

Promoting the blue economy and strengthening fisheries governance of the Gulf of Thailand through the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (GoTFish)

Basic Information

GEF ID

10703

Countries

Regional (Cambodia, Malaysia, Thailand, Viet Nam)

Project Title

Promoting the blue economy and strengthening fisheries governance of the Gulf of Thailand through the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (GoTFish)

GEF Agency(ies)

FAO

Agency ID

FAO: 666461

GEF Focal Area(s)

Multi Focal Area

Program Manager

Leah Karrer

PIF

Part I – Project Informatics

Focal area elements

1. Is the project/program aligned with the relevant GEF focal area elements in Table A, as defined by the GEF 7 Programming Directions?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(Karrer, May 10, 2021). Yes. Points addressed. Note that during the preparation, if the Agency gets new LoEs, then they can follow the procedure for an amendment by the time of CEO Endorsement. As the change in figures is less than 5% of the original amount, this could be processed as a minor amendment.

(Karrer, May 7 pm2, 2021). No. Please address:

The amounts in Portal cannot be higher than the allocated amounts in LoEs. While the Agency adjusted the GEF Financing amounts, they did not adjust the amounts of the Agency fee. The GEF Financing allocated in LoE to IW is \$6,231,109, and the combined allocated amount to Agency Fee for PPG and GEF Financing to IW is \$577,982. However, the Agency Fee of the GEF Financing and the PPG in Portal for IW are above the allocated amount in LoE ($\$591,446 + 15,860 = \$607,306 > \$577,982$). Please adjust, so total amounts in Portal cannot go above the allocated amounts in LoE neither in the GEF Financing nor in the PPG and the correspondent Agency Fee.

(Karrer, May 7 (pm), 2021). Yes. Thank you.

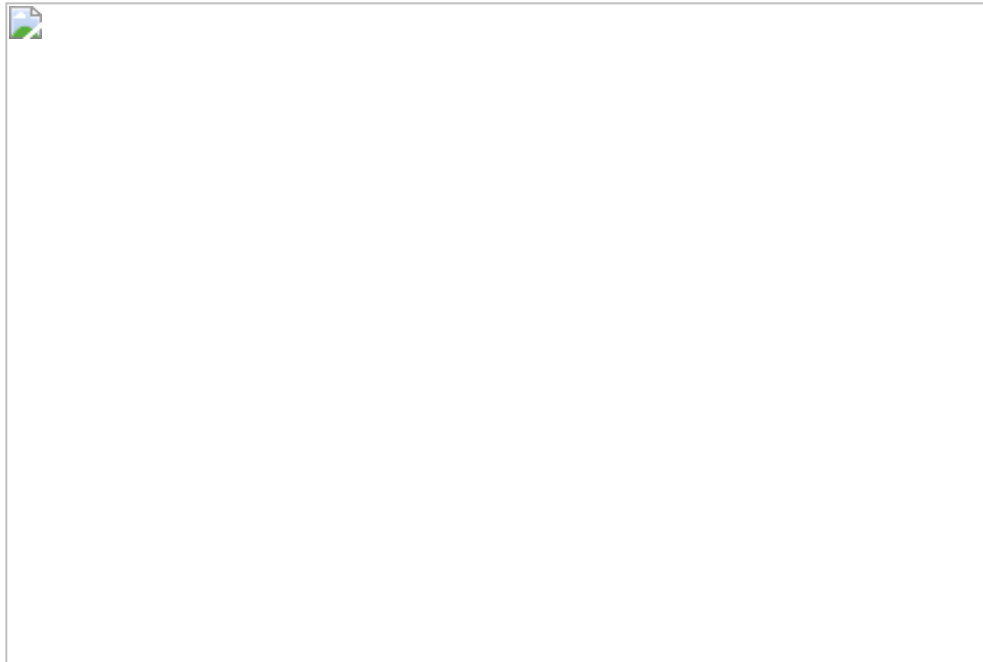
(Karrer, May 7 (am), 2021). No. Please address these points:

1. On the PMC Proportionality: there is not proportionality in the co-financing contribution to PMC. If the GEF contribution is kept at 5%, for a co-financing of \$117,866,532 the expected contribution to PMC must be around \$5,893,326 instead of \$592,293 (which is 0.5%). As the costs associated with the project management have to be covered by the GEF portion and the co-financing portion allocated to the PMC, the GEF contribution and the co-financing contribution must be proportional, which means that the GEF contribution to PMC might be decreased and the co-financing contribution to PMC might be increased to reach a similar level. Please ask the Agency to amend either by increasing the co-financing portion and/or by reducing the GEF portion. A more definitive estimation of PMC will be presented and adjusted at CEO Endorsement stage.

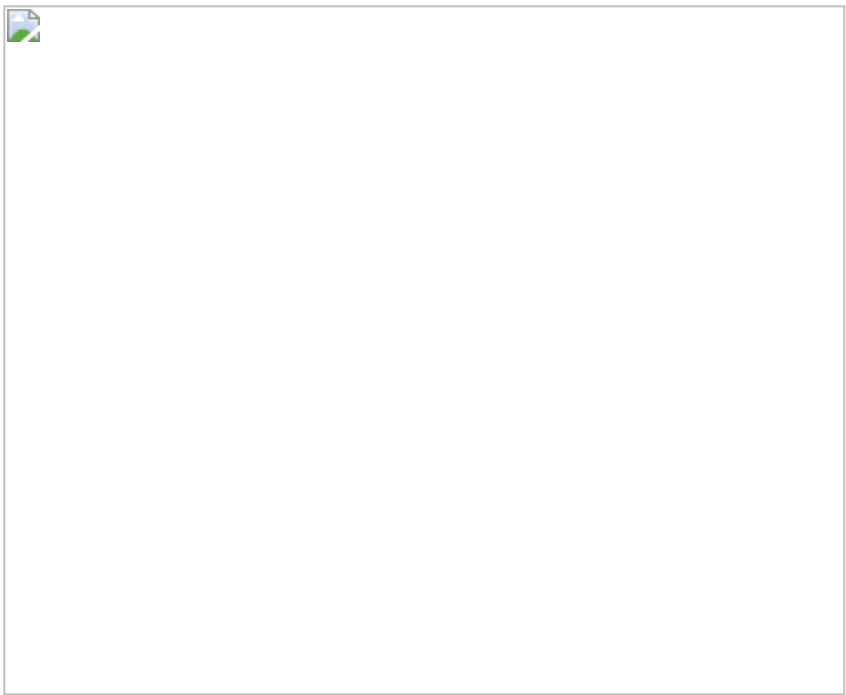
(if images do not appear, please refer to email sent 5/7/2021)



2. Table D and E: please enter Regional under Country column for IW focal area:



3. Letters of Endorsement from Malaysia and Viet Nam show differences in grant amount and PPG in comparison with table D and E above – please adjust the amounts in Tables D and E to the allocated amounts in these LoEs – otherwise, new LoEs are needed.





4. On Core Indicators (comment provided by Minna): For Core Indicator 7, please choose a SWE (or “regional”) from the drop down menu.

5. Gender Equality (comment provided by Gabriella): It is well note that the PIF includes information on plans to carry out gender analysis during the PPG phase and to develop a gender action plan. The project also includes gender considerations across the some of the proposed project components. The PIF, however, lacks indicative information on any project specific gender dimensions, gaps and or barriers for women in the fishery sector to be addressed by the project. Please ask Agency to provide additional indicative information on relevant gender issues and provide further information on how the project expects to ensure engagement women and women organization/interest groups during project development.

(Karrer, May 3, 2021). Yes. Thank you.

(Karrer, April 6, 2021). No. Please ensure the annexes (and all documentation) are in the Portal version or else pull out the annexes from the Word version posted and create as its own document clearly labeled "Annexes to PIF".

(Karrer, Jan 6, 2021). No. Please ensure the annexes (and all documentation) are in the Portal version or else pull out the annexes from the Word version posted and create as its own document clearly labeled "Annexes to PIF".

(Karrer, Oct 2, 2020). No.

The annexes are missing. Please post to the Portal.

Agency Response

8 May 2021

The correct project numbers for the GotFish are the ones in Malaysia's LOE, and are the same for IW numbers for all other LOES from Cambodia, Thailand. The numbers noted in GEFSEC comments above, unfortunately, were extracted from the VietNam letter, unfortunately, whose breakdown are incorrect.

Malaysia Letter breakdown

	PPG	Project	Fees	Total
IW	155556	623713 8	607306	700000 0
Biodiversity	40909	108968 5	107406	123800 0

Vietnam had issued LOE at the time when Malaysia had committed higher amount of their STAR (2 million), which they later reduced to 1.238 million.

We communicated with Vietnam OFP to obtain a new letter, and they sent a response (uploaded in Document section, in Vietnamese as well as its translation in English). Vietnam OFP said, as translated "The GEF Vietnam Office received the Official Letter No. 204 / TCTS-KHCN & HTQT dated 19th February, 2021 of D-fish regarding the review, approval and re-signing the LOE for the project proposal to promote green economy in Gulf of Thailand through an ecological fisheries approach - the GoTFish project, whereby the project only has a change in Malaysia's funding contribution and this change has no impact on the Vietnamese partner. At the present, the GEF Global and the GEF Vietnam Steering Committee do not have regulations on the re-signing LOE in cases where there is a change similar to the project proposal of D-Fish and FAO." We believe, given the three correct letters, and one IOE correct for overall amount for IW, should be Ok for the WP

Inclusion.

May 7

- 1, 2, 3 and 4 have been corrected/ updated as suggested.
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- On gender, the following text has been inserted:
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- An IUCN^[1] report on the role of women in fisheries in Asia has noted that women are crucial to the fisheries sector and, while studies have shown they comprise almost half of the sector's labour force in developing countries, including GOT countries, their contributions have often gone undocumented and therefore rendered invisible to most researchers and policy makers. This is because national policies, frequently driven by production targets and concerns with overfishing, prioritize primary production of fish over other parts of the supply chain in which women are represented in much larger numbers. This lack of recognition of women's contributions to the sector's economy at different stages of the supply chain and to food security undervalues the economic and social benefits they provide. It also marginalizes women in implementing sectoral policies and increases their vulnerability, especially in small-scale capture fisheries which are already sidelined within the fishing industry. Including women's roles and contributions in research and practice is therefore essential to addressing inequality. Many studies have shown that women participate in almost all activities in the fisheries sector including the construction of fishing gears, fish sorting, fish handling, and fish processing^[2]. Some women participate directly in fishing activities with their family members in lakes, rivers and streams. Fish selling is almost exclusively the domain of women in some cases, especially for inland fisheries. However, despite their pervasive involvement, women's invaluable contribution is often overlooked and undocumented, such that women do not benefit from adequate working conditions, facilities, training and access to information. Many of the landless women in the Mekong Region are the "poorest of the poor" in fisheries.

