes that environmental challenges in marine ecosystems cannot be effectively addressed without the full inclusion of women as decision-makers, rights holders, and agents of change.
3. To realize this transformation, the project applies six interlinked levers: i) Policy and governance, ii) Capacity building, iii) Network development, iv) Sustainable livelihoods, v) Access to finance, and vi) Knowledge

management and learning. These levers work together to remove gender-related barriers to sustainable ocean governance and reinforce one another. For example, the pilot initiatives generate new knowledge that is captured through the project's knowledge systems; these insights are fed back into policy packages, governance tools, and capacity-building content. Similarly, lessons from trainings inform updates to network strategies, while regional forums and learning exchanges surface innovations that can be scaled through policy and financing dialogues. This creates a continuous feedback loop where practice, learning, and policy evolve together, reinforcing long-term impact.

#### **Lever: Policy and Governance**

4. This lever provides the enabling foundation for gender-transformative change by integrating inclusive approaches into ocean policy frameworks. The project will develop a Policy Development Package to guide governments and marine institutions in integrating gender-transformative approaches into policy and governance frameworks. It will also create a Capacity Assessment Tool to help institutions evaluate their technical, financial, and institutional readiness to implement inclusive ocean governance. Both tools will be co-designed with stakeholders – including the women frontliners in coastal communities and the Women Ocean Guardians Network– through participatory regional workshops and iterative consultations. Once developed, the tools will be piloted in one country to demonstrate their feasibility, relevance, and potential for replication to improve governance outcomes for marine ecosystems and communities.

*Assumption:* Local governments and marine authorities will be willing and able to adopt gender-transformative policies if appropriate tools are accompanied by institutional commitment, leadership support, and openness to cultural change.

*Risk:* Political turnover, weak institutional ownership, or resistance to gender-transformative approaches may delay or block adoption of new policy tools and governance reforms.

#### **Lever: Capacity Building**

5. The project will strengthen the leadership, technical, and negotiation capacities of women to influence marine conservation and governance. The project will co-design relevant training and mentorship programs that combine biodiversity monitoring and resource management with leadership, business, and advocacy skills, through the Women Ocean Guardians Network. Peer-to-peer and cross-regional mentorship models will be embedded to reinforce skills and solidarity. Training will be delivered through inclusive, flexible formats adapted to women's time constraints, literacy levels, and local languages. Ongoing alumni networks and follow-up mentoring will help ensure that capacity development translates into long-term engagement and influence.

*Risk:* Women may face cultural, institutional, or logistical barriers – such as restricted mobility, unpaid care burdens, or limited access to decision-making spaces – that prevent them from applying their capacities in practice, or engage in the capacity building activities in the first place.

#### **Lever: Network Development**

6. The project will build the Women Ocean Guardians (WOG) Network into a sustained, inter-regional platform anchored in three regional hubs. These hubs will coordinate action, peer learning, and leadership training, while contextualizing tools to reflect local realities. The Women Ocean Guardians Pledge will be launched as a voluntary commitment to create buy-in across governments, civil society, and the private sector. *Assumption:* Connecting and empowering women frontliners in coastal and marine ecosystems through a structured network will amplify their voices and increase their influence in sustainable ocean governance. the regional and international institutions will support the Women Ocean Guardians Network for its establishment as a sustainable structure beyond the project's duration.

*Risk:* Access to finance for long-term commitment.

#### **Lever: Sustainable Livelihoods**

7. To demonstrate tangible benefits of inclusive ocean governance, the project will pilot a community-led model linking gender-responsive conservation with sustainable livelihoods linked to MPAs/OECMs. The pilot, which will be designed in the PPG stage, will support women-led enterprises in areas such as eco-tourism, seaweed farming, and waste upcycling. The pilot will emphasize that inclusive governance benefits entire communities – men and

women alike – by positioning women’s participation as essential to environmental outcomes, not a competing priority.

*Assumption:* The pilot gender-responsive initiatives will demonstrate measurable benefits to the ecosystem and communities, and challenge restrictive gender norms.

*Risk:* Pilot livelihood initiatives may face limited viability or uptake if local market conditions are weak, enabling infrastructure is lacking, or restrictive gender norms prevent women from fully engaging in or benefiting from economic activities.

#### ***Lever: Financing***

8. This lever plays a catalytic role, enabling especially the sustainable livelihoods lever rather than functioning independently. The project will broker dialogue between communities and financial actors, promoting the co-design of products that respond to women’s needs in sustainable ocean governance. Financial institutions will be encouraged to adapt or create mechanisms aligned with women’s needs, but design and delivery will remain with the institutions themselves.

*Assumption:* Financial institutions and private sector actors will be willing to engage in co-designing and delivering financial mechanisms that improve women’s access to resources for sustainable livelihoods linked to area-based conservation.

*Risk:* Financial institutions and private sector actors may lack the incentives, risk appetite, or operational flexibility to co-design and implement gender-responsive financing products that reach women at the community level.

#### ***Lever: Knowledge Management and Learning***

9. The project will establish feedback-rich systems to document and share lessons from across its interventions. It will create accessible, multilingual knowledge products and build a digital platform to connect communities, policymakers, and the Women Ocean Guardians Network. The project will organize annual Women Ocean Guardians forums to support South-South learning exchanges and ensure participation in global platforms such as IW:LEARN. Structured feedback loops will ensure that women’s insights – especially from pilots and trainings – inform future policy tools, replication strategies, and project design.

*Assumption:* Access to knowledge, resources, and network will increase women’s participation in ocean governance practices.

*Risk:* Knowledge products may not reach or resonate with target users.



