

# GEF-8 REQUEST FOR CEO ENDORSEMENT/APPROVAL

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## General Project Information

### Project Title

Blue Corridor: connectivity for the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of marine ecosystems of global importance in the Southern Caribbean of Costa Rica.

Region	Latin America and the Caribbean	GEF Project ID	11780
Country(ies)	Costa Rica	Type of Project	GBFF
GEF Agency(ies):	IUCN	GEF Agency Project ID	P04965
Project Executing Entity(s)	OTS- Organization of Tropical Studies	Project Executing Type	CSO
GEF Focal Area (s)	Biodiversity	Submission Date	10/15/2025
Type of Trust Fund	GBFF	Project Duration (Months)	48
GEF Project Grant: (a)	3,565,596.00	GEF Project Non-Grant: (b)	0.00
Agency Fee(s) Grant: (c)	320,904.00	Agency Fee(s) Non-Grant (d)	0.00
Total GEF Financing: (a+b+c+d)	3,886,500.00	Total Co-financing	921,622.00
PPG Amount: (e)	150,000.00	PPG Agency Fee(s): (f)	13,500.00
Total GEF Resources: (a+b+c+d+e+f)	4,050,000.00		

### Project Tags :

GBF Target 1, GBF Target 2, GBF Target 3, GBF Target 8, GBF Target 10, GBF Target 22, Support IPLC

### Rio Markers

Climate Change Mitigation	Climate Change Adaptation	Biodiversity	Land Degradation
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Significant Objective 1	Significant Objective 1	Principal Objective 2	Significant Objective 1
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## Project Summary

Provide a brief summary description of the project. (max. 2000 words, approximately 1/2 page)

The Blue Corridor Project in Costa Rica’s Southern Caribbean aims to restore ecological connectivity and diversify local livelihoods through inclusive governance and nature-based solutions. It will establish a 720 km<sup>2</sup> marine corridor between Cahuita National Park and Gandoca-Manzanillo Wildlife Refuge, integrating coral reefs, mangroves, seagrasses, turtle nesting beaches, and watersheds. This corridor supports globally important species—sea turtles, manatees, dolphins, and reef fish—while safeguarding ecosystem services vital to coastal communities. The project addresses major drivers of biodiversity loss—climate change impacts, land-based pollution, overfishing, weak governance, and limited sustainable financing—through an integrated approach combining conservation, restoration, and sustainable use. Its goal is to strengthen institutional and community capacity for sustainable corridor management. Component 1 will establish participatory governance and coordination mechanisms, promoting shared local management and aligning with the Talamanca terrestrial corridor. Component 2 will support sustainable livelihoods, ecosystem restoration, and innovative finance, including marine PES, to reduce pressure on marine resources and enhance community resilience. Component 3 will implement participatory monitoring, strengthen enforcement, and improve knowledge management, gender equity, and safeguards. Expected outcomes include improved governance of marine-coastal ecosystems, enhanced ecological connectivity, reduced land-sea pollution, and diversified, sustainable livelihoods for fisherfolk, Afro-descendant, Indigenous, and local communities. The project offers scalable models for ecosystem-based adaptation, contributing to Costa Rica’s environmental goals and the GBF, delivering global biodiversity benefits, and demonstrating an inclusive approach to marine conservation

## Project Description Overview

### Project Objective

To restore and improve the connectivity of key ecosystems and diversify the livelihoods of local communities, afro-descendants and indigenous peoples in Costa Rica's southern Caribbean

### Project Components

#### 1. Design and establishment of the marine corridor

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GBFF
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
355,000.00	54,523.00

Outcome:

1.1 Designed and established the Marine Corridor with participatory governance

Output:

1.1.1. Technical and administrative design established, including structure and procedures for participatory governance

1.1.2 Strengthened management capacities of the governance structures of the marine corridor

1.1.3 Management Plan developed participatively, validated, and approved

1.1.4 Participatory coordination mechanism for integrated management between the Marine Corridor and the Talamanca-Caribbean terrestrial biological corridor defined and implemented

## 2. Sustainable management for the restoration and connectivity of the marine corridor by local communities, afro-descendants and indigenous peoples

Component Type	Trust Fund
Investment	GBFF
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
1,940,512.00	670,344.00

Outcome:

2.1 Protected marine and coastal biodiversity through sustainable productive alternatives and PES schemes

2.2 Strengthened local economy through sustainable productive alternatives in land ecosystems

Output:

2.1.1 Public-private financial mechanisms for the management of the marine corridor designed and validated

2.1.2 Pilot of marine PES program for prioritized stakeholders and activities in the Marine Corridor designed

2.1.3 Restoration actions implemented in prioritized sites to improve the mechanical and ecological connectivity in the Marine Corridor

2.1.4 Sustainable small-scale productive and restoration projects implemented on tourism, artisanal and commercial fishing

2.2.1 Sustainable small-scale productive and restoration projects in land ecosystems directly related to the marine corridor implemented

2.2.2 PES in the watersheds that flow into the marine corridor implemented

2.2.3 Strengthened institutional capacities in waste and wastewater management, in watersheds that flow into the marine corridor

## 3. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Knowledge Management for the Conservation and Sustainability of the Marine Corridor

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GBFF
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
930,504.00	144,601.00

Outcome:

3.1 Coordinated and regulated participatory monitoring, control and surveillance system of the Marine Corridor

3.2 Improved knowledge sharing and dissemination of lessons learned

Output:

- 3.1.1 Participatory Monitoring system for the management of the biological corridor designed and validated
- 3.1.2 Monitoring management plan of the Marine Corridor implemented
- 3.1.3 Regulated and coordinated monitoring of fishing activity and maritime transport in the marine corridor
- 3.1.4 Coordinated and effective control and surveillance for protection and conservation
- 3.2.1. Traditional knowledge and local practices collected, documented, and disseminated.
- 3.2.2. Mainstreaming of gender equality and inclusion, and social and environmental safeguards strategies developed and implemented

## M&E

Component Type	Trust Fund
Technical Assistance	GBFF
GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
169,790.00	26,077.00

Outcome:

monitoring plan and final evaluations

Output:

monitoring plan and final evaluations

## Component Balances

Project Components	GEF Project Financing (\$)	Co-financing (\$)
1. Design and establishment of the marine corridor	355,000.00	54,523.00
2. Sustainable management for the restoration and connectivity of the marine corridor by local communities, afro-descendants and indigenous peoples	1,940,512.00	670,344.00
3. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Knowledge Management for the Conservation and Sustainability of the Marine Corridor	930,504.00	144,601.00
M&E	169,790.00	26,077.00
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>3,395,806.00</b>	<b>895,545.00</b>
Project Management Cost	169,790.00	26,077.00
<b>Total Project Cost (\$)</b>	<b>3,565,596.00</b>	<b>921,622.00</b>

Please provide Justification

## PROJECT OUTLINE

### A.CHANGES COMPARED TO PPG REQUEST

Please describe and justify any major changes to the project design, including to elements put forward in the PPG request to meet the following GBFF selection criteria:

- a. Potential of the project to generate global environmental benefits (GEBs) (include a description of the GEBs the project will generate per the GBFF Results Indicators);
  - b. The alignment of the project with the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans and/or National Biodiversity Finance Plans or similar instruments to identify national and/or regional priorities;
  - c. The level of policy coherence and coordination across multiple ministries, agencies, the private sector, and civil society that the project aims to support;
  - d. Whether the project will mobilize the resources of the private sector and philanthropies'; and
  - e. Whether and how the project will engage with and provide support to IPLCs.
1. The following changes were made from PIF. A table summarizes those below:
    - i. Component 1: Merged Outcomes 1.1 and 1.2 into a single Outcome.
    - ii. Component 1: Outputs 1.1.1 and 1.1.2 merged into a single Output 1.1.1 focused on the technical and administrative design. Outputs 1.2.1 and 1.2.2 merged into a single Output 1.1.2.
    - iii. Component 1: Included a new Output for coordination between the marine corridor and the biological corridor Talamanca Caribe.
    - iv. Component 1: Total budget for this Component was reduced from \$848,950 to \$355,000. The additional budget was shifted for implementation of activities under Component 2.
    - v. Component 2: Components 2 and 3 and related Outcomes and Outputs were merged and reorganized into a single Component 2, with two main sub-components with distinct geographical focus: 1) One focused on actions in the marine-coastal areas (Outcome 2.1), including the development of public-private financial mechanisms (Output 2.1.1); pilot of marine payment for ecosystem services (MPES) (Output 2.1.2); restoration actions for ecological connectivity (Output 2.1.3) and sustainable tourism and fishing projects with Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) (Output 2.1.4). 2) The second sub-component focused on actions in watersheds directly related to the marine corridor (Outcome 2.2), including the implementation of sustainable livelihood projects (Output 2.2.1), PES in watershed (Output 2.2.2), and improved capacities for solid waste management (Output 2.2.3).
    - vi. Component 2: Output 3.2.1 (Proposed regulations (decree and regulation) for the formalization of marine OECMs) was removed as the Government deemed no longer appropriate for inclusion in the project.
    - vii. Component 3: Previous Outputs 4.1.1 and 4.1.3 were merged into Output 3.1.1 which focus solely on the design and validation of the monitoring system, including the participation of IPLCs. Outputs 4.1.2 and 4.1.4 were merged into Output 3.1.2 (Monitoring management plan of the Marine Corridor implemented).
    - viii. Component 3: New Outcome 3.2 (Knowledge Management) with two new Outputs were added. Output 3.2.1 for Knowledge Management and Output 3.2.2 for gender mainstreaming of gender (implementation of the Gender Action Plan) and the implementation of social and environmental safeguards.

Component	PIF		CEO Endorsement	Comment
	Outcome	Output	Output	
1	1.1	1.1.1	1.1.1	Same
		1.1.2	1.1.1	Output merged into 1.1.1
	1.2	1.2.1	1.1.2	Same
		1.2.2	1.1.2	Output merged into 1.1.2
		1.2.3	1.1.3	Same
		1.1.4 (new)	New Output	
2	2.1	2.1.1	1.1.2	Output merged into 1.1.2
		2.1.2	2.2.2	Same
		2.1.3	2.2.3	Same
	2.2	2.2.1	2.1.4, 2.2.1	Output divided geographically into Outputs 2.1.4 and 2.2.1
		2.2.2	2.1.4	Outputs 2.2.2 and 2.2.3 merged into 2.1.4
		2.2.3	2.1.4	Outputs 2.2.2 and 2.2.3 merged into 2.1.4
	2.3	2.3.1	2.2.2	Same
3	3.1	3.1.1	2.1.1	Same
		3.1.2	2.1.2	Same
	3.2	3.2.1		Removed (no longer relevant)
4	4.1	4.1.1	3.1.1	Same
		4.1.2	3.1.2	Same
		4.1.3	3.1.1	Merged into 3.1.1
		4.1.4	3.1.2	Merged into 3.1.2
	4.2	4.2.1	3.1.3	Same
	4.3	4.3.1	3.1.4	Same
		3.2.1 (new)	New KM Output	
		3.2.2 (new)	New Gender and Safeguards Output	

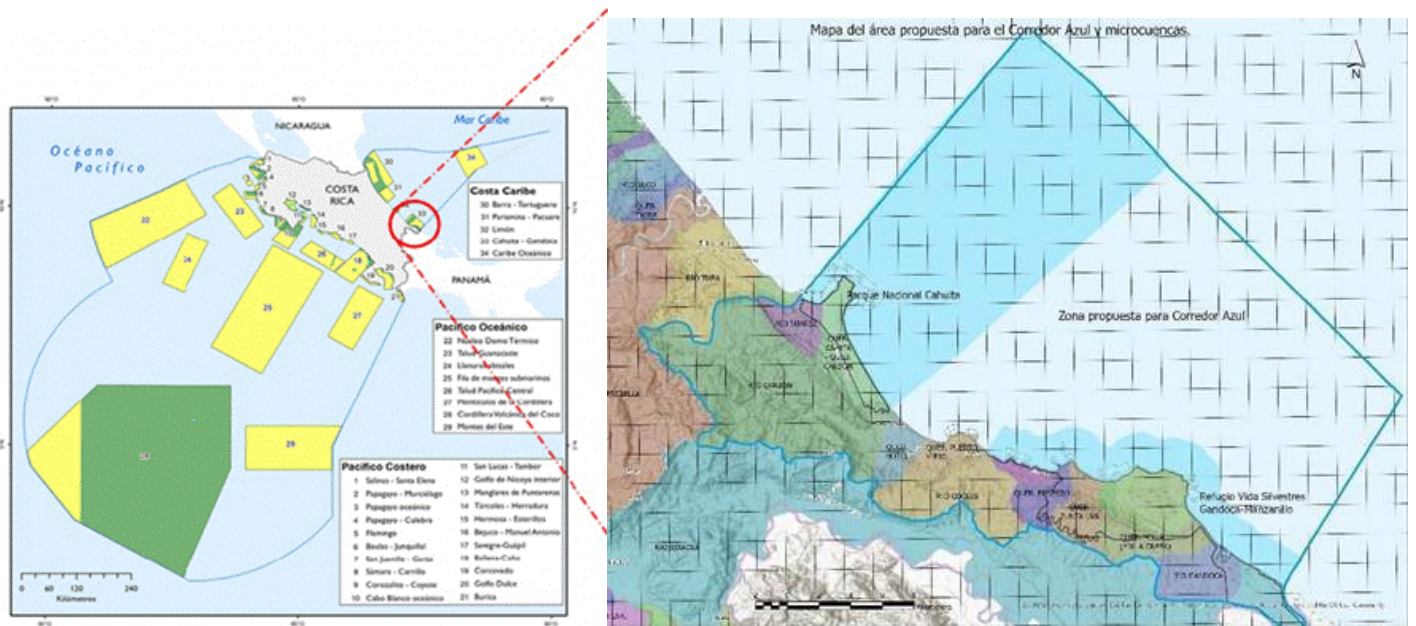
## B. PROJECT RATIONALE

Describe the current situation including: the global biodiversity problems that the project will address; the key elements of the system to be addressed by the project; and underlying drivers of environmental change in the project context, such as population growth, economic development, climate change, sociocultural and political factors, including conflicts, or technological changes. Describe the objective of the project, and the justification for it. (Approximately 3-5 pages).

### B.1 Regional Context and Baseline

- In 2008, Costa Rica initiated a national land-use planning process for biodiversity conservation to preserve representative samples of its natural wealth through Protected Wildlife Areas and innovative conservation initiatives. In 2023, as part of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, SINAC updated this conservation analysis with a focus on conservation and management gaps in marine-coastal and oceanic environments under the GRUAS III planning framework<sup>[1]</sup>. That study identified 34 Important Sites for Conservation and Management (ISC), including 25 marine-coastal and nine oceanic, including the proposed project intervention area Cahuita-Gandoca (ISC 33) in the Southern Caribbean region of Costa Rica (Figure 1), within the SINAC Administrative Conservation Area La Amistad Caribe (ACLAC) unit.

1.



**Figure 1:** Project area, including proposed marine Blue Corridor and coastal areas between the Cahuita National Park and the Gandoca-Manzanillo National Wildlife Refuge.

2. As shown in the ISC 33 fiche in the GRUAS III planning framework, the proposed marine coastal corridor is located between the marine areas of the Cahuita National Park (CNP) (23,290 hectares) and the Gandoca-Manzanillo National Wildlife Refuge (GMNWR) (5,360 hectares) and covers the area with a conservation and management vacuum between the two protected areas (see Figure 1). This initiative aims to establish an ecologically connected and sustainably managed marine corridor (Blue Corridor) that spans approximately 26,000 hectares of marine area and 11,150 hectares of coastal areas, the later comprised of the micro-watersheds that feed into the marine area.<sup>[2]<sup>2</sup></sup>
3. The region is recognized for its exceptional biodiversity and ecological value, and has been identified as a Key Biodiversity Area by IUCN, including wetlands recognized under the Ramsar Convention, notably the Gandoca lagoon and mangrove system<sup>[3]<sup>3</sup>[4]<sup>4</sup></sup>. This includes critical coastal and marine habitats such as coral reefs (700 hectares), mangroves (160 hectares), wetlands (1,128 hectares), estuarine lagoons, seagrass beds (identified as an important habitat for the manatee), nesting beaches for marine turtles (Negra, Cahuita, Grande, and Gandoca beaches), and micro-watersheds<sup>[5]<sup>5</sup>[6]<sup>6</sup>[7]<sup>7</sup></sup>.
4. The marine and coastal ecosystems in the corridor provide essential habitat and migratory routes for multiple species of global conservation concern. These include green, hawksbill, and leatherback sea turtles, West Indian manatees, bottlenose and Guiana dolphins, and numerous species of reef fish and invertebrates (e.g., snappers, groupers, octopuses and lobsters)<sup>[8]<sup>8</sup></sup>. The connectivity of these ecosystems is vital for maintaining ecological functions, especially as they support both local livelihoods

and broader marine biodiversity. This region contributes to Costa Rica's commitments under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, particularly Target 3 (30x30), through the proposed establishment of the marine-coastal corridor<sup>[9]</sup>.

5. The most extensive fringing reef in the Costa Rican Caribbean is located here, composed of three barriers, the outer barrier, the eastern section, and the western section. These barriers have been degraded by high sedimentation, human activities, and some natural factors, such as storms and warming waters. Coral cover near CNP decreased from 40% (early 1980s) to 10% (early 1990s) to 15-17% (early 2000s)<sup>[10]</sup><sup>10</sup> and to 12-25% by 2023.<sup>[11]</sup><sup>11</sup> Near Puerto Viejo, coral cover was around 23% in 1988 and 14% in 1993 and around 5.6 to 12% in 2021,<sup>[12]</sup><sup>12</sup> while in Punta Cocles coral cover had increased between 5% in 1983 to 16% by 2002. Around the GMNWR, coral cover had decreased from 8% in 1988 to only 2% by 1999, and was around 7% by 2003.<sup>[13]</sup><sup>13</sup>
6. Beyond marine conservation, the corridor also includes the La Estrella and Sixaola river basins. These watersheds are critical sources of freshwater and sediment inputs into the marine environment and are increasingly affected by land-based pollution, agriculture runoff, and deforestation<sup>[14]</sup><sup>14</sup><sup>[15]</sup><sup>15</sup>. Between 2002 and 2024, the Talamanca region experienced the loss of approximately 2,800 hectares of humid primary forest, representing about 32 % of the total tree cover loss observed in the region over the same period. Over these two decades, the overall area of humid primary forest in Talamanca declined by roughly 1%, indicating ongoing pressures on forest ecosystems despite existing protected areas and conservation designations<sup>[16]</sup><sup>16</sup>. Including the terrestrial zones of influence, is essential to address land-sea interactions and strengthen the resilience of coastal and marine ecosystems.
7. The intervention area lies within Talamanca canton, Limón province, recognized for its biodiversity but also high social and economic vulnerability. It shows elevated multidimensional poverty, limited services, and unemployment above national averages<sup>[17]</sup><sup>17</sup>. Talamanca also has Costa Rica's largest Indigenous population, mainly Bribri and Cabécar, many in remote areas. These conditions pose challenges but also opportunities to integrate traditional knowledge and community-based conservation into inclusive development. Despite constraints, the region retains strong cultural and natural capital, with ecotourism potential linked to its coastal and marine ecosystems.
8. The Southern Caribbean, including Talamanca's coastline, is a humid tropical zone with high annual rainfall (up to 6,000 mm), stable temperatures (24–28°C), and no pronounced dry season<sup>[18]</sup><sup>18</sup>. Influenced by the ITCZ and trade winds, it experiences frequent rainfall and high humidity. Oceanographically, it faces low-energy waves and moderate currents, but is vulnerable to sea-level rise, erosion, and sedimentation from the Sixaola River<sup>[19]</sup><sup>19</sup>. Climate projections foresee more extreme events, higher seas, and inundation risks,<sup>[20]</sup><sup>20</sup> underscoring the need for integrated land-sea management that strengthens ecosystem resilience and adaptive capacity.
9. In general, governance of the area responds to various institutions depending on which specific area we are referring to. The management of CNP and GMNWR is nested within the national system of protected areas (SINAC) and operates under a decentralized, multi-stakeholder model. Notably, CNP is managed under a co-governance framework involving local

communities through the Local Management Council (Consejo Local), while the GMNWR also integrates local participation and conservation-based tourism initiatives<sup>[21][21][22]22</sup>. The project will further reinforce governance for the rest of the area outside CNP and CMNWR through inclusive, community-based approaches aligned with OECM principles, emphasizing indigenous rights, gender equality and social inclusion, and local ownership.