The IUCN and WorldFish reports highlight the following issues on women's role in fisheries in the GOT countries:

1. **Cambodia:** Women constitute an important workforce in fisheries and contribute to the sustainable use and management of fishery resources. They play a larger role than men in aquaculture, although a lesser role in capture fisheries. They play a primary role in fish processing and marketing, which generate income for family maintenance. The coastal provinces have also undergone rapid development over the past decade, fuelled by foreign investments in industry, infrastructure, real estate and tourism. Women constitute an important workforce in fisheries and play a greater role than men in aquaculture and a primary role in fish processing and marketing, which generates income for family maintenance. Gender has been mainstreamed in some fishery policies with the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (Camcode), for example, emphasizing the importance women's contributions and mainstreaming gender across activities. There are gender mainstreaming focal points and working bodies in all departments of ministries involved in coastal and fisheries resource management, although no concrete work on coastal management by gender institutions could be identified

• **Thailand:** Fisheries is important for food security and represents a major development sector in Thailand. The sector is significant as a source of animal protein for most rural people, generating income and employment, and providing a major source of livelihood especially in rural communities. There is little knowledge and information about the fisher population of which about half are women. Up to now, there is no clear policy direction on promoting women in the fisheries sector in Thailand. Owing to the paucity of research in this area, awareness of women's activities in fisheries is lacking. There is only some recent recognition that women as well as men are key players in the success of fisheries management and production. In October 2001, the Department of Fisheries agreed to serve as the focal point of the Thai National

fisheries management and production. In October 2001, the Department of Fisheries agreed to serve as the focal point of the Thai National Women in Fisheries (TWIF) Network in Thailand. It paved the way for the Department of Fisheries to empower women at both organisational

and operational levels with support from other concerned agencies in Thailand. Women are also becoming increasingly involved through their work on fish farms and through migration, with many women migrating from Cambodia to Thailand for seafood processing jobs. The government's main policy is the 2017–2021 Women's Development Strategy and a cabinet resolution in 2011 further required all ministries and departments to have a Chief Gender Equality Officer (CGEO). In the Department of Fisheries specifically, there is a CGEO, a Gender Equality Coordination Centre, a Gender Mainstreaming Working Group, and a Master Plan for Gender Equality (DOF, 2007). A Gender Equality Promotion Committee establishes policies and plans to promote gender equality in all private and public entities. Despite these efforts by the Thai government, the local realities of gender mainstreaming in policies regarding coastal resources management and fisheries have been fragmented.

- **Vietnam:** Fisheries constitutes one of the most important economic sectors in Vietnam, contributing significantly to the export turnover of the country and supplying the main protein nutrition for the population. Over 3.4 million people are involved in capture fisheries, fish farming, transporting, processing, distributing and marketing of fish and fishery products. More than half are females living in rural areas and coastal fishing villages. The Vietnamese Women in Fisheries (VWIF) Network established in March 1999, is operating under the guidance of the Committee for the Advancement of Women in Fisheries. It is an integral component of the Network for Women and Gender in Fisheries Development in the Mekong Region. In its first meeting in Hanoi, the VWIF agreed to gather baseline data pertinent to female labor in fisheries and socioeconomic conditions of these women, work conditions, and to develop special projects to improve post-harvest technology to add value to fishery products and improve the natural resources. Recently, the national network members participated in the study on gender and seafood processing industry. Research teams interviewed some of the managers and workers (male and female) of 19 fish processing factories and four landing sites according to a set questionnaire prepared by the research team. The network likewise carried out a study on the hygiene and safety conditions of laborers in the seafood industry, where the majority of the workers (84 %) are female.

- **Malaysia:** In Malaysia, women who are involved in small-scale fisheries activities are usually wives or daughters of fishers. In many cases, they work to supplement the family income and in some cases may not receive a wage if it is a home-based family business. Some may help their husbands to market the catch, accompany their husbands out to sea and help to mend nets. Women are often involved in aquaculture, especially if the activity is a small-scale business involving low technical input, with the harvests meant mainly for home consumption or sale to neighbors. In Malaysia, they often prepare the feed and tend to fish cages or fish/prawn ponds. In these two South East Asian Islamic countries, as aquaculture becomes more intensified and more commercialized, there is a corresponding decrease in the involvement of women (Felsing et al. 2000). Women generally carry out routine, non-technical activities passed on to them by family members. Many lack the highly technical skills and basic understanding on ecological and biological requirements of the intensive commercial systems; these skills and knowledge are crucial in many cases to the success of commercial farms. Upgrading of skills is frequently made available by extension courses organized by the Government. Training courses, however, are attended mainly by men because most women may have domestic duties, which prevent them from staying away from home for a period of time. There were only 18 women of a total of 952 persons trained at the aquaculture courses on the culture of penaeid prawn, giant freshwater lobster, mussel and fish conducted at the National Prawn Fry Production and Research Centre in Kedah, Malaysia from 1996-2001. Marketing of fish is also a traditional role of many women from the lower socio-economic group. In Peninsular Malaysia, women in the east coast states especially

Kelantan, are more actively involved in the marketing of the catch than women in the west coast. Similarly, in Indonesia, women in some areas are more active than in other areas. In Bali, women are actively involved in fish marketing but this activity is carried out by men in South Sulawesi (Felsing et al. 2000). Women are also involved in activities such as the traditional processing of dried, salted or smoked fish or in factories involved in fish canning or prawn processing. In Malaysia, more than 80% of the workforce in the canning and prawn processing factories are women working mainly as operators in the processing lines. The seafood processing industries in Indonesia can be divided into four categories, mainly the traditional, small, medium and commercial scale. The industry is dominated by small and medium scale operations, which are mainly located close to fish landing sites where women are employed as manual workers. These factories produce products such as salted-dried, salted-boiled, smoked, fermented products, fish/shrimp crackers, frozen fish, canned fish and fish meal. While the more traditional fisheries products

The project will build on national policy directives and institutional focal persons on gender issues within government; and also work with women's networks – such as the Vietnamese Women in Fisheries (VWIF) Network to ensure that strong gender concerns are built into project design and also in implementation. Ministries related to women's empowerment and youth will also be invited to meetings and consultations during PPG to ensure gender-related messages are even more strongly included in full project design, including results indicators, budget and in communication/ knowledge management sections. Other non-government actors, including CBOs, NGOs, and international organizations working on gender issues in the fisheries sector in these countries will be also consulted.

During PPG the insight from these groups will be sought to ensure the Pro Doc addresses key gender issues identified”.

[1] <http://www.mangrovesforthefuture.org/assets/Repository/Documents/Regional-Synthesis-Report-Gender-in-coastal-and-fisheries-resource-management.pdf>

[2] http://pubs.iclarm.net/Pubs/Wif/wifglobal/wifg_asia.pdf

April 2021

The Annexes have been uploaded separately as requested. Please note that some of the annexes in the Word version of the PIF (which has also been uploaded on the portal) have not been uploaded separately as they are the GEF project taxonomy worksheet and the indicators worksheet.

Annexes have been uploaded in Document section of the project. Please see uploaded Word version of the PIF

Indicative project/program description summary

2. Are the components in Table B and as described in the PIF sound, appropriate, and sufficiently clear to achieve the project/program objectives and the core indicators?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(Karrer and Sapijanskas, May 3). Yes.

As noted and agreed by FAO the Theory of Change will require further elaboration and detail during the PPG, including linkages between the strategies, actions, impacts and visions.

(Karrer and Sapijanskas, April 6, 2021). No. Please address the remaining points:

2. The Theory of Change will require further elaboration and detail during the PPG, including linkages between the strategies, actions, impacts and visions.

3. Please ensure aquaculture references are removed in the following sections: 1.5 Incremental / additional cost Make a difference in the use of market incentives; Component 1 in KM; gender; and, private sector engagement (ASC and GAA).

14. (JS) Thank you for the response and revision. However, please clarify in concrete terms what "establishment of" Means in 3.2.1 identification and establishment of ecological corridors of critical and important habitat [...] and consider reformulating. Is it supposed to mean the establishment of protection measures for the corridors? The description of the alternative scenario seems to imply that this output is limited to the identification of corridors.

(Karrer and Sapijanskas, Jan 6, 2021). No.

1. Please provide the noted explanation regarding the limited risk of COVID19 affecting the project goals in the PIF. COVID19 impacts will need to be further assessed during PPG, including if the pandemic raised long-term dependency concerns and opportunities.

2. The Theory of Change will require further elaboration and detail during the PPG, including linkages between the strategies, actions, impacts and visions.

3. Aquaculture is still referenced in the document, including regarding institutions (e.g. SFP), Outcome 2.1, para 60, and para 62 (where I stopped search). These references need to be removed in light of the agreed focus on fisheries except related to feed.

4. (JS) Thank you for having provided information on potential target species. Please however provide information on the anticipated approach(es) to corridor identification, with references. To our knowledge, there is no scientific consensus on the most appropriate method to assess connectivity (see e.g. [Balbar & Metaxas \(2019\) Global Ecology and Conservation 17:e00569](#) for a recent review) but some require extensive analysis and data. Since the project proposes to use target species, it seems it is envisaged to use more data-intensive approaches (demographic and/or genetic modelling). This might be feasible in output 3.2.1 where BD STAR will be used on a smaller area but it is unclear that it would be feasible as part of output 3.1.1 at the scale of GoT. Please be more precise on the anticipated approaches, which will likely differ in 3.1.1 and 3.2.1, explain on which available data the project will build on (please make sure to include the references that are in annex G in the portal entry as well), and clarify if these are sufficient or if the collection of new data (e.g. genetic sampling, tagging, habitat surveys, etc.) is to be part of the project.

5. Please ensure *all* indicators are quantitative (e.g. Indicator "Capacity assessments improve throughout the duration of the project and

relevant (e.g. Component 2 indicator notes FIPs, which are not noted in the outputs).

6. Addressed. Increased from 243K to 547K tonnes fish.

7. Addressed.

8. The proposed revision (Outcome 1.1 regional; Outcome 1.2 national) makes sense, but is not reflected in the PIF. Outcome 1.2 notes regional plans. Please revise to reflect proposed split.

9. Given the data is from 2003 and the inconsistency, please reconsider including this data point and instead seek more accurate data.

10-13. Addressed

14 (JS). Thank you for annex G. However, output 3.2.1 (Identification and establishment of ecological corridors [...]) and 3.1.1 (Mapping of aquatic ecological corridors in the GoT) both still involve corridor identification. Please clarify the differences between the two in the PIF (see related point 4 above).

Please also clarify in the PIF what is meant by “establishment of ecological corridors” in 3.2.1 “Identification and establishment of ecological corridors [...]” and consider reformulating to reflect what it means in practice. Given annex G, it seems to actually mean the establishment of some sort of marine spatial plan along the East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia, with core areas, buffer zones, sustainable use zones, etc.

Finally, please clarify how the project will improve the management effectiveness of 228,651 ha of conservation area (indicator 3.2.1) if 3.2.1 on the establishment of management measures is only in “at least 1 project target location”.

15-16 (JS) - Thank you for the revisions but the content of outcome 3.3 remains unclear and a more precise description is needed. Please notably describe in concrete terms in the PIF what is meant by “priority ecosystem resilience maps”, “participatory ecosystem resilience plans”, “investment options in blue sector livelihoods”, ideally with references.

Given the short elaboration provided, we understand “priority ecosystem resilience maps” as a mapping of the threats and vulnerability for some ecosystems that have already been prioritized elsewhere (including as a result of 3.2.1). Or is it actually a more sophisticated spatially-explicit assessment of ecosystem resilience?

In detailing what are “participatory ecosystem resilience plans”, which are to cover MPAs and beyond, please clarify their articulation with existing MPA management plans and with the management measures defined in 3.2.2.

16 (JS) - Thank you but the reformulation of the output does not in itself provide a convincing theory of change / explanation of how livelihood interventions will effectively reduce pressure on globally significant BD. Please provide such an explanation. The recent STAP advisory document on behavior change may be useful

(<https://stapgef.org/sites/default/files/publications/STAP%20Behavior%20Change%20Paper%20%28web%29.pdf>).

(Karrer, Oct 2, 2020). No.

1. The project considers the process implications of COVID19, such as difficulties in accessing stakeholders; however, it does not consider how the goals of the project will be affected. In particular, with IUU on the rise during COVID19, and with unemployed people resorting to fishing to provide for their families, additional pressure would be anticipated on the fisheries. These impacts need to be discussed as well as how they will be addressed in the context of delivering GEBs and/or climate adaptation and resilience benefits.