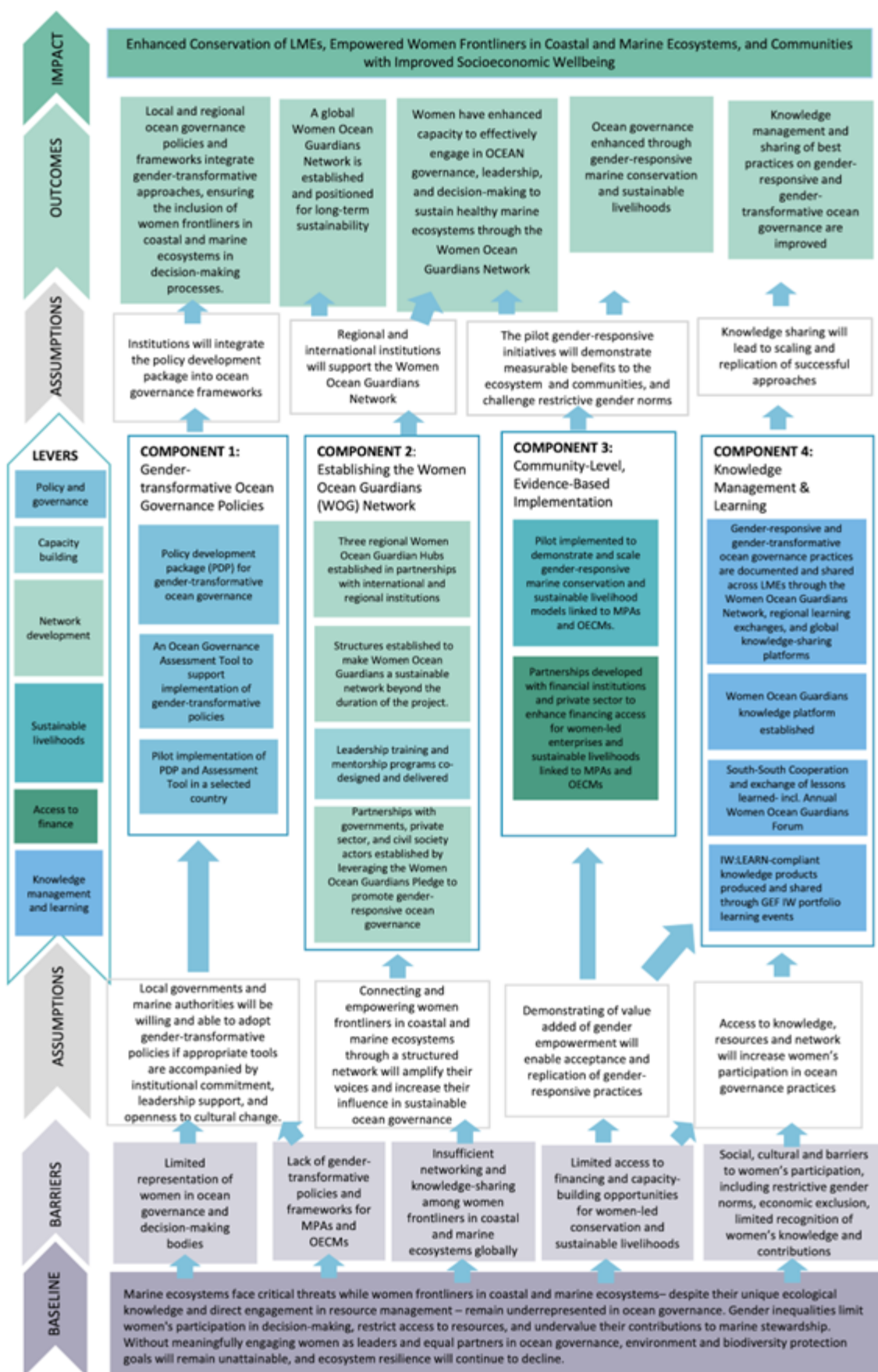


Figure 2. Theory of change diagram

## Project Components

### COMPONENT 1: GENDER-TRANSFORMATIVE POLICIES FOR SUSTAINABLE OCEAN GOVERNANCE

**Outcome 1.1: Local and regional ocean governance policies and frameworks integrate gender-transformative approaches, ensuring the inclusion of women frontliners in decision-making processes for coastal and marine ecosystems**

**Indicator 1.1:** *Number of gender-transformative policy and governance frameworks adopted on national or regional level*

**Target 1.1:** *At least one gender-transformative policy and governance framework is adopted on national or regional level*

**Output 1.1.1: A policy development package for gender-transformative ocean governance developed**

**Indicator 1.1.1:** *Number of policy development packages developed*

**Target 1.1.1:** *One policy development package developed*

10. This output focuses on the development of a comprehensive Policy Development Package (PDP) to support governments, marine resource management authorities, and conservation stakeholders. The PDP will guide the integration of gender-transformative approaches into marine and coastal policies, including the governance frameworks of MPAs and OECMs.
11. The PDP will be designed to unlock environmental and socio-economic benefits that would remain out of reach without gender-transformative policies. It will consist of several interlinked components: guidelines for integrating gender-transformative approaches into relevant policies, capacity-building tools tailored for policymakers, policy drafting templates, and a collection of best practices. It will also include stakeholder engagement strategies to ensure that gender perspectives are comprehensively embedded throughout policy processes. The PDP will be created through a participatory and co-creative process to ensure that it is grounded in real-world contexts and garners stakeholder buy-in from the outset. Regional co-design workshops will be convened, bringing together women leaders, government representatives, civil society organizations, fisherfolk cooperatives, and community-based conservation actors, including local rangers. The Women Ocean Guardians network will also be actively engaged in the co-creation process.
12. To maximize reach and uptake, the package will be presented on intergovernmental platforms such as the Caribbean Biodiversity Corridor (CBC), the Nairobi Convention (Africa), and the Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA). It will also be disseminated through key knowledge-sharing platforms, including IW:Learn, ensuring broad accessibility and sustained engagement across regions. The PDP will not remain a static product. Its design will allow for continuous refinement and adaptation.

**Output 1.1.2: An Ocean Governance Assessment Tool to support the implementation of gender-transformative marine policies developed**

**Indicator 1.1.2:** *Number of assessment tools developed*

**Target 1.1.2:** *One assessment tool developed*

13. Under this output, a comprehensive Ocean Governance Assessment Tool will be developed to support governments, marine resource management authorities, and conservation stakeholders in identifying institutional gaps and assessing their readiness to integrate gender-transformative approaches into ocean governance, including within the frameworks of MPAs and OECMs. It will provide a structured framework to evaluate both formal capacities—such as institutional, technical, and financial capabilities—and enabling conditions like political will, prevailing gender norms, and informal power dynamics that influence decision-making and accountability.

Rather than functioning as a static checklist, the tool will employ a range of assessment methods, including self-assessment modules, stakeholder interviews, and participatory workshops, to ensure a nuanced and context-specific analysis.

14. The tool will be designed in a modular and potentially digital format, enabling users to tailor the tool to their specific priorities. For instance, separate modules may focus on MPAs (with potential linkages/integration of Management Effectiveness Evaluation Tool for MPAs<sup>[1]</sup>), financial resourcing, leadership structures, or enforcement mechanisms. Its structure will be informed by and aligned with existing assessment frameworks, such as those developed by UNDP<sup>[2]</sup> and UN<sup>[3]</sup>, ensuring that the tool resonates with institutional stakeholders and is more readily adopted. Like the PDP, the tool will be shared through intergovernmental platforms such as the CBC, the Nairobi Convention (Africa), and PEMSEA. Dissemination will also be supported via established knowledge-sharing platforms, ensuring broad access and institutional uptake across marine regions.

### **Output 1.1.3: The Policy Development Package and the Ocean Governance Assessment Tool are implemented**

**Indicator 1.1.3:** Number of countries in which the policy package and the assessment tool implemented

**Target 1.1.3:** The policy package and the assessment tool are implemented in at least one country

15. To demonstrate practical application and accelerate regional momentum, the project will pilot the Policy Development Package and the Ocean Governance Assessment Tool in at least one country. This will serve to showcase the relevance, feasibility, and gender-transformative potential of the tools developed under Outputs 1.1.1 and 1.1.2. The implementation will be accompanied by tailored capacity-building support to government officials and relevant stakeholders involved in the design and enforcement of MPA and OECM-related policies and regulations. As part of this process, participants' knowledge and attitudes toward gender mainstreaming and affirmative action will be measured before and after the capacity-building interventions. This will enable the project to document the gender-transformative impact of the intervention and provide tangible evidence for adaptive learning.
16. The pilot will also be used to document lessons learned and identify opportunities to improve the PDP and the Ocean Governance Assessment Tool. These insights will inform further refinement of the tools and ensure that they remain grounded, relevant, and adaptable across diverse national contexts. To deepen the project's visibility and influence, countries participating in the pilot will be invited to formally adhere to the Women Ocean Guardians Pledge. The country to pilot the policy package and assessment tool will be selected at the PPG stage, based on the level of interest, demonstrated political commitment to gender equality, and active engagement in regional ocean governance platforms such as the CBC, Nairobi Convention, or PEMSEA.

## **COMPONENT 2: ESTABLISHING THE WOMEN OCEAN GUARDIANS NETWORK**

### **Outcome 2.1: A global Women Ocean Guardians Network is established and positioned for long-term sustainability**

**Indicator 2.1:** Number of active network members of the Women Ocean Guardians

**Target 2.1:** 1 fully operational global Women Ocean Guardians Network with at least 1000 active members established by end of project

#### **Output 2.1.1: Regional Women Ocean Guardians Hubs established in partnerships with international and regional institutions**

**Indicator 2.1.1:** Number of regional hubs established

**Target 2.1.1:** 3 regional hubs established

17. Under this output, the Women Ocean Guardians Network will be established with three regional hubs in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, and Southeast Asia, expected to cover several LMEs, including the Caribbean



Sea LME, Agulhas and Somali Current LMEs, and the Bay of Bengal. The exact locations of the hubs will be determined during the PPG stage.

