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# Protecting priority coastal and marine ecosystems to conserve globally significant Endangered, Threatened, and Protected marine wildlife in southern Mindanao, Philippines

Review PIF and Make a recommendation

## Basic project information

**GEF ID**

10536

**Countries**

Philippines

**Project Name**

Protecting priority coastal and marine ecosystems to conserve globally significant Endangered, Threatened, and Protected marine wildlife in southern Mindanao, Philippines

**Agencies**

UNDP

**Date received by PM**

3/22/2020

**Review completed by PM**

4/14/2020

**Program Manager**

Jurgis Sapjanskas

**Focal Area**

Biodiversity

**Project Type**

FSP

## PIF

### Part I – Project Information

#### Focal area elements

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

## **Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

JS 3/30/2020

Thank you for the submission of this project focused on threatened marine wildlife in the Philippines. The project is eligible and well-aligned with the BD-2-7 entry point, as proposed in the PIF.

## **Agency Response**

**Indicative project/program description summary**

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

## **Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

JS 4/14/2020

Many thanks for the thorough revisions and in-depth responses throughout the PIF and the review sheet.

Yes, cleared.

JS 3/30/2020

We appreciate that the PIF contains many precise and relevant references. However, the project is relatively small in scale and impact for the funding requested. Please consider the options provided below to clarify and possibly expand the anticipated scale of impact.

1- The project focuses on marine wildlife known to travel long distance, including some highly migratory species, which likely require coordinated management strategy at very large spatial scales to make a difference. However, the approach is relatively small in scale (3 adjacent bays) with little plans to scale-up or coordinate at larger scale. Please:

- o clarify how the project would be able to have impact at a scale that is sufficient enough for the targeted species (e.g. with academic references, or lessons learnt from other project)? Please notably clarify why at least the existing 215,950 ha MPA of nearby Sarangani Bay (WDPA ID 305927), which seems also an important site for dugongs and cetaceans according to the maps provided, is not part of project and anticipated Marine wildlife PA network ?

- o throughout the PIF, including in table B, be clearer on the project contributions at national scale. This is especially true for components 1 and 3.

- o consider strengthening the proposal on coordination at larger scale and up-scaling (e.g. national level activities to have a stronger contribution on marine wildlife management in all existing MPAs that may be relevant to marine wildlife). Please also refer to and consider making links with the processes at the scale of the Sulu-Celebes LME, most notably the LME-wide Strategic Action Program (SAP and list of past/on going projects: <https://www.iwlearn.net/iw-projects/basins/lmes/sulu-celebes-sea>).

2- Please clarify the project's theory of change, describing how and why the projected changes are expected to happen in the project's context. Please notably clarify:

- o how the projects intends to curb poaching (second threat reported in the PIF) and illegal trade which are mentioned several times in PIF, but does not appear in any output / outcome.

- o how the livelihood interventions (output 2.2.2) will have effects on biodiversity of global relevance, and how the outputs of component 3, which are mainly awareness raising, would lead to "behavior change" as per outcome 3.1.

- o the project contribution on tourism (table 3 on risks is the only place where support to establishing ecotourism development plans in mentioned)

3- Please revise output and indicator formulations. Many outputs are indeed formulated as outcomes (most notably 1.1.1, 1.2.2, 2.2.2, 2.2.3, 2.3.1). Some proposed indicators do not measure their corresponding outcomes and are sometimes formulated as outcomes and not as indicators (most notably 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2). Please notably strengthen indicators measuring biodiversity results. The outputs should be formulated to be very concrete, if possible quantified (X plans, Y training), to give an idea of the value for money.

4- Specific comments:

- Component 1:

- o Output 1.1.1 on capacity: please reformulate so that the difference with 1.2.1 on capacity building is clear. Please confirm that capacity building will be at national scale.

- o Output 1.1.2: justify the added value of this registry relative to the WDPA. Please confirm in the PIF that all KBAs and MPAs (including LCA) created in the project will be reflected in the respective world KBA and WDPA databases. Please confirm the registry will be of a national scale and explain how funding/maintenance will be sustained beyond the project. Please clarify why there are no targets (X ha) for the work related to the classification of MCAs as Environmentally Critical Areas, which we understand will go beyond the scope of the 3 targeted bays.

- o Output 1.1.3: Please clarify difference with 2.2.2

- o Output 1.1.4: please provide the references for the “already existing data and information” and for PCRA

- o Output 1.2.1: Please reformulate to show that it includes training and not just development of standards. Confirm that capacity building will be at national scale and explain how trainings will be institutionalized.

- Component 2:

Please :

- o Mark as INV and not TA

- o confirm in the PIF that all KBAs designated under the project will follow the global standard for KBAs and be referenced in the global database of KBA.

- o also confirm in the PIF that all LCAs and MPAs that will benefit from project interventions will be referenced in WDPA and will be assessed with the METT.

- o clarify the added-value of designating MPAs within an LCAs, in terms of anticipated biodiversity outcomes.

- o clarify the added-value of putting in place a network (MWPAN) at this relatively small scale.