2. The Theory of Change will require further elaboration and detail during the PPG, including linkages between the strategies, actions, impacts and visions.
3. The text generally only refers to fisheries, but periodically mentions aquaculture. Please ensure consistency by including only fisheries or fisheries and aquaculture activities.
4. Please describe the anticipated approach / target species for corridor identification that will ensure it contributes to biodiversity of global relevance.
5. Please ensure the indicators noted in Table B relate to the outcome or output. For example, the indicator for Outcome 3.1 (Establishment and maintenance of a regional publicly available GIS dataset on species and habitat distribution and status) does not align with the outputs.
6. If compared to the Thailand capture fisheries alone, the suggested 243000 tons fish moved to more sustainable levels, is equivalent to around 12% of the Gulf of Thailand fisheries moved to sustainable harvest level. Please assess if this can be increased.
7. Please ensure that the amount of fish to be moved to sustainable levels are the same under core indicators, as what has been included in the previously provided Annex B/pp 51. Currently that is not the case.
8. There are overlaps in the outputs. Both Outcome 1.1 and Outcome 1.2 include outputs related to governance: policies (Output 1.1.2) and plans (Outputs 1.2.2., 1.2.3, 1.2.5) Couldn't these be moved to one Outcome? And then focus the other Outcome on the outputs related to capacity building (Output 1.2.1) and organizational design through mechanisms (Output 1.1.1) and task forces (Output 1.2.4)?
9. The statistics in Table 1 (p11) on Thailand's fisheries in the table in paragraph 11 are contradicted by FAO data (<http://www.fao.org/3/a0477e/a0477e0f.htm>) showing 1.891 M tonnes. The FAO data for Thailand (1.891M tonnes) are greater than the total amount for all 4 countries' fisheries noted to the left. Please resolve these differences.
10. In Component 3 the added-value of embedding a national component in the larger project is still not clear. Please clarify in the PIF how the Malaysian part of the project benefits / contributes to the implementation of the regional work and reciprocally.
11. For Component 3, please clarify the location of activities, particularly whether they will be focused in Malaysia or other countries. Also, please clarify what are the OECMs in the target seascape.
12. Regarding Outcome 3.2, please clarify how this work is to "strengthen the institutional and legal framework for ICFRM and MSP" and confirm that the target is for the policy to be adopted.
13. Please clarify that the project will evaluate the fisheries benefits of conservation areas and not just develop a corresponding guideline (indicator for outcome 3.2 in Table B

guidance (indicator for outcome 3.2 in Table D).

14. For output 3.3.2, please explain which sea areas are to be covered in the mapping and how they relate to the areas covered in 3.2.1.
15. For output 3.3.3, please clarify what are the “biodiversity resilience plans” (3.3.3). Which area will they cover, is it the same as the MPAs of 3.2.3? If so, how do they relate to MPA management plans? If not, how they have an impact on biodiversity of global relevance? In which output are these plans acted upon in the project?
16. Please note that the livelihood interventions of output 3.3.4 are not eligible for BD funding as described. Therefore, please provide a convincing theory of change / explanation of how they will effectively reduce pressure on globally significant BD.

Agency Response

1. This risk is considered low in the GoT countries so far, but it will be re-assessed during the PPG phase. The following text has been included as part of the risks: “Ongoing monitoring by both FAO and SEAFDEC is tracking effects of Covid-19 on fisheries in the GoT countries. Initial assessments indicate that IUU fishing activities during the COVID-19 in Gulf of Thailand is stable or decreasing. This is because the government enforcement and management measures have not been affected significantly so far. Reduced access to fishing labour and lower market demands due to economic downturn means there has also not been significant increase in fishing effort nor IUU. The project current design will help address the impact of IUU fishing (due to COVID-19 secondary impacts, and other causes), so it will be even more important to enhance fisheries management measures in the four GoT countries. During PPG phase, the longer term COVID-19 impacts on fisheries and livelihoods will be considered in terms of how they will be addressed in the context of delivering GEBs and/or climate adaptation and resilience benefits.”
2. The Theory of Change will be further elaborated during the PPG, including linkages between the strategies, actions, impacts and visions.
3. We agree. The text has been revised to ensure that consistency. The main interest of the project is fisheries, but there is mention of aquaculture when it refers to the linkage of fish for feeds. In terms of outputs, the only output referring to aquaculture is Output 2.1.1: Identification of mechanisms and stakeholder platforms to support incentives for sustainable and well managed GoT fisheries value chains (including feeds for aquaculture). GoTFish will be able to provide guidance among the linkages between fisheries and aquaculture, especially in relation to feeds and the use of low-value fish from capture fisheries.
4. Identification of ecological corridors will focus on two aspects for prioritization: 1) Priority corridors for vulnerable or threatened species present of global biodiversity significance in the GoT (Dugong (*Dugong dugong*), Dolphin and whale species, sea turtles, and whale sharks (*Rhincodon typus*), and 2) species of commercial importance to fisheries, which have transboundary movements during different life stages (e.g. Spotted sardinella (*Amblygaster sirm*), the Indo-Pacific Mackerel (*Rastrelliger brachysoma*), Longtail Tuna (Thunnus tonggol)). These species have been tentatively identified in the PIF, and during PPG phase, the relevant information about these species will be analyzed for the determination of the ecological corridors and management or protection needs.

5. Thank you, this suggestion has been integrated. The Output indicator, after consultation with the countries, has been modified to: "Establishment and maintenance of a regional GIS dataset on species and habitat distribution and status (with different levels of information being shared)", which is directly linked to Output 3.1.1: Mapping of aquatic ecological corridors in the GoT. The Outcome indicator has been modified to: 228,650.9 ha of conservation area under improved conservation management and sustainable use in the East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia based on global Protected Area (PA) performance standards.

6. The latest GoT catch figures have been provided by the Department of Fisheries in the 4 countries. Please note that this estimation of catch in Table 1 is only for GoT area and does not include these countries' catches from outside (except Cambodia). The Thailand figure in FAO data is from 2003 and does not account for a major revision in collecting the data for Thailand, which used to include catches from Thai vessels outside Thai waters (that was identified as GoT catch due to transshipment vessels landing in GoT-Thailand ports). In the case of Cambodia, these are estimates since they do not have monitoring capacity. It is expected that thanks to the CAPFish project in Cambodia (mentioned in the baseline and as co-finance) this will help address the issues in data. The 1.62 M tonnes (Table 2) is the estimate for GoT which we consider currently representative. Based on our consultation that GoT fisheries resources are currently overexploited by 45% (a re-estimate of the earlier figure of 30%), the project will aim to contribute towards a goal of 75% improvement of overexploited fisheries returning to sustainable levels. This equates to about **547,393 tonnes** that will be moved to more sustainable fishing levels. These changes have been integrated in the PIF. We acknowledge the high levels of uncertainty regarding these figures and prefer to use a conservative approach in setting targets.

7. Thank you for noticing this, the difference has been corrected in Annex B.

8. Thank you for the suggestion, we concur with the logic, and would like to note that both planning and capacity building are an integral part of the EAFM process. This prevents us from cleanly separating capacity building from planning. In the spirit of the suggestion, we have modified re-arranged the outputs, so that Outcome 1.1. will be primarily focused on the regional fisheries transboundary governance and cooperation, which includes enhancing the coherence of fisheries policies and legal frameworks, the establishment of regional task forces for improved transboundary fisheries management, addressing regional issues through regional action plans (beyond those issues covered in the subsidiary EAFM plans), and ultimately, the agreement on a regional mechanism for fisheries cooperation (e.g. transboundary regional body, the format of its composition and process to be discussed at length during project execution). Outcome 1.2 will now focus on the development of national and (sub-) regional EAFM plans, and includes the capacity strengthening of stakeholders to engage in the elaboration of these plans. Both sub-outcomes will be implemented concurrently and complement each other.

9. The Thailand figure is FAO data is from 2003 and does not account for a major revision in collecting the data for Thailand, which used to include catches from Thai vessels outside Thai waters (that was identified as GoT catch due to transshipment vessels landing in GoT-Thailand ports) as noted earlier. In the case of Cambodia, these are estimates since they do not have monitoring capacity. It is expected that thanks to the CAPFish project in Cambodia (mentioned in the baseline and as co-finance) this will help address the issues in data.

10. Component 3 will contribute to identifying the aquatic ecological corridors existing in the Gulf of Thailand. As indicated in paragraph 66, the focus of this proposal is in Malaysia since the country has mobilized biodiversity funds. However, IW funds will be used to increase the GoT understanding of the existing transboundary ecological corridors (important both for fisheries and biodiversity) and

connectivity with the other three countries. This gained knowledge will be integrated into the four countries EAFM plans as part of the IW funding and therefore directly contribute to reduce fisheries stress on marine biodiversity, contributing not only to Malaysia's marine biodiversity (as case study country), but also to the other 3 countries.

11. Component 3 (specially Outcomes 3.2 and 3.3) will be mainly focused in East Coast Peninsular Malaysia, working on existing protected areas (228,650.9 ha) as well as the potentially new protected areas and conservation sites: Potentially 149 km² of Pahang (Pulau Berhala) and Johor (Pulau Lima archipelago) will be identified as new protected areas and 1,508 km² water area in Johor States (which will include existing Marine Parks) has the potential to be identified as a Dugong Sanctuary while 315km coastline in Kelantan and Terengganu States has the potential to be considered as conservation/OECM sites. Maps have been included as part of Annex G.

12. This Outcome and Outputs have been modified. Outcome 3.2 will examine the existing ecological corridors of critical and important habitats for aquatic resources in East Coast Peninsular Malaysia, especially the biodiversity significant species, and EBSA covering migratory routes, spawning, feeding, aggregation and nursery grounds, and other related habitats. These species and areas will be identified, mapped and their status assessed. Work under this outcome will also address the linkages between biodiversity and fisheries, through for example, the evaluation of benefits accrued by MPAs into fisheries areas as well as the level of biodiversity protected. Output 3.2.4 reads "Incorporate the identified new conservation area as part of related National or Sub-national Policy on Integrated Coastal and Fisheries Resources Management, and Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) for the East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia which also considers additional coastal sectors e.g. tourism sector, ports and harbors, etc."; and the indicator will be "1 improved related National or Sub-National Policy on Integrated Coastal and Fisheries Resources Management, and Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) for the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia which will be adopted (subject to the decision by the Cabinet)". As indicated by Malaysia: "Appropriate policies can encourage participatory, demand-driven and sustainable development. Policies lead to the development of laws and rules and regulation designed to achieve policy goals. A legal and policy framework is essential to holding actors accountable in addressing sustainable production and protection of resources. Developing such a framework entails securing political commitment from the highest levels of leadership and management within the sector to implement strategies and policies related to food security, biodiversity conservation and ocean management as a whole. Instituting national policies, strategies and action plans that set out roles and responsibilities of different marine resources management actors and are budgeted for implementation; are important in mainstreaming marine biodiversity responsibilities".

13. Yes, the guidelines will be implemented in at least one project site. The revised indicator now reads: "*1 new guideline in evaluating fisheries benefits of conservation areas developed and tested in at least 1 project site*".

14. Due to the recent budget adjustment, Output 3.2.1 has been removed. The new and existing MPAs that the project will work in East Peninsular Malaysia are included in Annex G.

15. The terminology of these maps has been modified to "Ecosystem Resilience Plans", that will include information on biodiversity of global relevance. The maps will include the existing protected areas (228,650.9 ha) as well as the potentially new protected areas and conservation sites: Potentially 149 km² of Pahang (Pulau Berhala) and Johor (Pulau Lima archipelago) will be identified as new protected areas and 1,508 km² water area in Johor States (which will include existing Marine Parks) has the potential to be identified as a Dugong Sanctuary while 315km coastline in Kelantan and Terengganu States has the potential to be considered as conservation/ OECM sites. In addition, areas outside the MPAs will be considered if they are relevant for biodiversity (e.g. the ecological corridors), or that they require the use of other management regimes (e.g. habitat seasonal gear controls).

use of other management regimes (e.g. habitat, seasonal, gear controls).

16. The Output has been modified and now it reads “Output 3.3.4: Establish investment options in blue sector livelihoods (including effective business modelling and mentoring and exploring opportunities to engage coastal communities (such as fisher cooperatives) with impact investors for the conservation of biodiversity)”, which aims at reducing pressure on globally significant BD.