18. These hubs will serve as strategic coordination spaces for advancing inclusive and equitable ocean governance at the regional level, while ensuring that global messages, tools, and capacity-building efforts are grounded in regional realities. Each hub will be operationalized with clearly defined core functions, including regional coordination, peer learning, leadership training, advocacy, and long-term network management. The hubs will also facilitate the contextualization of global tools and strategies to reflect region-specific governance structures, socio-cultural contexts, and environmental priorities. To enhance legitimacy and long-term viability, each hub will be established in partnership with existing regional institutions – such as intergovernmental bodies, universities, or well-established conservation NGOs – that already have strong community ties and operational infrastructure. For instance, in the Caribbean, the CBC has expressed strong interest in including the Women Ocean Guardians Network as a recognized stakeholder. In Africa and Asia, similar partnerships will be explored, potentially through the Nairobi Convention, AWFISHNET (African Women Fish Processors and Traders Network), and PEMSEA, respectively.

**Output 2.1.2: Structures and execution arrangements established to make Women Ocean Guardians a sustainable network beyond the duration of the project**

19. The output will also focus on ensuring that the Women Ocean Guardians Network remains active and impactful well beyond the life of the project. In this regard, a sustainability roadmap will be developed that identifies financial, institutional, and governance-related mechanisms to support the network's long-term operations and growth. The project will actively pursue partnerships with UN agencies, philanthropic and public donors, financial institutions, and the private sector. These partnerships will seek to secure co-funding, align with broader gender and marine conservation strategies, and integrate the network into established global and regional initiatives.
20. Sustainability will be approached in a holistic sense – not only through funding and institutionalization, but also through fostering community ownership and long-term relevance. In parallel, the project will seek ways to embed the network's activities into national and regional planning processes, particularly where synergies exist with gender, climate, or marine policies. This will help anchor the network within broader governance frameworks, improving its chances of sustained support and influence.

**Output 2.1.2 : Partnerships with governments, private sector, and civil society actors established by leveraging the Women Ocean Guardians Pledge to promote gender-responsive ocean governance**

**Indicator 2.1.3:** Number of partnerships established by leveraging the Women Ocean Guardians Pledge

**Target 2.1.3:** At least 10 partnerships established

21. This output focuses on building partnerships and generating momentum for gender-responsive ocean governance by leveraging the Women Ocean Guardians Pledge – a voluntary commitment already open for signatories. The pledge invites governments, MPA authorities, regional organizations, civil society, and private sector actors to affirm their intent to integrate gender-responsive principles into marine and coastal governance, planning, and conservation.
22. As an inclusive engagement tool, the pledge allows stakeholders to publicly express their commitment to enhancing women's participation and leadership in marine resource governance and to addressing gender-based barriers within their mandates. The Women Ocean Guardians Network and its regional hubs will play a central role in promoting the pledge, facilitating peer learning among signatories, and linking their commitments to concrete partnership opportunities supported by the project.

23. Beyond raising awareness, the pledge will serve as a low-barrier, non-binding entry point for institutions to engage more deeply with project-supported tools and processes including policy development, capacity-building, and pilot implementation activities. The participation of early signatories, particularly those already active in regional governance platforms, will help build momentum and inspire uptake across other countries and marine regions.
24. The project will use the pledge strategically to cultivate multi-stakeholder partnerships that align efforts, co-develop project activities, and sustain engagement beyond the project's duration. In doing so, the pledge will help transform initial commitments into concrete actions and reinforce regional momentum for gender-equitable ocean governance.

**Outcome 2.2: Women have enhanced capacity to effectively engage in OCEAN governance, leadership, and decision-making to sustain healthy marine ecosystems through the Women Ocean Guardians Network**

**Indicator 2.2:** % of women reporting improved leadership and engagement in decision-making, with supporting qualitative feedback on confidence and influence (pre-post assessment)

**Target 2.2:** At least 65% report improved leadership and engagement, with qualitative feedback of increased confidence and influence by project end.

**Output 2.2.1: Leadership training and mentorship programs co-designed and delivered**

**Indicator 2.2.1.1:** Number of frontliners trained through leadership and capacity-building programs

**Target 2.2.1.1:** 700 women frontliners trained through leadership and capacity-building programs

25. This output will focus on the co-design and delivery of regional training and mentorship programs to enhance the capacity of women to participate meaningfully in marine and coastal governance, resource management, and leadership across the broader ocean governance landscape. The training programs will be co-designed with local stakeholders and the Women Ocean Guardians Network to ensure they are tailored to the local context and needs, while also fostering global connectivity and peer learning through the network.
26. Training curricula will include technical topics such as biodiversity monitoring, enforcement, and resource management, alongside dedicated modules on leadership development, financial and business management, negotiation skills, and strategies to increase women's influence in governance processes. This holistic approach will ensure that women are equipped not only with technical expertise but also with the leadership capacity needed to drive gender-responsive change in marine conservation. Training formats will be tailored to varying levels of literacy, language needs, and time availability, ensuring that women from diverse backgrounds can participate meaningfully. On-site coaching and follow-up mentoring will be embedded into the delivery process to support women as they begin to apply new skills and leadership strategies in governance settings.
27. The program will also create space for cross-regional learning exchanges to foster solidarity and innovation across LMEs. Opportunities for certification or formal recognition, potentially in collaboration with regional academic institutions or partners, will be explored to enhance participants' professional and advocacy pathways.

### COMPONENT 3: COMMUNITY-LEVEL, EVIDENCE-BASED IMPLEMENTATIONS

**Outcome 3.1: Ocean governance enhanced through gender-responsive marine conservation and sustainable livelihoods**

**Indicator 3.1: 2.2** Marine protected areas under improved management effectiveness

**Target 3.1:** 203,079.122 ha (Indicative at concept stage)

### Output 3.1.1: A pilot implemented to demonstrate and scale gender-responsive marine conservation and sustainable livelihood models linked to MPAs and OECMs

**Indicator 3.1.1:** Number of pilots implemented

**Target 3.1.1:** One pilot implemented

28. This output focuses on piloting gender-responsive models for marine conservation and sustainable livelihoods connected to MPAs and OECMs. The pilot will engage communities in identifying and testing locally appropriate, women-led solutions, such as eco-tourism, sustainable fisheries, seaweed farming, and plastic waste upcycling to strengthen ocean governance and economic resilience.

29. Belize and Costa Rica are under consideration as potential pilot countries, with final selection and pilot design to be determined during the PPG stage. Final selection and detailed pilot design will be confirmed during the PPG phase, based on the application of a defined set of selection criteria outlined in the table below.

Criteria	Description
Transboundary environmental significance	The country is located within or adjacent to a Large Marine Ecosystem (LME) of transboundary importance, where regional ecological integrity depends on cooperative marine and coastal governance.
Regional governance and collaboration mechanisms	The country actively participates in a regional or subregional governance platform (e.g., LME commissions, MPA networks, or ocean-related conventions) that supports joint actions in marine protection, monitoring, or policy coordination.
Policy and institutional readiness	The country demonstrates political will relevant to the WOG project's objectives.
Stakeholder engagement and gender inclusion	There is an active presence of women's organizations and/or community-based networks engaged in marine and coastal governance, with demonstrated interest in gender-responsive or inclusive conservation approaches.
Financial infrastructure	The country has existing financial infrastructure that could support or co-create financial products benefiting women or community-level actors in marine governance.
Scalability and replication potential	The country has enabling conditions (e.g., national policies, institutional champions, demand from government or CSOs) that support the integration and scaling of gender-transformative marine governance practices piloted under the WOG project.

