

MID-TERM REVIEW

Project ID:	10575
Project Name:	Coral Reef Rescue: Resilient Coral Reefs, Resilient Communities
Countr(ies):	Global, Fiji, Indonesia, Madagascar, Philippines, Solomon Islands, Tanzania
Implementing Agency:	WWF-US

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. OVERVIEW	3
A. Description	3
B. Key Dates	3
II. PROGRESS STATUS AND ISSUES	3
A. Main MTR Findings	3
B. Stakeholder Engagement	15
C. Gender Equality	18
D. Knowledge Management	20
III. CORE INDICATORS	26
IV: CO FINANCING	28
V: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS	29
VI. ANNEX	30

I. Overview

A. Description

Project name

Coral Reef Rescue: Resilient Coral Reefs, Resilient Communities

Country

Global, Fiji, Indonesia, Madagascar, Philippines, Solomon Islands, Tanzania

GEF ID

10575

Implementing Agency

WWF-US

Executing Entity

University of Queensland

Trust Fund

GET

Project Type

FSP

Objective

Project Objective: To build capacity and solutions that ensure the long-term survival of climate refuge coral reef ecosystems, thereby conserving their biodiversity and supporting the blue economies and communities dependent on them.

B. Key Dates

CEO Endorsement/Approval

5/31/2022

Agency Approval

11/11/2022

Implementation Start

3/8/2023

First Disbursement

4/4/2023

Expected MTR

9/30/2025

MTR Submission

7/17/2026

Actual MTR

1/31/2026

Expected Completion

3/31/2027

II. PROGRESS STATUS AND ISSUES

A. Main MTR Findings

The GEF Coral Reef Rescue: Resilient Coral Reefs, Resilient Communities project (GEF CRR) is being implemented in six countries in three regions: (East Africa: Madagascar, Tanzania; SEA: Indonesia, Philippines;

and South Pacific: Fiji, Solomon Islands) in international waters, and managed from a seventh Country (Australia).

Project Description

The goal is to build capacity and solutions that ensure the long-term survival of climate refuge coral reef ecosystems so are able to repopulate other coral reefs damaged by climatic events. Conserving climate refuge coral reefs creates a critical seed bank to support the regeneration of coral reefs globally. It also protects their biodiversity, and supports the blue economies and communities dependent on them. The Project is organized into the following components:

- Component 1: Creates a global network of tools and knowledge: It create knowledge sharing through online courses MOOC, ensures coral reef data monitoring tools effectively used through a platform, designs training to ensure its accessibility to communities, decision makers and practitioners
- Component 2: Creates National multi-sectoral hubs to coordinate planning for climate refuge coral reef rescue at the national level: Inclusive governance - multi-stakeholder regional and national hubs that collaboratively design national action plans, informed by analyses of threats/opportunities, costs/benefits, traditional knowledge, and community voices
- Component 3: Creates financial solutions to support climate resilient coral reefs, supporting sustainable livelihoods: By way of providing technical assistance, it will establish a pipeline of projects that are ‘investor ready’ to aid in increasing investments in sustainable livelihoods that are coral friendly
- Component 4: Creates communication strategies to foster social change and raise awareness and adaptively manage the project. A public awareness and communications strategy targets influential individuals and institutions and the wider public on the value of healthy coral reefs. A series of M&E tools aim to ensure information regularly flows from the six countries and lessons can be learnt, challenges responded to effectively.

Principle findings and recommendations, organized by core criteria

After consolidation, a total of 27 recommendations have been made, organised according to the core criteria; there are two under Relevance, two under Coherence, three under Efficiency, six under Effectiveness, three under Results/Impact as well as two follow on projects to increase impact, one under Sustainability, five under

Adaptive Capacity and six under GEF criteria of Gender and Safeguarding. The five main ones are below.

Overall Project Assessment: The project is well received by stakeholders. The development of National Hubs and National Action Plans is enabling four national governments to convene stakeholders and prioritise coral reef conservation. The remaining two countries are addressing significant challenges and are expected to deliver similar progress, although at a regional government scale. Overall, the project rated satisfactory and aligns strongly with global and national priorities in the six participating countries; Fiji, Solomon Islands, Indonesia, Philippines, Madagascar and Tanzania. Implementation varies across countries; Tanzania and Fiji are the most advanced, followed by Indonesia and Solomon Islands. Madagascar is progressing despite national government challenges. The Philippines has had a disappointing start due to administrative issues, but is expected to start implementation by January 2026.