Responses to review comments from Jan 2021

1. The COVID19 related risks have been included in the risk table in Section 5, as shown in the table below:

COVID-19 pandemic impacts			
Continued restrictions on transboundary and within-country movements restricts project activities, especially with on the ground meetings and pilot activities, travel of international consultants	Medium - High	The project will work with countries to ensure that activities are proofed to the extent possible against extended travel between areas. Virtual conferencing will be used wherever possible for transboundary meetings and between country dialogues. International consultants may deliver part of their inputs remotely. National consultants will be used wherever possible operating within their locality to reduce risks of extended movements.	Medium
Rise of IUU during COVID19, due to unemployed people resorting to fishing to provide for their families, with additional pressure on the fisheries.	Low	Ongoing monitoring by both FAO and SEAFDEC is tracking effects of Covid-19 on fisheries in the GoT countries. Initial assessments indicate that IUU fishing activities during the COVID-19 in Gulf of Thailand is stable or decreasing. This is because the government enforcement and management measures have not been affected significantly so far. Reduced access to fishing labour and lower market demands due to economic downturn means there has also not been significant increase in fishing effort nor IUU. The project current design will help address the impact of IUU fishing (due to COVID-19 secondary impacts, and other causes), so it will be even more important to enhance fisheries management measures in the four GoT countries. During PPG phase, the longer term COVID-19 impacts on fisheries and livelihoods will be considered in terms of how they will be addressed in the context of delivering GEBs and/or climate adaptation and resilience benefits, including long term dependency concerns and opportunities.	Low

2. Thank you and yes, the theory of change will be further elaborated and detailed during the PPG, including linkages between the strategies, actions, impacts and vision.

3. The text has been edited to remove references to aquaculture, unless is directly linked to fish feed for aquaculture.

4. The question is correct that different approaches will be needed for the identification of the ecological corridor at the GoT scale and

the smaller scale for Malaysia. Starting with the larger GoT scale, the plan is to use existing datasets and potentially supplement that with limited demographic dispersal modelling for fisheries if insufficient data are available. Thus, the primary approach will be to identify corridors of migration and habitat use (including nesting) by key taxa including marine mammals, turtles and whale sharks. Global and regional datasets exist for these. Turtle nesting: UNEP-WCMC[1]; Turtle migrations: Status of the World Sea Turtles (<https://www.seaturtlestatus.org/>); global models of whale shark distribution, that can be applied within the GoT for a more detailed estimate of feasible hotspots given local data on sea temperature, chlorophyll-a, depth, and distance from shore[2]; and country-level data on dugong distribution exists for Thailand[3], Cambodia/Vietnam[4], and Malaysia[5]·[6] and syntheses have been carried out by UNEP[7] (UNEP 2002) and the Global Register of Migratory Species[8]. There are multiple methods available to integrate such data into regional planning and the project will explore the application of each with the broader set of users. These include site selection criteria for key nursery habitats or corridors including the potential to identify Key Biodiversity Areas where residence times are high and population levels critical[9]·[10], network design criteria for essential bottlenecks in population migration[11]·[12], and explicit policy recommendations on connected populations[13]. The project will collate regional datasets, many of which are not available in the primary literature, as well as expert knowledge on the key habitats and corridors of key fisheries species. For example, the Indo-Pacific Mackerel (*Rastrelliger brachysoma*) appear to utilize Terengganu and Pahang in Malaysia as a regionally-significant ecological corridor[14] that connects international jurisdictions. At the finer spatial scale within Malaysia the focus will concentrate on (1) the role of mangroves as nursery habitats for a variety of fish and invertebrate species and (2) the corals and their fisheries. There is strong evidence from Fisheries Department surveys that areas of mangroves are exceptionally important nursery habitats, which aligns with global studies[15]·[16]. Methodologies to map corridors of mangrove nurseries with offshore adult habitat will be adapted to the distribution of coastal resources in Malaysia[17], thereby identifying priority locations for consideration in MPAs or other forms of protection. These analyses will be based on existing maps of major habitats as well as existing algorithms of nursery habitat function that prioritise habitat importance, in part according to their tidal profile; emergent mangroves provide weaker nursery benefits[18]. Connectivity in coral reef fisheries can be modelled using particle tracking and new algorithms have been developed under a recent World Bank/GEF project at the University of Queensland to operationalize such connectivity for rebuilding reef fisheries[19]. These approaches are now routinely applied in eastern Indonesia in the creation of new MPAs. Specifically, they identify the key source locations to resupply larvae to important fishing grounds. The tools to implement such methods are freely available. The approach does require models of larval dispersal, which are created from regional oceanographic models and the project will fund such work in key parts of the GoT including Malaysia. It is important to note that a key justification for adopting The University of Queensland at the Executing Agency of the Malaysian component is their scientific experience in modelling and applying connectivity for planning at both local and regional levels. Key participants include Professor Peter Mumby, who headed the GEF Capturing Coral Reef Ecosystem Services project which developed and applied new methods, as well as Dr Daniel Dunn who works on conserving large scale migratory species and is a lead on the Migratory Connectivity in the Ocean (mico.eco) project. Involvement of UQ will help ensure that regional implementing agencies will, in collaboration with local data providers, have access to the latest approaches for modelling and applying connectivity.

5. The indicators have been modified – at the PIF stage, only quantitative outcome indicators have been provided. More specific output level indicators will be discussed during the PPG phase of the project. The outcome indicators are provided below:

- **Outcome 1.1: Fisheries resources and marine biodiversity ecosystem services are restored through strengthened regional transboundary governance and cooperation of GoT fisheries, building their resilience through improved habitat and fisheries management (SAP Fisheries Objective 1)**

- o *Indicator 1.1.1 - Number of shared water ecosystems (fresh or marine) under new or improved cooperative management (GEF Core Indicator 7).*
- o *Indicator 1.1.2. At least 1 regional stakeholder task-force and a key regional issue identified*
- o *Indicator 1.1.3. 1 revised regional/ national fisheries policy/ guidelines/ RPOA/ NPOA for management of shared stocks (e.g. possible bilateral arrangement between Implementation State), that takes into account gender considerations and the different needs of women and men in the fisheries sector.*
- o *Indicator 1.1.4 At least 2 Decisions and/or Recommendation related to shared stock management endorsed through the active participation of Inter-Ministry Committees/ National Level Committees*
- o *Indicator 1.1.5 - 1 regional mechanism for transboundary GoT, based on existing platforms ((e.g. SEAFDEC- GoT Countries Technical Working Group, ASWGF, RPOA-IUU)*
- o *Indicator 1.1.6. – At least 1 GoT sub-regional fisheries management plans/action plans that is developed/ revised for shared species/fisheries and other shared fisheries issues, with evidence that implementation has been initiated (e.g. national budget committed to implement the plans), following the EAF.*

· **Outcome 1.2:** Development and implementation of Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF) management plans in the Gulf of Thailand enhances the resilience against climate change and manages fishing effort of fisheries stakeholders (women and men) (related to SAP Fisheries Objective 1)

- o *Indicator 1.2.1 - About half a million tonnes (or 75% of overexploited fisheries) return to sustainable levels. (Links to GEF Core Indicator 8)*
- o *Indicator 1.2.2 – 12.7 million ha of marine fisheries habitat under improved management practices (links to GEF Core Indicator 5)*
- o *Indicator 1.2.3 – 30 % of raw fish supply that is converted to fishmeal comes from fisheries with an EAF plan and is part of a transparent catch documentation scheme*
- o *Indicator 1.2.4 – About 125,000 fish-workers (estimated at about 70% male and 30 % female - to be confirmed during PPG phase) benefit from GEF investment*
- o *Indicator 1.2.5 – 4 national fisheries management plans/action that are developed/revised for shared species/fisheries and other shared fisheries issues, with relevant participation of stakeholders.*
- o *Indicator 1.2.6 – 4 national plans that initiate implementation, with evidence of national commitment (e.g. national budget committed to implement the plans) following the EAF and addressing gender considerations*

· **Outcome 2.1:** Establishment of a market and behaviour incentive mechanism which reduces ecosystem stress from fishing, enhances the uptake of good practices supporting fisheries management and supports the transition to climate-resilient fisheries (integrating gender considerations and the different needs of women and men along the fishery value chain) (related to SAP Fisheries Objective 3[20])

- o *Indicator 2.1.1 – 1 fishmeal transparency catch documentation scheme covering estimated 20 % of fishmeal production (or 2 commercial stocks) is in place and is being implemented*
- o *Indicator 2.1.2 – 2 market and/or behaviour change incentive mechanisms initiated (with women's participation of at least 30%)*
- o *Indicator 2.1.3 – 10% of fisheries related establishments/operations that meet national or international certification and incorporates biodiversity/ sustainable resources/ resource protection considerations (direct and indirect)*
- o *Indicator 2.1.4 – At least 1 of private/public partnerships created at the regional level*

- o *Indicator 2.1.5 – At least 1 fisheries improvement projects (FIPs) taking place in the GoT (with clear fisher livelihood improvements and gender considerations)*
 - o *Indicator 2.1.6 – 1 regional plan to enhance the level of participation of women along the fisheries value chain implemented*
- **Outcome 3.1:** Improved integration of habitat and biodiversity conservation considerations in the management of fisheries in the Gulf of Thailand through deeper understanding of the ecological transboundary corridors existing in the Gulf of Thailand, leading to enhanced resilience of vulnerable aquatic species and those important for regional food security and sovereignty, (related to SAP-Fisheries Objective 1)
 - o *Indicator 3.1.1 – At least 2 biodiversity targets and outcomes, incorporated into EAFM plans (regional and national levels)*
 - o *Indicator 3.1.2 – 1 regional GIS dataset on species and habitat distribution and status (with different levels of information being shared) established*
 - o *Indicator 3.1.3 – 1 national Guidelines for biodiversity integration developed and implementation initiated*
 - o *Indicator 3.1.4 – 4 countries participate in GoT technical platform on fisheries and aquatic biodiversity*
- **Outcome 3.2:** Reduced threats to vulnerable species and critical/ important habitats for food security and sovereignty with strengthened national and transboundary protection and management of aquatic resources in East Coast Peninsular Malaysia
 - o *Indicator 3.2.1 – 224,865 ha of conservation area under improved conservation management and sustainable use in the East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia based on global Protected Area (PA) performance standards.*
 - o *Indicator 3.2.2 – 1 New guideline in evaluating fisheries benefits of conservation areas developed and tested in at least 1 project site.*
 - o *Indicator 3.2.3 – 1 improved related National or Sub-National Policy on Integrated Coastal and Fisheries Resources Management, and Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) for the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia adopted (subject to the decision by the Cabinet)*
- **Outcome 3.3:** Enhanced resilience of ecosystems and coastal communities in East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia
 - o *Indicator 3.3.1 – Marine managed areas have been assessed and management improvements increased BD biodiversity benefits and improved linkages with fisheries (targets to be defined during PPG phase)*
 - o *Indicator 3.3.2 – At least 1 participatory ecosystem resilience plan with a monitoring system initiated in marine conservation areas*
- **Outcome 4.1:** Efficient knowledge management and targeted communication, improves the understanding amongst stakeholders of ecosystem and fishery linkages in the Gulf of Thailand (related to SAP Fisheries Objective 2[21])
 - o *Indicator 4.1.1 – 1 regional and 4 M&E systems in place and monitoring performance against gender sensitive indicators*
 - o *Indicator 4.1.2 – 10 knowledge sharing events on topics related to transboundary EAFM plans, FIPS, gender issues in fisheries value chains, social and market incentives, etc. carried out and related materials developed, shared and used to affect change*
 - o *Indicator 4.1.3 – Participation in 5 IW Learn meetings and adoption of GoT relevant IWLearn tools*
 - o *Indicator 4.1.4 – 1 GOTFISH knowledge platform established and easily accessible for stakeholders*
 - o *Indicator 4.1.5 – At least 10 GoTFish lessons learned collated and accessible., communicated through IW-Learn fora.*
- **Outcome 4.2:** Enhanced stakeholder involvement and gender equity
 - o *Indicator 4.2.1 – 1 gender and social inclusion plan developed and implemented*

- o *Indicator 4.2.1 – 1 regional and 4 national project gender and stakeholder engagement strategy implemented*
- o *Indicator 4.2.2 – 1 regional and 4 GoTFish gender and stakeholder strategy developed and approved by stakeholders*

6. n.a.