- o Clarify if the project intends to explore PES? PES appear in the private sector engagement section of the PIF but do not seem to be part of the project.

Component 3:

- o Output 3.2.1: please clarify the sustainability/maintenance of the knowledge management platform beyond the project’s lifetime

- o Output 3.2.2: Depending on the size of what is announced as a congress, an annual congress at the national level would be expensive and does not seem necessary given the scale of the project. Please reconsider or thoroughly justify.

## Agency Response

UNDP 04/10/2020

### 1.1

Thank you for this comment, it is correct that highly migratory species require coordinated management strategies at large spatial scales, which is why such regional strategies exist through various multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). However, these agreements only form umbrella frameworks. To realize them means implementing them in the Signatory States, and thus on-the-ground conservation and management actions within national jurisdictions of range and coastal states are essential to safeguard the populations. The protection of these species and their priority habitats can be affected via different tools, such as MPA and MPA network establishment and strengthening. This was confirmed by Lascelles et al. (2014): “Even though they [migratory marine species] are wide-ranging, long-term studies reveal considerable site fidelity and well-defined habitats for many species and areas. These sites are prime candidates for enhanced management such as via Marine Protect Area (MPA) designations”.<sup>[1]</sup> In addition, long-term studies reveal that the many migratory marine species fill their own ecological niches and show considerable site fidelity in well-defined habitats and that populations often overlap in distribution and habitat use (see Lascelles et al., 2012<sup>[2]</sup>; Lascelles et al., 2014<sup>[3]</sup>). Several species, such as marine turtles and dugongs have exhibited high site fidelity in the selected project sites, as these are important developmental and foraging habitats. This has been confirmed by previous studies and field reports, which have shown that the project sites have some of the most significant ETP MW populations and seagrass habitats in the country. Field research from DENR PENRO Region XI (2016) showcases the presence of both dugongs, marine turtles in extensive seagrass areas in Mayo Bay and Pujada Bay. Moreover, the maps drafted by Ong et al. (2002) on the presence of ETP MW species and their habitats also identify Malita as important habitat for dugongs, cetaceans, and whalesharks (Map 5 and Map 6 in the PIF). In addition, a local NGO reported that in at least one site (in Dahican Beach, Mati), three marine turtle species nest on a 1km beach. The local management and protection of these species during important parts of their life cycles is crucial for their conservation, such as halting beach degradation and light pollution on marine turtle nesting beaches.

Additional text explaining this has been added to the Project Sites section (See page number 7).

### 1.2

Even though it was determined that Sarangani Bay, including Balut island, is indeed an important site, especially because ETP MW species are present and wildlife trafficking is taking place via Balut island, this site was not included in the project for the following reasons:

- a) Significant logistical requirements and expenses due to long and difficult overland and sea travel from Davao;
- b) Challenging weather conditions (monsoon impacts) pose increased risk and exposure to natural disasters, rendering project implementation difficult within the proposed budget and/or timeline; as experience has shown, exposure to natural disasters can caused project delays and cancellations; and
- c) Sarangani Bay is currently one of the project sites of the USAID Protect Wildlife Project and has received technical assistance (TA) including PA strengthening and enforcement support. The Inclusion of this site in the project would most probably be redundant and spread project resources too thinly across proposed project sites, with the other sites needing more support. However, the project is open to partnerships with existing MPA management units in SB, e.g. in terms of the MWPAN, and will explore interest and mechanisms for collaboration.

Additional text explaining this has been added to the Associated Baseline Projects section (**See page number 12**). Please note that during the PPG phase, the project partners also will consider adding other sites as suggested during stakeholder workshops, such as parts of the waters surrounding the Mati Peninsula. Additional text explaining this has been added to the Project Sites section (**See page number 7**)

### 1.3

Numerous changes to clarify the project's contributions at the national scale have been made to the PIF particularly for outcome 1.1 [outputs 1.1.1; 1.1.2; 1.1.4 (formerly 1.1.5)]; outcome 1.2 [output 1.2.1]; and, Outcome 3.2 [outputs 3.2.1 and 3.2.3] in the Alternative Scenario section (**See pages number 13-19**)

### 1.4

The narrative on coordination at larger scale and up-scaling has been strengthened throughout the document (**See Associated Baseline Projects, page number 12 and Alternative scenario, Output 1.1.4, pages number 14-15**). Additionally, a new Output 3.2.3 has been added to the PIF, with a focus on strategies and actions for scaling up project results: "Output 3.2.3: Lessons learned are scaled up and can be replicated throughout the Philippines." (**See page number 20**).

### 1.5

Text describing links to the Sulu-Celebes LME SAP has been added to the Associated Baseline Projects section (**See page number 12**)

## 2

A project simplified Theory of Change has been added to the Proposed Alternative Scenario section (**See page number 21**). This TOC will be revisited during PPG to expand on the connections between the threats, root causes, barriers and intervention strategies through further consultations and more detailed assessments.