10. The area holds regional relevance as a potential model for implementation of marine connectivity in the Caribbean basin. It also plays a strategic role in national marine spatial planning and supports Costa Rica’s leadership in ocean conservation<sup>[23]23[24]24</sup>.

## B.2 Environmental Problems and Root Causes

11. The “Blue Corridor” faces many environmental issues, some of which are significant global environmental challenges. Key drivers for the resulting environmental problems include socioeconomic conditions, climate change and climate variability, and governance conditions (including finance). Figure 2 illustrates these main environmental problems and root causes:

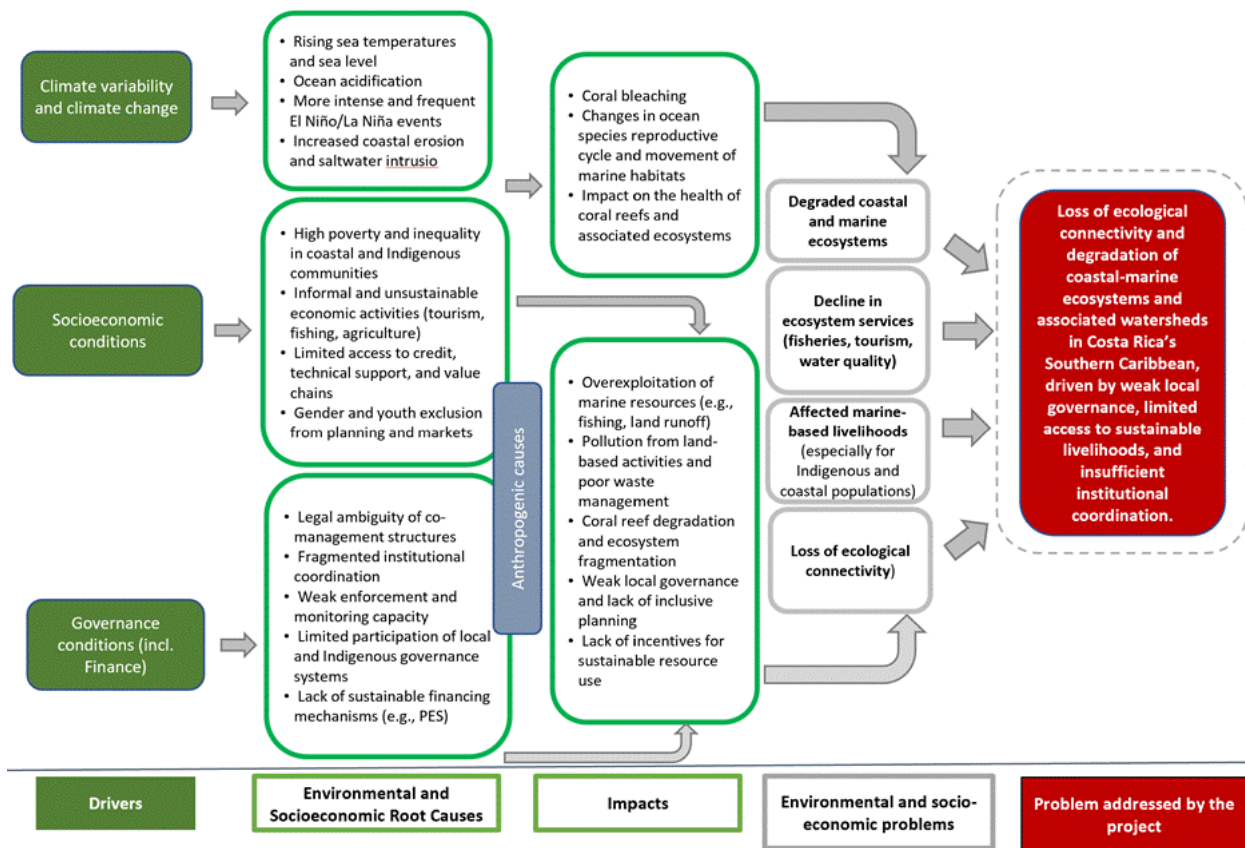


Figure 2: Underlying System Drivers, Root Causes, Impacts and Resulting Problems

### B.2.1: Driver- Climate variability and climate change:

12. The Southern Caribbean of Costa Rica is experiencing increasing climate variability and intensification of extreme weather patterns, particularly in coastal and riverine areas. Recent decades have shown significant changes in temperature and precipitation dynamics, including unseasonal storms, heavy rainfall, and extended flooding events in low-lying coastal zones<sup>[25]25[26]26</sup>. These shifts are already altering key ecological processes and have begun to destabilize the balance of sensitive coastal-marine ecosystems.
  13. Climate projections for the region under high-emission scenarios (RCP8.5) suggest a rise in mean annual temperature of up to 2.5°C by mid-century, along with increasing unpredictability in rainfall patterns and more frequent extreme events<sup>[27]27[28]28</sup>. These changes pose a critical threat to biodiversity and ecosystem services. In particular, sea-level rise and stronger rainfall events contribute to coastal erosion and the degradation of habitats such as coral reefs, mangroves, and turtle nesting beaches—ecosystems that are central to the proposed corridor area<sup>[29]29</sup>.
  14. Empirical data have already documented the erosion of beaches used by endangered sea turtles, sedimentation of coral reefs due to upstream runoff, and saltwater intrusion in estuarine systems. These impacts compromise both biodiversity and local livelihoods, particularly those of coastal and Indigenous communities in the Talamanca canton, who depend on small-scale fisheries, ecotourism, and subsistence agriculture<sup>[30]30</sup>. Moreover, a recent national-scale vulnerability assessment identified Talamanca as one of the most climate-vulnerable cantons in Costa Rica, due to its high exposure to climatic extremes, environmental sensitivity, and limited infrastructure and public service access<sup>[31]31</sup>. These factors place the project’s intervention area within a nationally recognized climate vulnerability hotspot, underscoring the urgency of adaptive, ecosystem-based interventions tailored to local conditions.
  15. Between 1988 and 2018, hydrometeorological events caused significant economic damage in Costa Rica’s Caribbean region, including the Talamanca canton. According to national disaster records, the Huetar Caribe planning region—which encompasses the project area—sustained among the highest total losses in the country due to floods, landslides, and coastal storm surges<sup>[32]32</sup>. These damages include destruction of road infrastructure, disruption of basic services, and severe impacts on agricultural production and local economies. Projected increases in the intensity and frequency of such events under climate change scenarios suggest that these costs will escalate, reinforcing the need for proactive, ecosystem-based investments that reduce exposure and increase resilience.
  16. In addition, future scenarios further intensify concern. The expected amplification of El Niño and La Niña cycles will likely disrupt the hydrological balance of watersheds feeding into the corridor, increasing sediment and contaminant loads into marine ecosystems<sup>[33]33</sup>. Rising temperatures and humidity also elevate risks related to water-borne and vector-borne diseases, particularly in marginalized coastal populations that already face infrastructural and healthcare gaps<sup>[34]34</sup>.
  17. Although Costa Rica is not among the countries most acutely affected by climate-related disasters on a global scale, it remains vulnerable to systemic climate risks. According to the Climate Risk Index for the period 2000–2019, Costa Rica ranked 89th globally, with an even lower exposure ranking of 130th in 2019 alone—reflecting year-to-year variability and the latent nature of slow-onset events<sup>[35]35</sup>. However, in the World Economic Forum’s Global Risks Perception Survey, extreme weather events
-

were ranked among the top five most relevant risks facing the country, underlining growing national concern regarding the frequency and intensity of climate-related hazards<sup>[36]</sup><sup>36</sup>.

18. Nevertheless, these interconnected risks highlight the urgency of climate-informed, ecosystem-based adaptation strategies. Establishing a marine corridor between CNP and GMNWR offers a direct response to these climate challenges. The corridor will reinforce ecological connectivity between coastal habitats, improve sediment buffering through integrated watershed management, and serve as a governance platform to align local and national climate adaptation priorities. By embedding resilience within both natural and human systems, the corridor provides a scalable model for nature-based solutions in vulnerable coastal landscapes.

### **B.2.2: Driver- Socio-economic dimension:**

19. The socioeconomic context of the project area—within Costa Rica’s Talamanca canton—is characterized by structural poverty and inequality that exacerbate environmental pressures. Talamanca consistently ranks among the lowest in national development indicators, with a Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.691 and a Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) of 0.186, placing it among the ten most vulnerable cantons in the country<sup>[37]</sup><sup>37</sup>. These figures reflect systemic deficits in access to health, education, and infrastructure, particularly in rural, afro-descendant, and indigenous communities. While these conditions fall outside the direct scope of project interventions, they shape the socioeconomic landscape in which conservation efforts take place and contribute to communities’ reliance on natural resource extraction as a coping strategy. Recognizing these constraints is critical to designing viable, community-led alternatives that align with local capacities and realities.
20. The local economy in the South Caribbean is primarily based on small-scale agriculture, artisanal fishing<sup>[38]</sup><sup>38</sup>, and tourism<sup>[39]</sup><sup>39</sup>, sectors that are heavily dependent on ecosystem health and highly vulnerable to external shocks. A recent socioeconomic assessment found that while most agricultural producers in Talamanca are medium-scale farmers (41%), a significant portion (8%) engage solely in subsistence agriculture, with 77% lacking access to agro-industrial value chains due to financial, logistical, and institutional barriers<sup>[40]</sup><sup>40</sup>. This limited economic diversification creates a scenario in which unsustainable practices, such as overfishing, soil degradation, and deforestation—are often the only available means of securing basic livelihoods.
21. These vulnerabilities are further exacerbated by critical gaps in basic services such as waste management, sanitation, and road access. Although the project will not directly address infrastructure development, these systemic challenges influence land-sea pollution dynamics and limit opportunities for communities to shift toward more sustainable livelihoods. Inadequate solid waste and wastewater management, for example, contribute to marine contamination and degradation of coral and seagrass habitats—key ecosystems targeted by the project. These challenges are reflected in national assessments that identify unregulated resource extraction, unplanned tourism, and pollution as key pressures on the marine-coastal corridor area<sup>[41]</sup><sup>41</sup>.
22. The Kéköldi Bribri Indigenous Territory, located within the project landscape, reflects both the vulnerabilities and opportunities present in the region. Home to approximately 1,500 inhabitants across ten communities, Kéköldi is governed through traditional leadership structures and community-based decision-making rooted in cultural and environmental stewardship. The community’s PAFT (Plan Ambiental, Forestal y Territorial) highlights priorities such as territorial governance, forest conservation, sustainable economic activities, and the empowerment of women and youth.<sup>[42]</sup><sup>42</sup> However, like other rural Indigenous populations in Talamanca, the community faces structural barriers to financing, policy inclusion, and technical support.
23. A key limitation in the region is the uneven access to sustainable financial mechanisms such as Payments for Environmental Services (PES). While forest-based PES schemes have been implemented in Indigenous territories for years, access remains

uneven and constrained by legal and institutional barriers. Marine-based PES models, in contrast, are still in early stages of development and have not yet been extended to Indigenous coastal communities in the Caribbean. Recent experiences in the Gulf of Nicoya demonstrate the feasibility of applying marine PES models to incentivize community-based resource stewardship.<sup>[43]</sup><sup>43</sup> Expanding and adapting such mechanisms in the Caribbean context—especially within Indigenous and coastal communities—could support ecosystem protection while diversifying household income streams and strengthening long-term conservation outcomes.<sup>[44]</sup><sup>44</sup>

24. Gender inequality is another persistent driver of socio-environmental vulnerability. Women in Talamanca face greater barriers in accessing land, credit, and formal employment, yet they are essential actors in community economies, especially in agroecology, tourism, and cultural industries. However, there are differences from ethnic origin. While indigenous Bribri women are under a matriarchal society, they do not own land and have limited credit access, afrodescendant women can be land owners and access to credit (although with severe limitations). The PAFT of Kéköldi explicitly identifies the empowerment of women and youth as strategic priorities, linking gender equity to resilience and sustainability. Supporting gender-responsive and intergenerational approaches will be central to ensuring that conservation strategies are both inclusive and effective.
25. In sum, the socioeconomic landscape in Talamanca—marked by poverty, informality, and institutional marginalization—contributes directly to environmental degradation and limits the adoption of sustainable practices. The project aims to address these root causes not by tackling poverty directly, but by strengthening the enabling conditions for sustainable livelihoods: community empowerment, improved access to incentives like PES, capacity development, and culturally grounded governance. In doing so, the project seeks to shift the economic logic that underpins unsustainable resource use and promote long-term resilience in both human and ecological systems.

### **B.2.3: Driver- Governance dimension:**

26. The governance context in the Southern Caribbean of Costa Rica is shaped by a diverse mix of institutional structures, local traditions, and overlapping jurisdictions. While the legal responsibility for biodiversity conservation lies with the National System of Conservation Areas (SINAC), the practical landscape is more fragmented. The SINAC's administrative ACLAC unit oversees an extensive territory that includes both terrestrial and marine ecosystems, encompassing national parks, wildlife refuges, Indigenous territories, and Ramsar wetlands. ACLAC promotes decentralized and participatory governance through mechanisms such as the Regional Conservation Council (CORAC), which brings together civil society, local governments, and community representatives<sup>[45]</sup><sup>45</sup>. However, resource constraints, overlapping mandates, and inconsistent coordination limit its capacity to effectively implement integrated marine and coastal governance.
27. Each protected area within the project landscape operates under a distinct governance arrangement. CNP functions under a co-management model involving a Local Management Council (COLAC) that includes local stakeholders and SINAC representatives. This model has helped reduce past tensions and increase local buy-in. In contrast, the Gandoca-Manzanillo National Wildlife Refuge, despite having a co-management agreement signed in 2004, lacks a formal legal framework (such as a ministerial decree) that institutionalizes this structure. While there is a co-management model involving the local Comprehensive Development Association (ADI) in Manzanillo, the area of Gandoca has no local organization to support this co-management. This legal ambiguity weakens community trust and limits the long-term stability of participatory management processes<sup>[46]</sup><sup>46</sup>. Additionally, while Gandoca is recognized as a Ramsar site and overlaps with transboundary conservation initiatives—such as the San San Pond Sak wetland in Panama—these designations do not currently benefit from active binational governance mechanisms.
28. Beyond formal conservation frameworks, governance in the region is shaped by a mosaic of social and cultural actors, including afro-descendant communities, Indigenous territories, and migrant populations. Afro-descendant communities in Cahuita, Puerto Viejo, and Manzanillo have historically led initiatives in community-based tourism, environmental education, and marine stewardship. However, these communities often face barriers to accessing decision-making spaces, funding, and legal mechanisms for co-management. Similarly, Indigenous governance systems, such as that of the Kéköldi Bribri Territory—

represented through ADITIK—demonstrate strong internal cohesion and territorial vision. The PAFT developed by Kéköldi outlines clear priorities for governance, land use, and biodiversity conservation rooted in traditional knowledge.

29. Despite this diversity of actors, effective coordination remains a major challenge. According to the 2015 stakeholder analysis conducted for the Caribbean South marine site, most inter-actor relationships were limited to information exchange (62%) or occasional coordination (49%), with only 13% involving sustained alliances<sup>[47]</sup>. Municipal authorities, local development associations, fishers' groups, tourism cooperatives, and NGOs often operate in silos, lacking structured mechanisms for shared planning or accountability. This fragmentation weakens responses to environmental pressures such as overfishing, pollution, and tourism impacts.
30. Additionally, international designations such as Ramsar sites, the La Amistad Biosphere Reserve, and the Talamanca Range-La Amistad World Heritage Site offer global recognition but require stronger local governance systems to fulfill their obligations. Although these sites are legally recognized, there are currently no active governance structures specific to their management in the Caribbean South. Local actors report limited awareness and engagement with these international frameworks, highlighting a disconnect between Costa Rica's global commitments and site-level implementation.
31. The Corredor Biológico Talamanca Caribe represents another governance asset. Although not a regulatory body, it serves as a platform for dialogue and coordination among state entities, Indigenous organizations, farmers' associations, and NGOs. Its landscape-based approach to connectivity aligns well with the corridor vision of the proposed project. However, its potential remains underutilized due to a lack of formal integration with institutional planning and insufficient resources for continuous operation.
32. Governance challenges in the project area—including legal ambiguity in co-management, institutional fragmentation, limited coordination, and exclusion of key community actors—constitute a fundamental root cause of marine and coastal degradation. The project seeks to overcome these barriers by reinforcing inclusive governance models, legally recognizing local co-management mechanisms, empowering Indigenous and afro descendant organizations, and creating enabling conditions for adaptive and collaborative management at multiple scales.

### **B.3: Key Barriers:**

33. Based on the preceding analysis of environmental problems and their underlying root causes, the project identifies a set of critical barriers that hinder the effective conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal ecosystems in the Southern Caribbean. These barriers reflect operational, institutional, financial, and technical challenges that must be addressed to strengthen ecological connectivity, improve local governance, and promote resilient livelihoods. The project has been designed to directly tackle these obstacles through targeted interventions aligned with national priorities, local capacities, and international commitments.

#### **(i) Governance and Institutional Framework**

- Barrier 1 – Limited governance for areas in the marine corridor  
The governance framework for marine and coastal areas in the Southern Caribbean is fragmented and underdeveloped. While SINAC holds the legal mandate, many coastal and marine zones lack formal governance mechanisms or clear jurisdiction, particularly outside of protected areas. This creates legal and operational vacuums that hinder planning, enforcement, and co-management with communities.
- Barrier 2 – Limited institutional and management capacity of governance members  
Local and regional governance actors—including protected area councils, Indigenous organizations, and community groups—often lack sufficient technical, legal, and administrative training to carry out effective conservation governance. This weakens coordination, undermines trust, and reduces the likelihood of achieving inclusive and sustainable outcomes.

#### **(ii) Financial and Economic Structures**

- Barrier 3 – Limited capacity and financial resources of municipalities  
Municipalities such as Talamanca play a critical role in managing land-based activities that impact coastal and marine environments. However, they frequently lack the budget, human resources, and technical capacity to implement effective environmental planning, monitoring, or waste management programs.
- Barrier 4 – Lack of clear incentives for private sector participation in marine conservation initiatives

The absence of structured incentive schemes—such as tax benefits, PES mechanisms, or regulatory certainty—discourages private sector actors from investing in conservation, restoration, or sustainable use initiatives. This limits the potential for public-private collaboration and reduces the sustainability of conservation financing.

- Barrier 5 – Limited experience for the design and implementation of innovative financial mechanisms for marine areas

Despite Costa Rica's vast experience with PES schemes, local actors—particularly in the Caribbean—face challenges in developing and operationalizing financial tools such as marine PES, trust funds, or blue carbon schemes. This limits access to long-term conservation finance at the local level.

- Barrier 6 – Limited access to sustainable financial structures

There are very few functioning, place-based financial mechanisms to support marine biodiversity in the Southern Caribbean. The lack of targeted, recurring funding sources undermines the sustainability of local conservation initiatives and disincentivizes long-term planning by local actors.