7. n.a.

8. The suggestion has been taken on board, thank you. Outcome 1.1. is now for work at the regional level, and 1.2 its focused for the national level.

9. The data provided in the PIF has been obtained directly from the countries during the GoTFish Workshop that took place in 2019. The 2003 data point was therefore not used in the PIF as suggested.

10. n.a.

11. n.a.

12. n.a.

13. n.a.

14. With regards to corridor identification, work done under Outcome 3.1.1. will synthesize available data on regional nursery, nesting and migratory sites / corridors throughout the GoT (see response above). This will have a focus on biodiversity and key regional fisheries species, mostly of a pelagic nature like the Indo-Pacific mackerel. These data will inform regional fisheries management plans with a view to ensuring transboundary sustainability of biodiversity and key fisheries species. Work done under Outcome 3.2.1 will utilise the data from 3.1.1. but include more detailed biodiversity information for Malaysia if available. It will also create new data layers on corridors and nursery habitats for mangrove nurseries and the connectivity of reef fisheries. These data will be used to map out the potential fisheries benefits accruing from existing and potentially new protected areas (i.e., the degree to which these areas provide important sources of fish larvae to major fishing grounds). There are two ways that the project will enhance management effectiveness. The first is by highlighting which areas of the existing conservation area provide the most important fisheries and conservation benefits (the latter being interpreted by the ability to replenish larvae within the MPA . This increased level of transparency of MPA function will help target enforcement resources where they can be more effective as well contribute to communication products. Secondly, the project will create a tool to predict the expected fisheries benefits of different management areas. Such information is currently absent yet is frequently desired as part of an assessment of expected MPA functionality. An MPA's function will improve as the brood stock of fisheries species improves within its borders and where the MPA has the potential to contribute important spillover to fished areas. By developing a monitoring tool for MPA fisheries benefits, the project will improve the governance of fisheries management areas by adding greater transparency and helping stakeholders set realistic expectations from protection.

15. **Priority ecosystem resilience maps** will focus primarily on the coral reefs of Malaysia seeing as they are a key biodiversity asset. The major threats to these ecosystems are global warming (coral bleaching events), sedimentation reaching the coast from rivers, and overfishing . Reef habitats provide high quality habitat for small scale fisheries, and habitat quality is a key determinant of productivity, as is the proximity of mangrove nurseries which can mitigate some loss of reef habitat quality. Threats to reefs will be adapted from the existing 'Reefs at Risk' for water quality and fishing whereas climate change will be mapped using patterns of relative thermal stress during heatwaves as measured by NOAA satellites . Together these data layers provide information on the exposure of reefs to damage. A full vulnerability analysis can then be undertaken in a participatory manner where community groups identify factors that confer sensitivity and

adaptive capacity of the system. High sensitivity would include dominance by highly sensitive species to stress such as corals of the genus *Acropora*. Adaptive capacity includes factors that help the reef recover such as areas of lower fishing pressure, good mangrove cover (as this helps mitigate coral habitat loss for reef fisheries), and areas that are thought to be more acceptable for local management (good governance, high community cohesion, existing protection, etc.). Maps of reef vulnerability to damage will then be combined with community information on local value for fisheries, tourism and amenity. Areas of high vulnerability and community importance can then be considered as priority for further protection. This process constitutes a 'participatory ecosystem resilience mapping' and is used to aid transparency and inclusion in the conservation prioritization process. This will be applied at a priority location (to be determined) where new levels of protection are being considered.

16. Thank you for the comment. After discussion with the country, this Output (3.3.4) has been removed from the proposal and will be dependent on the mobilization of national budget, aimed towards the provision of livelihood diversification options that contribute to the conservation of biodiversity and remove fishers out of fishing. The concept of **blue sector livelihoods** will be used in its broader sense as per of the overall IW component of the project. Investment options in the 'blue sector livelihoods' comprises the engagement of communities in feasible entrepreneurial options for alternative livelihoods. The approach will follow the work done by the World Bank / GEF CCRES project (ccres.net) in Indonesia and the Philippines and includes tools that help support communities in their identification of feasible livelihood options as well as support in business planning (<https://ccres.net/resources/ccres-tool/ebbd>).

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<http://data.unep-wcmc.org/datasets/22>

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[3] Hines EM, Adulyanukosol K, Duffus DA (2005) Dugong (*Dugong Dugon*) abundance along the Andaman Coast of Thailand. *Mar Mamm Sci* 21:536-549

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[9] Hoyt E, Notarbartolo di Sciara G. 2014 Report of the workshop for the development of Important Marine Mammal Area (IMMA) Criteria, Marseille, France, 22 October 2013.

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- [17] Mumby PJ (2006) Connectivity of reef fish between mangroves and coral reefs: Algorithms for the design of marine reserves at seascape scales. Biol Conserv 128:215-222
- [18] Igulu MM, [...], Mgaya YD (2014) Mangrove habitat use by juvenile reef fish: Meta-analysis reveals that tidal regime matters more than biogeographic region. Plos One e0114715
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- [20] SAP Fisheries Objective 3: Build the capacity of fisheries departments/ministries to engage in meaningful dialogue with the environment sector regarding the improvement of fisheries and management of interactions between fisheries and critical marine habitats
- [21] SAP Fisheries Objective 2 - Improve the understanding amongst stakeholders, including fisher folk, scientists, policymakers, and fisheries managers, of ecosystem and fishery linkages, as a basis for integrated fisheries and ecosystem/habitat management

FAO Response April 2021

2. Yes, this has been noted in the PIF (Paragraph 85). The ToC will be further elaborated and detailed during PPG, including linkages between the strategies, actions, impacts and visions.
3. The references to aquaculture have been removed.

14. The Output has been reformulated as suggested, and now it reads: Output 3.2.1 - Identification and establishment of ecological corridors of critical and important habitat for aquatic resources in the East Coast of peninsular Malaysia with spatial maps and information available for EAF planning .and identification of management and protection measures (the type of measures to be decided during PPG phase in consultation with stakeholders)

Co-financing

3. Are the indicative expected amounts, sources and types of co-financing adequately documented and consistent with the requirements of the Co-Financing Policy and Guidelines, with a description on how the breakdown of co-financing was identified and meets the definition of investment mobilized?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(Karrer, April 6, 2021). Yes.

(Karrer, Jan 6, 2021). No. It's great to see the amounts from Malaysia and Thailand; however, the co-financing needs to be revisited in the next version once all countries have confirmed their contribution and LOEs are submitted.

(Karrer, Oct 2, 2020). No.

Only the Cambodia government is providing co-financing; yet, this project has tremendous value for the countries. Please revisit co-financing with the countries.

Agency Response

Countries are estimating co-finance and the final figures along with the co-finance letters will be provided during PPG phase. The estimated amounts for now are:

- Malaysia – 3,520,000
- Thailand – 3,469,578
- Viet Nam – still being discussed

Response to Jan 2021 comments

The amounts of co-finance for the four countries are:

Cambodia – 3,410,000 USD

Malaysia – 3,520,000 USD

Thailand – 3,469,578 USD

Viet Nam – 75,850,000 USD

GEF Resource Availability

4. Is the proposed GEF financing in Table D (including the Agency fee) in line with GEF policies and guidelines? Are they within the resources available from (mark all that apply):

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(Karrer, April 6, 2021). Yes.

(Karrer, Jan 6, 2021). No.

The split of the budget between IW and BD by outcome needs to be noted in the Portal submission if not in Table B then in a table within the text.

Participation in IW-LEARN goes beyond creating a website and attending conferences. It also includes: actively participating in webinars, listserve discussions, and regional meetings; providing Results Notes and Experience Notes; and, contributing to global syntheses. Please review IWLEARN activities and edit accordingly.

When referring to locales in the PIF, please refer to the paragraph. For example, you noted the IWLEARN edit was on page 37, but it was on page 53 in my version. However, the paragraph numbers should stay the same.

(Karrer, Oct 2, 2020). No.

The budget plans for the project are limited. At a minimum, please provide a breakout for IW and BD at the Outcome level.

The 1% allocation to IWLEARN is not found in the text. Please ensure included.

Agency Response

The amount of IW-LEARN is not found in the text. Please ensure included.

The breakdown for IW and BD have been provided at the Outcome level. Please see uploaded word version of the PIF in document section.

The following text has been included in the PIF (Pag. 37):

The project will follow the IW-Learn criteria, including the project website, as well as participation in IW conferences and workshops (1% of the project funds will be directed for participation and engagement in IW events).

Responses to review comments from January 2021

The split has been noted in the table.

The IWLEARN activities have been edited as follows: *The project will follow the IW-Learn criteria, including the project website, as well as active participation in IW conferences and workshops, webinars, listserve discussions and regional meetings; providing Results Notes and Experience Notes; and contributing to global synthesis (1% of the project funds will be directed for participation and engagement in IW events).*

Apologies for the confusion, and we will make sure to refer to the paragraph instead of the page number.

The STAR allocation?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(Karrer, Oct 2, 2020). Yes.

Agency Response

The focal area allocation?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Agency Response

The LDCF under the principle of equitable access?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Agency Response

The SCCF (Adaptation or Technology Transfer)?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Agency Response

Focal area set-aside?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Agency Response

Impact Program Incentive?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Agency Response

Project Preparation Grant

5. Is PPG requested in Table E within the allowable cap? Has an exception (e.g. for regional projects) been sufficiently substantiated? (not applicable to PFD)

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(Karrer, Oct 2, 2020). Yes.

Agency Response

Core indicators

6. Are the identified core indicators in Table F calculated using the methodology included in the corresponding Guidelines? (GEF/C.54/11/Rev.01)

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(Karrer and Sapijanskas, May 4, 2021). Yes.

Please note that baseline METT score are not required at PIF stage but CEO endorsement stage. Also for implementation please be sure to correct the WDPa entries.

(Karrer and Sapijanskas, May 3, 2021). No.

For core indicator 5 - We need an explanation for the 4 million ha. In the response below you calculate for each country totaling 12.7 million ha. How did you determine 4 million ha would be improved? You note that 4 million ha is 1/3 of the GoT but then how did you decide that 1/3 of the GoT will improve? Is that the area of the benthic and coastal habitats in the map below and if so why are those the priority areas? You also note for outcome 1.2 that you'll be developing and implementing EAF management plans for the GoT. Is that the basis for determining the target area? In that case, what share of the area under the EAF management plans will have enough support for effective implementation to report under core indicator 5? The logic for 4 million ha needs explanation. Please provide an explanation in the PIF. Also, if relevant, please include the map.

(Karrer and Sapijanskas, April 6, 2021). No. Core Indicator #5 indicates 12.7M ha of marine habitat under improved management, which is over 1/2 the GEF-7 target. Please ensure this is accurate and provide an explanation for this amount in the table. Also, the text under section 1.6 GEBs notes the project will contribute to improved management of over 387Mha. Please correct for consistency and accuracy.

Core indicator 2.2 is cleared with many thanks for the revisions. We note the overlap between MPAs. Please make sure to correct the WDPA entries as part of the project implementation. We also note that in the review sheet many baseline METT score are provided as identical and very high (85), which is most likely a typo. Please note that baseline METT score are not required at PIF stage but CEO endorsement stage.

(Karrer, Jan 6, 2021). No.

(JS) Core indicator 2.2: Please break down the entry with one line per MPA and fill in the corresponding WDPA ID. The MPAs per state are combined. We need these to be on separate lines to reflect each management unit since the core indicator is on management effectiveness, as measured by METT, which will differ between management units. Please note that at CER you will have to provide baseline METT and target METT scores for each MPA.