30. The pilot will be co-designed through a participatory process involving community stakeholders and representatives from the Women Ocean Guardians Network, ensuring that the models are grounded in local priorities. The design process will also draw on global evidence and lessons learned from successful, community-led marine conservation initiatives to support adaptation and relevance.

31. The pilot will emphasize the shared environmental and socio-economic benefits of inclusive ocean governance for both women and men, positioning women's participation and leadership as a key driver of sustainability and community well-being. It will also explore the feasibility of alternative financing and business models such as cost-sharing arrangements or payment for ecosystem services (PES) to bolster long-term support for community-based conservation and sustainable livelihoods.

30. A replicability roadmap will be developed to outline the steps, enabling conditions, and partnerships required to scale successful elements across other MPAs and OECMs in the region. This roadmap will position the pilot as a foundation for broader adoption of inclusive approaches in marine conservation and livelihoods. Learnings from the pilot will be captured and shared through systematic documentation, storytelling, and reflection sessions that capture successes, challenges, and women participants' experiences. Partnerships with local youth-led or women-led digital storytelling initiatives will be explored to amplify community voices and maintain visibility.

### **Output 3.1.2: Partnerships developed with financial institutions and private sector to enhance financing access for women-led enterprises and sustainable livelihoods linked to MPAs and OECMs**

**Indicator 3.1.2:** Number of partnerships formalized ( e.g. through an MoU) with financial institutions

**Target 3.1.2:** At least 2 partnerships formalized

31. This output focuses on establishing strategic partnerships with financial institutions and private sector actors in the selected pilot country(ies) to enhance financing access for women-led enterprises contributing to sustainable ocean governance. These partnerships will aim to catalyze investment in businesses operating in and around MPAs and OECMs, particularly in sectors such as eco-tourism, sustainable fisheries, seaweed farming, and circular economy solutions like plastic waste upcycling.
32. The project will act as a connector between financial institutions, conservation trust funds, and women-led enterprises, without directly developing financial mechanisms. By facilitating dialogue, it will promote the co-design of tailored financial solutions that align with inclusive and sustainable ocean governance. The Women Ocean Guardians Network and local communities will be actively engaged in the co-design process to ensure that financial products reflect the actual constraints, priorities, and opportunities of coastal women. While the project will enable and support these processes, financial institutions will retain responsibility for designing and delivering the mechanisms. In parallel, private sector partnerships will be leveraged to identify market opportunities and supply chain linkages that strengthen the viability of women-led enterprises.

## **COMPONENT 4: KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT & LEARNING**

### **Outcome 4.1: Knowledge management and sharing of best practices on gender-responsive and gender-transformative ocean governance are improved**

**Indicator 4.1:** Percentage of surveyed stakeholders reporting increased knowledge/awareness of gender-responsive ocean governance practices

**Target 4.1:** At least 80% of surveyed stakeholders demonstrate improved knowledge through pre/post assessments

### **Output 4.1.1: Knowledge products and learning exchanges developed and disseminated through the Women Ocean Guardians Network, regional learning exchanges, and global knowledge-sharing platforms**

**Indicator: 4.1.1:** Number of best practices documented and shared

**Target 4.1.1:** At least 5 best practices are documented and shared

33. This output aims to strengthen learning and knowledge exchange on gender-responsive and gender-transformative ocean governance by systematically capturing, documenting, and disseminating best practices, outcomes, and lessons from across the project.
34. The project will develop comprehensive knowledge documents and targeted products that highlight the impact of the project pilots, along with actionable recommendations for replication and scale-up. These will include case studies, policy briefs, and best practice compilations. To increase accessibility and engagement, The knowledge products will go beyond traditional formats to increase accessibility and engagement, especially among women at the community level. These will include short video case studies, audio storytelling, and illustrated briefs in local languages, making information more relatable and usable.
35. To further support exchange and visibility, Annual Women Ocean Guardians Forums will bring together policymakers, practitioners, and women frontliners in coastal and marine ecosystems to exchange insights and

advance gender-responsive ocean governance. These forums will include innovative formats such as storytelling circles and community dialogues to elevate women's voices and experiences, complementing more formal sessions. These exchanges will also foster South-South cooperation, enabling countries and communities across the Global South to share innovations, adapt tools, and co-create gender-responsive solutions based on shared environmental and socio-cultural realities.

#### **Output 4.1.2: Women Ocean Guardians knowledge platform established**

**Indicator 4.1.2:** *Existence and functionality of the knowledge platform*

**Target 4.1.2:** *Women Ocean Guardians knowledge platform established and functional by year 2*

36. This output focuses on the establishment of a dedicated knowledge platform to support communication, collaboration, and access to training and resources for women and local communities involved in ocean governance. The platform will serve as a central hub for the Women Ocean Guardians Network, enabling users across regions to share experiences, access learning materials, and stay connected.
37. To ensure accessibility, relevance, and long-term viability, the PPG phase will include an assessment of the most suitable and cost-effective modality for deploying the platform. This assessment will consider whether to build a stand-alone digital platform or integrate the network's functions into an existing platform aligned with ongoing initiatives.
38. Regardless of the technical modality chosen, the platform will be designed with the needs of its users at the forefront, offering features such as downloadable resources, language-accessible content, interactive spaces for peer exchange, and links to training opportunities. Where feasible, offline-friendly tools will also be considered to increase reach in low-connectivity areas.

#### **Output 4.1.3: IW:LEARN-compliant knowledge products produced and shared through GEF IW portfolio learning events**

**Indicator 4.1.3:** *Number of knowledge products are disseminated through IW:Learn*

**Target 4.1.3:** *At least 5 knowledge products are disseminated through IW:Learn*

39. This output ensures the project contributes to global knowledge-sharing and learning within the GEF International Waters (IW) portfolio by engaging with IW:LEARN. Participation will include the development of targeted knowledge products such as case studies, technical briefs, and multimedia materials aligned with IW:LEARN standards. The project will also engage in IW portfolio learning events, contributing insights from the Women Ocean Guardians Network, pilot initiatives, and capacity-building efforts to inform broader dialogue on gender-responsive ocean governance. Through these efforts, the project will support cross-project learning and amplify its global influence by positioning gender-responsive and sustainable ocean governance as a critical dimension of effective transboundary water management within the GEF IW community.

### **COMPONENT 5: MONITORING & EVALUATION**

#### **Outcome 5.1: A functional M&E system supports continuous improvement of the project**

**Indicator 5.1:** *Percentage of progress achieved and reported in implementation of the project*

**Target 5.1:** *100% if project implementation has been achieved and related M&E reporting delivered*

#### **Output 5.1.1: Periodic M&E reports submitted to CI-GEF Agency**

**Indicator 5.1.1:** *Number of Quarterly and Annual Reports generated and reviewed*

**Target 5.1.1:** *16 Quarterly and 4 Annual M&E reports generated and reviewed for decision-making and adaptive management*

40. This output ensures the establishment and implementation of a functional Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system to support continuous improvement and learning throughout the project. Periodic M&E reports will be submitted to the CI-GEF Agency in accordance with GEF requirements, providing timely updates on project progress, outcomes, and lessons. A comprehensive monitoring framework will be developed to track impacts at the pilot site and across the regional network hubs. In addition to conventional quantitative indicators, the framework will integrate qualitative metrics to capture more nuanced dimensions of change. These include women's perceptions of empowerment, shifts in leadership roles, and their evolving participation in marine and coastal governance processes.
41. Participatory monitoring will be central to the project's approach, particularly at the community level. Local women leaders and community groups will be actively engaged in collecting, analyzing, and interpreting monitoring data. This will not only enhance the richness of reporting but also foster greater ownership and accountability, ensuring that M&E becomes a tool for reflection and empowerment – not just compliance.