No cost extension: PMU and GEF WWF US should agree to a no cost extension consisting of six months

implementation to compensate for delays and three months for project closure. The additional six-month will allow countries to consolidate their NAPs and obtain National Hub approval, and to strengthen support for Coral Friendly Business to create a potential investment pipeline.

Revise the Results Framework: The PMU and GEF WWF US should revise all 12 indicators in the Results Framework. This includes redefining measurement methods to ensure they reflect project progress, potentially with greater detail at country level, and setting more ambitious targets for Year 4. Seven indicators were overachieved at the MTE, and adjustments are needed to demonstrate progress over time. This recommendation applies to both core indicators (impact) and outcome indicators.

Creating Learning Opportunities: Four recommendations aim to create learning opportunities for project teams and Hub members. These include; Cross – Country and Cross Regional Exchange, In-Country and Cross-

Country learning, Project Symposium with IW learn and A Blue Economy Journey. Another recommendation concerns beneficiaries and proposes Enabling Communities of Practice (CoP). This also relates to communication and the need for resources in multiple languages. Several learning activities are planned, but need to start.

In terms of CoPs, PMU should work with the NTFs to assess what a CoP would mean in each national context and at what level it would operate, whether Community or professional. It should be assessed whether the emergence of CoPs might be from the members of the technical working groups, or from training participants.

It would be helpful to identify common themes of interest. An exchange involving all NTFs, similar to the inception workshop, could include presentations on the WCS new model for 50 Plus refuge reefs, the PMU data portal and multi-language MOOCs, sustainability plans, coral trust funds experiences and lessons exchanged. More structured learning from regional hubs, such as those in Indonesia, could be valuable. Madagascar and the Philippines may have lessons to share on setting up their regional hubs or may benefit from lessons from Indonesia. Lessons are also expected from engaging with the CTI structures and from any shift in understanding of coral biodiversity to coral reef resilience and effective management interventions from the NAPs that have made a difference.

Greater use should be made of international conferences like the IW:Learn conference and the Ocean Conferences, to enable NTF representatives and key National Hub members to participate in joint workshops and share experiences that can be adopted in their context. In the meantime, more engaging online processes should be developed to encourage deeper reflection, critical thinking and more effective delivery. Panel discussions with external experts and project staff, with questions shared in advance, as well as dragons den or shark tank presentations, role play exercises, could help shift team away from overly optimistic reporting and encourage real learning.

Rescaling Component 3: The PMU with NTFs with support from consultants, need to assess community preparedness and current private sector involvement. This should include a review of best practices before

any financing of Coral Friendly Business is considered. Countries should exchange experiences on Coral Friendly Businesses, Livelihoods/CBOs/SMEs and identify the key lessons, including what has not worked. They

should also consider inclusiveness, the empowered women leaders and entrepreneurs, eco-tourism experiences and the challenges of scale up from a start up to a registered enterprise. Good Practice in micro-financing, and proposal writing should be shared across countries. This may require revisions to consultant contracts, and the PMU should be involved. The PMU should guide National Steering Committees in setting minimum capacity requirements for community-based organizations and SMEs seeking support and financing.

Component 3 should be refocused to support different scales of Coral Friendly Business or social enterprises in each country and lower expectation to more realistic levels such as focusing on livelihoods rather than fully developed enterprises, particularly in remote areas around climate resilient reefs where fewer business operate.

Explore Follow On Projects:

The evaluators were asked to suggest follow on projects that would build on the enabling conditions established by this project. Two types are proposed. The first is an immediate follow on project with a four year timeframe that would embed the enabling conditions set out in the GEF CRR design. The second is a longer term initiative, targeting land based changes that require significant government investment or support from larger investors like development banks. This would aim to reduce sedimentation in rivers and marine pollution through effluent treatment and upgrading waste water systems.