### 2.1

The project approach addresses poaching, i.e. through MPA/MWPAN planning/ establishment, strengthened management and enforcement. One of the project sites (Mati) is a major transshipment point for the illegal wildlife trade (ADB, DENR-BMB, GEF, GWP, 2019, Addressing Illegal Wildlife Trade in the Philippines). Specific outputs that include activities to combat poaching are Output 1.1.1 - Policy support and institutional mechanisms at various governance levels enabled and capacities increased for establishment and management of MCAs for ETP marine wildlife; and Output 2.3.1 - Capacity of community-based enforcement teams in the project sites increased and enforcement mechanisms functional and sustained to enable improved MCA management and wildlife conservation.

However, the following text has been added to the PIF: "The Project will further make use of innovative technologies, such as WildALERT, an app that was recently developed by USAID under the Protect Wildlife Project in order to assist law enforcers in identifying wildlife species and reporting wildlife crimes in the field." (**See Alternative scenario, Output 1.1.1, page number 13**)

### 2.2

Livelihood interventions will lead to enhanced protection for globally significant ETP MW and their habitats by weaning people away from destructive, unsustainable, and/or illegal practices. Better livelihoods opportunities will provide local communities with alternatives to existing livelihoods that depend on or cause harm to globally important biodiversity (i.e. turtles, dugongs, cetaceans), and their habitats (i.e. MKBAs). As an example, employment in eco-tourism will provide alternatives to illegal fishing/ hunting or poaching of turtle eggs, while also providing local stakeholders with strong incentives to protect the biodiversity on which eco-tourism depends. This has been clarified in the Alternative scenario section, Output 2.2.4 (**See page number 17**)

### 2.3

Additional text has been added to the Alternative scenario section to clarify the linkages between awareness raising and behavior change (See Output 3.1.1, page number 18)

## 2.4

Text on the project contribution to tourism has been added to several sections of the PIF, including the Project Description (See page number 7); Outputs 2.2.3 and 2.4.1 (see pages number 19-20); and Alternative scenario (see page number 17).

## 3.

A number of the project outputs and indicators have been reformulated as advised (See Table B, pages number 1-3 and Alternative Scenario, pages number 13-20).

## 4. Responses to specific comments

### Component 1

#### Output 1.1.1

The wording of Outputs 1.1.1 and 1.2.1 has been revised in the PIF to clarify that Output 1.1.1 is focused on policy and institutional frameworks, while output 1.2.1 is focused on capacity strengthening, as follows:

- 1.1.1: “Capacity increased for establishment and management of MCAs for ETP marine wildlife” has been changed to: “Policy support provided and institutional mechanisms at various governance levels enabled for the establishment and management of MCAs for ETP marine wildlife”
- 1.2.1: “Personnel and institutional competency standards for marine wildlife conservation developed and adopted at the national, regional, and local levels” has been changed to: “Training needs assessed and trainings conducted to improve personnel and institutional competency standards and capacities increased for the establishment and management of MCAs for ETP marine wildlife at national, regional, and local levels”

(See Alternative scenario, pages number 13-14)

Additionally, to sustain project initiatives for capacity development, the project will build on existing tools, such as online training platforms/integration into existing online modules, trainings already developed by other projects, and the integration of contents into existing modules/curricula of partner universities and/or training institutions, all of which will enable project partners to sustain and propagate training, capacity building, and project learning beyond the project timeline. As an example, the project will build on the Protected Area (PA) Academy<sup>[4]</sup> and contribute to the development of specific modules, particularly in relation to the ETP MW MCA/MWPAN designation. Furthermore, the identification of additional financing options to sustain project initiatives for capacity development will be based on the outcomes of the reviews of existing methods, tools and guidelines under Output 1.1.1 (See Alternative scenario, Output 1.2.1, page number 15)

#### Output 1.1.2

With regard to the comment on the registry, we assume that this was referring to the database and not the registry, which will be a system to register MCAs containing ETP MW as Environmentally Critical Areas in order to make the requirements for Environmental Impact Assessments and Environmental Compliance Certificates stricter in these areas.

Regarding the database, text has been added under Output 1.1.2 describing the structure and goals of the database, as well as how it will add value beyond the WDPA and WDKBA.

With regard to the scale, management and funding of the registry system, this will be a national system; the project will assist BMB in updating the Environmental Critical Area (ECA) list of the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) and ensure that MCAs containing ETP MW are registered as ECAs on EMB's list; and funding will only be needed for the review, update, and expansion of criteria for registration during the project lifetime. As the registry system is already part of BMB/EMB, the project will work with BMB/EMB to ensure budget allocation.

With regard to the targets for ECAs, in fact the boundaries of the ECAs coincide with the boundaries of the MCAs, and therefore the targets for MCAs -- 166,619 ha (newly created) + 20,873 ha (under improved management effectiveness) = 187,492 ha – are already captured in the indicators.