### (iii) Technical Capacity for Monitoring and Management

- Barrier 7 – Limited technical and financial capabilities for coordinated monitoring, control and surveillance

Agencies responsible for marine and coastal surveillance—including SINAC, Coast Guard, and local authorities—lack sufficient coordination and resources. Fragmented mandates and underfunded operations reduce the effectiveness of enforcement and monitoring, especially in remote areas like Gandoca-Manzanillo.

- Barrier 8 – Limited technical capabilities in local communities for the effective implementation of a participatory monitoring system

There is growing interest in participatory monitoring by Indigenous, afro-descendant, and community-based groups. However, there is limited training, equipment, or institutional support to integrate these actors into official monitoring systems, despite their knowledge and presence on the ground.

### (iv) Programmatic Implementation for Restoration and Livelihoods

- Barrier 9 – Limited restoration actions implemented for marine connectivity

Efforts to restore ecological connectivity across coral reefs, seagrasses, and mangroves are incipient in the Southern Caribbean. Restoration initiatives remain small-scale, short-term, and underfunded, limiting their ability to reverse long-term ecosystem degradation.

- Barrier 10 – Limited implementation of productive and restoration projects to support marine biodiversity conservation

There are few concrete examples of projects that simultaneously support community livelihoods and biodiversity outcomes (e.g., sustainable aquaculture, eco-certification, agroecology). As a result, communities often lack alternatives to resource extraction or informal tourism, perpetuating pressure on sensitive ecosystems.

### (v) Knowledge Management

- Barrier 11 – Limited systematization and dissemination of traditional knowledge and local practices

There are local efforts to collect and document traditional knowledge from local communities (fisher, agro-caribbean and indigenous groups related to the marine corridor). However, these efforts are often isolated and not coordinated.

## **B.4: Baselines Scenario and any associated baseline projects.**

34. The Southern Caribbean region of Costa Rica is experiencing growing national and international attention due to its high biodiversity, ecological connectivity, and the urgent need for integrated land-sea management. In this context, the proposed project is embedded within a dynamic baseline of initiatives that reflect a progressive shift toward marine conservation, climate adaptation, and inclusive development. These baseline efforts—led by government agencies, international organizations, and civil society—have laid important groundwork through participatory planning, pilot restoration efforts, financial innovation, sustainable tourism practices, and the consolidation of marine protected areas.

35. Costa Rica's Southern Caribbean builds on a dynamic baseline of national and regional initiatives that strengthen marine conservation, ecosystem connectivity, and community resilience. At the regional scale, projects such as Save the Blue Five (GIZ) and BE-CLME+ (FAO/CAF) enhance transboundary governance, migratory species protection, and sustainable fisheries value chains—creating clear synergies for the Blue Corridor. Likewise, the Blue Nature Alliance (CI) and UNDP initiatives in the Central American Pacific (the Costa Rica pilot of the Central American Pacific Coastal LME and the program mainstreaming sustainable marine fisheries value chains across CCLME & PACA LMEs) advance large-scale marine spatial planning and ecosystem-based management; lessons from these efforts will inform corridor governance, monitoring, and enforcement.

36. Nationally, initiatives such as *BIOFIN Costa Rica* and the *MarViva/Blue Action Fund program* have mobilized innovative financing instruments (new PES schemes, thematic bonds, and sustainable tourism initiatives), and supported institutional capacities for marine spatial planning and enforcement. These efforts provide an enabling financial and policy environment that the project will leverage to pilot marine PES mechanisms, expand restoration actions, and consolidate community-based livelihood initiatives.

37. Locally, NGO- and community-led efforts—implemented by organizations such as the LAST Association, the Corredor Biológico Talamanca Caribe, and local cooperatives—on sustainable tourism, coastal resource management, coral restoration, lionfish control, and environmental education in Cahuita, Gandoca and adjacent areas provide tested practices and data. These experiences demonstrate the feasibility of participatory management, ecosystem restoration, and behavior change, offering a solid foundation for scaling through the Blue Corridor.
38. Despite these efforts, persistent barriers related to fragmented governance, insufficient funding, limited technical capacities, and underdeveloped incentive systems continue to undermine the long-term effectiveness and scalability of conservation actions in the region. The Corredor Azul Caribe project builds upon this baseline by addressing these systemic gaps and aligning with national and regional frameworks. It will add strategic value by integrating terrestrial and marine conservation through improved governance, financing mechanisms, nature-based livelihoods, and enhanced community engagement. The project also aims to strengthen synergies with complementary efforts, avoiding duplication and leveraging lessons learned to amplify conservation impacts at scale.

## **B.5 Stakeholders**

39. **Partnerships:** The success of this project depends on dynamic, strategic and multi-sector partnerships across a number of government entities, local governments, local communities, afro-descendant and indigenous peoples, and NGOs/CSOs. Hence, at the core of the project’s strategy is to identify and engage all relevant actors who will play key roles in providing technical support, develop strategic agreements, undertake management interventions and ensure that adequate safeguards are in place to achieve the expected results.
40. Building on this framework, the Blue Corridor will be implemented through a broad alliance of government institutions, local authorities, community organizations, Indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples, civil society groups, academia, and the private sector. At the institutional level, SINAC and its ACLAC unit, together with INCOPECSA, the Coast Guard, and other government agencies, will provide regulatory oversight, enforcement, and technical guidance. The Municipality of Talamanca plays a pivotal role in addressing land-based sources of marine pollution such as waste and wastewater management, while national entities including INAMU, DIGEPYME, INA, and MEIC contribute to gender equality, small business development, and vocational training. These institutions ensure that the corridor aligns with national priorities, policy frameworks, and enforcement mechanisms.
41. Community and civil society actors are equally central to the corridor’s success. Indigenous and Afro-descendant organizations, including the Bribri and Cabécar territorial associations, ACOMUITA, and Afro-descendant tribal and cultural associations, will bring traditional knowledge, cultural values, and governance structures into project planning and implementation. Local councils, development associations (ADIs), and artisanal fishers’ organizations in Cahuita, Puerto Viejo, Manzanillo, and Gandoca will help balance biodiversity objectives with livelihood needs, while women’s cooperatives and youth associations contribute to more inclusive governance. NGOs and grassroots groups such as MarViva, Raising Coral, COASTS, and others provide practical experience in coral restoration, sustainable fisheries, environmental education, and marine stewardship.
42. The private sector, particularly tourism chambers and associations in Cahuita and the Southern Caribbean, will be engaged to align sustainable business practices with biodiversity conservation and to strengthen the region’s profile as an ecotourism destination. Academic and research institutions such as CIMAR/UCR, UNA, and UNED will generate scientific data and build local capacity for monitoring and adaptive management. Together, these partnerships create a dynamic, multi-sector governance platform that ensures legitimacy, inclusiveness, and the long-term sustainability of the Blue Corridor.

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<sup>[1]</sup> Sistema Nacional de Áreas de Conservación (SINAC). 2024.

<sup>[2]</sup> The coastal areas are already part of the Biological Corridor Talamanca Caribe (BCTC), which seeks to guarantee the connection between protected areas, indigenous territories and promote the genetic exchange of species of wild flora and fauna. The BCTC governance includes various organizations under the Association of Organizations of the Talamanca Caribbean Biological Corridor (ACBTC). Please check <https://corredortalamanca.org/> for more details.

<sup>[3]</sup> SINAC, 2017. Plan General de Manejo Refugio Nacional de Vida Silvestre Gandoca - Manzanillo, 2017 - 2027.

<sup>[4]</sup> SINAC. (2025). Perfil institucional del Área de Conservación La Amistad Caribe (ACLAC). Retrieved from: <https://www.sinac.go.cr/es/ac/aclac/paginas/default.aspx>

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- [6] SINAC. 2017. Plan General de Manejo Refugio Nacional de Vida Silvestre Gandoca - Manzanillo, 2017 - 2027. 151 pp.
- [7] SINAC. 2024. Identificación y análisis de sitios de importancia para la conservación y el manejo en ambientes marino-costeros y oceánicos de Costa Rica (Grúas III - Volumen III). 192p.
- [8] SINAC. 2016. Elaboración de Estudios Científicos Marino-Costeros Básicos para el Sitio de Importancia para la conservación de Caribe Sur. Proyecto Consolidación de las Áreas Marinas Protegidas de Costa Rica del Sistema Nacional de Áreas de Conservación. PNUD y GEF. 70 pp.
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<sup>[36]</sup> World Economic Forum. (2022). The Global Risks Report 2022 (17th Edition). Geneva, Switzerland: WEF. Retrieved from <https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-risks-report-2022/>

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<sup>[38]</sup> On Costa Rica's Caribbean coast, fishing activity is largely artisanal and concentrated in a limited number of landing sites, including Cahuita, and Puerto Viejo. Overall fishing effort and catch volumes in this region remain significantly lower than those observed along the Pacific coast, where fishing activity is more spatially extensive and productive. See: [Herrera Ulloa et al., 2011](#)

<sup>[39]</sup> Tourism in the Cahuita area is predominantly characterized by small-scale, community-based rural tourism, and in some cases based on circular-economy practices in which local agricultural production and artisanal fisheries supply hotels, restaurants, and other tourism services, within a tourism cluster concentrated mainly in Cahuita and Puerto Viejo. This tourism model contributes to the diversification of local livelihoods and the redistribution of tourism income across different community sectors; however, it also generates increasing pressure on CNP, reinforcing the need for strengthened governance, improved coordination between park authorities and local actors, and sustainable management strategies to balance conservation objectives with tourism development. See: [Vasconcelos-Vásquez et al. \(2024\)](#) and [SINAC \(2014\)](#).

<sup>[40]</sup> Gutiérrez & Villalobos. (2021). Caracterización socioeconómica, productiva y comercial de agricultores del Caribe sur de Costa Rica. IICA, Fundación Neotrópica y Fundación CRUSA.

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<sup>[44]</sup> SINAC. 2024.

<sup>[45]</sup> SINAC. 2025. Perfil institucional del Área de Conservación La Amistad Caribe (ACLAC). Retrieved from: <https://www.sinac.go.cr/es/ac/aclac/paginas/default.aspx>

<sup>[46]</sup> SINAC. 2015. Estrategia de atención al sitio de importancia para la conservación marino costero de Caribe Sur. Costa Rica.

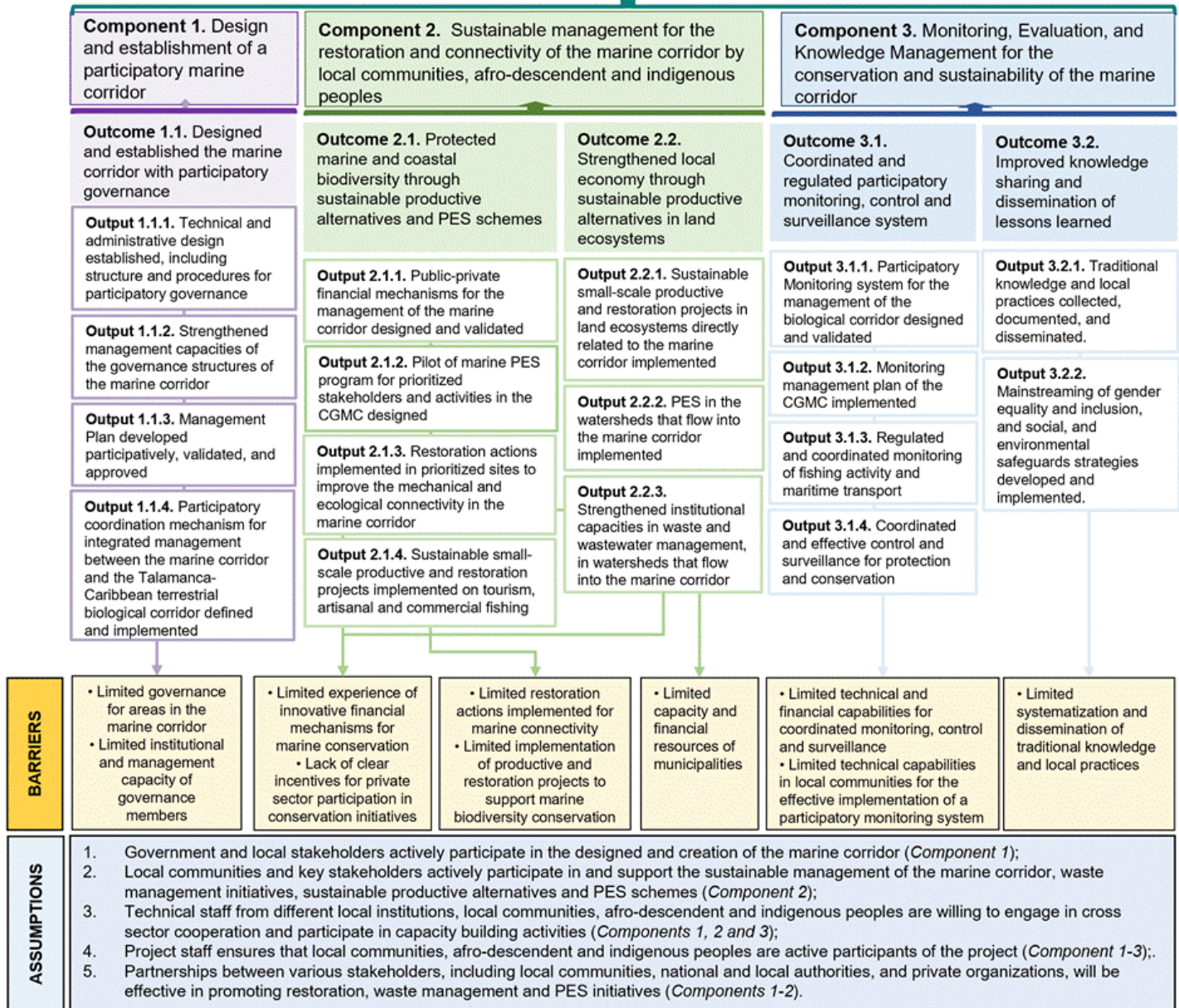
<sup>[47]</sup> SINAC. 2015. Idem.

## C. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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

1. **Theory of change (TOC).** The GEF-supported Project Alternative responds to the development challenge by systematically addressing the barriers described above, as presented in Figure 3, the TOC of the project:

**OBJECTIVE:** To restore and improve the connectivity of key ecosystems in Costa Rica's southern Caribbean by diversifying the livelihoods of local communities and strengthening the capacity of government entities, local community groups, afro-descendant and indigenous peoples to effectively and sustainably create and manage the marine corridor



2. The **project objective** is To restore and improve the connectivity of key ecosystems and diversify the livelihoods of local communities, afro-descendant and indigenous peoples in Costa Rica's southern Caribbean by strengthening government entities, local community groups, afro-descendant and indigenous peoples to effectively and sustainably create and manage the marine corridor between the CNP and the GMNWR.
3. The project will support the establishment and management of the Marine Corridor, and will adopt **three main strategies** (project components):
  - I. Design and establishment of a participatory marine corridor.
  - II. Sustainable management for the restoration and connectivity of the marine corridor by local communities, afro-descendant and indigenous peoples.
  - III. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Knowledge Management for the conservation and sustainability of the marine corridor.

4. The project constitutes an alternative to the current status quo under each component as follows:
5. Component 1 will be centered on the design and creation of the Blue Corridor in a participatory manner. For this, the work will focus on: (i) the technical and administrative design and establishment of the Blue Corridor, ensuring that the structure and procedures for participatory governance of the marine corridor are established.; (ii) Instituted participatory governance of the Blue Corridor which will allow local communities to have a role in the management of the Blue Corridor, based on the experience of the CNP. This component will address the barriers on limited governance for areas in the marine corridor and limited institutional and management capacity of governance members.
6. Component 2 will focus on the sustainable management, restoration and connectivity of the Blue Corridor by local communities, afro-descendant and indigenous peoples, supporting the implementation of Blue Corridor priority actions aligned with the Management Plan. For this, the work will focus on: (i) Development of sustainable financial mechanisms for the management of the marine corridor; (ii) protection and restoration of marine and coastal biodiversity to reduce loss of connectivity and biodiversity, (iii) Strengthened the local economy through sustainable productive alternatives; (iv) Implementation of PES in upper and middle watersheds that flow into the marine corridor implemented; (v) improved waste management to reduce pollution. This will address the limited restoration actions implemented for marine connectivity, limited capacity and financial resources of municipalities, low technical and institutional capacity for the design and implementation of financial mechanisms, limited implementation of productive and restoration projects to support marine biodiversity conservation and the lack of clear incentives for private sector participation in conservation initiatives.
7. Component 3 will support the monitoring and evaluation and knowledge management for the conservation and sustainable management of the Blue Corridor. For this, the work will focus on: (i) Participatory monitoring of the marine corridor; (ii) Regulation and coordinated monitoring of fishing activity and maritime transport in the marine corridor; (iii) Coordinated control and surveillance for the protection of the marine corridor; and (iv) systematization and dissemination of traditional knowledge and local practices. This will address the barriers, the limited technical and financial capabilities for coordinated monitoring, control and surveillance and the limited technical capabilities for the effective implementation of a participatory monitoring system.
8. The project will use a **multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and gender-responsive approach**, mainstreaming these issues through engagement with partners and key actors in the project area. This approach aims to transform women's lives in terms of sustainable economic development by providing training, financing, and support for women's initiatives for restoration and sustainable production. A series of knowledge management publications and awareness events will support the achievement of these targets.
9. Also, the project will recognize the customary, historical, and ancestral rights of local communities, their means of subsistence, and their cultural expression in the project's area of influence. The project will establish a grievance redress mechanism (see Annex 2) and will comply with the right to prior, free and informed consultation--40932- MP-MJP-, in accordance with the norms and principles established in the national legislation on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of Costa Rica. Executive Decree No. 43532-MP-MINAE-MCJ-MEP, published in 2022, formally recognizes Afro-descendant Peoples in Costa Rica. The decree affirms the self-recognition of the Afro-Costa Rican population as an Afro-Costa Rican Tribal People. Grounded in ILO Convention 169, it acknowledges that they share key characteristics with Indigenous Peoples, including distinct social, cultural, and economic traditions; a strong identification with ancestral territories; and governance partially guided by their own norms and customs. The decree also establishes the Afro-Costa Rican Tribal People's Forum as a platform for consultation and dialogue with the government. The Project Executing Entity will be the Organization for Tropical Studies (OET), which has previous experience implementing projects in the same area. IUCN, SINAC, and the consultancy responsible for the project design have held exchanges with OET regarding its experience in implementing FPIC processes, which require adequate budgetary allocation to ensure proper and effective execution. Based on these discussions, the FPIC process has been incorporated into the project design, with the aim of securing the necessary resources for its implementation. Accordingly, the project design includes a budget allocation that will allow for an equivalent consultation process with both Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendant communities. The project aims to build on this initial consultation phase (where the communities have expressed their desire/informal consent to participate) and seek consent through an FPIC process at the beginning of the implementation phase, using the budget allocated for this purpose. In summary, these stakeholders have been engaged from the outset, throughout the project design process, and will continue to participate during implementation — the Bribri under the FPIC framework, and the Afro-descendant communities through a similar approach (and based on the requirements outlined by IUCN ESMS), even though such treatment is not yet formally recognized in national legislation.
10. **Outline of project Components and Outcomes.** The GEF funding requested by the Government of Costa Rica will be used to achieve the following Components, Outcomes and Outputs:

## 11. Component 1: Design and establishment of a participatory marine corridor.

12. **Outcome 1.1:** Designed and established the marine corridor with participatory governance. This Outcome includes the development of a technical and administrative design to establish the corridor, as well as the definition of a participatory governance structure that integrates the national government, municipalities, tourism and commerce chambers, and local communities linked to these marine ecosystems. Local communities will have an active participation in the co-management of the Blue Corridor. Additionally, the management capacities of governance structures will be strengthened, with ongoing assistance to ensure coordination and efficiency in managing the corridor. Finally, a pilot management plan will be developed and validated, serving as a framework for the sustainable operation of the marine corridor. There are four main Outputs:
13. **Output 1.1.1. Technical and administrative design established, including structure and procedures for participatory governance.** Under this Output the project will support the establishment of the technical and administrative participatory governance structure of the Blue Corridor. This includes consultations with national and local government, chamber of tourism, chamber of commerce and IPLCs (fisherfolks, afro-descendants, and indigenous peoples) linked to the ecosystem services provided by the marine corridor. The structure and procedures for participatory governance of the marine corridor will be established in direct consultations with national and local communities, including local government (Talamanca Municipality), chamber of tourism, chamber of commerce and IPLCs (fisherfolks, afro-descendants, and indigenous peoples) linked to the ecosystem services provided by the marine corridor.
14. The main goal of the governance mechanisms is to ensure that there is active participation of local communities in the marine corridor. This will ensure that the concepts used within the marine corridor area will be defined and agreed upon jointly with the communities, in accordance with the rules and principles established in national legislation. Any access or restriction of access to fishing areas historically used by communities will be proposed, justified and approved jointly with the communities, and free access to beaches, departure and disembarkation points for communities will be protected and guaranteed, following national legislation.
15. Gender and social inclusion considerations will be integrated into the governance design through a standardized consultation guide, mechanisms to ensure the participation of women, youth, and Indigenous and Afro-descendant groups, and the incorporation of gender quotas or other affirmative actions. The community communication strategy will be developed with an intersectional lens and implemented with a strong gender and social inclusion lens, including tailored outreach tools and socialization workshops to ensure diverse actors are reached and meaningfully engaged. Safeguards considerations will also be included in terms of participatory natural resource use mapping and zoning, safeguard-proofed regulatory co-design, and mapping and safeguarding culturally significant natural features. Indicative activities include:
- Activity 1.1.1.1. Participatory mapping and identification of key stakeholders within the marine-coastal corridor.
  - Activity 1.1.1.2. Establishment of a governance structure based on existing models adapted to the context of the marine corridor.
  - Activity 1.1.1.3. Development and implementation of a community communication strategy.
16. **Output 1.1.2. Strengthened management capacities of the governance structures of the marine corridor.** Under this Output, the project will support capacity building of the governance structures of the marine corridor, such as the General Assembly and the Board of Directors. The project will also support accompanying actions and continuous assistance for governance structures in the management of the marine corridor. As part of the GAP, gender equality and social inclusion perspective will be included in the capacity gap assessment and the integration of gender-sensitive content into the training plan for governance bodies. Institutional strengthening will include topics such as inclusive leadership and conflict resolution, and will promote mechanisms to address gender-based discrimination. Safeguards considerations in the ESMF for this output include strengthening the capacity of SINAC and relevant ADIs for vigilance and control, and through adaptive management support where needed. Indicative activities include:
- Activity 1.1.2.1. Development of comprehensive training processes for representatives of the Local Committee and key organizations.
  - Activity 1.1.2.2. Design and implementation of an institutional strengthening plan for both active and inactive Local Councils and the Local Committee.
  - Activity 1.1.2.3. Establishment of permanent coordination mechanisms.

17. **Output 1.1.3. Management Plan developed participatively, validated, and approved.** Under this Output, the project will support the development of the Management Plan of the marine corridor in a participatory manner with all the relevant stakeholders. Indicative activities include:

- Activity 1.1.3.1. Implementation of broad-based community consultation processes to incorporate the perspectives, needs, and proposals of diverse local sectors into the design of the plan.
- Activity 1.1.3.2. Integration of sustainable and culturally relevant productive practices into the management plan.
- Activity 1.1.3.3. Validation of the management plan through a legitimate participatory structure, ensuring its formal approval by representative actors from the involved communities.

The participatory development of the Blue Corridor Management Plan will apply a gender-responsive and intersectional approach. This includes the use of a methodological guide for inclusive consultations, targeted focus groups with women from diverse backgrounds, and the integration of disaggregated analysis to ensure diverse perspectives inform the Plan. Gender-specific roles and contributions will be recognized and supported, and the final document will incorporate concrete recommendations to strengthen women's participation in marine corridor management and productive activities.

18. **Output 1.1.4. Participatory coordination mechanism defined and implemented for integrated management between the Marine Corridor and the Talamanca-Caribbean terrestrial biological corridor.** The project will support the development of a coordination mechanism, which will include measures to ensure balanced, inclusive participation across gender, age, and cultural groups. Gender-responsive training and facilitation tools will be used to strengthen capacities for equitable engagement, and a structured approach will guide the integration of gender and social inclusion principles. Indicative activities include:

- Activity 1.1.4.1. Collaborative design of an inter-sectoral coordination mechanism involving marine and terrestrial, institutional and community actors.
- Activity 1.1.4.2. Facilitation of dialogue and joint planning spaces among community organizations, informal leaderships, and public entities.
- Activity 1.1.4.3. Implementation of pilot coordination actions.

19. **Component 2: Sustainable management for the restoration and connectivity of the marine corridor by local communities, afro-descendant and indigenous peoples.**

20. **Outcome 2.1: Protected marine and coastal biodiversity through sustainable productive alternatives and PES schemes.** The component focuses on sustainably managing the Blue Corridor to restore ecological connectivity and conserve marine biodiversity, following the Management Plan established under Component 1. The project aims to improve IPLC living conditions by promoting sustainable income alternatives like responsible fishing, tourism, and utilizing invasive species, fostering an inclusive tourism and fishing model. It includes the development of public-private financial mechanisms to ensure the long-term continuity of conservation and management activities in the corridor; designing a pilot marine PES program, based on previous experiences in the Gulf of Nicoya<sup>[1]<sup>48</sup></sup>, adapted to the prioritized actors and activities for the marine corridor; coral reef restoration in priority areas and enhancing management effectiveness in CNP and GMNWR.<sup>[2]<sup>49</sup></sup> Economic and income diversification initiatives will be managed in a fair, transparent and equitable manner by the communities, and the criteria for the delivery of these resources and the financial justification and reporting will be jointly agreed upon between the communities and the project. The project will establish mechanisms (agreements, protocols) for the operation, maintenance, and monitoring of the investments made to ensure their sustainability over time. These same principles apply to Outcome 2.2. There are four main Outputs:

21. **Output 2.1.1. Public-private financial mechanisms for the management of the marine corridor designed and validated.** Under this Output, the project will support the development of financial mechanisms for the marine corridor. Indicative activities include:

- Activity 2.1.1.1. Identify marine conservation financing needs for the Marine Corridor.
- Activity 2.1.1.2. Design innovative and feasible financial mechanism proposals for the marine corridor.

- Activity 2.1.1.3. Propose a financial governance model adapted to the marine corridor (linked to Output 1.1.1).
- Activity 2.1.1.4. Develop and validate a roadmap for the pilot implementation of the selected financial mechanism.
- Activity 2.1.1.5. Implement a pilot phase of the selected financial mechanism for the marine corridor.

The GAP will focus on ensuring equitable access to conservation finance and the financial mechanisms piloted participatory consultations, gender-disaggregated analysis of financial barriers and needs, and the inclusion of gender-responsive criteria in governance models, allocation processes, and benefit-sharing. The pilot implementation will incorporate inclusive monitoring and generate lessons learned to inform scaling efforts.

22. **Output 2.1.2. Pilot of marine PES program for prioritized stakeholders and activities in the Marine Corridor designed.** Under this Output, the project will support the development of a pilot on marine PES, based on lessons learned from the marine PES in the Gulf of Nicoya. Safeguards provisions for this component in the ESMF include Integrated Pest Management (IPM) guidelines and training, screening and monitoring of chemical use in PES, and context-specific co-design with Indigenous and Afro-descendant communities. Indicative activities include:

- Activity 2.1.2.1. Identify and prioritize relevant marine ecosystem services and the actors who sustain them.
- Activity 2.1.2.2. Adapt existing regulatory and operational guidelines (Law 10507, Nicoya Gulf pilot) to the ecological, social, and institutional conditions of the Marine Corridor.
- Activity 2.1.2.3. Define eligibility criteria and the incentive structure of the pilot.
- Activity 2.1.2.4. Strengthen local capacities for fund management.
- Activity 2.1.2.5. Design, validate, and implement the pilot plan.

Activities in the GAP aim at incorporating in the PES program inclusive eligibility criteria and incentive structures that account for gender-differentiated roles and contributions in marine ecosystem management. A mapping of gendered responsibilities and a review of regulatory barriers will inform design adaptations. Specific training activities and capacity-building modules will strengthen local capacities on gender-responsive fund management, and the pilot's monitoring system will track equity outcomes across target groups.

23. **Output 2.1.3. Restoration actions implemented in prioritized sites to improve the mechanical and ecological connectivity in the Marine Corridor.** Under this Output the project will support restoration interventions, especially focused on connectivity of coral reefs and marine pastures. Restoration interventions will incorporate gender-responsive approaches by including local ecological knowledge held by women, youth, and Indigenous groups in site selection processes. They will also include biosecurity protocols and screening of species. Training activities will integrate gender and social inclusion modules tailored to women in community brigades and technical staff. Indicative activities include:

- Activity 2.1.3.1. Manage the technical and legal permits required for coral reef and marine pastures interventions.
- Activity 2.1.3.2. Identify and ecologically characterize priority sites for restoration.
- Activity 2.1.3.3. Train community brigades and technical staff from ACLAC.
- Activity 2.1.3.4. Design, install, and maintain coral nurseries
- Activity 2.1.3.5. Carry out coral transplantation, marine pasture restoration, and subsequent monitoring.

24. **Output 2.1.4. Sustainable small-scale productive and restoration projects implemented, including tourism, and artisanal and commercial fishing.** Under this Output, the project will support small-scale productive and restoration projects by local communities, afro-descendant and indigenous peoples, sustainable tourism initiatives in the marine corridor (e.g., fishing, diving), and sustainable artisanal and commercial fishing in the marine corridor. Each group will be involved in the design of the selection criteria and the implementation of the grants system in coordination with OTS. A gender-responsive approach will be applied by expanding stakeholder mapping to understand the differentiated roles and barriers faced by women, youth, and Afro-descendant and Indigenous communities in productive value chains. Priority will be given to women-led and youth-led initiatives, with support for business plans, mentorship, and access to equipment. Tailored training will also be provided, ensuring accessibility and relevance for underrepresented groups. Indicative activities include:

- Activity 2.1.4.1. Identify stakeholders, capacities, opportunities, and current conditions through participatory processes for sustainable production linked to tourism, artisanal fishing, aquaculture, and related activities.
- Activity 2.1.4.2. Design and implement sustainable and innovative productive initiatives. Initiatives will integrate conservation practices, improve value chains, and enhance access to differentiated markets.
- Activity 2.1.4.3. Develop and support sustainable business plans that integrate conservation practices, improvements in value chains, and access to differentiated markets.
- Activity 2.1.4.4. Strengthen local capacities for the technical, organizational, and commercial management of the projects, prioritizing the participation of women, youth, and Indigenous peoples.
- Activity 2.1.4.5. Implement community conservation actions associated with sustainable fishing and tourism practices.

25. **Outcome 2.2: Strengthened local economy through sustainable productive alternatives in land ecosystems.** The project aims to improve IPLC living conditions by promoting sustainable income alternatives in watershed areas that flow into the marine corridor, following the Management Plan established under Component 1. It will support IPLC access to PES schemes for their conservation efforts in the watersheds that feed into the marine corridor, and waste management. There are three main Outputs:

26. **Output 2.2.1. Sustainable small-scale productive and restoration projects in land ecosystems directly related to the marine corridor implemented.** Under this Output, the project will support small-scale productive and restoration projects by local communities, afro-descendant and indigenous peoples in watershed ecosystems that flow into the Marine Corridor. It will also prioritize women- and youth-led productive initiatives in terrestrial ecosystems, such as agroforestry and ecotourism. Targeted capacity-building workshops will be delivered to ensure equitable participation and access to tools. In addition, technical and financial support mechanisms will be designed to recognize unpaid restoration work, often carried out by women. Indicative activities include:

- Activity 2.2.1.1. Map and characterize existing sustainable productive initiatives in the territory linked to the marine-coastal corridor via watersheds draining into the sea.
- Activity 2.2.1.2. Strengthen the technical and organizational capacities of local enterprises, especially regarding certifications, marketing, and productive value chains.
- Activity 2.2.1.3. Design support or incentive mechanisms for sustainable projects, prioritizing those that integrate restoration and environmental sustainability.

27. **Output 2.2.2. PES in the watersheds that flow into the marine corridor implemented.** Under this Output, the project will support the implementation of PES in areas near the Marine Corridor, especially in those middle and upper watersheds.<sup>[3]<sup>50</sup></sup> Indicative activities include:

- Activity 2.2.2.1. Review and validate the mapping of beneficiaries and priority areas for forest, agroforestry systems (SAF), and water-related PES in watersheds linked to the Marine Corridor.
- Activity 2.2.2.2. Design and pilot implementation of a terrestrial-coastal PES based on fishing closures and conservation periods, in coordination with communities.
- Activity 2.2.2.3. Promote fiscal and non-monetary incentives for landowners who conserve forests or restore critical areas, especially in Indigenous territories.

The GAP recommends specific activities such as technical exchange with FONAFIFO and partners of the +Mujeres +Natura initiative, to adapt gender-responsive elements from the national PES program. A gender assessment on land tenure will inform eligibility pathways that recognize women's contributions to conservation, even when they lack formal land titles. Measures such as co-registration and shared recognition within households contribute to ensuring equitable access to PES benefits, especially in jointly managed family lands.

28. **Output 2.2.3 Strengthened institutional capacities in waste and wastewater management, in watersheds that flow into the Marine Corridor.** This output will enhance local waste and wastewater systems through improved infrastructure, inter-institutional coordination, and community engagement, including incentives and awareness campaigns to reduce land-based pollution affecting the marine corridor. Indicative activities include:

- Activity 2.2.3.1 Strengthen the local waste and wastewater management system.
- Activity 2.2.3.2 Coordinate territorial actors (municipalities, NGOs, businesses, communities) to develop and implement local waste management plans with a watershed-to-sea approach.
- Activity 2.2.3.3 Promote incentive mechanisms and environmental certifications (e.g., Blue Flag, Blue Corridor Seal, ecoins program) integrated with community education campaigns.

Gender and social inclusion considerations include promoting the active participation of women, youth, and Indigenous and Afro-descendant women in the co-design of waste management plans and integrating gender and equity indicators. Culturally appropriate education and outreach campaigns will be tailored to diverse demographic groups to promote shared responsibility and behavior change.

29. **Component 3: Monitoring, Evaluation and Knowledge Management for the conservation and sustainability of the Marine Corridor**

30. **Outcome 3.1: Coordinated and regulated participatory monitoring, control and surveillance system of the Marine Corridor.** A participatory monitoring system will be implemented for the continuous assessment of management effectiveness and the ecological integrity of the corridor. This includes the design and validation of tools to evaluate the implementation of the management plan, as well as participatory actions to monitor the ecological status of the corridor. Coordinated regulations will be established for fishing and maritime transportation activities, ensuring their alignment with the corridor's management plan. Lastly, integrated control and surveillance actions will be carried out to mitigate pressures from illegal activities, with a focus on conservation. There are four main Outputs:

31. **Output 3.1.1. Participatory Monitoring system for the management of the biological corridor designed and validated.** Under this Output, the project will support the design and validation of the monitoring system for the management of the biological corridor. The project will also support the design and implementation of a Participatory monitoring system for the ecological integrity of the marine corridor. The participatory monitoring system will integrate gender and inclusion considerations such as co-producing Traditional Ecological Knowledge with female knowledge holders, identifying inclusive lessons learned from past monitoring initiatives, and developing disaggregated indicators on governance, participation, and benefit-sharing. Indicative activities include:

- Activity 3.1.1.1. Technical review and systematization of lessons learned and tools from PROMEC-CR and other relevant marine-coastal ecological monitoring experiences.
- Activity 3.1.1.2. Participatory design of the Marine Corridor monitoring system, incorporating ecological, governance, and sociocultural dimensions.
- Activity 3.1.1.3. Capacity development in participatory biomonitoring within the marine-coastal corridor involving local actors in system implementation.
- Activity 3.1.1.4. Implementation of pilot tests or field trials of the monitoring system at representative points within the Marine Corridor.

32. **Output 3.1.2. Monitoring management plan of the Marine Corridor implemented.** Under this Output, the project will support the implementation of the monitoring of the ecological integrity of the marine corridor. It will apply gender and social inclusion indicators to assess equitable access to resources, decision-making roles, and benefit-sharing. Tailored training will strengthen the technical and leadership capacities of women, youth, and Indigenous and Afro-descendant women in ecological monitoring. Indicative activities include:

- Activity 3.1.2.1. Application of monitoring protocols and tools in selected pilot sites within the Marine Corridor
- Activity 3.1.2.2. Strengthening of local capacities through advanced training and technical assistance
- Activity 3.1.2.3. Establishment of participatory coordination and follow-up mechanisms for sustained implementation.

- Activity 3.1.2.4. Participatory evaluation and refinement of the monitoring system based on field experience.
33. **Output 3.1.3. Regulated and coordinated monitoring of fishing activity and maritime transport.** Under this Output, the project will support the registration of licenses and permits for fishing and maritime transportation in the marine corridor, taking into account data protection protocols and consent procedures. The GAP proposes actions to identify institutional and structural barriers that limit equitable access for women, and recommendations to support regulatory improvements, including adaptations to facilitate women's access to licenses. Women's organizations and gender institutions will also be engaged in coordination and oversight mechanisms to promote inclusive governance of these sectors. Indicative activities include:
- Activity 3.1.3.1. Review regulatory frameworks, procedures, and existing systems for the regulation of fishing and maritime transport.
  - Activity 3.1.3.2. Prepare a comprehensive characterization of fishing and maritime transport activities within the Marine Corridor.
  - Activity 3.1.3.3. Design and implement a mechanism for inter-institutional and community coordination for regulated monitoring and control.
  - Activity 3.1.3.4. Strengthen licensing and permitting systems through simplified and accessible procedures.
  - Activity 3.1.3.5. Implement digital tools for tracking and traceability of regulated activities.
  - Activity 3.1.3.6. Strengthen local capacities for the implementation of the regulated monitoring system.
34. **Output 3.1.4: Coordinated and effective control and surveillance for protection and conservation.** This output will strengthen the Marine Corridor's surveillance system through improved diagnostics, inter-institutional coordination, modern monitoring technologies, capacity building for authorities and community brigades, and the implementation of joint patrols and participatory schemes that ensure long-term, inclusive enforcement. Indicative activities include:
- Activity 3.1.4.1. Prepare an operational and strategic diagnostic of the control and surveillance system in the Marine Corridor.
  - Activity 3.1.4.2. Design inter-institutional and community mechanisms for joint coordination and response.
  - Activity 3.1.4.3. Strengthen technologies and systems for monitoring and response.
  - Activity 3.1.4.4. Provide technical and operational training for security forces and community actors.
  - Activity 3.1.4.5. Implement coordinated patrols and participatory surveillance.
  - Activity 3.1.4.6. Formalize and sustain community participation within the surveillance system.
- The GAP includes a set of recommended activities to be integrated into the design and implementation of control and surveillance systems for the Marine Corridor: analyze gender gaps in patrol roles, design gender-sensitive protocols, and incorporate specific modules on GBV and SEAH prevention into patrol training. Special efforts will be made to strengthen the operational capacities of women rangers and to ensure that women and youth community members engaged in surveillance are recognized and supported through tailored incentive schemes.
35. **Outcome 3.2: Improved knowledge sharing and dissemination of lessons learned.** This outcome aims to document results and impacts to facilitate replication and scaling up of similar business models and approaches in other areas of Costa Rica and potentially across other countries. It will systematize and share good practices, lessons learned, and successful project experiences with national and local stakeholders, and at external events, highlighting contributions from women. Indicative activities include:
36. **Output 3.2.1. Traditional knowledge and local practices collected, documented, and disseminated.** Under this Output, the project will support the systematization of knowledge and best practices generated by the project, including co-designing of cultural heritage protocols and access safeguards. Indicative activities include:
- Activity 3.2.1.1. Design and implement a participatory system for knowledge documentation and systematization.
  - Activity 3.2.1.2. Develop and share culturally appropriate outreach materials in local languages.