Core indicator 5: the target in the portal is 3.8 million ha when the GoT is ca. 39 million ha. Why do you only target only 10% of the Gulf? Please clarify.

(Karrer, Oct 2, 2020). Yes.

Agency Response

Core Indicator 2	Marine protected areas created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use					(Hectares)
		Hectares (2.1+2.2)				
		Expected			Achieved	
		PIF stage	Endorsement		MTR	TE
Indicator 2.1	Marine protected areas newly created					
Name of Protected Area	WDPA ID	IUCN category	Hectares			
			Expected		Achieved	
			PIF stage	Endorsement	MTR	TE

				PIF stage	Endorsement	MTR	TE
<i>Pulau Berhala</i>		TBC		400			
<i>Pulau Lima</i>		TBC		14500			
		Sum		14900			
Indicator 2.2	Marine protected areas under improved management effectiveness						
Name of Protected Area	WDPA ID	IUCN category	Hectares	METT Score (Scale 1-3)			
				Baseline		Achieved	
				PIF stage	Endorsement	MTR	TE
<i>Pulau Rawa</i>	555705826	Category II	5080.0	85			
<i>Pulau Babi Hujung</i>	555705825	Category II	5235.0	85			
<i>Pulau Babi Tengah</i>	555705824	Category II	5149.0	85			
<i>Pulau Babi Besar</i>	555635840	Category II	8414.0	85			
<i>Pulau Harimau</i>	555705827	Category II	4900.0	85			
<i>Pulau Gual</i>	555705829	Category II	4570.0	85			
<i>Pulau Mensirip</i>	555705828	Category II	4660.0	85			
<i>Pulau Aur</i>	198395	Category II	9745.0	85			
<i>Pulau Pemanggil</i>	198394	Category II	8790.0	85			
<i>Pulau Tinggi</i>	555635837	Category II	10180.0	85			
<i>Pulau Sibul</i>	555705831	Category II	4260.0	85			
<i>Pulau Sibul Hujung</i>	555705832	Category II	1183.0	85			
<i>Pulau Mentigi</i>	555705830	Category II	4399.0	85			
<i>Pulau Tioman</i>	18307	Category II	25115.0	85			
<i>Pulau Labas</i>	555705837	Category II	4478.0	85			
<i>Pulau Sepoi</i>	555705836	Category II	4457.0	85			
<i>Pulau Jahat</i>	555705839	Category II	4520	85			
<i>Pulau Ceben</i>	555705838	Category II	4492.0	85			
<i>Pulau Tulai</i>	555705840	Category II	6306.0	85			
<i>Pulau Tokong Bahara</i>	198413	Category II	4513.0	85			
<i>Pulau Sembilang</i>	555635839	Category II	6060.0	85			
<i>Pulau Seri Buntar</i>	555705823	Category II	7720.0	85			
<i>Pulau Kapas</i>	198,399	Category II	2133.0	85			
<i>Pulau Lang Tengah</i>	19,648	Category II	6150.0	85			
<i>Pulau Nyireh</i>	555705833	Category II	1440.0	85			
<i>Pulau Tenggol</i>	555635838	Category II	2400.0	85			
<i>Pulau Redang</i>	9786	Category II	12750.0	85			
<i>Pulau Ekor Tebu</i>	198406	Category II	4060.0				
<i>Pulau Lima</i>	198402	Category II	4200.0	85			

<i>Pulau Lima</i>	<i>198402</i>	Category II	<i>4390.0</i>	<i>85</i>			
<i>Pulau Pinang</i>	<i>198407</i>	Category II	<i>4890.0</i>	<i>85</i>			
<i>Pulau Susu Dara</i>	<i>198401</i>	Category II	<i>1428.0</i>	<i>85</i>			
<i>Pulau Perhentian Kecil</i>	<i>19647</i>	Category II	<i>8107.0</i>	<i>85</i>			
<i>Pulau Perhentian Besar</i>	<i>10028</i>	Category II	<i>9121.0</i>	<i>85</i>			
<i>Pulau Yu Besar</i>	<i>555629251</i>	Category II	<i>4786.0</i>	<i>85</i>			
<i>Pulau Yu Kecil</i>	<i>555629252</i>	Category II	<i>4666.0</i>	<i>85</i>			
<i>Rantau Abang Fisheries Protected Area / Turtle Sanctuary</i>	<i>19647</i>	Category IV	<i>51176.3</i>				
		Sum	<i>261,723.3</i>				
Core Indicator 5	Area of marine habitat under improved practices to benefit biodiversity						12,7 Million Ha
Indicator 5.1	Number of fisheries that meet national or international third-party certification that incorporates biodiversity considerations						
Third party certification(s): <i>MSC Regional Certification (to be created by the project) Global Aquaculture Alliance (related to fish feeds)</i>				Number			
				Expected		Achieved	
				PIF stage	Endorsement	MTR	TE
				2			
				2			
				1			
Indicator 5.2	Number of large marine ecosystems (LMEs) with reduced pollution and hypoxia						
			Number				
			Expected		Achieved		
			PIF stage	Endorsement	MTR	TE	
Indicator 6.2	Emissions avoided						
Core Indicator 7	Number of shared water ecosystems (fresh or marine) under new or improved cooperative management						(Number)
Indicator 7.1	Level of Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis and Strategic Action Program (TDA/SAP) formulation and implementation						
		Shared water ecosystem	Rating (scale 1-4)				
			PIF stage	Endorsement	MTR	TE	
Indicator 7.2	Level of Regional Legal Agreements and Regional Management Institutions to support its implementation						
		Shared water ecosystem	Rating (scale 1-4)				
			PIF stage	Endorsement	MTR	TE	
		<i>Gulf of Thailand LME (Regional Fisheries Agreement)</i>	1				

Indicator 7.3	Level of National/Local reforms and active participation of Inter-Ministerial Committees					
		Shared water ecosystem	Rating (scale 1-4)			
			PIF stage	Endorsement	MTR	TE
		<i>Gulf of Thailand LME (Regional Committees)</i>	4			
Indicator 7.4	Level of engagement in IWLEARN through participation and delivery of key products					
		Shared water ecosystem	Rating (scale 1-4)			
			Rating		Rating	
			PIF stage	Endorsement	MTR	TE
		<i>Gulf of Thailand LME (Transboundary Fisheries)</i>	4			
Core Indicator 8	Globally over-exploited fisheries Moved to more sustainable levels					
						(Tons)
Fishery Details			Metric Tonnes			
			PIF stage	Endorsement	MTR	TE
		<i>Gulf of Thailand cumulative catch (multispecies)</i>	547,393			
Core Indicator 11	Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment					
			Number Achieved			
					MTR	TE
		Female	60000			
		Male	60000			
		Total	120,000			

Additional notes:

- Indicator 2.1 - The WDPA ID for Pulau Lima and Pulau Berhala are not available because these islands are currently have been identified as potential MPAs and further process need to be taken for MPA establishment which will fall under category II (IUCN).
- Indicator 2.2 - Malaysia has reviewed and noticed there is discrepancy in the hectareage and it could be miscalculated previously. Therefore, Malaysia has amended the hectareage as follows:
 - o Johor Marine Park – 60,679.20 ha* (Category II of IUCN Category)
 - o Pahang Marine Park – 54,573.90 ha* (Category II of IUCN Category)
 - o Terengganu Marine Park – 58,435.9 ha* (Category II of IUCN Category)
 - o Rantau Abang Fisheries Prohibited Areas / Rantau Abang Turtle Sanctuary– 51,176.3 ha* (Category IV of IUCN Category)
- **Total: 224,865.3 ha** (refers to overlapping areas); 262,818.50 ha (counted individually). The total hectareage of MPAs will be different if counted individually because some individual areas are reported to be overlapping. The overlapping areas have been highlighted according to color coding and comments in Annex 1 for quick reference.
 - o The Rantau Abang Turtle Sanctuary (gazetted under State Enactment) with 6,924 ha overlaps with Rantau Abang Fisheries

Protected Area (gazetted by the Fisheries Act 1985 under the Federal Law) with 51,176.3ha. Therefore, the hectarage for both sites will be 51,176.3 ha

- o **Ref:** Ministry of Water, Land and Natural Resources. 2019. A Master List of Protected Areas in Malaysia – A Tool for National Biodiversity Conservation Management and Planning. Ministry of Water, Land and Natural Resources, Putrajaya, Malaysia.

Core Indicator 5: Thank you for the comment. We have re-calculated the area, and we consider that a more realistic target is **12,700,000 Ha** (which represents 33.4 % of the GoT area). This value has been included as GEF Core Indicator 5.

FAO Response April 2021

The Core Indicator #5 has been revised to 4 M Ha. This represents the anticipated benthic and coastal habitats that will benefit from the total target area of 12.7 M ha that is the focus of the improved fisheries management (see map below). The section 1.6 has been revised accordingly as well.



The map includes estimated areas that will fall under the project (IW), which will include approximately: Vietnam (48,600 km²); Cambodia (13,500 km²); Thailand 1,2,3, 16,200,8,200,19,800 km²; Malaysia (20,700 km²). Total 127,000 km² = 33.4% of the GoT. 127,000 km² to Ha = 12,700,000 Ha.

In relation to Core Indicator 2.2 we confirm that yes, the METT will be revised during the PPG phase.

Response to May 3 Review

Core Indicator 5

The project's work on supporting EAFM is expected to cover 12 million ha. A map has been uploaded in Annex A to illustrate "Indicator 5"s tentative areas these plans will cover (12+ million ha), and has also been uploaded in document section. This will be further clarified after detailed discussions with the countries.

2. Of the 12 million ha covered under EAFM, the project's work will directly contribute to implementation of the plans over the project's 5 years, which are expected to cover 4 million ha- that is one third of the area covered by EAFM. This too will be discussed further and detailed during project preparation. The project support will include capacity building on detailed site level planning within identified areas for EAFM, as well as capacity building on implementing activities related to conservation and sustainable use, reducing threats, and monitoring. Such capacities will be built at community level, inter-community levels and also for government and other supporting stakeholders. Necessary key equipment may also be provided, but with adequate consideration for equity, sustainability and to ensure that the project does not create a culture of dependency on external support. Detailed actions will be developed during full proposal development, along with contribution from cofinance.

3. The 4 million ha under indicator 5 will cover benthic and coastal habitats that are considered high priority from the perspective of biodiversity and cross border management.

4. The total number of beneficiaries is an estimate based on the 4 million ha area to be covered, and the likely number of people that would

directly benefit from project actions.





Project/Program taxonomy

7. Is the project/program properly tagged with the appropriate keywords as requested in Table G?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(Karrer, Oct 2, 2020). Yes.

Agency Response

art II – Project Justification

1. Has the project/program described the global environmental/adaptation problems, including the root causes and barriers that need to be addressed?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(Karrer, Oct 2, 2020). Yes.

Agency Response

2. Is the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects appropriately described?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(Karrer, Oct 2, 2020). Yes.

Agency Response

3. Does the proposed alternative scenario describe the expected outcomes and components of the project/program?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(Karrer, Oct 2, 2020). Yes.

Agency Response

4. Is the project/program aligned with focal area and/or Impact Program strategies?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(Karrer, Oct 2, 2020). Yes.

Agency Response

5. Is the incremental/additional cost reasoning properly described as per the Guidelines provided in GEF/C.31/12?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(Karrer, Oct 2, 2020). Yes.

Agency Response

6. Are the project's/program's indicative targeted contributions to global environmental benefits (measured through core indicators) reasonable and achievable? Or for adaptation benefits?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(Karrer, Oct 2, 2020). Yes.

Agency Response

7. Is there potential for innovation, sustainability and scaling up in this project?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(Karrer, Oct 2, 2020). Yes.

Agency Response

Project/Program Map and Coordinates

Is there a preliminary geo-reference to the project's/program's intended location?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(Karrer and Sapijanskas, May 3, 2021). Yes.