Changes reflecting the above information are provided in the PIF (**See Alternative scenario, Output 1.1.2, page number 14**)

#### **Output 1.1.3**

The previous Output 1.1.3 has been changed to Output 2.2.1, and the word “financing” has been removed from the Output title. The rationale is that the previous Output 1.1.3 was focused on facilitating and drafting MOAs among project site LGUs in managing jurisdictional and geographical overlaps, and establishing commitment for collaboration in terms of ETP MW conservation while Output 2.2.2 (new 2.2.3) is about assessing, developing, and implementing diverse sources of MCA financing options. (**See Alternative scenario, pages number 14-17**)

#### **Output 1.1.4**

Citations for the already existing data and information and for the Participatory Coastal Resource Assessments (PCRA) have been added to Output 1.1.3 (formerly Output 1.1.4) (**See Alternative scenario, page number 14**)

#### **Output 1.2.1**

The wording of Output 1.2.1 has been reformulated from “Personnel and institutional competency standards for marine wildlife conservation developed and adopted at the national, regional, and local levels” to: “Training needs assessed and trainings conducted to improve personnel and institutional competency standards, and capacities increased for the establishment and management of MCAs for ETP marine wildlife at national, regional, and local levels”. And text explaining how training will be institutionalized has been added to the output (**See Alternative scenario, page 15**)

### **Component 2**

#### **2.1**

As requested, component 2 has been changed to INV (**See Table B, page number 2**)

#### **2.2**

Text on designated KBAs following global standards and being referenced in the global database of KBA has been added to the alternative scenario section and Outputs 1.1.2 and 2.1.1 (**See pages number 14-16**)

Finally, additional text regarding the baseline situation for KBAs in the Philippines has been added to the baseline (**See page number 12**).

#### **2.3**

With regard to referencing sites in the WDPA, see response just above.

With regard to assessing project MPA sites with the METT, this has been clarified under Output 2.1.3 (See Alternative scenario, page number 16).

#### 2.4

MPAs in the Philippines are governed by stricter conservation regulations and zoning schemes than LCAs, and zoning schemes will be established within the LCAs wherein smaller MPAs can be designated as Strict Protection or No Take Zones. In this way, MPAs within the LCAs can provide increased protection for ETP MW and their priority habitats, such as dugong foraging grounds and turtle nesting beaches, as well as the spawning/nursery grounds of fish and invertebrates that are important prey for ETP MW species in the project sites. It is also worth noting that LCAs comprise large areas, such as entire bays, and thus typically require collaboration among Local Government Units (LGUs). Local marine sanctuaries within LCAs can be managed directly by a multi-sectoral MPA management committee of the barangay, which is the smallest unit of government in the Philippines. LGUs can allocate a specific budget for the protection and conservation of these smaller units within the municipality, thus enhancing and complementing the national efforts for biodiversity conservation and sustainable management. It is important for local communities to have ownership of these MPAs and to be fully invested in their management, in recognition of the potential return on their investment in terms of spill-over effects in fisheries resources, potential eco-tourism revenues, or part of their local heritage, and other ecosystem services that accrue back to both the local government and the local community. (See Alternative scenario, Output 2.1.3, page number 16).

#### 2.5

MPA networks magnify the benefits of individual sites and protect large-scale processes that maintain healthy populations, such as connectivity, gene flow and genetic variation. In addition, the MW PAN will maximize cost-efficiencies and enable synergies, including for example inter-LGU initiatives on enforcement, CEPA activities, and fund raising/management. The creation of a MW PAN is also an important tool for bringing together local stakeholders in their efforts to conserve globally significant ETP MW species and habitats. Additional text has been added to Output 2.1.4 of the PIF to clarify the added value of the MW PAN. (See alternative scenario, page number 17)

#### 2.6

The text referring to Payments for Ecological Services (PES) in the section on private sector engagement has been removed. In addition, under output 2.2.3 reference text has been added stating that the project will explore the potential for PES schemes, as part of a broader effort to assess and develop conservation financing options. (See Alternative scenario, page number 17)

### Component 3

#### Output 3.2.1

During the PPG phase, the project partners will explore options for building on or integrating with existing knowledge platforms in order to support sustainability, including the M&E data platform for the Philippine Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan (PBSAP), which is currently being developed by BMB with support from the UNDP-Biodiversity Financing Initiative (BIOFIN). (Alternative scenario, Output 3.2.1, page number 18)

#### Output 3.2.2

The text under Output 3.2.2 has been revised to address this comment. (Alternative scenario, page number 19)

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[1] Lascelles et al. 2014. Migratory marine species: their status, threats and conservation management needs. Aquatic Conservation

[2] Ben G. Lascelles et al., ‘From Hotspots to Site Protection: Identifying Marine Protected Areas for Seabirds around the Globe’, Biological Conservation 156 (November 2012): 5–14, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biocon.2011.12.008>.

[3] Ben Lascelles et al., ‘Migratory Marine Species: Their Status, Threats and Conservation Management Needs: MIGRATORY MARINE SPECIES: CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT NEEDS’, Aquatic Conservation: Marine and Freshwater Ecosystems 24, no. S2 (November 2014): 111–27, <https://doi.org/10.1002/aqc.2512>.