- Activity 3.2.1.3. Establish regular mechanisms for knowledge exchange.
- Activity 3.2.1.4. Enhance local capacities in community communication.

As part of the GAP, specific activities are proposed such as documenting experiences that highlight women's and youth participation, developing outreach materials with disaggregated data, and ensuring that at least 30% of these materials focus on gender and inclusion. The project will also implement dedicated knowledge exchange activities and include GESI-focused sessions in community and institutional learning events to promote continuous reflection and adjustment of the GAP implementation.

37. **Output 3.2.2: Mainstreaming of gender equality and social inclusion, and social and environmental safeguards strategies developed and implemented.** This output will ensure that GESI considerations and social and environmental safeguards are integrated into all project activities. The allocated budget under this output will support the implementation of the project's ESMF/ESMP and additional required annex plans (e.g. Indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples Plan), SEP, GRM and GAP, including hiring both Safeguards and Gender Officers (see corresponding Annexes for more details). Apart from those defined in the GAP and ESMF/ESMP, capacity building workshops on GESI and environmental and social safeguards will be conducted to support and strengthen existing capacities of project staff and related stakeholders. Indicative activities include:
- Activity 3.2.2.1. Implement and monitor social and environmental safeguards management and gender strategies and activities for all project components, as indicated in the ESMF/ESMP and the GAP.
  - Activity 3.2.2.2. Conduct capacity building workshops targeting the PMU staff on GESI and environmental and social safeguards to support and strengthen existing capacities of project staff and related stakeholder.
38. **Incremental cost reasoning.** In the **baseline scenario**, Costa Rica would continue implementing ongoing national and local initiatives focused on marine and coastal conservation through existing frameworks such as SINAC management plans, terrestrial Payment for Environmental Services (PES) schemes, and isolated NGO projects on coral restoration, waste management, and community tourism. These efforts contribute to national conservation objectives but remain fragmented and limited in scope, particularly in addressing the marine-coastal interface between Cahuita National Park and the Gandoca-Manzanillo Wildlife Refuge. Governance gaps persist outside formally protected areas, institutional coordination is weak, and sustainable financial mechanisms for marine biodiversity management are still underdeveloped. As a result, conservation and restoration efforts in the Southern Caribbean would continue to be implemented in isolation, with short-term and localized benefits that are insufficient to ensure ecological connectivity, long-term ecosystem resilience, and measurable global environmental outcomes.
39. The **GEF alternative** enables Costa Rica to move beyond this fragmented baseline by providing the incremental resources necessary to establish an integrated and inclusive governance model for marine-coastal ecosystems. Through its support, the project will create a functional marine corridor that connects critical habitats and strengthens institutional, technical, and community capacities for integrated management. The project will finance the establishment of a participatory governance framework linking national institutions, municipalities, and Afro-descendant and Indigenous communities; the piloting of innovative financial mechanisms, including the country's first marine PES scheme; and the implementation of restoration and sustainable livelihood initiatives that enhance ecological connectivity across coral reefs, seagrasses, mangroves, and associated watersheds. It will also operationalize a participatory monitoring and enforcement system, ensuring adaptive management and the long-term sustainability of conservation gains. These interventions directly address the underlying barriers identified in the baseline—fragmented governance, limited financing, low technical capacity, and lack of coordination—transforming them into opportunities for systemic change.
40. The **GEF contribution of US\$3.57 million**, complemented by US\$0.92 million in co-financing, covers the incremental costs required to generate global environmental benefits that would not otherwise be achieved. These include the design and implementation of governance mechanisms, the development of innovative marine financial instruments, the establishment of baselines and monitoring systems, and the strengthening of inclusive capacities for corridor management. By assuming these transaction and coordination costs—typically not financed by national budgets or private actors—the GEF enables the transformation of fragmented actions into a coherent, sustainable model of marine governance and financing. The project will directly contribute to global biodiversity targets under the GBF and GEF-8, including the improved management of approximately 28,650 hectares of marine and coastal habitats, 26,000 hectares of marine ecosystems under improved practices, 300 hectares of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity, and direct benefits for more than 2,200 people, with particular emphasis on gender equality and inclusion.
41. In summary, GEF support provides the catalytic investment that bridges existing efforts and systemic transformation. It allows Costa Rica to shift from isolated conservation interventions toward an integrated seascape governance model that ensures

ecological connectivity, financial sustainability, and long-term resilience of marine and coastal ecosystems. These incremental investments generate durable global environmental benefits that would not occur in the baseline scenario, reinforcing Costa Rica's leadership in marine conservation and its contribution to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

[1] Please check: <https://www.ideassonline.org/public/pdf/PagoServiciosAmbientalesMarinos-ESP.pdf>

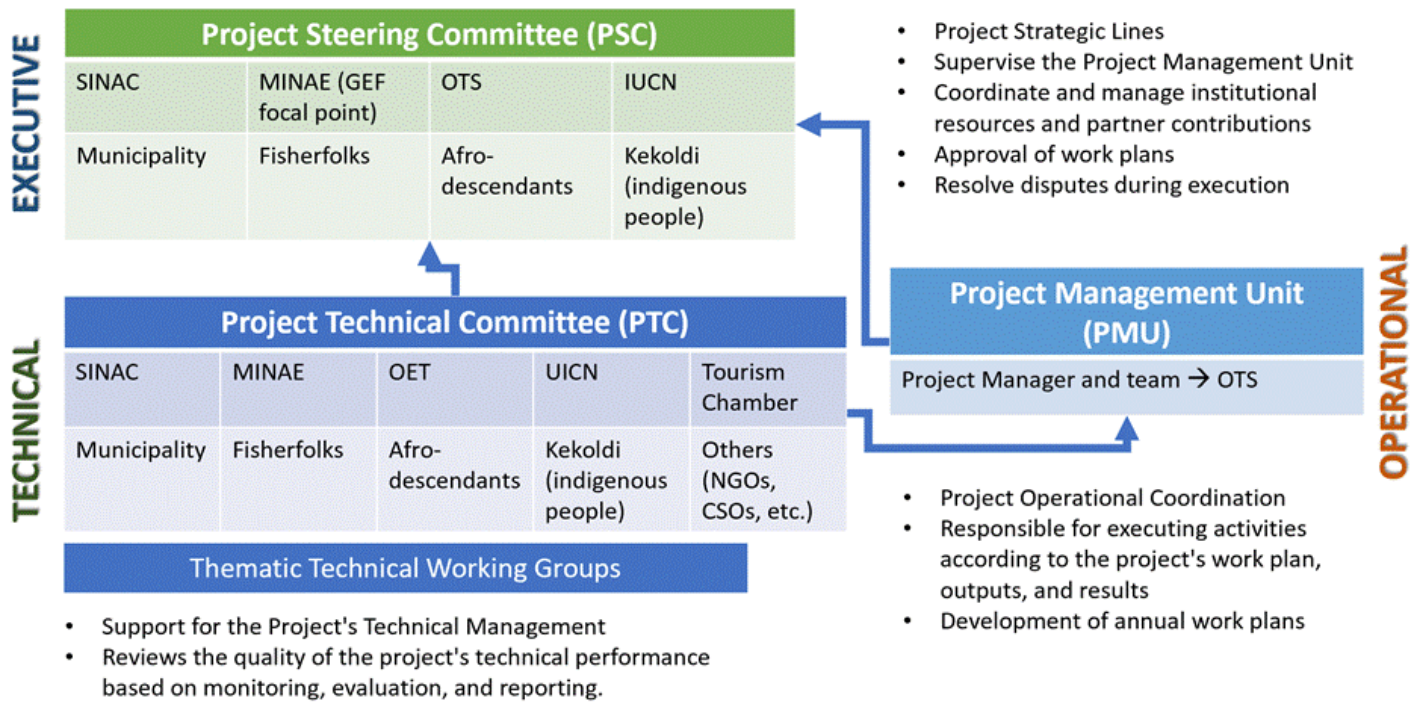
[2] For a comprehensive review of the experience of Costa Rica please check Alvarado et al. (2025) (available at <https://doi.org/10.15517/rev.biol.trop.v73iS1.63695>), and will follow best practices summarized in the GIZ protocol for coral restoration in Costa Rica (SINAC-GIZ. 2020. Protocolo para la restauración de arrecifes y comunidades coralinas de Costa Rica. San José, Costa Rica; Available at: <https://www.sinac.go.cr/ES/docu/ASP/Protocolo%20Restauración%20Arrecifes%20y%20Comunidades%20Coralinas%20CR%202020.pdf>).

[3] FONAFIFO has extensively documented that beneficiaries use the money received by the PES Program to improve quality of family life, such as school, medicine, food, and to carry out important projects in their communities. For example, in indigenous communities, repairs or construction of educational centers, streets and health centers are carried out. See <https://unfccc.int/climate-action/momentum-for-change/financing-for-climate-friendly-investment/payments-for-environmental-services-program>

## Institutional Arrangement and Coordination with Ongoing Initiatives and Project.

Please describe the Institutional Arrangements for the execution of this project, including financial management and procurement. If possible, please summarize the flow of funds (diagram), accountabilities for project management and financial reporting (organogram), including audit, and staffing plans. (max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

- 1. Executing Entity.** OTS will be responsible for the overall execution of the project and for the timely achievement of project results, and will be responsible for procurement and contracting all services envisaged in the project, including monitoring and evaluation of activities, and reporting to the fund on project implementation progress. All financial transactions and procurement of goods and services will be carried out based on an approved budget and strictly according to OTS procedures, in alignment with procurement guidelines and policies of the GEF. OTS will be responsible for the effective and efficient utilization of funds, preparation, and submission of interim and final reports on results achieved to SINAC, UICN and GEF. OTS will provide financial and technical oversight services for the outcomes and outputs of the project. OTS will ensure that project monitoring and evaluation run according to an agreed schedule, and in line with UICN and GEF requirements.
- 2. Project Steering Committee:** The Project Steering Committee (PSC) comprises representatives from SINAC, MINAE, OTS, UICN, Talamanca Municipality, fisherfolks, afro-descendants and indigenous peoples. The PSC is established to review performance based on monitoring and evaluation, and implementation issues to ensure quality delivery of results. The PSC is the most senior, dedicated project oversight body and will: i) provides overall strategic guidance and oversight to the project; and ii) review project performance based on monitoring, evaluation and reporting, including progress reports, risk logs and the combined delivery report to ensure OTS's ultimate accountability. The PSC is responsible for making management decisions by consensus. The PSC will meet at least once a year to provide strategic guidance, hold project reviews to assess annual performance and appraise the Annual Work Plan for the following year. The PSC will hold ad hoc meetings when necessary to deal with emerging issues.
- 3. Technical Committee.** The Project's Technical Committee (PTC) comprises representatives from SINAC, MINAE, OTS, UICN, and relevant institutions in the project area. The PTC is established to provide technical guidance on implementation issues to ensure quality delivery of project results. As such, the PTC: i) provides overall technical guidance and direction to the project, ensuring the highest quality of project intervention during project implementation; and ii) review quality of technical project performance based on monitoring, evaluation and reporting. The PTC is responsible for making technical decisions by consensus.
- 4. Project Management Unit (PMU).** The PMU will be responsible for implementing the project under direct supervision of OTS. The PMU will be based in the project area and will be: i) responsible for providing daily technical, administrative and financial project management; ii) establish and coordinate collaboration with institutions involved in project implementation; iii) serve as the secretariat for the PSC; iv) prepare annual work plans and be responsible for project monitoring and reporting. The PMU will comprise: Project Technical Specialist (PTS), project Assistant/ financial officer, safeguards and gender specialist, and M&E officer. A brief description of the terms of reference is provided in Annex 8.



- During the diagnostic phase, interviews were conducted with key stakeholders to systematically identify ongoing initiatives that align with the objectives of the Blue Corridor project. Through these consultations, several active efforts were recognized, each presenting valuable opportunities for collaboration and support as the Blue Corridor advances its mission.
- A notable example includes the terrestrial Payment for Environmental Services (PES) program within the Talamanca Caribe Corridor, which is locally administered and has demonstrated considerable success in land conservation. The Blue Corridor project seeks to further empower and enhance these efforts. Concurrently, the National System of Conservation Areas (SINAC) has been developing a marine PES initiative, establishing the legal and technical frameworks necessary for its implementation. The Blue Corridor project intends to assist in designing and expanding the marine PES scheme, particularly within the targeted marine corridor, thereby increasing the effectiveness and reach of conservation incentives.
- In addition to PES, the restoration and monitoring of critical habitats such as coral reefs, mangroves, and sea turtle sites are vital to maintaining the ecological integrity and sustainability of the marine ecosystem within the Blue Corridor. Healthy marine environments not only support biodiversity but also sustain the livelihoods of communities reliant on fishing, tourism, and other marine-based industries. Several organizations, including NGOs like Raising Coral and Coast, alongside academic partners such as the University of Costa Rica (CIMAR) and the National University of Costa Rica (UNA), are at the forefront of these restoration and monitoring activities. The Blue Corridor project aims to reinforce these initiatives by providing support for capacity building, technical training, and resource mobilization to ensure the long-term viability of these ecosystems.
- Furthermore, the Tu-MoDeLo project, led by Fundecooperación, the Costa Rican Institute of Tourism (ICT), and the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG), identifies and cultivates market opportunities within the tourism sector for sustainable agricultural and fisheries products adapted to climate change. The Blue Corridor project seeks to establish a partnership with Tu-MoDeLo to further assist small-scale producers who employ sustainable practices. This includes promoting the reduction of agrochemical usage, advocating for sustainable fishing methods, and supporting the development of ecotourism and cultural tourism. Through training, certification identification, and capacity building, the project contributes to reducing agrochemical use, increasing the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices, and improving fisheries and aquaculture operations. Additionally, these efforts aim to raise the number of tourism companies obtaining the CST (Tourism Sustainability Certification), thereby enhancing the value and recognition of sustainable products and services throughout the country.
- In conclusion, through close collaboration with these diverse initiatives and stakeholders, the Blue Corridor project positions itself to serve as a catalyst for strengthened biodiversity conservation, sustainable livelihoods, and the realization of Costa Rica's environmental and sustainability objectives.

Will the GEF Agency play an execution role on this project?

If so, please describe that role here and the justification.

n/a

Also, please add a short explanation to describe cooperation with ongoing initiatives and projects, including potential for co-location and/or sharing of expertise/staffing (max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

1. During the diagnostic phase, interviews were conducted with key stakeholders to systematically identify ongoing initiatives that align with the objectives of the Blue Corridor project. Through these consultations, several active efforts were recognized, each presenting valuable opportunities for collaboration and support as the Blue Corridor advances its mission.
2. A notable example includes the terrestrial Payment for Environmental Services (PES) program within the Talamanca Caribe Corridor, which is locally administered and has demonstrated considerable success in land conservation. The Blue Corridor project seeks to further empower and enhance these efforts. Concurrently, the National System of Conservation Areas (SINAC) has been developing a marine PES initiative, establishing the legal and technical frameworks necessary for its implementation. The Blue Corridor project intends to assist in designing and expanding the marine PES scheme, particularly within the targeted marine corridor, thereby increasing the effectiveness and reach of conservation incentives.
3. In addition to PES, the restoration and monitoring of critical habitats such as coral reefs, mangroves, and sea turtle sites are vital to maintaining the ecological integrity and sustainability of the marine ecosystem within the Blue Corridor. Healthy marine environments not only support biodiversity but also sustain the livelihoods of communities reliant on fishing, tourism, and other marine-based industries. Several organizations, including NGOs like Raising Coral and Coast, alongside academic partners such as the University of Costa Rica (CIMAR) and the National University of Costa Rica (UNA), are at the forefront of these restoration and monitoring activities. The Blue Corridor project aims to reinforce these initiatives by providing support for capacity building, technical training, and resource mobilization to ensure the long-term viability of these ecosystems.
4. Furthermore, the Tu-MoDeLo project, led by Fundecooperación, the Costa Rican Institute of Tourism (ICT), and the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG), identifies and cultivates market opportunities within the tourism sector for sustainable agricultural and fisheries products adapted to climate change. The Blue Corridor project seeks to establish a partnership with Tu-MoDeLo to further assist small-scale producers who employ sustainable practices. This includes promoting the reduction of agrochemical usage, advocating for sustainable fishing methods, and supporting the development of ecotourism and cultural tourism. Through training, certification identification, and capacity building, the project contributes to reducing agrochemical use, increasing the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices, and improving fisheries and aquaculture operations. Additionally, these efforts aim to raise the number of tourism companies obtaining the CST (Tourism Sustainability Certification), thereby enhancing the value and recognition of sustainable products and services throughout the country.
5. In conclusion, through close collaboration with these diverse initiatives and stakeholders, the Blue Corridor project positions itself to serve as a catalyst for strengthened biodiversity conservation, sustainable livelihoods, and the realization of Costa Rica's environmental and sustainability objectives.

## Core Indicators

Indicate expected results in each relevant indicator using methodologies indicated in the GEF-8 Results Measurement Framework Guidelines.

As per the GBFF Programming Directions, the GBFF performance will be monitored using the GEF Trust Fund Core Indicators 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 11 and all their sub indicators as well as 9 and sub-indicators 9.4 and 9.5 (see Annex 3 of the Programming Directions). Projects are encouraged to capture any co-benefits from the project in other GEF core indicators.

Additional indicators will be introduced to monitor policy elements of projects supported by the GBF Fund. They may draw on the monitoring framework for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework once it is agreed.

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

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
28650	28650	0	0

### Indicator 2.1 Marine Protected Areas Newly created

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

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

Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
28650	28650	0	0

Name of the Protected Area	WDPA ID	IUCN Category	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)	METT score (Baseline at CEO Endorsement)	METT score (Achieved at MTR)	METT score (Achieved at TE)
Cahuita National Park	2235	National Park	23,290.00	23,290.00			64.00		
Gandoca-Manzanillo National WR	19402145524	Protected area with sustainable use of natural resources	5,360.00	5,360.00			69.00		

### Indicator 4 Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectares; excluding protected areas)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
300	300	0	0

#### Indicator 4.1 Area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity (hectares, qualitative assessment, non-certified)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
300.00	300.00		

#### Indicator 4.2 Area of landscapes under third-party certification incorporating biodiversity considerations

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

#### Type/Name of Third Party Certification

#### Indicator 4.3 Area of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems

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

**Indicator 4.4 Area of High Conservation Value or other forest loss avoided**

Disaggregation Type	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

**Indicator 4.5 Terrestrial OECMs supported**

Name of the OECMs	WDPA-ID	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)

**Documents (Document(s) that justifies the HCVF)**

Title

**Indicator 5 Area of marine habitat under improved practices to benefit biodiversity (excluding protected areas)**

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
26,000.00	26,000.00		

**Indicator 5.1 Fisheries under third-party certification incorporating biodiversity considerations**

Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)

**Type/name of the third-party certification**

**Indicator 5.2 Large Marine Ecosystems with reduced pollution and hypoxia**

Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)

LME at PIF	LME at CEO Endorsement	LME at MTR	LME at TE

**Indicator 5.3 Marine OECMs supported**

Name of the OECMs	WDPA-ID	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)

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

	Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)

<b>Female</b>	912	912		
<b>Male</b>	1,368	1,312		
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,280</b>	<b>2,224</b>	0	<b>0</b>

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

The global environmental benefits (GEB) resulting from the project include (i) Marine Protected Areas Under improved management effectiveness (CI 2.2); (ii) Area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity (CI 4.1), (iii) Area of marine habitat under improved practices (CI 5); and (iv) People benefiting from GEF-financed investments disaggregated by sex (CI 11) .