The immediate follow on project, potentially the GEF CRR Plus, would use the existing four component framework, to implement the NAPs, develop adaptable MOOCs in local languages that can be completed off-line, build capacity in Coral Reef Businesses and prepare a smaller pipeline of organisations supported by blended finance options. It is suggested that this project consider the findings of the WCS 50 plus research when identifying additional areas to expand the current six country approach and build on existing synergies. In the SEA region, this might include reefs in Singapore, Malaysia; PNG, and East Timor to increase connectivity

between SEA and South Pacific reef systems. For East African reefs, this might include reefs in Seychelles, Mauritius, and Mozambique.

Key Project Findings

Relevance

The project relevance has a rating of highly satisfactory. The scientific paper that underpinned the theory of change, identifying the Bio-Climatic Units of resilient coral reefs was valid. This paper is in the process of being

updated and refined through the work of WCS Global team and is called 50 Reef Plus. The Madagascan government or beneficiaries were not consulted due to political instability at the time of the evaluation. However, all other national government stakeholders in five countries have stated the relevance and importance of Coral Reefs and this project is seen to have elevated their importance on the national agenda. Community beneficiaries (i.e. those in BCU areas) were also positive about the project objectives as they resonated with their own priorities and concerns about the status of their reefs. The Madagascan NTF team identified that the project would be relevant to the regional governments as this aligned with their economic interests relating to reef based tourism.

An area where relevancy is Moderately Satisfactory, is Component 3, as the project design pitched the coral friendly business concept at an economic level that is not aligned with local socio-economic situations in

BCU

communities in the six countries.

Coherence

This area also scored satisfactory to highly satisfactory for both internal and external coherence. GEF CRR, is very aligned with all of the national priorities of its six implementing countries, whether or not the NTF was a government body or an NGO. The project enables the national governments to meet their global and regional biodiversity conservation and SDG targets, priorities around blue economy, and coral data collection. The project has elevated the importance of Coral Reefs that have been neglected or overlooked compared with forest or land based biodiversity. The Hubs and the National Action Plans for Coral are seen to help fill an important gap.

There is still a gap, in terms of the private sector engagement, especially the ecotourism sector and in more than one country (e.g., Fiji, Indonesia and Madagascar). It is not known where the private sector initiatives are being implemented nor how successfully the coral restoration has been, but this can be addressed going forward with Component 3. Only two Countries have National Hubs that have engaged the private sector (Tanzania and Indonesia), and even Coral huddle was not set up to gather this data (this has now been corrected).

Internal cohesion is very strong between the GEF agency, PMU and the NTFs due to frequent and clear communications via regular monthly catch up meetings. Information was seen to move through the various layers at lightening pace. This was helped by a culture of active listening from WWF GEF Agency to PMU to NTFs that facilitated this. The systems developed by PMU assisted the flow of information between all aspects

of the project implementation and key consultants from UQ were not only building on trusted relationships their methodologies were designed foster participation and local ownership.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness was given a Satisfactory rating. The extent of revisions needed for the RF caused by design issues

meant it did not have a higher rating. There were good results from PMU facilitating high quality management

of the project and for the technical components delivering some initial changes. It is a strength that there is no one model for how to set up and run national hubs; NTFs and their lead government ministries were left to determine their own engagement approach.

The use of compound indicators comparing project progress with expected targets, when combined with a six-month implementation delay left the project unable to demonstrate its progress adequately with the RF. Two countries have experienced significant implementation delays, two countries have experience moderate implementation delays and two others are where they are expected to be. This gives an uneven delivery

pattern in the effectiveness across the six countries, and also factored into the rating given for the project.

There are also recommendations for improving specific country operations, namely: Tanzania, in order to improve the quality of the stakeholder engagement processes (i.e. by going slower and deeper for better buy-in and inclusion), Madagascar in terms of facilitating multi-sector dialogue through a regional sustainable coral

friendly tourism hub and ensuring a consultant is hired to facilitate dialogue with the private sector and regional governments, and Philippines in terms of getting started and ensuring there is someone hired to facilitate the CTI secretariat and bridge to Palawan regional government and finally for Solomon Islands to increase its the engagement with frequently rotating government officials. The Fiji NTF team seems to have sufficient staffing support, although managing stakeholder fatigue is likely to be required. During the next intense timeline delivery it will be necessary to ensure there is sufficient stakeholder consultation before cabinet approval, which may put more pressure on some stakeholders and will need careful management. There are other country teams that could benefit from third party hiring to support the project delivery (i.e. to improve communications and language e.g.: Indonesia, Madagascar, and Philippines) and there are sufficient funds to do so.