[4] The PA Academy, set up by the Protect Wildlife project (USAID) and BMB, is an online platform intended for PA staff

#### **Co-financing**

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

#### **Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

JS 4/14/2020

Yes, cleared.

JS 3/30/2020

Please clarify why the potential contribution of the Don Antonio O. Floirendo Sr., Foundation Inc. (AOF), mentioned in the PIF section on “private sector engagement”, is not included here.

The rest of the section is adequate.

#### **Agency Response**

**UNDP 04/10/2020**

The Don Antonio O. Floirendo Sr., Foundation Inc. (AOF) has been added to the list of Private Sector co-financing partners in the table. Also, UNDP Co-financing has been increased.

**(See Tables A, B and C; page numbers 1-4)**

**GEF Resource Availability**

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

**Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

JS 3/30/2020

Yes, cleared.

**Agency Response**

**The STAR allocation?**

**Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

JS 3/30/2020

Yes, cleared.

**Agency Response**

**The focal area allocation?**

**Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

JS 3/30/2020

Yes, cleared.

**Agency Response**

The LDCF under the principle of equitable access

**Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

**Agency Response**

The SCCF (Adaptation or Technology Transfer)?

**Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

**Agency Response**

Focal area set-aside?

**Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

**Agency Response**

Impact Program Incentive?

**Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

**Agency Response**

Project Preparation Grant

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

**Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

JS 3/30/2020

Yes, cleared.

## Agency Response

Core indicators

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

## Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

JS 4/14/2020

Yes, cleared.

JS 3/30/2020

Please make sure all surface area under core indicator 1 correspond to that in WDPA or justify the difference and confirm that steps will be taken to update WDPA accordingly (e.g. the Pujaba Bay MPA with WDPA ID 305911 is 21,200 ha in WDPA, not 20,873 ha).

Please clarify the methodology chosen for core indicator 11. Why employees of the fisheries and aquaculture sector would be beneficiaries when the project will likely restrict fishing and would probably benefit more the tourism sector.

## Agency Response

**UNDP 04/10/2020**

Regarding core indicator 1, the area of 20,873 ha for the Pujada Bay MPA is taken from the recently amended NIPAS Act (e-NIPAS) of 2018; this is the official figure in the national database and is considered to be correct. DENR-BMB will be informed about the discrepancy and the need to inform or request a change to the WDPA.

Regarding the methodology for Core Indicator 11, the text in the PIF has been updated and additional justifications for the methodology have been provided. **(See text under Table F; page number 5)**

Furthermore, the following text regarding beneficiaries has been added to Output 2.4.1: “These livelihood interventions will primarily target fisherfolk who are engaged in illegal, destructive, and unsustainable fishing practices and may be temporarily affected adversely by enforcement and management actions of the project. In the short-term, the project will provide alternative sustainable livelihood interventions for these fishers (e.g. in fish processing, production of souvenirs for tourists, tourist guiding, food stalls for local delicacies and “*pasalubong*”, etc.); in addition, short to medium-term financing options such as Cash-for-Work will be explored (these have proven successful in the Philippines in the past).” (See **Alternative Scenario, page number 18**)

#### **Project/Program taxonomy**

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

#### **Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

JS 4/14/2020

Yes, cleared.

JS 3/30/2020

Please clarify why "natural capital assessment and accounting" has been checked.

#### **Agency Response**

**UNDP 04/10/2020**

Please note this has been reconsidered and natural capital assessment and accounting has been un-checked from the project taxonomy.

#### **Part II – Project Justification**

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

#### **Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

JS 3/30/2020

Yes, cleared.

## Agency Response

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

### Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

JS 4/14/2020

Yes, cleared.

JS 3/30/2020

Please:

- move all projects presented in Table 4 to the baseline (the coordination section should include only the projects that this proposed project is planning to coordinate with)
- also refer to processes at the scale of the Sulu-Celebes LME, most notably the LME-wide Strategic Action Program (SAP and list of past/on going projects: <https://www.iwlearn.net/iw-projects/basins/lmes/sulu-celebes-sea>).
- add GEF/UNEP project Natural Capital Accounting and Assessment: Informing development planning, sustainable tourism development and other incentives for improved conservation and sustainable landscapes (GEF ID 10386, approved by the December 2019 Council) in the baseline. The UNEP project will notably work on and around the Mount Hamiguitan Range Wildlife Sanctuary, which is adjacent of two of the Bays this PIF proposes to work on. It will notably implement natural capital accounting and develop new revenue flows, cost-recovery or minimization, NC-friendly enterprises and partnership for sustainable tourism in the Wildlife Sanctuary landscapes, providing for many synergistic opportunities but also risks of duplication.
- add GEF/UNDP, Strengthening the Marine Protected Area System to Conserve Marine Key Biodiversity Areas (GEF ID 4810, 2014-2021) which notably works on the Davao gulf.
- Consider adding GEF/CI project The Meloy Fund : A Fund for Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in Southeast Asia (GEF ID 9370)
- be more specific on the lessons learnt and relationship with the PIF's target areas of the project/programs mentioned in this section
- provide more information on the Dugong Conservation Action Plan and the Marine Turtle Conservation Plan and on how the projects would contribute to them
- include in the baseline the main elements of sections C and D of annex E and explain how the projects intends to build on this background.