#### **Output 5.1.2: An independent Mid-Term Review (MTR) and Terminal Evaluation (TE) are conducted**

**Indicator 5.1.2: Numbers of MTR and TE conducted**

**Target 5.1.2: 1 MTR and 1TE conducted**

42. This output ensures that the project undergoes two critical external assessments to evaluate progress, effectiveness, and impact. A Mid-Term Review (MTR) will be conducted at the midpoint of project implementation to assess achievements against targets, identify challenges, and recommend course corrections where needed. A Terminal Evaluation (TE) will be carried out at the end of the project to assess its overall performance, including relevance, efficiency, sustainability, and the extent to which project objectives and outcomes have been achieved. Both evaluations will be conducted in line with CI-GEF Agency and GEF standards and will include stakeholder consultations and evidence-based assessments.

#### **Global Environmental Benefits**

43. The proposed project will generate global environmental benefits by improving the sustainability, equity, and resilience of marine and coastal governance in transboundary LMEs. With GEF funding of USD 3,4m million, the project will support improved management of MPAs and OECMs, with an indicative estimated area of approximately 203,079 hectares, based on potential pilot sites in Belize and Costa Rica. It will also foster more inclusive and cooperative governance across shared marine ecosystems, and the empowerment of women frontliners as stewards of biodiversity and marine resources. While this area estimate will be validated during the PPG phase, the project maintains a global aspiration, with further engagement opportunities to be explored in other LMEs during project preparation.
44. As noted in the project justification, these benefits would not materialize under a business-as-usual scenario. GEF support enables transformative, scalable models of gender-responsive ocean governance that integrate environmental, social, and institutional dimensions.

#### **Innovation**

45. This project introduces a transformative model for ocean governance by embedding gender equity not as an add-on, but as a structural enabler of marine conservation. It builds on the momentum of the 2024 Coastal Women Leaders' Exchange and the emerging Women Ocean Guardians Network to catalyze systemic change across policy, practice, and knowledge systems. Rather than focusing narrowly on community participation, the project targets the institutional root causes of exclusion – developing tools, networks, and feedback mechanisms that embed women frontliners into the core of marine governance. Its design reflects a deep integration of policy reform,



capacity-building, peer learning, and financial access – working together to transform how conservation is governed, who shapes it, and who benefits from it.

46. What makes the project's innovation scalable is its architecture: regional hubs, structured feedback loops, and global learning exchanges allow tested solutions to be adapted and institutionalized across geographies. Rather than isolated pilots, the project creates a platform for sustained innovation and replication, embedding gender-transformative ocean governance into policies, networks, and financing systems.

[1] <https://iucn.org/news/commission-environmental-economic-and-social-policy/202101/new-edition-protected-area-management-effectiveness-tracking-tool-mett>

[2] <https://www.undp.org/publications/systemic-capacity-assessment-tool>

[3] <https://unpan.un.org/capacity-development/otc/self-assessment-tools/self-assessment-questionnaire>, <https://weps-gapanalysis.org>

### Coordination and Cooperation with Ongoing Initiatives and Project.

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

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

1. The project will explore opportunities to collaborate with, learn from, and build on a range of ongoing initiatives that exemplify gender-responsive, community-led approaches to ocean governance. These potential areas of cooperation, mutual learning, and knowledge exchange will be further explored during the PPG phase.

**Table 3.** Cooperation with ongoing initiatives and projects

Initiative	Potential Cooperation with relevant initiatives
IW:Learn	The project will participate in IW:LEARN activities and share lessons from pilots and policy tools, while also leveraging the platform for cross-regional learning and dissemination of gender-transformative approaches in LMEs.
MPAConnect, Caribbean	The project could explore partnering with MPAConnect to strengthen gender-responsive training modules and adapt existing tools for broader regional uptake.
Blue Ventures' Gender Equality Program	The project can collaborate with Blue Ventures to learn from its gender-integrated conservation programming and apply similar models in pilot countries. Opportunities for shared learning, joint advocacy, and knowledge exchange will be explored.
More Women, More Nature Program, Costa Rica	The project could explore knowledge exchange with Costa Rica's national program to replicate elements that link women's leadership with restoration and biodiversity outcomes.
Women in Fisheries Association (WIFA), Belize	The project may support WIFA in expanding its outreach and training programs, and draw on its experience to inform the design of the Women Ocean Guardians Network and similar platforms.
Nairobi Convention (WIOSAP and SAPPHERE projects)	The project could align with Nairobi Convention activities, particularly in the Western Indian Ocean, to promote gender-responsive marine spatial planning and cross-project synergies.
Tanzania's Seaweed Farming Cooperatives	The project could explore the replication of this livelihood model in other contexts, using it as a good practice for linking conservation and women's economic empowerment.
Cash Blue and Parity MPA Governance, Madagascar	The proposed project can learn from this gender-parity MPA governance model and its use of direct socio-economic incentives to strengthen participation and compliance.

Women Rangers in Maningrida, Australia	The project can draw on this example to demonstrate the effectiveness of women-led conservation teams and advocate for increased recruitment, training, and recognition of women rangers in MPAs.
Pacific GESI in Coastal Fisheries and Aquaculture	The project could use this guidance and training approach as a model for incorporating GESI principles into fisheries and aquaculture management in participating countries.
Sea Women of Melanesia (Coral Sea Foundation)	This initiative offers a strong model for integrating traditional ecological knowledge with marine science. The project may facilitate exchanges and peer learning opportunities with the Women Ocean Guardians Network.
Coral Catch, Indonesia	The project can draw from Coral Catch's leadership training and coral restoration model to strengthen the capacity of young women in marine conservation.

## Core Indicators

### Indicator 2 Marine protected areas created or under improved management

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
203079	0	0	0

#### Indicator 2.1 Marine Protected Areas Newly created

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

Name of the Protected Area	WDPA ID	IUCN Category	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
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#### Indicator 2.2 Marine Protected Areas Under improved management effectiveness

Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
203079	0	0	0

Name of the Protected Area	WDP A ID	IUCN Category	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)	METT score (Baseline at CEO Endorsement)	METT score (Achieved at MTR)	METT score (Achieved at TE)
TBC at CEO stage			203,079.00						

### Indicator 7 Shared water ecosystems under new or improved cooperative management

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

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

Shared Water Ecosystem	Rating (Expected at PIF)	Rating (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Rating (Achieved at MTR)	Rating (Achieved at TE)
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**Indicator 7.2 Level of Regional Legal Agreements and Regional management institution(s) (RMI) to support its implementation (scale of 1 to 4; see Guidance)**

Shared Water Ecosystem	Rating (Expected at PIF)	Rating (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Rating (Achieved at MTR)	Rating (Achieved at TE)
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**Indicator 7.3 Level of National/Local reforms and active participation of Inter-Ministerial Committees (IMC; scale 1 to 4; See Guidance)**

Shared Water Ecosystem	Rating (Expected at PIF)	Rating (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Rating (Achieved at MTR)	Rating (Achieved at TE)
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**Indicator 7.4 Level of engagement in IWLEARN through participation and delivery of key products(scale 1 to 4; see Guidance)**

Shared Water Ecosystem	Rating (Expected at PIF)	Rating (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Rating (Achieved at MTR)	Rating (Achieved at TE)
	1			

**Indicator 11 People benefiting from GEF-financed investments**

	Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
<b>Female</b>	2,314			
<b>Male</b>	1,246			
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,560</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

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

- Indicator 2.2 reflects an indicative estimate of 203,079 hectares of marine protected areas expected to be under improved management, based on potential pilot sites in Belize and Costa Rica. This includes Glover's Reef (86,653 ha) and Sapodilla Cays (38,594 ha) in the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef LME, and Cahuita National Park (22,188 ha), Tortuguero National Park (50,284 ha), and Gandoca-Manzanillo Wildlife Refuge (5,360 ha) in the Caribbean Sea LME.