- CI2: 28,650 ha of marine protected areas created or under improved management, covering the marine portions of Cahuita NP (23,290 ha) and Gandoca-Manzanillo National WR (5,360 ha).
- CI4: 300 ha of landscapes under improved practices, consisting of areas implementing sustainable production practices promoted by the project and PES schemes in Indigenous territories.
- CI5: 26,000 ha of marine habitat under improved practices through the establishment and consolidation of the marine corridor.
- CI11: 2,280 people will benefit from GEF-financed investments, including at least 40% women, representing 5% of the total population of the Municipality of Talamanca.

## Key Risks

	Rating	Explanation of risk and mitigation measures
CONTEXT		
Climate	Moderate	Risk Assessment: The projection for the Caribbean coast of Costa Rica is that will there be an increase in intensity and frequency of hurricanes and tropical storms that could cause loss of mangrove, coral reef and seagrass restoration projects due to extreme weather events and also, loss of plantations in land. Other climate change impacts includes the increase in the sea surface temperature than could cause loss of coral habitats. Mitigation measures: The restauration projects implemented by the project are nature based adaptation solutions that help coastal and marine ecosystems to be less vulnerable to climate change impacts. Organisms who survive extreme temperature conditions and climate are used later on for restauration, making it more probable that they survive in a next extreme climate event. In addition, the project has proposed a lab of sexual reproduction for coral reef which reduce the vulnerability of coral reefs due to climate change.

Environmental and Social	Moderate	<p>Risk Assessment: The risk assessment conducted as part of the assignment identified 27 risks and impacts in the context of activities as part of the Blue Corridor project. These include risks related to all IUCN’s ‘ESMS Standards’ and ‘Environmental and Social Risk Areas’. Key risks identified include social risks such as increased and/or maintained access restrictions to natural resources due to project activities; inadequate FPIC process / lack of FPIC; discrimination in access to resources, services, or benefits from the project; increased risk of gender-based violence (GBV); unfulfilled commitments regarding support for/participation in project design and other activities involving communities; complexities and lack of clarity in fishing regulations; and perpetuation or aggravation of human rights conflict and tensions in the area. Environmental risks include application of pesticides, fungicides, or herbicides (biocides) leading to environmental impacts; physical disturbance and impacts to water quality; use of chemicals and hazardous materials; and project activities increasing vulnerability to climate hazards and impact on livelihoods. Mitigation measures: An Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) has been developed with mitigation measures to avoid, or where avoidance is not possible, minimize and manage potential adverse impacts associated with project activities. The ESMF also presents procedures to address potential future E&amp;S issues.</p>
Political and Governance	Low	<p>Risk Assessment: There is a presidential election in 2026 that may affect the political continuity of Government priorities, leading to budget changes in the project area or a reduction in the budget currently allocated to PES. Mitigation measures: UICN will ensure proper transfer of information regarding project activities to new authorities. At the same time, the project will engage stakeholders involved within the marine corridor area, especially with the municipal government of Talamanca and Integral Development Associations, to strengthen the community's ownership of the project and building alliances with private sector, academy and ONGs. In addition, the project will be creating new financing mechanisms so that the sustainability of the Blue Corridor does not depend exclusively on government funds.</p>

INNOVATION

Institutional and Policy	Low	<p>Risk Assessment: Insufficient coordination between the Marine Corridor and the Talamanca–Caribbean Biological Corridor. There is a risk that marine and terrestrial governance structures operate in a fragmented manner, reducing ecological connectivity and undermining integrated management. Mitigation measures: The project will mitigate this risk by applying and reinforcing the participatory coordination mechanism defined during project design, and by operationalizing permanent inter-institutional coordination measures between both corridors. In addition, the governance design considers the potential extension of the Talamanca–Caribbean Biological Corridor to the marine area, which will strengthen land-sea connectivity and ensure alignment between governance platforms. Risk Assessment: Staff turnover and political changes at the municipal level. Frequent rotation of municipal authorities and technical staff could disrupt implementation</p>
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		<p>continuity and deprioritize project actions. Mitigation measures: The project embeds municipalities within the Marine Corridor participatory governance structure to secure institutional commitment across administrations.</p> <p>Furthermore, an institutional strengthening plan for local councils and the Local Committee will be implemented, including mandate renewal, function definition, and training of representatives and key organizations. These measures will safeguard institutional memory, ensure effective transfer of responsibilities, and reduce the risk of discontinuity in project implementation.</p>
Technological	Moderate	<p>Risk Assessment: Some of the technologies implemented by the project may not be adopted by the beneficiaries. Mitigation measures: The project will provide extensive training in the different technologies and practices that will be implemented. This includes training with some of the technologies for monitoring and control of coral reefs and the marine corridor, involving both public institutions such as SINAC, fisherfolks, afro-descendants and indigenous peoples.</p>
Financial and Business Model	Moderate	<p>Risk Assessment: Failure to find sustainable financing options for the corridor over time and that upon completion of the project, the financial mechanisms achieved are discontinued. There is also a risk of creating or raising expectations in the communities with respect to the marine PES that later may not or could not be fulfilled. Mitigation measures: During project implementation, financial mechanisms will be identified in alliance with private and public sector to be economically sustainable the corridor actions, as well as an alliance with the Talamanca Caribe Biological Corridor will be more efficient the governance process which will facilitate the application for available financing.</p>

EXECUTION

Capacity	Moderate	<p>Risk Assessment: The institutional capacities of the local authorities are currently low, because they do not have enough budget, human and operational elements to development all the responsibility that they have in the area. This could affect the monitory activities proposed by the project.</p> <p>Mitigation measures: To help reduce this risk, the project will strengthen local institutions to have more effective monitoring activities. Local communities will be integrated into monitoring activities, along with NGOs and universities. In this way, the responsibility for monitoring tasks will not be carried out by local institutions alone and maximizes the likelihood that they will perform. This approach ensures that monitoring responsibilities are not solely borne by local institutions, thereby maximizing the likelihood of successful execution. To mitigate this risk, the project will empower local institutions to enhance their monitoring effectiveness. Local communities, NGOs, and universities will be integrated into these monitoring activities. This collaborative approach ensures that monitoring responsibilities are not solely borne by local institutions, thereby maximizing the likelihood of successful execution.</p>
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Fiduciary	Moderate	Risk Assessment: OTS has previous experience with GEF projects, and the likelihood of failure in financial management and procurement, non-compliance with rules and regulations, corruption, and mismanagement of funds is minimal. Mitigation measures: OTS, under the guidance of IUCN, will follow good practices and GEF rules and regulations during project implementation.
Stakeholder	Substantial	<p>Risk Assessment: The project area encompasses vulnerable communities, including indigenous, Afro-descendant, and fishing populations. These communities have a history of land tenure issues and conflicts between productive activities and conservation efforts, as approximately 80% of their territory is designated for protection. Consequently, they have expressed resistance to the project. There is also a risk that local communities may not fully engage with proposed project activities or that participants may abandon training after receiving it, leading to a waste of resources.</p> <p>Furthermore, some individuals may feel their opinions are not valued or that they are not adequately represented in project activities. Another significant factor is the resistance from stakeholders like CORBANA and fishermen to adopt more sustainable production methods. They fear a reduction in economic income or are only willing to embrace sustainable practices if provided with financial incentives. Mitigation measures: To mitigate these risks the project has involucrate the stakeholder since the beginning of the design and all the actors identified has been consulted to know their necessities and the activities that they are development currently in the project's area to have an integral vision and the people feel that project is strengthening their weak not the opposite for that the project proposes a wide range of training in different aspects that have been identified as having the greatest impact on the development of the productive activities of the stakeholders as well as to reduce the vulnerability of coastal and marine ecosystems. To mitigate identified risks, the project has engaged stakeholders from the outset of the design phase. All identified actors have been consulted to understand their needs and current activities within the project area. This comprehensive approach ensures an integrated vision and fosters a sense among the community that the project is addressing their vulnerabilities, rather than creating new ones. Therefore, the project offers a broad spectrum of training programs, focusing on areas identified as having the most significant impact on stakeholders' productive activities and on reducing the vulnerability of coastal and marine ecosystems.</p>
Other		
Overall Risk Rating	Moderate	The Blue Corridor Project presents a moderate overall risk, with identified risks spanning environmental, social, technical, institutional, and financial domains. Climate-related risks, including extreme weather and rising sea temperatures, may impact restoration efforts; however, these are mitigated

	<p>through nature-based solutions and adaptive restoration techniques. Environmental and social risks, including potential access restrictions, weak FPIC, and increased vulnerability of marginalized communities, are addressed through an Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF). While political, governance, and institutional risks are rated low, ongoing coordination and capacity-building efforts aim to ensure continuity and integration between marine and terrestrial governance structures. Moderate risks related to technological adoption, sustainable financing, and implementation capacity are being mitigated through stakeholder engagement, training, and diversified funding strategies. The most substantial risk lies in stakeholder engagement, particularly with vulnerable communities, due to historical land-use conflicts and resistance to change. To address this, the project emphasizes inclusive consultation, participatory governance, and tailored capacity-building programs. With comprehensive mitigation strategies in place, the project is well-positioned to manage risks and deliver its intended environmental and social outcomes.</p>
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#### D. ALIGNMENT WITH PROGRAMMING STRATEGIES AND COUNTRY/REGIONAL PRIORITIES

Identify the specific GBFF Action Area(s) that the project is aligned with and how the project will support the achievement of the specific Action Area objective(s).

Explain how the proposed interventions are aligned with the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans and/or National Biodiversity Finance Plans or similar instruments to identify national and/or regional priorities.

Please identify in the project tags which of the 23 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework the project contributes to and explain how in this section.

For Multi-Trust Fund projects, please explain alignment with the GEF-8 programming strategies and country and regional priorities, including how these country strategies and plans relate to the multilateral environmental agreements.

Confirm if any country policies that might contradict with intended outcomes of the project have been identified, and how the project will address this. (max. 500 words, approximately 1 page)

1. **GBFF Action Areas.** The project is aligned with the following GBFF Action Areas (AA):

- **GBFF AA 1: Biodiversity conservation, restoration, land/sea-use and spatial planning.** The marine corridor aims to enhance the connectivity and integrity of marine ecosystems in the southern Caribbean, both within and beyond existing protected areas. It will also strengthen SINAC's capacity to manage C NP and GMNWR while establishing financial mechanisms for the corridor's long-term sustainability.
- **GBFF AA 2: Support to IPLC stewardship and governance of lands, territories, and waters.** Participatory management of the biological corridor will involve IPLCs in governance bodies with voting rights. The project will enhance governance capacities, focusing on IPLC representatives and promoting the inclusion of women and youth. Lessons learned from the corridor's establishment will inform the regulation and formalization of marine OECMs.
- **GBFF AA 3: Policy alignment and development.** The corridor's management plan will integrate sustainable economic activities, promoting responsible fishing and tourism practices, as well as sustainable productive ventures that generate income through the sustainable use of marine resources. Fishermen's and tourism operators' associations are also expected to participate in the ecological monitoring of the marine corridor.
- **GBFF AA 6: Biodiversity mainstreaming in production sectors.** As part of the financial mechanisms for the marine corridor's sustainability, the project will develop a marine PES scheme tailored to the stakeholders and economic activities of the region. This initiative will encourage responsible fishing and tourism practices that minimize environmental impact, with potential for adaptation and scaling in other regions.

2. **Alignment with the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans.** The project aligns with CR's Nat BD Policy, Strategy, and Action Plan by integrating BD conservation and sustainable marine management. Through ecosystem restoration and sustainable fishing/ tourism, it tackles nat. priorities enhancing livelihoods. A marine corridor serves as a pilot model for the formalization of marine OECMs, as a complement to traditional conservation methods in CR. It is also aligns with the 4 pillars of the 2016-2025 Nat. bd Policy and contributes to strategic themes 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7 of the NBSAP, as well as to global goals 2, 4, 6, 10, 11, 13, 16, 18, and 22.
3. **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework targets.** Globally, the project directly supports targets 1 (28,650 ha of protected areas under improved management) , 2 (300 ha of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity), 3 (26,000 hectares of marine habitat under improved practices), 7 (e.g., 48 beach cleaning and recycling events for improved waste management in prioritized sites), 8 (e.g., 50% increase in live coral coverage), 19 (e.g., 30 households participating in the marine PES program and 20 households under the PES program), 21 (e.g., 10 knowledge products), and 22 (e.g., two participatory governance instruments) of the KM- GBF. The project supports land-sea spatial planning, ecosystem restoration, and the expansion of protected and conserved areas while embedding equity and participation of Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and local communities. Through innovative finance, knowledge sharing, and inclusive governance, it advances biodiversity mainstreaming and resilience, helping Costa Rica achieve its national priorities and global commitments under the 30x30 agenda
4. **Country policies that might contradict with intended outcomes of the project.** There are no country policies in Costa Rica that have been detected to contradict the intended outcomes of the project.

## E. POLICY REQUIREMENTS

### Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

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

Yes

**1) Does the project expect to include any gender-responsive-measures to address gender gaps or promote gender equality and women's empowerment?**

If the project expects to include any gender-responsive measures to address gender gaps or promote gender equality and women empowerment, please indicate in which results area(s) the project is expected to contribute to gender equality:

**Closing gender gaps in access to and control over natural resources;**

Yes

**Improving women's participation and decision-making; and/or**

Yes

**Generating socio-economic benefits or services for women.**

Yes

**2) Does the project's results framework or logical framework include gender-sensitive indicators?**

Yes

### Stakeholder Engagement

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

Yes

**Select what role civil society will play in the Project**

Consulted only; Yes

Member of Advisory Body; Contractor;

Co-financier;

Member of project steering committee or equivalent decision-making body ; Yes

Executor or co-executor;

Other (Please explain)

**Amount of resource allocated to support actions by IPLCs for the conservation, restoration, sustainable use and management of biodiversity:**

Amount (\$) of GBFF project financing to support actions by IPLCs	PIF Stage	CEO endorsement stage
	196,000.00	1,254,038.00

**If resources have been identified here, please provide a short justification for why they were included, with cross-reference to relevant project components and/or outputs:**

- The project emphasizes IPLCs' role in conserving and managing the marine corridor not only participating in the corridor's governance (Outcome 1.1) but also benefit from it (Outcomes 2.1 and 2.2). It promotes the integration of their traditional knowledge into governance structures, ensuring their perspectives are central to decision-making and sustainable marine ecosystem management (Outcome 1.1). IPLCs will also engage in participatory monitoring of the corridor's management and ecological health (Outcome 3.1). The project supports sustainable livelihoods, like responsible fishing and ecotourism, enhancing income and economic resilience (Outcome 2.1).

**Are IPLCs to receive and manage resources for the execution of project components/activities?**

Yes

**Are IPLCs leading the design and management of some project activities but do not manage financial resources?**

No

**Does the project provide in-kind support to actions by IPLCs for biodiversity?**

Yes

**Are IPLCs part of the project steering committee or equivalent decision-making body?**

Yes

## Private Sector

Will there be private sector engagement in the project?

Yes

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

Yes

## Environmental and Social Safeguards

We confirm that we have provided information regarding Environmental and Social risks associated with the proposed project or program, including risk screenings/ assessments and, if applicable, management plans or other measures to address identified risks and impacts (this information should be presented in Annex E).

Yes

Please provide overall Project/Program Risk Classification

### Overall Project/Program Risk Classification

PIF	CEO Endorsement/Approval	MTR	TE
	Medium/Moderate		
	Medium/Moderate		

## F. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

### Knowledge management

We confirm that an approach to Knowledge Management and Learning has been clearly described during Project Preparation in the Project Description and that these activities have been budgeted and an anticipated timeline for delivery of relevant outputs has been provided.

### Socio-economic Benefits

We confirm that the project design has considered socio-economic benefits to be delivered by the project, these have been clearly described in the Project Description, and they will be monitored and reported on during project implementation (at MTR and TER).

The Blue Corridor will generate significant socio-economic benefits by diversifying and strengthening local livelihoods through sustainable tourism, fisheries, and restoration-based value chains. By improving waste and wastewater management, piloting a marine PES scheme, and fostering eco-certifications, the project reduces environmental pressures while creating income opportunities. Indigenous and Afro-descendant communities will benefit from inclusive governance structures, vocational training, and support for small enterprises, ensuring equitable participation. Overall, the project enhances food security, employment, and resilience, while positioning the Southern Caribbean as a model for nature-based and community-driven development.

## ANNEX A: FINANCING TABLES

### Total GEF Financing Table

Resources Requested by Agency(ies), Country(ies), Focal Area and the Programming of Funds. All GEF sources of funds should be included here.

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Grant / Non- Grant	GEF Project Grant(\$)	Agency Fee(\$)	Total GEF Financing (\$)
IUCN	GBFF	Costa Rica	Biodiversity	GBFF Action Area 1	Grant	1,494,155.00	134,474.00	1,628,629.00
IUCN	GBFF	Costa Rica	Biodiversity	GBFF Action Area 2	Grant	984,784.00	88,631.00	1,073,415.00
IUCN	GBFF	Costa Rica	Biodiversity	GBFF Action Area 3	Grant	1,001,762.00	90,159.00	1,091,921.00
IUCN	GBFF	Costa Rica	Biodiversity	GBFF Action Area 6	Grant	84,895.00	7,640.00	92,535.00
<b>Total GEF Resources (\$)</b>						<b>3,565,596.00</b>	<b>320,904.00</b>	<b>3,886,500.00</b>

### Project Preparation Grant (PPG)

Was a Project Preparation Grant requested?

true

PPG Amount (\$)

150,000.00

PPG Agency Fee (\$)

13,500.00

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	PPG(\$)	Agency Fee(\$)	Total PPG Funding(\$)
IUCN	GBFF	Costa Rica	Biodiversity	GBFF Action Area 1	37,500.00	3,375.00	40,875.00
IUCN	GBFF	Costa Rica	Biodiversity	GBFF Action Area 2	37,500.00	3,375.00	40,875.00

IUCN	GBFF	Costa Rica	Biodiversity	GBFF Action Area 3	37,500.00	3,375.00	40,875.00
IUCN	GBFF	Costa Rica	Biodiversity	GBFF Action Area 6	37,500.00	3,375.00	40,875.00
<b>Total PPG Amount (\$)</b>					<b>150,000.00</b>	<b>13,500.00</b>	<b>163,500.00</b>

Please provide justification

#### Sources of Funds for non-GBFF GEF resources (only for Multi-Trust Fund projects)

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

#### Action Area Elements (and Focal Area Elements for Multi-Trust Fund projects)

Programming Directions	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing(\$)	Co-financing(\$)
GBFF Action Area 1	GBFF	1,494,155.00	386,204.00
GBFF Action Area 2	GBFF	984,784.00	254,543.00
GBFF Action Area 3	GBFF	1,001,762.00	258,932.00
GBFF Action Area 6	GBFF	84,895.00	21,943.00
<b>Total Project Cost</b>		<b>3,565,596.00</b>	<b>921,622.00</b>

#### Confirmed Co-financing for the project, by name and type

Please include evidence for each co-financing source for this project in the tab of the portal

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount(\$)
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Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Environment	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	401,622.00
Recipient Country Government	Costa Rican Institute of Fisheries and Aquaculture- Incopesca	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	146,000.00
Private Sector	Fishermen's Associations of the Southern Caribbean (ASOPACS)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	80,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Talamanca Municipality	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	294,000.00
<b>Total Co-financing</b>				<b>921,622.00</b>

Please describe the investment mobilized portion of the co-financing

n/a

## ANNEX B: ENDORSEMENTS

GEF Agency(ies) Certification :

GEF Agency Type	Date	Project Contact Person	Phone	Email
	9/11/2025	Janie Rioux		janie.rioux@iucn.org
	9/11/2025	Nadia Mujica	50660221799	nadia.mujica@iucn.org

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

Please attach the Operational Focal Point endorsement letter(s) with this template.