## Agency Response

### UNDP 04/10/2020

#### 2.1

Projects that will not directly coordinate with this proposed project have been moved to the baseline (See Associated Baseline Projects, page number 13)

#### 2.2

New text explaining how the project will support the objectives of the Sulu-Celebes LME Strategic Action Program has been added to the Baseline Scenario (See page number 12)

#### 2.3

Text describing the NCAA project has been added to the Associated Baseline Projects section (See page number 13)

#### 2.4

The marine protected area system project (GEF ID 4810, 2014-2021) was already listed in the document, please note that SMARTSeas project is the locally used name of this project. This has been clarified in the associated Baseline Projects section (see page number 13); and, in the Coordination with Other GEF/Non-GEF Financed Projects section (See pages number 31-32)

#### 2.5

Information on the Meloy Fund project has been added to the Associated Baseline Projects section (see page number 13); and to the Coordination with Other GEF/Non-GEF Financed Projects (See pages number 31-32)

#### 2.6

Additional text describing lessons learnt and relationship with the PIF's target areas has been added to the Associated Baseline Projects section. The new text on related GEF projects includes significant information in this regard. (See page number 13)

#### 2.7

Additional text describing the DCAP and MTCAP has been added to the Associated Baseline Projects section (See page number 13).

In addition, text explaining how the project will contribute to the DCAP and MTCAP has been added to the baseline situation, business as usual scenario; and, alternative scenario enabled by the GEF sections (See pages number 21-22).

#### 2.8

Key elements of sections C and D of annex E have been included in the Associated Baseline Projects section of the PIF (See page number 13).

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

**Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

JS 4/14/2020

Yes, cleared.

JS 3/30/2020

Please address comments of the second comment box of this review in the “alternative scenario” section of the PIF as well.

**Agency Response**

**UNDP 04/10/2020**

**This has been done as requested (See Alternative Scenario, pages number 13-20)**

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

**Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

JS 3/30/2020

Yes, cleared.

**Agency Response**

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

**Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

JS 4/14/2020

Yes, cleared.

JS 3/30/2020

Please be clearer on the increment provided by this project to the baseline, especially relative to planned activities under Dugong Conservation Action Plan and the Marine Turtle Conservation Plan, as well as under on-going GEF projects with overlapping geographies:

- o GEF/UNEP project Natural Capital Accounting and Assessment: Informing development planning, sustainable tourism development and other incentives for improved conservation and sustainable landscapes (GEF ID 10386, approved in December 2019)
- o GEF/UNDP, Strengthening the Marine Protected Area System to Conserve Marine Key Biodiversity Areas (GEF ID 4810, 2014-2021) which notably works on the Davao gulf.

## Agency Response

**UNDP 04/10/2020**

### 5.1

New text clarifying the importance of the Dugong Conservation Action Plan and the Marine Turtle Conservation Plan to the project baseline, and how the project will strengthen the implementation of these plans as part of the GEF alternative scenario, has been added to the baseline situation, business as usual scenario; and, alternative scenario enabled by the GEF (See pages number 21-22)

### 5.2

Text on the contribution of NCAA project to the baseline has been added to the Associated Baseline Projects section (see page number 13)

### 5.3

Text on the contribution of MPA system project to the baseline has been added to the Associated Baseline Projects section (See page number 13)

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

## Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

JS 4/14/2020

Yes, cleared.

Please confirm during PPG the project's contribution at the national scale and explore, as suggested in the PIF, collaboration with the Sarangani MPAs with respect to the MW PAN.

JS 3/30/2020

The project is relatively small in scale and impact for the funding requested. Please consider the options provided in this review to clarify and possibly expand the anticipated scale of impact.

## Agency Response

UNDP 04/10/2020

As noted in responses above, the project is expected to have significant impacts at the national level and to contribute national, regional and global action plans, initiatives and agreements, such that the scale and impact of the project fully justify the funding requested.

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

## Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

JS 4/14/2020

Yes, cleared.

JS 3/30/2020

Yes, cleared for innovation.

Please, during PPG, design a solid financial sustainability strategy for the MPWAN.

Please consider clarifying the project's contribution to strengthening the management of relevant existing MPAs for marine wildlife. It seems to be a lower hanging-fruit for up-scaling.

*Additional comment for the subsequent box on Maps/ coordinates, which is experiencing some technical issues at the moment:*

Yes, cleared.

## Agency Response

UNDP 04/10/2020

Additional text regarding the project strategy to strengthen the management of existing MPAs for marine wildlife has been added to the Scaling up section (See page number 23)

Project/Program Map and Coordinates

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

## Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

JS 3/30/2020

Yes, cleared.

## Agency Response

Stakeholders

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

## Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

JS 4/14/2020

Yes, cleared.

JS 3/30/2020

Please clarify whether all targeted LGUs have been consulted and to what extent they have given consent to the proposed LCAs/MPAs creation.