This figure is provisional and will be revisited and validated during the PPG phase once pilot countries and site-specific interventions are confirmed. While concrete interventions are currently anticipated in the Caribbean region, the project maintains a global aspiration, with additional engagement opportunities in other LMEs – such as the Western Indian Ocean and the Bay of Bengal – to be explored during the PPG phase, particularly through regional platforms and knowledge-sharing activities.

- Indicator 5.4 will be triggered through the pilot on gender-responsive sustainable livelihoods in at least one site potentially qualifying as OECM. As country and site selection will occur during the PPG, this indicator will be calculated at that stage.
- Indicator 7.4: The project is currently rated at Level 1 for IW:LEARN engagement at the PIF stage. It aims to reach Level 4 by project closure by developing an IW-compliant website, producing and sharing knowledge products through IW:LEARN, and actively participating in IW portfolio learning events and exchanges.
- Indicator 11: While this indicator would be further refined upon identification of the countries, the project is expected to reach approximately 3,560 direct beneficiaries, with at least 65% of them being women. This figure includes:
  - 200 individuals directly benefiting from the sustainable livelihood pilot
  - 50 women entrepreneurs accessing enhanced financing
  - 2,000 women frontliners gaining access to knowledge, tools, and peer learning opportunities through the regional hubs of the Women Ocean Guardians as well as the knowledge platforms.
  - 700 frontliners directly trained through leadership and capacity-building programs; and
  - 400 policymakers and technical staff from relevant institutions trained in inclusive policy and governance frameworks. This includes the officials on the national level as well as the representatives reached through the regional platform participants.
  - 60 financial institution staff receiving gender-responsive training
  - 150 people accessing international conference, GEF IW portfolio event participation and knowledge sharing events

## Key Risks

	Rating	Explanation of risk and mitigation measures
CONTEXT		
Climate	Moderate	<p>Risk: Climate-related events such as severe storms may disrupt project activities, particularly community-level pilots or stakeholder consultations in vulnerable coastal areas. These events could cause delays in implementation or reduce access to target communities for training or data collection.</p> <p>Mitigation measure: The project will integrate climate risk considerations into the design and selection of pilot sites and field activities. Flexible delivery mechanisms (including hybrid consultation formats and digital engagement) will be employed where needed. Contingency planning will be built into the implementation timeline.</p>
Environmental and Social	Low	<p>Risk: Environmental and social conditions in project areas – such as unequal access to natural resources, entrenched gender norms, socio-cultural barriers or low trust in external actors – may limit community engagement, access of women frontliners or create resistance to project activities. The project was preliminary screened for Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS) risks at PIF stage and was assigned a Category C as the proposed project activities</p>

		<p>(mostly focused on enabling changes in policies, knowledge exchange, training, and advocacy) are likely to have minimal or no adverse environmental and social impacts. One ESS Standard (ESS9) was triggered at this stage, as the project might create or support already existing financial mechanisms to support women ocean guardians for financial sustainability, which could potentially result in financial intermediation. In addition to this, five ESS standards were marked as TBD (for details please refer to Annex D). Nevertheless, a second ESS screening will be performed during the PPG stage when further details will be known e.g. the pilots under Component 3 and these can result in a change of ESS Standards triggered and the project ESS risk categorization. Mitigation measure: The project will embed a strong participatory and gender approach from the outset, including the preparation of a Gender Mainstreaming Plan, a Stakeholder Engagement Plan and an Accountability and Grievance Mechanism during the PPG phase. In response to ESS9 triggered, the project is required to embed the CI-GEF ESMF requirements into any financial mechanisms that it might create or support, thereby ensuring that any sub-granting by such mechanisms is screened for the ESS Standards and mitigation measures are designed, implemented, and monitored by the EA or party responsible of the mechanism. To confirm ESS risks marked as TBD and to identify new ESS risks as project details become available during the PPG phase, the project will undergo a second ESS screening. Additional mitigation measures will be identified and put in place as needed. All project activities will be co-designed with women, community members and trusted local actors such as fisherfolk, cooperatives, rangers, related associations. Consultations will be inclusive, locally adapted, and sensitive to social dynamics. Project design will be flexible to accommodate community feedback and to avoid reinforcing existing inequities.</p>
Political and Governance	Moderate	<p>Risk: Political instability, institutional turnover, or limited political will in some countries or regions could delay or weaken the adoption of gender-transformative policy reforms. Governance structures across LMEs may have competing mandates, and some national or local authorities may be hesitant to engage in reforms that challenge established norms or decision-making hierarchies. Mitigation measure: The project will be designed with flexible engagement mechanisms and adaptive implementation strategies, including context-specific entry points at the regional and national levels. During the PPG phase, a comprehensive stakeholder mapping will help identify strategic partnerships and champions. A context-specific review of political and governance risks will also be undertaken once the pilot countries are selected, ensuring that risks are appropriately evaluated and mitigation measures tailored to each context. The co-creation of tools and policies with local institutions and regional platforms will strengthen buy-in and reduce resistance. Where needed, the project will build on or align with ongoing regional commitments to gender equality and marine governance.</p>

Institutional and Policy	Moderate	<p>risk: While the project is broadly aligned with global and regional policy priorities, gaps or inconsistencies in national strategies, legal frameworks, or enforcement mechanisms may limit the adoption or effectiveness of gender-transformative ocean governance approaches. In some contexts, marine conservation strategies may not yet recognize the importance of gender inclusion or community-led governance models. Mitigation measure: The project includes a dedicated policy and governance component designed to work within existing institutional frameworks while introducing practical tools such as the Policy Development Package and the Capacity Assessment Tool. Early engagement with relevant ministries, regional bodies, and legal experts will help build a shared understanding of gender-transformative approaches and ensure that proposed reforms are context-sensitive, implementable, and aligned with national priorities. To further mitigate this risk, the project will pilot these tools in a country that demonstrates strong political willingness and institutional commitment to advancing gender-responsive ocean governance. This proof-of-concept will generate early lessons and evidence of feasibility, which will then be used to inform broader policy dialogues. Regional organizations such as the Caribbean Biodiversity Corridor (CBC) and PEMSEA will serve as platforms to amplify results, facilitate peer learning, and promote the uptake of effective approaches by other countries, fostering regional momentum and legitimacy.</p>
Technological	Low	<p>Risk: The project envisions the establishment of digital platforms to support the Women Ocean Guardians Network and to facilitate knowledge exchange across regions, including through existing platforms such as IW:LEARN. There is a potential risk related to the long-term maintenance and sustainability of newly created platforms or tools, particularly after project closure. Mitigation measure: This risk is considered low, as the project will adopt a sustainability-conscious approach to platform development. For any new digital tools or platforms, a dedicated host institution will be identified during the PPG phase to ensure continuity, content management, and long-term relevance. Where possible, the project will integrate its outputs into existing, well-functioning platforms, such as IW:LEARN, which already have established funding streams and institutional support. This approach reduces the risk of digital tools becoming obsolete and strengthens knowledge sustainability across marine regions.</p>
Financial and Business Model	Moderate	<p>Risk: There is a risk that the project's efforts to promote gender-responsive financial mechanisms and sustainable livelihood models may face challenges in uptake, scalability, or long-term sustainability – particularly if market linkages or institutional support are weak. Mitigation measure: The project adopts a facilitative approach to financial innovation, focusing on co-design processes with financial institutions and community actors to ensure relevance and local ownership. Pilot initiatives will be informed by market assessments and designed for replicability and alignment with existing institutional capacities. To enhance long-term sustainability, the project will also explore partnerships with regional and global networks, as well as relevant financial</p>