Name of GEF OFP	Position	Ministry	Date (MM/DD/YYYY)
Enid Chaverri	Director of International Cooperation	Ministry of Environment	9/24/2024

## ANNEX C: PROJECT RESULTS FRAMEWORK

Please indicate the page number in the Project Document where the project results and M&E frameworks can be found. Please also copy and paste the Project Results Framework from the project document below.

**Contribution to the Sustainable Development Goal (s):** Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all, Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns, Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts, Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss, Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

**Project title:** Blue Corridor: connectivity for the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of marine ecosystems of global importance in the Southern Caribbean of Costa Rica.

Objective and Outcome Indicators (no more than a total of 20 indicators)	Data Source	Baseline	Mid-term Target	End of Project Target	Data Collection Methods	Risks/Assumptions
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------	----------	-----------------	-----------------------	-------------------------	-------------------

**Project Objective:** To restore and improve the connectivity of key ecosystems in Costa Rica's southern Caribbean by diversifying the livelihoods of local communities and strengthening the capacity of government entities, local community groups, afro-descendant and indigenous peoples to effectively and sustainably create and manage the Blue marine corridor

1-4 indicators maximum	<p><b>Mandatory GEF Core Indicators:</b></p> <p>Indicator 1:</p> <p>GEF CI 11. # direct project beneficiaries disaggregated by gender (individual people)<sup>(1)51</sup></p>	<p>Direct beneficiaries disaggregated by sex were sourced from national demographic data (National Institute of Statistics and Census, INEC).</p> <p>Based on INEC data of the people inhabiting the project area that would directly benefit from the project interventions.</p>	0	182 women; 262 men; 456 total	912 women; 1,312 men; 2,280 total	<p>Survey of beneficiaries based on participation in project activities</p>	<p><b>Risks:</b> Reduced effectiveness and sustainability due to unaddressed specific needs and contributions across beneficiary groups (women, afro-descendant, IPs).</p> <p><b>Assumptions:</b> The baseline data reflects well on the target estimates for both men and women.</p> <p>All genders and groups (afro-descendant, IPs) have equal opportunities and resources to participate and benefit, with equitable distribution of information and value of the project across these groups.</p>
	<p><b>Mandatory GEF Core Indicators:</b></p> <p>Indicator 2:</p> <p>GEF CI 2.2. Marine Protected Areas Under improved management effectiveness</p>	<p>Marine protected areas created or under improved management, covering the marine portions of Cahuita NP (23,290 ha) and Gandoca-Manzanillo</p>	0	0	28,650	<p>Government records on the creation of the marine corridor</p>	<p><b>Risks:</b> Resource shortfalls, community opposition, regulatory and policy shifts, and the impacts of climate change.</p> <p><b>Assumptions:</b> There are sufficient</p>

		National WR (5,360 ha).					resources (financial, human, and technical) for project implementation, support of local communities and key stakeholders, stable and supportive policy and legal frameworks, and the predictability of climate change impacts.
	METT score		Cahuita NP: 64 Gandoca-Manzanillo National WR: 69	Cahuita NP: 65 Gandoca-Manzanillo National WR: 70	Cahuita NP: 70 Gandoca-Manzanillo National WR: 76		
	<b>Mandatory GEF Core Indicators:</b>  Indicator 3:  GEF CI 4.1. Area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity (hectares, qualitative assessment, non-certified)	Based on areas implementing sustainable production practices promoted by the project and PES schemes in Indigenous territories  Area estimated considers the potential of establishing functional and viable project interventions with local communities, afro-descendant and indigenous peoples.	0	60	300	Survey of beneficiaries based on participation in project activities	<b>Risks:</b> Limited adoption of best practices due to economic, knowledge, or cultural barriers, fluctuations in policy and incentives resource shortfalls, community opposition, and the impacts of climate change.  <b>Assumptions:</b> There are sufficient resources (financial, human, and technical) for best management practices implementation, support of local communities and key stakeholders, stable and supportive policy and legal frameworks, and the predictability of climate change impacts.
	<b>Mandatory GEF Core Indicators:</b>  Indicator 4:  GEF CI 5. Area of marine habitat under improved practices (hectare)	From SINAC, 26,000 hectares of marine habitat under improved practices through the establishment and consolidation of the marine corridor.	0	0	26,000	Government records on the creation of the marine corridor	<b>Risks:</b> Resource shortfalls, community opposition, regulatory and policy shifts, and the impacts of climate change.  <b>Assumptions:</b> There are sufficient resources (financial, human, and technical) for project

							implementation, support of local communities and key stakeholders, stable and supportive policy and legal frameworks, and the predictability of climate change impacts.	
<b>Project component 1</b>	<i>Design and establishment of a participatory marine corridor</i>							
<b>Project Outcome 1.1. Designed and established the marine corridor with participatory governance</b>	<p><i>Indicator 5:</i></p> <p><i>Number of participatory governance instruments developed.</i></p> <p><i>(At least 50% of total participants providing inputs and reviewing the policies are women, afro-descendant and indigenous peoples)</i></p>	<p><i>Project progress reports, Bi-monthly Gender Action Plan reports</i></p>	0	1	2	<p><i>Meeting reports and related attendance list, workshop reports, Gender Action Plan bi-monthly evaluations</i></p>	<p><i>Risks: The Important Sites for Conservation and Management (ISC) governance system does not include all interested parties, or there is no active participation of some of those actors.</i></p> <p><i>Assumptions: The main institutions and stakeholders, namely SINAC, local governments, private sector, local communities, afro-descendant and indigenous peoples, participate actively in the development of the Management Plan and coordination mechanism.</i></p>	
	<p><i>Indicator 6</i></p> <p><i>Percentage of people involved in the Governance of the marine corridor that report improved management capacities</i></p> <p><i>(At least 50% of total respondents are women)</i></p>	<p><i>Project progress reports, Bi-monthly Gender Action Plan reports</i></p>	0	50%	70%	<p><i>Workshop surveys as part of meeting reports, workshop reports, Gender Action Plan bi-monthly evaluations</i></p>	<p><i>Risks: The governance structure does not include all interested parties, or there is no active participation of some of those actors.</i></p> <p><i>Assumptions: The main institutions and stakeholders, namely SINAC, local governments, private sector, local communities, afro-descendant and indigenous peoples, participate actively in the development</i></p>	

							of the Management Plan.
<b>Outputs to achieve Outcome 1.1</b>	<p>1.1.1. Technical and administrative design established, including structure and procedures for participatory governance</p> <p>1.1.2. Strengthened management capacities of the governance structures of the marine corridor</p> <p>1.1.3. Management Plan developed participatively, validated, and approved</p> <p>1.1.4. Participatory coordination mechanism for integrated management between the Marine Corridor and the Talamanca-Caribbean terrestrial biological corridor defined and implemented</p>						
<b>Project component 2</b>	<b>Sustainable management for the restoration and connectivity of the marine corridor by local communities, afro-descendant and indigenous peoples</b>						
<b>Outcome 2.1. Protected marine and coastal biodiversity through sustainable productive alternatives and PES schemes</b>	Indicator 7:  Number of financial mechanisms developed.	Project progress reports	0	1	2	Meeting reports and related attendance list, workshop reports	<p><u>Risks:</u> Implementation of financial mechanisms may face some resistance to be implemented by local stakeholders.</p> <p><u>Assumptions:</u> The main stakeholders, namely SINAC, local governments, private sector, local communities, afro-descendant and indigenous peoples, participate actively in the development of the financial mechanisms.</p>
	Indicator 8:  Number of households participating in marine PES Program.  (at least 50% of beneficiaries are women).	Project reports, Mid-term report, Final evaluation report	0	6  (50% women; 50% men)	30  (50% women; 50% men)	Surveys of participating beneficiary households.	<p><u>Risks:</u> Beneficiaries may not have proper incentives to participate in marine PES Program.</p> <p><u>Assumptions:</u> Beneficiaries are able to protect areas given local incentives and government recognition for their conservation activities</p>
	Indicator 9:  Live coral reef coverage (percentage change of total area from baseline)	The mid-term evaluation report and Final Evaluation Report	0	10%	50%	SINAC and/or executing partner will survey areas where coral reef restoration takes place	<u>Risks:</u> Resource shortfalls, community opposition, regulatory and policy shifts, and the impacts of climate change.

							<i>Assumptions:</i> There are sufficient resources (financial, human, and technical) for project implementation, support of local communities and key stakeholders, stable and supportive policy and legal frameworks, and the predictability of climate change impacts.
	Indicator 10:  Number of beneficiaries participating in sustainable small-scale tourism and fishing projects in target areas  (at least 50% of beneficiaries are women).	Project reports of productive and restoration projects	0	60  (30 women; 30 men)	300  (150 women; 150 men)	Surveys of participating beneficiary households.	<i>Risks:</i> Beneficiaries may not have proper incentives to adopt sustainable practices.  <i>Assumptions:</i> Beneficiaries are able to protect areas given local incentives and government recognition for their restoration activities
	Indicator 11:  Reduction of lionfish density	Project reports of productive and restoration projects	0	10%	50%		<i>Risks:</i> Density of lionfish may not reduce due to external factors out of the control of fisherfolks.  <i>Assumptions:</i> Beneficiaries are able to reduce lionfish density.
<b>Outputs to achieve Outcome 2.1</b>	<p>2.1.1. Public-private financial mechanisms for the management of the marine corridor designed and validated</p> <p>2.1.2. Pilot of marine PES program for prioritized stakeholders and activities in the Marine Corridor designed</p> <p>2.1.3. Restoration actions implemented in prioritized sites to improve the mechanical and ecological connectivity in the Marine Corridor</p> <p>2.1.4. Sustainable small-scale productive and restoration projects implemented on tourism, artisanal and commercial fishing</p>						
<b>Outcome 2.2. Strengthened local economy through sustainable productive alternatives in land ecosystems</b>	Indicator 12:  Number of beneficiaries participating in sustainable small-scale productive,	Project reports of productive and restoration projects	0	20  (50% women; 50% men)	100  (50% women; 50% men)	Surveys of participating beneficiary households.	<i>Risks:</i> Beneficiaries may not have proper incentives to adopt sustainable practices.

	restoration in land ecosystems directly related to the marine corridor  (at least 50% of beneficiaries are women).						<u>Assumptions:</u> Beneficiaries are able to protect areas given local incentives and government recognition for their restoration activities
	Indicator 13:  Number of households participating in the PES Program.  (at least 50% of beneficiaries are women).	Project reports, Mid-term report, Final evaluation report	0	4  (50% women; 50% men)	20  (50% women; 50% men)	Surveys of participating beneficiary households.	<u>Risks:</u> Beneficiaries may not have proper incentives to participate in PES Program.  <u>Assumptions:</u> Beneficiaries are able to protect areas given local incentives and government recognition for their conservation activities
	Indicator 14:  Number of beach cleaning and recycling events for improved waste management in prioritized sites	Reports on waste management activities, project reports	0	12	48	Household surveys to elicit participation in project programs to improve waste management.	<u>Risks:</u> Lack of participation from local communities in recycling events. Households may not adopt waste management practices, or these are abandoned once project ends.  <u>Assumptions:</u> Effective communication with local communities to engage and integrate good practices for waste management into their way of life.
<b>Outputs to achieve Outcome 2.2</b>	<p>2.2.1. Sustainable small-scale productive and restoration projects in land ecosystems directly related to the marine corridor implemented</p> <p>2.2.2. PES in the watersheds that flow into the marine corridor implemented</p> <p>2.2.3. Strengthened institutional capacities in waste and wastewater management, in watersheds that flow into the Marine Corridor</p>						
<b>Project component 3</b>	<b>Monitoring, Evaluation, and Knowledge Management for the conservation and sustainability of the Marine Corridor</b>						
<b>Outcome 3.1. Coordinated and regulated participatory monitoring, control</b>	Indicator 15:  Number of M&E tools designed,	Project reports, Mid-term report, Final evaluation report	0	1  (1 tool)	2  (2 tools)	Project reports that registers the development and	<u>Risks:</u> The participatory M&E tools do not have enough community engagement and participation. Lack

and surveillance system	validated and implemented					validation of each tool	of technical capacities of local communities makes it difficult to implement the M&E protocols.  <i>Assumptions:</i> The project can engage effectively local communities to participate in the M&E
	Indicator 16:  Number of licenses and permits for fishing and maritime transportation in the marine corridor registered.	Records from INCOPECSA	0	8	40	Records from INCOPECSA	<i>Risks:</i> Resource shortfalls, community lack of support, regulatory and policy shifts  <i>Assumptions:</i> There is cooperations by fishing and maritime transportation vessels to comply with licensing and permit process
	Indicator 17:  Number of joint patrols conducted	Project reports, Mid-term report, Final evaluation report	0	2	8	Government reports on patrolling	<i>Risks:</i> Resource shortfalls, community lack of support, regulatory and policy shifts  <i>Assumptions:</i> There is coordination between government entities and local authorities to conduct joint patrols
<b>Outputs to achieve Outcome 3.1</b>	<p>3.1.1. Participatory Monitoring system for the management of the biological corridor designed and validated</p> <p>3.1.2. Monitoring management plan of the Marine Corridor implemented</p> <p>3.1.3. Regulated and coordinated monitoring of fishing activity and maritime transport</p> <p>3.1.4. Coordinated and effective control and surveillance for protection and conservation</p>						

<b>Outcome 3.2. Improved knowledge sharing and dissemination of lessons learned</b>	Indicator 18:  Number of knowledge management products	Project reports, Mid-term report, Final evaluation report	0	4	10	Project reports that registers the development and validation of knowledge products	<i>Risks:</i> The collection and dissemination of traditional knowledge and local practices encounter limited participation.  <i>Assumptions:</i> The project can engage effectively local communities to participate in the development of knowledge products that document traditional knowledge and local practices
<b>Outputs to achieve Outcome 3.2</b>	3.2.1. Traditional knowledge and local practices collected, documented, and disseminated						

3.2.2. Mainstreaming of gender equality and inclusion, and social, and environmental safeguards strategies developed and implemented.

<sup>[1]</sup> This indicator captures the number of individual people who receive targeted support or assistance from a given GEF-financed project or program and/or who use the specific resources that the project maintains or enhances. Direct beneficiaries are all individuals receiving either: (a) Targeted support. This includes individuals whom can be identified as receiving direct support or assistance, can be counted individually and are aware they are receiving support in some sort and/or use the specific resources. This implies a high degree of attribution to the project; or (b) High intensity of support. This means receiving a high level of support/effort provided per person, assessed on a continuum with broad levels from Low to Medium and High, where only high intensity of support qualifies as direct beneficiary as per Table 1 (page 26) of the GEF's [Guidelines on the Implementation of the GEF-8 Results Measurement Framework](#)

## ANNEX D: STATUS OF UTILIZATION OF PROJECT PREPARATION GRANT (PPG)

Provide detailed funding amount of the PPG activities financing status in the table below:

Project Preparation Activities Implemented	GETF/LDCF/SCCF Amount (\$)		
	Budgeted Amount	Amount Spent To date	Amount Committed
Consultant (AAE company to develop the CEO Endorsement, technical consultants, safeguards consultants, pen holder, safeguards development tools, local consultations)	118,000.00	115,751.20	2,248.80
Travel (participant transfers to workshops. National authorities to Cahuita, both workshops were in the project landscape)	3,000.00	524.45	2,475.55
Workshops (inception workshop, final workshop, fishermen and municipal council presential meetings) Committed funds: Follow up stakeholder consultation workshop to explain final version of the project to the local communities and national and local (2) Committed funds: Field visit with project executing partners to key stakeholders in the field to advance in project inception (1)	29,000.00	9,611.81	19,388.19
<b>Total</b>	<b>150,000.00</b>	<b>125,887.46</b>	<b>24,112.54</b>

## ANNEX E: PROJECT MAP AND COORDINATES

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

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Cahuita, Talamanca	9.73	-82.83	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Cahuita, Talamanca	9.88	-82.70	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Sixaola, Talamanca	9.66	-82.48	

Location Description:

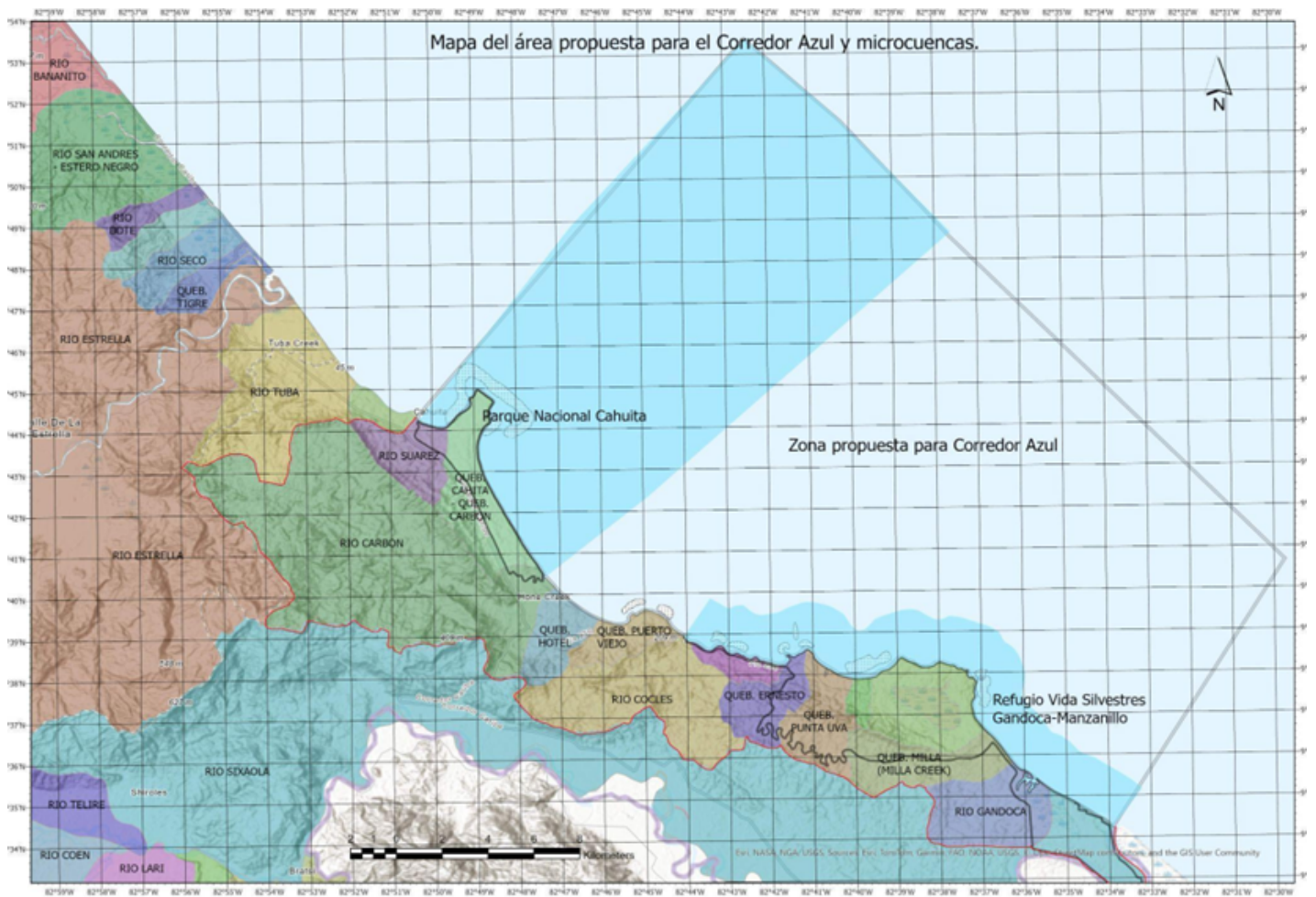
Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Sixaola, Talamanca	9.57	-82.48	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

**Please provide any further geo-referenced information and map where project interventions are taking place as appropriate.**



**ANNEX F: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS DOCUMENTS INCLUDING RATING**

Attach agency safeguard datasheet/assessment report(s), including ratings of risk types and overall project/program risk classification as well as any management plans or measures to address identified risks and impacts (as applicable).