## Agency Response

**UNDP 04/10/2020**

All targeted LGUs have been consulted during stakeholder consultations in January 2020. They have indicated interest and commitment to the proposed project targets as presented (i.e. KBA/MPA creation). For MPAs, they specifically requested technical assistance and support to improve the management effectiveness of their respective MPAs. Text providing further details on this has been added to the Stakeholders section (**See page number 25**).

During the PPG phase, a Stakeholder Engagement Plan will be developed outlining a formal strategy in identifying, consulting, and engaging stakeholders in the project sites to achieve their support for the project. Expressions of support of stakeholders will be documented in the Stakeholder Engagement Report and National Validation Workshop Report that will be generated during PPG phase.

**Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment**

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

**Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

JS 4/14/2020

Yes, cleared.

JS 3/30/2020

We note the announced gender analysis and gender action plan (output 3.4.1), including gender-sensitive and sex-disaggregated indicators. However, the section on gender is mostly generic at this stage and gender is not yet mainstreamed in the project. Please pay particular attention to gender mainstreaming during PPG.

**Agency Response**

**UNDP 04/10/2020**

During the PPG phase, the project will (i) conduct a Gender Analysis, and (ii) develop a Gender Action Plan that will help to identify needs and opportunities to reduce potentially adverse effects of the project on men and women, as well as promote and mainstream gender equality within the project. In addition, text on gender mainstreaming has been added to the Alternative Scenario, introductory paragraph (See page number 14); and Output 3.4.1 (See page number 20); Gender Equality (See page number 26); and, Risks (pages number 29-30)

**Private Sector Engagement**

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

**Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

JS 4/14/2020

Yes, cleared.

JS 3/30/2020

Please clarify what the project is planning to do in relation to PES and how the PES scheme mentioned in the private sector section relates to the project or project targeted sites.

### **Agency Response**

**UNDP 04/10/2020**

Please see response to the comment on PES under Component 2.

### **Risks**

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

### **Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

JS 4/14/2020

Yes, cleared.

We note the project high risk rating. Please ensure final project submission adheres to the GEF ESS policy. We notably note the project will have to assess its potential impacts on access and rights of IPLCs. By the time of CEO endorsement please ensure that UNDP's safeguard policies are applied in full, including FPIC, and provide the documentation as an annex.

JS 3/30/2020

As per the Guidelines on the GEF Policy on Environmental and Social Safeguards, please also provide the overall project/ program risk classification in the PIF. We note it is rated as high according to the attached Social and Environmental Screening.

The discussion of the impact of MPAs on livelihood (4th row of the table) is an over-simplification. Please revise and acknowledge the complexities related to the issue. See e.g:

-Mizrahi, M. I., Diedrich, A., Weeks, R., & Pressey, R. L. (2019). A systematic review of the socioeconomic factors that influence how marine protected areas impact on ecosystems and livelihoods. *Society & natural resources*, 32(1), 4-20.) Please consider reformulating.

- Westlund, L., Charles, A., Garcia, S. M., & Sanders, J. (2017). Marine protected areas: Interactions with fishery livelihoods and food security. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Technical Paper, (603), I.

## **Agency Response**

**UNDP 04/10/2020**

Text indicating that the overall project risk classification according to the Pre-SESP was High has been added to the Risks section **(See page number 27)**

Regarding the impact of MPAs on livelihoods, the complexities on this issue as presented in the two reports listed above are acknowledged. Additional text exploring the potential impacts of MPAs on livelihoods, and the project mitigation strategy for this risk, has been added to the Risk Matrix **(See page number 28)**

During the PPG phase, a Stakeholder Engagement Plan and an Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) will be developed, and a Livelihood Feasibility Study (LFS) will be conducted in all project sites (Output 2.2.3), which will form the basis for the identification of viable alternative livelihoods, technical assistance, and training.

## **Coordination**

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

## **Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

JS 4/14/2020

Yes, cleared.

JS 3/30/2020

As the agency knows, the implementation and execution roles on GEF projects are meant to be separate per policy and guideline. The GEFSEC will analyze any requests for dual role playing by an agency at the time of CEO endorsement and only approve those cases that it deems warranted on an “exceptional” basis. We

strongly encourage the agency to look at third party options as a preferred way forward. We also strongly encourage the agency to discuss any and all options for execution that do not include the government with the GEFSEC early in the PPG phase. The technical clearance of this PIF would in no way endorse any alternative execution arrangement.

Please clarify why co-execution by DENR-BMB and DA-BAFR has not be retained, given their overlapping mandates on marine wildlife.

Please add GEF/UNEP project Natural Capital Accounting and Assessment: Informing development planning, sustainable tourism development and other incentives for improved conservation and sustainable landscapes (GEF ID 10386, approved in December 2019) and remove finished projects in Table 4.

Please consider coordinating with the on-going processes at the scale of the Sulu-Celebes LME, most notably the LME-wide Strategic Action Program (SAP and list of past/on going projects: <https://www.iwlearn.net/iw-projects/basins/lmes/sulu-celebes-sea>).