		institutions and regional funds, to identify opportunities for continued investment and scaling beyond the life of the project.
EXECUTION		
Capacity	Low	Risk: PEE may lack the technical and managerial expertise required for efficient project execution. Mitigation measure: The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), as the proposed executing entity, brings extensive experience in implementing complex, multi-stakeholder environmental projects across marine and coastal ecosystems, including GEF-funded initiatives. WCS operates in over 50 countries and has a strong track record in the design, execution, and monitoring of biodiversity, conservation, and governance-related interventions – particularly in LMEs. WCS has demonstrated capacity in leading participatory processes, building institutional partnerships, and delivering results under international standards. Additionally, WCS’s leadership in organizing the 2024 Coastal Women Leaders’ Exchange and the early coordination of the Women Ocean Guardians initiative illustrates both its thematic alignment and its readiness to lead this project effectively.
Fiduciary	Low	Risk: Risk of non-compliance of the PEE with financial management and procurement guidelines, potentially leading to misuse of funds or delays in procurement. Mitigation measure: This risk is considered low given WCS’s well-established institutional preparedness and strong track record in managing donor-funded projects. The organization has robust financial, procurement, and operational systems in place to ensure compliance with fiduciary standards and efficient day-to-day project implementation, monitoring, and accountability.
Stakeholder	Low	Risk: Achieving meaningful, inclusive engagement across diverse stakeholder groups – especially in culturally and geographically diverse regions – may face challenges. Barriers may include limited access to technology, consultation fatigue, language and literacy differences, or social norms that restrict women’s participation. In some settings, stakeholders may be hesitant to engage in gender-related discussions or reform processes. Mitigation measure: A detailed stakeholder engagement plan will be implemented from project inception, establishing clear roles and expectations for each stakeholder. This will foster accountability and support active participation. The project will maintain regular communication with stakeholders, including updates and feedback mechanisms, to ensure sustained involvement and address any emerging concerns. By actively engaging both key stakeholders and local communities, the project will build widespread support, thereby enhancing the project’s impact and long-term sustainability.
Other	Low	Risk: Macroeconomic instability in participating countries such as inflation, reduced public budgets, or economic downturns could limit domestic investment in marine conservation, constrain government engagement, or reduce the effectiveness of livelihood-related interventions. Mitigation measure: The project does not rely heavily on co-financing from national budgets, but rather emphasizes partnerships, capacity-building, and network-

		<p>based approaches that are more resilient to macroeconomic fluctuations. During the PPG phase, feasibility assessments will inform the design of the pilots and explore linkages with regional and international financing mechanisms to reduce dependence on national funding. Risk: The project's integrated, multi-level design – including global coordination, regional hubs, national policy tools, and local pilot initiatives – requires strong coherence across components. There is a risk that misalignment between tools, delivery models, or regional contexts could reduce effectiveness or create fragmentation during implementation. Mitigation measure: The Theory of Change was developed to ensure strong internal linkages between the six project levers and to support a mutually reinforcing implementation model. During the PPG phase, design coherence will be strengthened through in-depth stakeholder consultations, piloting strategies, and participatory planning. Clear mechanisms will be established to capture lessons from pilot sites, trainings, and network activities, and to use this information to refine tools, approaches, and decision-making across the project during its implementation.</p>
Overall Risk Rating	Moderate	<p>The overarching risk to this project is moderate. Close monitoring of the identified risks and effective implementation of mitigation measures will ensure that the risks do not adversely impact the success and durability of the project.</p>

### C. ALIGNMENT WITH GEF-8 PROGRAMMING STRATEGIES AND COUNTRY/REGIONAL PRIORITIES

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

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

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

1. This project is fully aligned with the GEF-8 International Waters (IW) Focal Area, particularly Objective 1: Accelerate Joint Action to Support a Blue Economy. Under Sub-Objective 1.a (Sustaining Healthy Blue Ecosystems), the project advances inclusive and cooperative governance frameworks to strengthen the management and resilience of transboundary marine ecosystems. It supports the implementation of sustainable action plans through more effective MPAs, OECMs, and women-led conservation initiatives, while also fostering cross-jurisdictional collaboration and knowledge exchange across LMEs. The establishment of the Women Ocean Guardians Network and gender-transformative policy tools directly contribute to improving the institutional architecture necessary for cooperative ecosystem management, in line with the IW strategy.
2. In alignment with Sub-Objective 1.b (Advancing Sustainable Fisheries Management), the project promotes participatory, rights-based approaches to marine resource governance. Through gender-responsive finance mechanisms, capacity-building for women frontliners, and support for sustainable, women-led livelihoods, the project enhances innovation, social inclusion, and environmental responsibility in fisheries and coastal value chains. Its approach supports the implementation of national and regional strategies that align with global commitments under key multilateral environmental agreements, including the CBD and the Convention on the



Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, as well as the Sustainable Development Goals (particularly SDGs 5, 13, and 14).

3. The project also aligns with several targets under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF), particularly those related to protected areas, gender equality, and equitable governance. <sup>[1]</sup> It contributes to the implementation of global biodiversity commitments through gender-transformative policy reforms, community-level marine conservation, and inclusive knowledge sharing. The table below outlines the project's preliminary contributions to selected KMGBF targets relevant to gender-responsive ocean governance, coastal livelihoods, and area-based conservation. These alignments reflect the current project design and may be further refined during the PPG phase. Specifically, following the confirmation of pilot countries and activities, an updated assessment will be conducted to determine whether additional KMGBF targets are supported.

KMGBF Target	Project Contribution
Target 1 – Integrated biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning	The project supports inclusive marine governance and more effective management processes for coastal and marine ecosystems, contributing to biodiversity-inclusive planning and decision-making across LMEs.
Target 3 – Effectively conserve 30% of terrestrial and marine areas	The project supports the effective and equitable management of marine and coastal protected areas and OECMs. By strengthening inclusive governance and empowering local and Indigenous women in conservation, the project contributes to the global ambition of Target 3.
Target 18 – Eliminate harmful incentives and promote positive ones	The project promotes gender-responsive finance mechanisms and supports women-led sustainable livelihoods, shifting incentives toward conservation-friendly and inclusive coastal economies.
Target 20 – Ensure access to biodiversity-related information	Through Component 4, the project documents and shares gender-transformative ocean governance practices via the Women Ocean Guardians Network and global platforms like IW:LEARN, improving access to biodiversity knowledge.
Target 21 – Ensure participation and respect for rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities	The project engages Indigenous women, fisherwomen, and community leaders in marine governance processes and policy design, ensuring that their voices and knowledge systems are respected and elevated.
Target 22 – Gender equality and women's participation	The project is explicitly designed to empower women in marine conservation by institutionalizing the Women Ocean Guardians Network and advancing gender-transformative approaches in policy and knowledge management (Components 1 and 4), alongside gender-responsive actions across other components.