Title

- 2. Stakeholder's engagement framework
- 7 ESMF Blue corridor
- Afro descendent engagement plan
- ENG ESMF Blue corridor
- ENG Stakeholder engagement plan
- 5. gender action plan final
- 7. ESMF- blue corridor
- 6. Indigenous and afro descendant framework

4. Gender analysis  
3. Grievance Mechanism  
ESMS Screening 10-9-25

**ANNEX G: BUDGET TABLE**

Please upload the budget table here.

**Appendix A: Indicative Project Budget Template**

Expenditure Category	Detailed Description	Component (US\$eq.)							Total (USD)	Responsible Entity <small>ftn1</small>	
		Component 1	Component 2		Component 3		Sub-Total	M&E			PMC
		Outcome 1.1	Outcome 2.1	Outcome 2.2	Outcome 3.1	Outcome 3.2					
Works	Internal improvements for existing shelter to receive researchers, volunteers, and the community in the Cahuita National	\$ 20,000					\$ 20,000			\$ 20,000	OTS
	Installation of five (5) artificial reefs by local fisherfolks (Y2-Y4) <b>TOTAL: \$100,000</b>	\$ 100,000					\$ 100,000			\$ 100,000	OTS
Goods	Implements/tools for building the bases used in coral planting Y2 <b>TOTAL: \$20,000</b>	\$ 20,000					\$ 20,000			\$ 20,000	OTS
	Materials for implementation of seagrass restoration project <b>TOTAL: \$10,000</b>	\$ 10,000					\$ 10,000			\$ 10,000	OTS
	Office equipment <b>TOTAL: \$10,000</b>	\$ 10,000					\$ 10,000			\$ 10,000	OTS
	Cold storage, urns, freezers, scales, ice machine, and coolers for product storage and marketing for processing facility in	\$ 28,000					\$ 28,000			\$ 28,000	OTS
	Three (3) floating docks (\$35,000 each) (Cahuita, Manzanillo, Gandoca), with its respective anchors and mobile system	\$ 105,000					\$ 105,000			\$ 105,000	OTS
	Fishing traps for control of lionfish (280 units x \$250/each) Y1 <b>TOTAL: \$70,000;</b>	\$ 70,000					\$ 70,000			\$ 70,000	OTS
	Logistical costs, including fuel (\$20,000/year) <b>TOTAL: \$80,000</b>	\$ 80,000					\$ 80,000			\$ 80,000	OTS
	Two laptops (\$1,000/each), one desktop computer (\$800) and one printer (\$1,000) with ink supply <b>TOTAL: \$3,800</b>	\$ 3,800					\$ 3,800			\$ 3,800	OTS
	3,000 Orange bags for waste collection & 8 Plastic containers with safety lids (Activity 2.2.3.1) <b>TOTAL: \$18,238</b>			\$ 18,238			\$ 18,238			\$ 18,238	OTS
	Roof for the Gumbé boat (\$1,800); Tow barge to move the boat (\$6,000); Garage for the boat (\$6,000); Large compressor				\$ 65,400		\$ 65,400			\$ 65,400	OTS
	Monitoring equipment (2 drones x \$4,000/each) for local fisherfolks for participatory monitoring <b>TOTAL: \$8,000</b>				\$ 8,000		\$ 8,000			\$ 8,000	OTS
	A trailer for Jet Sky (\$2,000); Two-person kayaks for surveillance in rivers and estuaries (\$4,800); A trailer for the boat				\$ 16,000		\$ 16,000			\$ 16,000	OTS
	Materials to delimit the marine area by creating geospatial polygons, marking, placing bollards, and other items in the				\$ 82,000		\$ 82,000			\$ 82,000	OTS
	Two (2) radio communication center with a marine frequency for each conservation area (\$2,000/each); A marine GPS				\$ 26,000		\$ 26,000			\$ 26,000	OTS
	Communication medium for the GRM (telephone), purchased in 2026 and expenses during the 4 years, related to MM22.2					\$ 680	\$ 680			\$ 680	OTS
4 laptops (\$1000 each) for PMU, project camera (\$500) for communications and printer with supplies (\$1000) <b>TOTAL:</b>						\$ -		\$ 5,500.00	\$ 5,500	OTS	
Two (2) Jet Skies for rapid surveillance in each protected area (\$16,000/each) (\$32,000); An Eduardoño-type fiberglass boat					\$ 152,000	\$ 152,000			\$ 152,000	OTS	
One closed box truck (Activity 2.2.3.1) <b>TOTAL: \$52,000</b>			\$ 52,000			\$ 52,000			\$ 52,000	OTS	
Grant funding (up to \$5,000 per recipient x 30 recipients) to implement marine PES with local communities <b>TOTAL:</b>	\$ 150,000					\$ 150,000			\$ 150,000	OTS	
Grant funding for livelihood activities managed by the local fishing associations <b>TOTAL: \$84,600</b>	\$ 84,600					\$ 84,600			\$ 84,600	OTS	
Grant funding for Sustainable small-scale productive and restoration projects (25 households x \$2000/each) <b>TOTAL:</b>			\$ 50,000			\$ 50,000			\$ 50,000	OTS	
Grant funding for livelihood activities managed by the local people in the watersheds (20 households x \$4,000/HH)			\$ 80,000			\$ 80,000			\$ 80,000	OTS	
Revolving funds/						\$ -			\$ -	OTS	
Sub-contract to						\$ -			\$ -	OTS	
Contractual						\$ -			\$ -	OTS	
Contractual Services – Company	Development of Marine Corridor Management Plan, including a Long-Term Fisheries Management Plan for the Southern	\$ 40,000					\$ 40,000			\$ 40,000	OTS
	Contracting of media spots for dissemination of Management Plan <b>TOTAL: \$9,264</b>	\$ 9,264					\$ 9,264			\$ 9,264	OTS
	Contract for the design of the elevated internal plastic-wood trail that will cross the park, continuing the current one			\$ 200,000			\$ 200,000			\$ 200,000	OTS
	Local firm for the implementation of the Cahuita NP and Gandoca-Manzanillo NWR Sustainable Tourism Plans <b>TOTAL:</b>			\$ 100,000			\$ 100,000			\$ 100,000	OTS
	Studies on marine currents and bathymetry in Manzanillo Y1 <b>TOTAL: \$15,000;</b>			\$ 15,000			\$ 15,000			\$ 15,000	OTS
	Design and construction of facility for fisherfolks in Cahuita Y2 <b>TOTAL: \$100,000</b>			\$ 100,000			\$ 100,000			\$ 100,000	OTS
	Marine Custodian Training (Diving) (80 people at \$500/person) <b>TOTAL \$40,000</b>				\$ 40,000		\$ 40,000			\$ 40,000	OTS
	Consulting firm to develop a digital tool (App/Web Platform) for self-management for fisherfolks <b>TOTAL: \$20,000</b>				\$ 20,000		\$ 20,000			\$ 20,000	OTS
	Local firm for the implementation of ecological monitoring protocols in the marine area, applicable to the entire Blue				\$ 100,000		\$ 100,000			\$ 100,000	OTS
	Design, periodic reviews and dissemination of material to publicize the GRM: @500 per year (Y1-Y4), related to MM22.2.					\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000			\$ 2,000	OTS
International Consultants	International consultant (40 days x \$500, lump sum) to develop marine PES; <b>TOTAL: \$24,000</b>	\$ 24,000					\$ 24,000			\$ 24,000	OTS
Two (2) international consultants for Independent Mid-term Review (MTR) and Independent Terminal Evaluation (TE)						\$ -	\$ 40,000		\$ 40,000	OTS	
Local consultant (Anthropologist) for mapping of stakeholders and census of fisherfolks and maritime transportation (40	\$ 16,000					\$ 16,000			\$ 16,000	OTS	
Local consultant (geographer) to support mapping of stakeholders (20 days x \$500/day) <b>TOTAL: \$10,000</b>	\$ 10,000					\$ 10,000			\$ 10,000	OTS	
Local communications consultant to develop and implement community communication strategy (40 days x \$500/day)	\$ 20,000					\$ 20,000			\$ 20,000	OTS	
Local consultant for capacity assessment of local institutions for the design of training processes (Activity 1.1.2.1)	\$ 25,000					\$ 25,000			\$ 25,000	OTS	
Local consultant for assessment and definition of actions to improve management effectiveness in the marine areas of	\$ 12,500					\$ 12,500			\$ 12,500	OTS	
Local consultant to identify designing needs and design innovative financial local mechanisms (40 days x \$500) <b>TOTAL:</b>	\$ 20,000					\$ 20,000			\$ 20,000	OTS	
Coordinator for fisherfolks activities jointly selected (\$2,000/month) for 42 months <b>TOTAL: \$84,000</b>	\$ 84,000					\$ 84,000			\$ 84,000	OTS	
One (1) field person for monitoring of fisherfolks activities and develop participatory monitoring system with M&E Officer	\$ 42,000					\$ 42,000			\$ 42,000	OTS	
Local consultant for video production (20 days x \$250) Y3; <b>TOTAL: \$5,000</b>	\$ 5,000					\$ 5,000			\$ 5,000	OTS	
Promoters (6, part-time) (\$1,500/each) Y2; <b>TOTAL: \$9,000</b>	\$ 9,000					\$ 9,000			\$ 9,000	OTS	
Local consultant (GIS Specialist) (16 days x \$250); <b>TOTAL: \$4,000</b>	\$ 4,000					\$ 4,000			\$ 4,000	OTS	
Local consultant (Marketing Specialist) (16 days x \$250); <b>TOTAL: \$4,000</b>	\$ 4,000					\$ 4,000			\$ 4,000	OTS	
Local consultant do develop one (1) "Community Protocol for the Cultivation and Management of Artificial Reefs." (20 days	\$ 10,000					\$ 10,000			\$ 10,000	OTS	
Local consultant to develop one (1) proposed update to the "National Lionfish Management Protocol." (15 days x \$500)	\$ 7,500					\$ 7,500			\$ 7,500	OTS	
Local consultant (communications) for project for the recognition of cultural promoters of the southern Caribbean (40 days				\$ 10,000		\$ 10,000			\$ 10,000	OTS	
Develop, design of knowledge management products, including publications, low cost videos and infographs, etc. (80 days				\$ 20,000		\$ 20,000			\$ 20,000	OTS	
Translation of Knowledge products into local language (\$5,000) <b>TOTAL: \$5,000</b>				\$ 5,000		\$ 5,000			\$ 5,000	OTS	
Individual local consultancy @\$300 per day (15 days), GAP Act. 2.1.1.1 (2) = One (1) mapping and recommendations report				\$ 4,500		\$ 4,500			\$ 4,500	OTS	
Individual local consultancy @\$300 per day (15 days), GAP Act. 2.2.3.3 (1) = One (1) gender rapid assessment report of				\$ 4,500		\$ 4,500			\$ 4,500	OTS	
Individual local consultancy @\$300 per day (15 days), GAP Act. 3.1.3.1 (1) and GAP Act. 3.1.3.2 (1) = One (1) Gender and				\$ 4,500		\$ 4,500			\$ 4,500	OTS	
Individual consultant @300 per day (30 days), GAP Act. 2.2.2.3 (1) = One (1) gender assessment on land tenure in project				\$ 9,000		\$ 9,000			\$ 9,000	OTS	

**Appendix A: Indicative Project Budget Template**

Expenditure Category	Detailed Description	Component (US\$eq.)					Sub-Total	M&E	PMC	Total (USD)	Responsible Entity
		Component 1 Outcome 1.1	Component 2 Outcome 2.1	Component 2 Outcome 2.2	Component 3 Outcome 3.1	Component 3 Outcome 3.2					
<b>Professional</b>	Audit costs (professional services) @ \$2,000 per year for 4 years. <b>TOTAL: \$8,000</b>							\$8,000.00	\$ 8,000	OTS	
	Project Technical Specialist (PTS) (\$62,118 / year for 4 years) <b>TOTAL: \$248,472</b>	\$ 124,236	\$ 124,236			\$ 248,472			\$ 248,472	OTS	
<b>Salary and benefits / Staff costs</b>	Administrative and Financial Assistant for 4 years <b>TOTAL: \$151,032</b>							\$ 151,032	\$ 151,032	OTS	
	Project Safeguards and Gender Specialist for 4 years <b>TOTAL: \$208,800</b>					\$ 208,800			\$ 208,800	OTS	
	M&E specialist for 4 years <b>TOTAL: \$208,800</b>				\$ 82,010	\$ 82,010	\$ 126,790		\$ 208,800	OTS	
	Technical Marine-Coastal Specialist for 4 years <b>TOTAL: \$210,238</b>		\$ 210,238			\$ 210,238			\$ 210,238	OTS	
	Eight (8) consulting workshops in the area of the project in main areas (Cahuita, Puerto Viejo, Manzanillo, Gandoca and	\$ 40,000				\$ 40,000			\$ 40,000	OTS	
	Development of six (6) training workshops (\$2,500/workshop) including courses for park rangers in the marine area, boat	\$ 15,000				\$ 15,000			\$ 15,000	OTS	
	Consultations workshops with SINAC (1x\$1000) <b>TOTAL: \$2000</b>	\$ 2,000				\$ 2,000			\$ 2,000	OTS	
	10 consultations workshops (\$3,000/workshop) for development and validation of Marine Corridor Management Plan	\$ 30,000				\$ 30,000			\$ 30,000	OTS	
	Consultation and validation workshop for the design of an inter-sectoral coordination mechanism <b>TOTAL: \$10,000</b>	\$ 10,000				\$ 10,000			\$ 10,000	OTS	
	Two consultation and validation workshops (2 x \$2,500) for the design and development of the financial mechanisms		\$ 5,000			\$ 5,000			\$ 5,000	OTS	
	Two consultation and validation workshops (2 x \$2,500) for the design and development of the marine PES, and		\$ 10,000			\$ 10,000			\$ 10,000	OTS	
	Sustainability Workshops (20 x \$2500) <b>TOTAL: \$50,000</b>		\$ 50,000			\$ 50,000			\$ 50,000	OTS	
	Two consultation and validation workshops (2 x \$2,500) for the design and development of agroforestry interventions		\$ 5,000			\$ 5,000			\$ 5,000	OTS	
	Two consultation and validation workshops (2 x \$2,500) for the design and development of PES interventions <b>TOTAL:</b>		\$ 5,000			\$ 5,000			\$ 5,000	OTS	
<b>Trainings, Workshops, Meetings</b>	Consultation and validation workshop (\$2,500/each) of the monitoring system <b>TOTAL: \$5,000</b>				\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000			\$ 5,000	OTS	
	Four training workshops (4 x \$2,500) for local communities of participatory monitoring <b>TOTAL: \$10,000</b>				\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000			\$ 10,000	OTS	
	Four (4) refresher workshops (\$100 each) for tour operators on marine area use protocols <b>TOTAL: \$4,000</b>				\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000			\$ 4,000	OTS	
	1 workshop @ \$1,500, GAP Act. 1.1.2.2 = One (1) training workshop for SINAC's Conservation Area la Amistad Caribe staff				\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500			\$ 1,500	OTS	
	1 technical meeting @ \$1,000, GAP Act. 1.1.2.2 (6) = One (1) dissemination session held to present SINAC's Gender Policy				\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000			\$ 1,000	OTS	
	1 technical meeting exchange @ \$2,000, GAP Act. 2.2.2.2 (1) = Technical exchange with FONAFIFO and partners of the				\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000			\$ 2,000	OTS	
	1 workshop @ \$2,000, GAP Act. 3.1.1.3 (2) = training workshop for project staff and local institutional stakeholders on				\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000			\$ 2,000	OTS	
	1 workshop @ \$2,000, GAP Act. 3.1.4.4 (2) = capacity building workshop targeting women park rangers and patrols <b>TOTAL:</b>				\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000			\$ 2,000	OTS	
	1 knowledge exchange workshop @ \$2,000 per year, GAP Act. 3.2.1.3 (2) = specific gender and social inclusion knowledge				\$ 8,000	\$ 8,000			\$ 8,000	OTS	
	Co-development of FPIC protocol and Afro-descendants process, documentation and dissemination, administrative and				\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000			\$ 15,000	OTS	
	1 workshop to publicize the GRM: @1000, 2026, related to MM22.2. (Activity 3.2.2.1) <b>TOTAL: \$1,000</b>				\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000			\$ 1,000	OTS	
	1 workshop per year @ \$1,000 each: Capacity building workshops targeting the PMU staff on GESI and environmental and				\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000			\$ 4,000	OTS	
	Inception Workshop and Report (M&E). <b>TOTAL: \$9,000</b>						\$ 3,000		\$ 3,000	OTS	
<b>Travel</b>	Travel (Learning Exchange Fund) (travel expenses for 6 people @ \$700/each. (transportation) + 5 days per diem @ \$200 (per year) for 2 years	\$ 20,400				\$ 20,400			\$ 20,400	OTS	
<b>Office Supplies</b>	Office supplies for fisherfolks <b>TOTAL: \$2,000</b>		\$ 2,000			\$ 2,000			\$ 2,000	OTS	
	Office supplies for PMU @ \$5,258 for 4 years <b>TOTAL: \$5,258</b>						\$ 5,258		\$ 5,258	OTS	
<b>Audio Visual &amp;</b>	Printing costs for dissemination of Management Plan (Output 1.1.3) <b>TOTAL: \$1,000</b>	\$ 1,000				\$ 1,000			\$ 1,000	OTS	
	Printing costs of materials for fisherfolks initiatives <b>TOTAL: \$2,500</b>		\$ 2,500			\$ 2,500			\$ 2,500	OTS	
	Printing costs of knowledge management materials for local distribution <b>TOTAL: \$14,614</b>				\$ 14,614	\$ 14,614			\$ 14,614	OTS	
<b>Grand Total</b>		\$ 355,000	\$ 1,730,274	\$ 210,238	\$ 458,410	\$ 472,094	\$ 3,226,016	\$ 169,790	\$ 3,565,596		

Please explain any aspects of the budget as needed here

please see budget in excel version in the roadmap and documents for this project.

**ANNEX H: BLENDED-FINANCE RELEVANT ANNEXES**

Please use the most up to date templates per the most recent call for proposals.

**ANNEX H.1: Termsheet**

Instructions. This termsheet to be submitted with the PIF/PFD should include sufficient details to allow a financial expert to understand and judge the financial viability of the proposed investments. Indicative terms and conditions should be used when specific details are not yet available. An equivalent termsheet used for internal Agency purposes is acceptable but must include sections on Currency Risk, Co-financing Ratio and Financial Additionality.

**ANNEX H.2: Agency capacity to implement blended finance projects**

Instructions. Any financial returns, gains, interest or other earnings and remaining principal will be transferred to the GEF Trust Fund as noted in the Guidelines on the Project and Program Cycle Policy. and the GEF Non-Grant Instrument Policy.