Please also consider collaboration with GEF/CI project The Meloy Fund : A Fund for Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in Southeast Asia (GEF ID 9370)

## Agency Response

**UNDP 04/10/2020**

**C1**

References to UNDP support services to project execution have been removed.

**C2**

DENR-BMB is retained as the EA due to its mandate. However, the project plans on working closely with DA-BFAR as a project site partner on specified work packages, following the convergence Memorandum of Agreement between BMB and BFAR. It could also be envisioned to engage BFAR as one Local Responsible Partner. The type of engagement with BFAR will be assessed during the PPG-Phase.

**C3**

The requested reference to the GEF/UNEP project ID 10386 has been made in the section on Coordination with Other GEF/Non-GEF Financed Projects (see page number 31)

**C4**

Information on coordination with the Sulu-Celebes LME SAP has been added to the Associated Baseline Projects section (see page number 12)

**C5**

Information on coordination with the Meloy Fund project has been added to the Associated Baseline Projects section (see page number 12).

**Consistency with National Priorities**

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

**Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

JS 3/30/2020

Yes, cleared.

**Agency Response**

**Knowledge Management**

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

**Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

JS 3/30/2020

Yes, cleared.

**Agency Response**

**Part III – Country Endorsements**

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

**Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

JS 3/30/2020

Le LOE is valid, cleared.

## **Agency Response**

**Termsheet, reflow table and agency capacity in NGI Projects**

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

## **Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

### **Agency Response**

### **GEFSEC DECISION**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

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

## **Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

JS 4/14/2020

Yes, the PIF is recommended for clearance.

JS 3/30/2020

Not yet. Please address the comments above and resubmit.

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

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

**Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion**

JS 4/14/2020:

Please ensure final project submission adheres to the GEF ESS policy. We notably note the project will have to assess its potential impacts on access and rights of IPLCs. By the time of CEO endorsement please ensure that UNDP’s safeguard policies are applied in full, including FPIC, and provide the documentation as an annex.

Please confirm during PPG the project's contribution at the national scale and explore, as suggested in the PIF, collaboration with the Sarangani MPAs with respect to the MWPAN.

If PES are explored as part of the project, please make use of the following STAP advisory document:

<http://stapgef.org/sites/default/files/stap/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Payments-for-Environmental-Services-and-GEF.pdf>

**Review Dates**

	<b>PIF Review</b>	<b>Agency Response</b>
<b>First Review</b>		
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>		
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>		
<b>Additional Review (as necessary)</b>		

**PIF Review**

**Agency Response**

**Additional Review (as necessary)**

**PIF Recommendation to CEO**

**Brief reasoning for recommendations to CEO for PIF Approval**

The project objective is to strengthen management effectiveness and address underrepresentation of Marine Conservation Areas designed to conserve endangered, threatened and protected marine wildlife and sustain ecosystem services for human well-being.

Marine megafauna such as various cetaceans, dugongs, sharks, rays, and turtles are particularly threatened as their habitat is much larger than that of smaller species and encompass a variety of ecosystems and locations. However, their protection has seldom been a decisive factor the establishment of marine protected areas (MPA) in the Philippines. Populations thus continue to decline in the face of habitat and coastal development, illegal, destructive, and unsustainable fishing, poaching, and climate change.

The project has three components. Under component 1, the project will improve enabling conditions to ensure that policies, institutional mechanisms, and capacities at local, regional and national levels are in place to support the establishment and management of MPAs that effectively conserve globally significant marine wildlife. Component 2 will increase the geographic coverage as well as the management of MPAs and establish an protected area network covering three priority sites for marine turtles, cetaceans, dugongs, rays and whale sharks in southern Mindanao. It will improve practices for conservation and sustainable use beyond the boundaries of protected areas, identify sustainable financing options, and support the effective enforcement of policies and regulations. Under Component 3, the project's interventions aim at changing perceptions, attitudes, practices and behavior of stakeholders through a Communication, Education and Public Awareness Program and improved knowledge management.

The project will create 166,619 ha of new MPAs and improve management effectiveness of an additional 21,000 ha by establishing a Marine Wildlife Protected Area network spanning ca. 190,000 ha in three priority sites for marine turtles, cetaceans, dugongs and whale sharks. It is expected to benefit directly 12,746 people, including 2,059 women.

The project will build on a strong baseline and leverage \$16,079,500 in co-financing (1:5.4 ratio), mostly new investment mobilized (1:5). Through it focus on threatened marine wildlife as the basis for identifying, establishing, and improving management of multi-species MPAs, it will be a first in the Philippines. By building tools (public database, knowledge management platform, registry ensuring that the presence of threatened wildlife are accounted for in EIAs), guidelines (e.g. on tourism – wildlife interaction), lessons learnt (e.g. on community-based enforcement, eco-tourism development) and training programs at the national level, and by

being tightly linked to national processes (recently adopted 10-year roadmaps for dugong and marine turtle conservation), the project will fast-track future efforts to establish additional MPAs and directly contribute to improving the management of existing MPAs for the conservation of marine wildlife.