4. In addition, the project is expected to complement and reinforce existing regional frameworks and priorities. In the Caribbean, the project aligns with the CLME+ Strategic Action Programme, which emphasizes the need for inclusive governance, ecosystem-based management, and strengthened stakeholder engagement in the sustainable use of marine resources. The project contributes to these goals by supporting gender-responsive marine governance and fostering regional cooperation through the Women Ocean Guardians Network. Furthermore, stakeholder consultations during the preparation of the PIF with PROCARIBE+, a regional initiative focused on protecting and restoring the ocean's natural capital, indicated that the SAP for the Caribbean Sea is entering a revision process. As such, the initiative views the proposed project as a valuable opportunity to engage Women Ocean Guardians as a group in the elaboration of the new action plan.
5. In the Western Indian Ocean, the project is consistent with the priorities of the Nairobi Convention and its Strategic Action Programme, as well as the WIOSAP Project, which promote integrated coastal zone management, community engagement, and policy coherence. The project builds on these priorities by advancing local-to-regional governance approaches and empowering women as agents of ecosystem stewardship.
6. In the Bay of Bengal, the project supports the objectives of the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BOBLME) SAP, particularly its focus on improving regional collaboration, enhancing the livelihoods of coastal communities, and strengthening marine ecosystem management. By promoting women's leadership in coastal governance and linking local practices with regional learning platforms, the project reinforces these shared priorities.

7. These regional frameworks offer important entry points for cross-border collaboration, policy alignment, and knowledge dissemination. During the PPG phase, further alignment with regional institutions and intergovernmental bodies will be explored to ensure coherence with existing commitments and platforms, and to foster complementarity with ongoing initiatives in each LME.

[ftnref1](#)<sup>[1]</sup> Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework Target 5 available here: <https://www.cbd.int/gbf/targets>

## D. POLICY REQUIREMENTS

### Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment:

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

Yes

### Stakeholder Engagement

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

Yes

### Were the following stakeholders consulted during project identification phase:

Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities: Yes

Civil Society Organizations: Yes

Private Sector: Yes

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

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

### Private Sector

Will there be private sector engagement in the project?

Yes

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

### Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS) Risks

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

Yes



## Overall Project/Program Risk Classification

PIF	CEO Endorsement/Approval	MTR	TE
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Low

## E. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

### Knowledge management

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

Yes

## ANNEX A: FINANCING TABLES

### GEF Financing Table

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

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Grant / Non- Grant	GEF Project Grant(\$)	Agency Fee(\$)	Total GEF Financing (\$)
CI	GET	Global	International Waters	International Waters: IW-1	Grant	3,519,725.00	316,775.00	3,836,500.00
<b>Total GEF Resources (\$)</b>						<b>3,519,725.00</b>	<b>316,775.00</b>	<b>3,836,500.00</b>

### Project Preparation Grant (PPG)

Is Project Preparation Grant requested?

true

PPG Amount (\$)

150000

PPG Agency Fee (\$)

13500

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Grant / Non- Grant	PPG(\$)	Agency Fee(\$)	Total PPG Funding(\$)
CI	GET	Global	International Waters	International Waters: IW-1	Grant	150,000.00	13,500.00	163,500.00

Total PPG Amount (\$)		150,000.00	13,500.00	163,500.00
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Please provide justification

### Sources of Funds for Country Star Allocation

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

### Indicative Focal Area Elements

Programming Directions	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing(\$)	Co-financing(\$)
IW-1-1	GET	3,519,725.00	24572365
Total Project Cost		3,519,725.00	24,572,365.00

### Indicative Co-financing

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co- financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount(\$)
GEF Agency	Conservation International (CI)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	1424087
Others	Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	10131295
Others	Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)/Caribbean Biodiversity Fund (CBF)/WCS/Caribbean Biological Corridor (CBC)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	5000000
Others	CBF/WCS Cuba	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	3000000
Others	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN (FAO)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	2000000
Others	Movilizadorio	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	1225000
Others	CBF	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	1000000

Others	FundeCooperación	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	500000
Others	CBC - The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	141983
Others	MarFund	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	150000
<b>Total Co-financing</b>				<b>24,572,365.00</b>

Describe how any "Investment Mobilized" was identified

Not Applicable

CI: Co-financing for staff time and travel, project activities in Costa Rica and support from CI GEF Agency

- WCS: Staff time, related projects, 30x30 Ocean Accelerator
- BMZ/CBF/WCS/CBC: Project (TBC) for work across the CBC focused on sustainable livelihoods with a significant emphasis on women
- CBF/WCS Cuba: Project (TBC) directly related to Women Ocean Guardians work in Cuba.
- FAO: Co-financing for FAO ongoing projects focused on gender.
- Movilizadorio: Co-financing from Mobilizadorio, associated with three ongoing projects directly aligned with Women Ocean Guardians work
- CBF: Co-financing for project activities in Jamaica, Dominican Republic, and Cuba aligned with Women Ocean Guardians.
- FundeCooperación: Co-financing for Fundecooperación associated with transformative financial mechanisms.
- CBC-NORAD: Co-financing for the CBC (NORAD-funded) activities focused on gender.
- MarFund: Co-financing for MarFund ongoing projects in the target regions.

The co-financing presented at this stage reflects initial partner commitments. During the PPG phase, the project team will proactively explore opportunities to secure additional sources of co-financing, with an emphasis on grants and investment-type contributions. Efforts will focus on identifying funding and technical support aligned with the project's objectives on gender-transformative ocean governance and sustainable coastal livelihoods.

## ANNEX B: ENDORSEMENTS

### GEF Agency(ies) Certification

GEF Agency Type	Name	Date	Project Contact Person	Phone	Email
GEF Agency Coordinator	Conservation International	4/22/2025	Orissa Samaroo		osamaroo@conservation.org

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

Name	Position	Ministry	Date (MM/DD/YYYY)
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## ANNEX C: PROJECT LOCATION

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

**Global.** The specific countries and locations for (i) the implementation of the Policy Development Package and the Ocean Governance Assessment Tool, and (ii) the pilot of sustainable livelihood models linked to MPAs and OECMs, will be identified during the PPG phase. Geo-referenced information will be provided accordingly.

## ANNEX D: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS SCREEN AND RATING

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

Title
20250416 WOG Preliminary ESS Screening Report

## ANNEX E: RIO MARKERS

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

## ANNEX F: TAXONOMY WORKSHEET

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Focal Area/Theme	Biodiversity		
		Protected Areas and Landscapes	
			Productive Seascapes
			Coastal and Marine Protected Areas
			Community Based Natural Resource Management
		Financial and Accounting	
			Payment for Ecosystem Services
			Conservation Finance
		Mainstreaming	
			Tourism
			Fisheries
		Biomes	
			Mangroves
			Sea Grasses
			Coral Reefs

	International Waters		
		Coastal	
		Biomes	
			Coral Reefs
			Mangrove
			Seagrasses
		Marine Protected Area	
		Aquaculture	
		Learning	
		SIDS : Small Island Dev States	
		Large Marine Ecosystems	
Influencing Models			
	Strengthen institutional capacity and decision-making		
	Convene multi-stakeholder alliances		
Stakeholders			
	Private Sector		
		SMEs	
		Financial intermediaries and market facilitators	
		Individuals/Entrepreneurs	
	Type of Engagement		
		Partnership	
		Participation	
		Consultation	
		Information Dissemination	
	Civil Society		
		Community Based Organization	
		Non-Governmental Organization	
	Communications		
		Awareness Raising	
		Education	
		Behavior Change	
		Public Campaigns	
	Indigenous Peoples		
	Beneficiaries		
	Local Communities		
Gender Equality			
	Gender Mainstreaming		
		Women groups	
		Sex-disaggregated indicators	
		Gender-sensitive indicators	
		Beneficiaries	
	Gender results areas		
		Capacity development	
		Access and control over natural resources	
		Awareness raising	

		Access to benefits and services	
		Participation and leadership	
		Knowledge generation and exchange	
Capacity, Knowledge and Research			
	Enabling Activities		
	Learning		
		Adaptive Management	
		Indicators to Measure Change	
		Theory of Change	
	Knowledge Generation		
	Innovation		
	Capacity Development		