As agreed by FAO, for the CEO endorsement request, please be sure to include the corresponding activity and budget line to support the KBA designation process.

(Karrer & Sapijanskas, April 6, 2021). No. Figure 1 still has both the yellow and the red lines and both indicating they are the LME boundary. Please correct.

Related to the previous point below - for the CEO endorsement request, please be sure to include the corresponding activity and budget line to support the KBA designation process.

(Karrer & Sapijanskas, Jan 6, 2021). No. Please clarify the difference between the red and yellow lines on Figure 1 both of which seems to be indicating the boundary of the Gulf of Thailand LME.

(JS) Thank you for annex G and maps therein.

Please provide the reference to the evidence used to determine that the areas proposed for MPA creation meet the KBA criteria and confirm that the project will allocate resources for going through the process of KBA designation. Please note that the GEF does not require to assess existing MPA the project will work on against KBA criteria.

(Karrer, Oct 2, 2020). No.

Please clarify the coordinates for the Gulf of Thailand and the locations of the existing MPAs for improvement. Also please specify where the new MPAs will be created and the indicative surface area. If it is not already designated as a KBA, please (i) provide a reasonable indication that the KBA criteria will be met and (ii) plan to devote some resource in the project for going to the process of KBA designation. There should already be an indication at PIF stage of the area planned for MPA creation. It might notably in the large areas that have been recognized as EBSAs but are not yet covered by MPAs on eastern coast of Malaysia (e.g. Redang Island Archipelago and Adjacent Area).

For Outcome 3.2, please clarify how the project would enhance MPA management effectiveness, as measures by the METT, in concrete terms beyond "a revision of management measures". Will the project contribute to their implementation?

Please clarify the existing MPAs that will benefit from the project will have to be reported separately (as they appear in the WDPA), and not lumped together per Malaysian State as shown in the upstream Annex F.

Please provide a map showing the specific locations of the interventions corresponding to the Malaysian component of the project.

To our knowledge, EBSAs are not conservation areas but just areas identified in need of protection. Please thus delete the reference to EBSAs in the list of fisheries replenishment zones where the "The project will into mechanisms to increase the inclusivity of multidisciplinary stakeholders in the management and decision making" under Outcome 3.5.

Agency Response

The coordinates for the GoT appear in the Figure 1 (the area covered from latitude 1°25' N to 13°29' N and longitude 99°13' E to 104°45'). The location of the new MPAs is included in Annex G. Potentially 149 km² of Pahang (Pulau Berhala) and Johor (Pulau Lima archipelago) will be identified as a new protected areas and 1,508 km² water area in Johor States (which will include existing Marine Parks) has the potential to be identified as a Dugong Sanctuary based on scientific evidence and KBA criteria with the aim of increasing the conservation value and/or fisheries benefits of the wider eco-region/ network of the East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia. Assessment and designation of these additional protected areas and conservation zones that strengthen the overall integrity eco-corridor will be initiated during the lifetime of the project for future implementation.

Component 3 on BD will complete the METT during the PPG phase for an initial assessment of the management measures. Due to the budget adjustment, the Outputs under Outcome 3.2 have been revised as: "*Output 3.2.1 - Identification and establishment of ecological corridors of critical and important habitat for aquatic resources in the East Coast of peninsular Malaysia with spatial maps and information available for EAF planning*" and "*Output 3.2.3 - Identification and establishment of management measures in conservation areas to ensure they provide the highest potential return for achieving biodiversity conservation (following the METT) and fisheries management targets in at least 1 project target location*".

A list of the MPAs (new and existing ones) that will participate in the project have been included in Annex G.

The map has also been included in Annex G.

The outcomes and outputs have been revised.

Responses to comments from Jan 2021

- MAP: Thank you for noticing this – the figure caption was not adequate and it has been corrected. The yellow line refers to the geographical front for the Gulf of Thailand as defined by the International Hydrographic Commission, while the red line refers to the GoT LME, that extends beyond the front and includes a small section of the adjacent South China Sea.
- MPA creation: Thank you. Yes, we can confirm that the project will allocate resources for going through the process of KBA designation. The references for the determination of the areas proposed as MPAs are as follows:
 - o Mohamad Saupi, I., & Goeden, G. B. (2020). Assessment of coral reefs community health in Pulau Berhala, Pahang, Malaysia. *Journal of PeerScientist*, 2(1), e1000017.
 - o Ponnampalam, L. S., Fairul Izmal, J. H., Adulyanukosol, K., Ooi, J. L. S., & Reynolds, J. E. (2015). Aligning conservation and research priorities for proactive species and habitat management: The case of dugongs Dugong dugon in Johor, Malaysia. *Oryx*, 49(4), 743–749.
 - o Ooi, J.L.S., Goh, H.C., Then, A.H.Y, Affendi, Y.A., Izarenah, M.R., Abu Muntalib, J. 2017. Status Report on the Marine Environment of the Mersing Marine Park Island, and Indicative Proposal for a Marine Protected Area Network. Department of Marine Park Malaysia.
 - o Seminar Penyelidikan Jabatan Taman Laut Malaysia (2018: Putrajaya) Prosiding Seminar Penyelidikan Jabatan Taman Laut Malaysia 2018 / Editor: Ab. Rahim Gor Yaman, Abd. Muntalib Juli, Md. Nizam Ismail, Albert Apollo Chan, Izarenah Md. Repin.

April 2021

- The map has been revised, and now only includes the line related to GoT LME

- Regarding the KBA criteria, we agree that yes, there will be a budget line to support the KBA designation process.

Stakeholders

Does the PIF/PFD include indicative information on Stakeholders engagement to date? If not, is the justification provided appropriate? Does the PIF/PFD include information about the proposed means of future engagement?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(Karrer, April 6, 2021). Yes. A much more thorough explanation of the role of the stakeholders will need to be provided in the Pro Doc based on consultations during PPG.

(Karrer, Jan 6, 2021). No. As noted, at the point of the PIF the Agency should have identified the actual stakeholders (i.e. the names of the government agencies, CSOs, etc), not just the categories. While the table notes how they will be consulted during PPG, it does not discuss how they will likely be engaged and affected during the actual project.

(Karrer, Oct 2, 2020). No.

Please note that the upstream version of the Annex F Stakeholder Plan only provides a list of stakeholder categories. This table should specify the organizations and at least give initial ideas regarding their roles, which will then be detailed during PPG.

The second paragraph states, “stakeholders will be given information about the project and informed” which implies a top-down, need to know approach, which is not participatory. This approach needs to be revised to encourage and respect stakeholder engagement.

In addition the categorization needs reconsidering. It would seem that all the categories, including fishers, CSOs, NGOs, coastal communities, natural resource managers, and govt counterparts) would be part of the project implementation and, therefore, in the middle column.

Finally, since blue swimming crab is specifically mentioned as an important species, it is odd that the Crab Council <http://www.committedtocrab.org/about/> is not mentioned in the project. It seems that cooperation with the Crab Council, would be one of the avenues that should be explored in the process of moving the Gulf of Thailand Fisheries towards sustainability.

Finally, we would expect that the major fishing company, CP, would be included in plans for stakeholder engagement.

Agency Response

The Annex F with the Stakeholder Engagement Plan has been revised accordingly.

The mentioned text was for obtaining the Free, Prior, and informed consent. The text has now been modified to make this clearer and now reads:

“Consultations so far during the development of the PIF have been in accordance with the GEF guidelines for stakeholder engagement and public consultations. During the PPG phase the project will go into more detail to develop the Stakeholder Engagement Plan to: i) Identify people or communities that are or could be affected by the project, as well as other interested parties, ii) Ensure that such stakeholders are appropriately engaged on environmental and social issues that could potentially affect them, through a process of information disclosure and meaningful consultation; and iii) Maintain a constructive relationship with stakeholders on an on-going basis through meaningful engagement during project implementation. The FAO Free, Prior and Informed consent protocol will be initiated if the project interacts with indigenous people (not identified at the PIF stage, but to be considered during the PPG phase)”.

And there is ongoing discussion with different private sector actors (including the Crab Council), who have supported the project and will be involved in the implementation of the project in due course – please refer to the support letters in the attachment.

CP was included in the plans for stakeholder engagement (they also appear in the baseline). Both CP and Thai Union have participated in the two regional GoTFish workshops and Thai Union has agreed to indicate co-finance for the project.

Responses to review comments from Jan 2021

The name of the actual stakeholder group have been provided under Annex F (the final table is provided below for easy reference):

Stakeholder group	Methods for consultation and engagement
1. Country Government Agencies (DoF, Ministry of Environment, Department of Coastal Management, etc.) of the 4 countries (Cambodia, Malaysia, Thailand and Viet Nam)	Government stakeholders are aware of the project from the project design phase and will be convened again during PPG phase to discuss project activities for the achievement of the outputs. Government stakeholders will be closely involved in all the outputs of the project, to ensure ownership and sustainability beyond the project duration. This engagement will be done through face-to-face and virtual meetings, emails, phone calls, and workshops, as well as using other appropriate communication channels (including the use of publications, project flyers, brochures) to support policy-making at the national and regional levels.
2. Fisherfolks and fishing communities, including women involved in fisheries related activities along the value chain, and fisherfolk families in the 4 countries (Cambodia, Malaysia, Thailand and Viet Nam)	As the key beneficiaries of the project, fishers and fishing communities will be consulted throughout the PPG phase on decision-making regarding EAFM plans and incentives to promote sustainable fishing in the GoT. The stakeholder consultations will ensure that their needs and local contexts are well taken into account. The project will devote specific efforts to ensure that women in the seafood sector receive the attention that they need along the value chain. Targeted communities will be involved through key informant consultations and focus group discussions.

<p>3. Regional and international organizations, development partners,</p> <p>FAO, UN Environment, SEAFDEC, IUCN</p>	<p>FAO (the UN Agency that has the mandate for fisheries) is the Implementing Agency of this project, while UN Environment is the Implementing Agency of the SAP implementation project and the Fishery Refugia project. Both agencies will work closely to coordinate implementation of the three projects.</p> <p>SEAFDEC and IUCN (in addition to UQ, explained below) will be the Executing Agencies of the project, with close linkages to other regional and international organizations that have been consulted in the design of the PIF (more information of these consultations in Annex E). These organizations and development partners will continue to be mobilized during project formulation and further implementation, ensuring close coordination with other relevant initiatives as outlined in section 1.2 of the PIF (baseline scenario and associated baseline projects). The main channels for communication with regional and international stakeholders will be through E-mail, phone, workshops and regular exchange meetings.</p>
<p>4. Civil society</p> <p>(Cambodia: FFI, Malaysia: RCM</p> <p>Thailand: SDF,</p> <p>Viet Nam: MCD)</p>	<p>CSOs and NGOs (at the local, national and regional levels), such as the Centre for Marine life Conservation and Community Development (MCD) in Viet Nam, the Sustainable Development Foundation (SDF) in Thailand, Flora and Fauna International in Cambodia, and Reef Check Malaysia (RCM) will be involved during project formulation and implementation. The main channels for communication with stakeholders from civil society will be through email, phone, attendance to workshops and other face-to-face meetings, as well as using publications, project flyers, and brochures.</p>
<p>5. Academic and research institutions</p> <p>(University of Queensland, WorldFish, and national level academic and research institutions in the four countries)</p>	<p>The University of Queensland (UQ) is one of the Executing Agencies of the project, is also a world leading research and teaching institutions, facilitating the sharing of knowledge generated by the project with the academia more broadly (more information about UQ can be found in section 1.2 of the PIF). Other key partners of the project will be WorldFish, as well as other academic and research institutions in the four participating countries. The main channels for communication with academic and research institutions will be through email, phone and face-to-face meetings, as well as their attendance to project workshops</p>
<p>6. Private sector</p> <p>(Thai Union, CP, SFP and other private sector actors at the national level in the four countries)</p>	<p>Private sector representatives (Thai Union and CP, and also SFP that works very closely with private sector stakeholders), have attended the GoT PIF design workshops and will continue to be involved during the PPG phase (particularly under Component 2). Thai Union has already confirmed co-financing and other private sector actors are likely to follow. The main channels for communication with private sector stakeholders will include email, phone and face-to-face meetings, as well as their attendance to project workshops.</p>

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Is the articulation of gender context and indicative information on the importance and need to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women, adequate?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(Karrer, Oct 2, 2020). Yes.

Agency Response

Private Sector Engagement

Is the case made for private sector engagement consistent with the proposed approach?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(Karrer, Oct 2, 2020). Yes.

Agency Response

Risks to Achieving Project Objectives

Does the project/program consider potential major risks, including the consequences of climate change, that might prevent the project objectives from being achieved or may be resulting from project/program implementation, and propose measures that address these risks to be further developed during the project design?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(Karrer, Oct 2, 2020). Yes.

Agency Response

Coordination

**Is the institutional arrangement for project/program coordination including management, monitoring and evaluation outlined?
Is there a description of possible coordination with relevant GEF-financed projects/programs and other bilateral/multilateral initiatives in the project/program area?**

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(Karrer, May 3, 2021). Yes. For CEO a much more detailed explanation of coordination will need to be provided.

(Karrer, April 6, 2021). No. The Coordination section (paragraph numbering is missing for #114-119) needs to include the explanation you provided below in your response regarding the differences and complementarity between this project and existing GEF Gulf of Thailand projects. Annex H is missing from the resubmission.

(Karrer, Jan 6, 2021). No. An explanation needs to be provided regarding how this proposed GoT project is different from the other two SCS LME projects, which include GoT. There is a perfunctory description of the 2 LME projects which is immediately followed by a discussion of coordination. Before discussing coordination it needs to be clear how this new proposed project on fisheries, which is also addressed by the other 2 projects, is different and not duplicating the 2 projects. In short: what do the 2 projects not address that this project does address?

During PPG more detail regarding coordination will need to be developed.

(Karrer, Oct 2, 2020). No.

The project alignment with the two South China Sea LME project needs to be reflected in the Results Framework. The note "SAP Objective 1" under Component 1 is insufficient and needs a bit of elaboration.

During the PPG the coordination mechanisms for this project and the two South China Sea Strategic Action Program projects need to be articulated in much more detail than provided in the PIF.

Agency Response

Please note that we have modified the project Outcomes to reference the SAP priorities, including long-term objectives and expected outcomes, and this are part of the results framework, as follows:

Outcome 1.1: Fisheries resources and marine biodiversity ecosystem services are restored through strengthened regional governance of GoT fisheries, building their resilience to the effects of high and increasing levels of fishing effort

- related to SAP Fisheries Objective 1: Build the resilience of Southeast Asian fisheries to the effects of high and increasing levels of fishing effort

Outcome 1.2: Development and implementation of Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EAF) management plans in the Gulf of Thailand (national and regional levels) enhances the resilience against climate change and manages fishing effort of fisheries stakeholders (women and men)

- related to SAP Fisheries Objective 1 - Build the resilience of Southeast Asian fisheries to the effects of high and increasing levels of fishing effort

Outcome 2.1: Establishment of a market and behavior incentive mechanism which reduces ecosystem stress from fishing, enhances the uptake of good practices supporting fisheries management and supports the transition to climate-resilient fisheries (integrating gender considerations and the different needs of women and men along the fishery value chain)

- related to SAP Fisheries Objective 3 - Build the capacity of fisheries departments/ministries to engage in meaningful dialogue with the environment sector regarding the improvement of fisheries and management of interactions between fisheries and critical marine habitats).

Outcome 3.1: Improved integration of habitat and biodiversity conservation considerations in the management of fisheries in the Gulf of Thailand through deeper understanding of the ecological transboundary corridors existing in the Gulf of Thailand, leading to enhanced resilience of vulnerable aquatic species and those important for regional food security and sovereignty

- related to SAP Fisheries Objective 1 - Build the resilience of Southeast Asian fisheries to the effects of high and increasing levels of fishing effort)

Outcome 4.1: Efficient knowledge management and targeted communication, improves the understanding amongst stakeholders of ecosystem and fishery linkages in the Gulf of Thailand

- related to SAP Fisheries Objective 2 - Improve the understanding amongst stakeholders, including fisher folk, scientists, policymakers,

and fisheries managers, of ecosystem and fishery linkages, as a basis for integrated fisheries and ecosystem/habitat management)

Section 6 explains in detail how the GoTFish project is related with other GEF projects (particularly South China Sea SAP and Fisheries Refugia).

Responses to comments from Jan 2021

The GoTFish project has been designed to address the management challenges and disconnections that arise from transboundary fishery governance issues (e.g. overexploitation of fisheries resources, IUU fishing, gender and other socioeconomic issues, etc., as described in the barriers section of the PIF). This is complementary to, but quite distinct from the approach of the Fishery Refugia project, which is the fisheries component of the SCS-SAP project, and which is focused on management of those habitats that underpin important life stages of species that form important fisheries (e.g. wetlands, mangroves, seagrasses, coral reefs). The Refugia Project's objective is more focussed on enhancement of the science and knowledge and development of policy and plans for implementation of the "fishery refugia" concept.

The GoTFish project addresses fishery management at the broader LME scale, through the application of the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries and Blue Economy reasoning at a regional level. It aims to strengthen fisheries governance, based on a shared vision for the sustainable use of fisheries resources in the Gulf of Thailand LME, this necessarily incorporates the actions and progress achieved by the SCS and Fishery Refugia Projects but the specific issues the GoTFish will address are not covered by these other two projects. This is the aspect of placing transboundary governance and cooperation at the centre to:

- updating policies and strengthen legal frameworks to improve bilateral approaches
- establishing and enhancing regional stakeholder task-forces to deal with other transboundary fishery issues (beyond fisheries refugia and habitat management, e.g. IUU, sustainable management)
- Developing regional EAFM plans and other related action plans, and a mechanism for a regional approach to transboundary fisheries management (which will be defined by countries during early project implementation).

The GoTFish project is also innovating beyond the scope of SCS and Refugia projects, in its exploration of market- and behaviour-related incentive mechanisms, through partnerships and active involvement of the private sector in the search of solutions (e.g. Fishery Improvement Projects, involvement in seafood taskforces, etc).

Component 3 of the GoTFish project makes use of IW (all four countries) and Biodiversity (only Malaysia) funds to provide a deep dive for a greater understanding of the ecological corridors existing in the Gulf of Thailand, with a special focus in Malaysia. Although there are clear linkages to the Refugia concept in terms of managing and protecting ecologically important habitat or corridors, the focus is primarily on vulnerable biodiversity that may be related or unrelated fisheries resources, but still potentially impacted by the activities within fisheries. This Component builds on the knowledge generated by the Fishery Refugia project and will, for example, integrate and build on findings and recommendations of the Tanjung Leman fishery refugia, as well as other completed GEF projects such as the CCRES). Importantly, the activities in Component 3 do not isolate biodiversity from fisheries, as the component will work on the integration of these issues into the EAFm plans, alongside improving the management of existing, and development of new, MPAs that are important for marine biodiversity.

Additional text related to coordination between these projects has been included in the Coordination section of the PIF – Please refer to paragraphs 114 to 119, and **Annex H**, which provides a description of the Fisheries Refugia project objectives and work plan for 2021 and 2022.

FAO Response April 2021

- The same explanation has been included in the PIF (paragraph 115). Annex H has been submitted separately.

Consistency with National Priorities

Has the project/program cited alignment with any of the recipient country's national strategies and plans or reports and assessments under relevant conventions?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(Karrer, Oct 2, 2020). Yes.

Agency Response

Knowledge Management

Is the proposed “knowledge management (KM) approach” in line with GEF requirements to foster learning and sharing from relevant projects/programs, initiatives and evaluations; and contribute to the project's/program's overall impact and sustainability?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(Karrer, Oct 2, 2020). Yes.

During PPG the knowledge management plans need further consideration. Plans for drawing out lessons learned and elaboration on the knowledge products need to be provided. It also needs to be clear how the lessons learned will be shared and through what channels beyond only IWLEARN.

Agency Response

We agree on the importance of knowledge management. Component 4 of the project is on Efficient Knowledge Management and Targeted Communication. A strategy for knowledge management will be prepared during the PPG phase, focusing on the type of knowledge that needs to be produced, and how can it be widely disseminated to the general public but also reaching the right audience through targeted communications (through a communication strategy). The project will also coordinate with other projects and programs in the region and beyond, to capture and share lessons learned. A list of potential knowledge products and lessons learned has been provided in "Section 8, Knowledge Management", and this will be discussed in more detail during PPG phase.

Responses to comment made in Jan 2021

We agreed, and text to that effect has been included in the PIF (Par. 1250:

A strategy for knowledge management will be prepared during the PPG phase, focusing on the type of knowledge that needs to be produced, and how can it be widely disseminated to the general public but also reaching the right audience through targeted communications, with the provision of a plan for drawing out lessons learned and elaboration on the knowledge products, including how the lessons learned will be shared and through what channels (beyond IWLEARN).

Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS)

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

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(Karrer, Oct 2, 2020). Yes.

Agency Response

art III – Country Endorsements

Has the project/program been endorsed by the country's GEF Operational Focal Point and has the name and position been checked against the GEF data base?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(Karrer, April 6, 2021). Yes.

(Karrer, Jan 6, 2021). No. Awaiting LOEs.

(Karrer, Oct 2, 2020). No.

We understand that Malaysia has withdrawn their signed LOE and will resign with a lower STAR allocation. Consequently, the PIF needs to be revised to realign activities, particularly in Component 3, to commiserate with the STAR funding. In addition, Viet Nam, which noted the BD funding in their LOE, also needs to resubmit their LOE.

The Thailand LOE is missing and needs to be submitted.

All four LOEs are needed for this project to be included in the December WP.

Agency Response

Countries are currently following their internal process to obtain their LoEs.

Malaysia has confirmed a reduction on their BD funds, and this change has already been incorporated in the PIF, with a consequent reduction in the Outputs.

Response

Thailand OFP letter has been obtained and uploaded.

Termsheet, reflow table and agency capacity in NGI Projects

Does the project provide sufficient detail in Annex A (indicative termsheet) to take a decision on the following selection criteria: co-financing ratios, financial terms and conditions, and financial additionality? If not, please provide comments. Does the project provide a detailed reflow table in Annex B to assess the project capacity of generating reflows? If not, please provide comments. After reading the questionnaire in Annex C, is the Partner Agency eligible to administer concessional

finance? If not, please provide comments.

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Agency Response

EFSEC DECISION

RECOMMENDATION

Is the PIF/PFD recommended for technical clearance? Is the PPG (if requested) being recommended for clearance?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

(Karrer, May 7 pm2, 2021). No. See above concern regarding fee.

(Karrer, May 7pm, 2021). Yes.

(Karrer, May 7am, 2021). No. Please address points in #1 above.

(Karrer, May 4, 2021). Yes.

(Karrer, May 3, 2021). No. Please address the core indicator #5 concern in question 6 above.

(Karrer, April 6, 2021). No. Please address the points above.

(Karrer, Jan 6, 20201). No. Please address above points.

(Karrer, Oct 2, 2020). No. Please see the previous points to be addressed.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Additional recommendations to be considered by Agency at the time of CEO endorsement/approval.

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

Review Dates

	PIF Review	Agency Response
First Review	10/2/2020	10/27/2020
Additional Review (as necessary)	1/6/2021	3/23/2021
Additional Review (as necessary)	4/6/2021	4/30/2021
Additional Review (as necessary)	5/3/2021	5/5/2021
Additional Review (as necessary)	5/4/2021	5/7/2021

PIF Recommendation to CEO

Brief reasoning for recommendations to CEO for PIF Approval