Effective Knowledge Management Systems: Out of 83 documents provided, 74 were considered relevant, some of these were process documentation rather than output products, which demonstrate progress of each team. The project has produced a significant number of reports so far, 50 (67%) of which were either of high or good quality (HS, S or MS). It would be helpful to NTFs and consultants to have guidance on what outputs may contain and critical feedback mechanism to ensure good quality analysis and outputs are produced.

Common characteristics of the reports to note:

- No Executive Summaries to longer reports:
- Few Maps:
- Lack of Photos in the PPRs:
- Lack of overviews or summary conclusions: and
- Dominance of English (although noting that some reports were submitted to PMU in their local language and translated).

The project has a number of online tools and platforms; 3 MOOCs, Data portal, and Coral Huddle as well as a number of more conventional knowledge products; such as a communications strategy and reports and articles. These are of high quality and already have high levels of engagement. Coral Huddle is a good depository across 6 countries – but not all documents are up to date (Indonesia must have dedicated resources to ensure they address this).

The Project website is very good but was not well publicised, it does not get brought up by google easily and most searches and links go to the WWF CRRI website - even the UQ website does this. WCS makes no reference to it on its own website.

We suggest a guidance document is produced as part of component 4, that guides the use of mobile video (i.e Vox pop) or a light touch training workshop is provided by the global team using a training the trainers

approach so the NTF teams have basic skills to train local stakeholders in this. It would enable local stakeholders to have more voice and presence when they present at the National Hub meetings and it can be a way that women and youth get heard in forum where they are not always invited. A more indepth approach could be included in a follow on project.

The project is well managed by both GEF WWF US and PMU-UQID, and communication between them and the NTFs is frequent and effective. Both teams have strong active listening skills and are responsive at being realistic about the implementation challenges and actively adaptively managed the project. Both are rated highly satisfactory.

Efficiency

Overall, the project is well managed financially, despite the challenges faced. The project has an efficiency co-efficient of 1 due to the careful financial management of PMU. The lowest dispersal has been in the “grants & agreements” category, which has only spent so far 20%, this does not reflect the amount pipelined, but it is noted that this reflects the delays in setting up contracts and getting agreements with the NTFs in the 6 project implementation countries. Only 30% of the total budget has actually been spent whereas 56% is earmarked for spending. There remains sufficient funds for a 6 month extension to project activities and 3 months for a transition phase to wind down the reporting on this project or set up a phase 2.

There is significant underspend in three countries at end of Q2, Year 3 stage: i.e. Philippines, Indonesia and Madagascar, all three countries have spent less than \$200,000; it is predicted to be difficult to spend the remaining component 2 budget without a 6 months extension and reallocation of funds. It should be noted that the budget design was an even allocation of approximately \$900K for each country. Although equal, it was not an equitable distribution as each country has a different level of cost of living, which means an uneven burn rate should have been expected and predicted. The budget design also limited travel of PMU and NTFs within countries and between countries which has limited cross fertilization and learning.

Not all the activities are at 100% delivery, there have been delays, but what is being planned is being spent to deliver the activities in the AWP. The gap between the amount spent and what is expected at this time in the MTE, reflects the 6 month implementation delay. Both Component 2 and 3 still have large amounts left, although not necessarily a large remaining percentage of their budget. Initially Component 2 may need to be reallocated and although component 3 is yet to start in earnest, and there are a significant number of technical analysis planned, there may be room to reallocate budget to other areas that will help deliver on the overall outcomes for the project such as cross country visits and learning.

Co-financing commitments at the design phase were unrealistic; 10 times larger than the proposed budget, this was a weakness in the original design. The total commitments made, but not actualised comes to approximately \$44.4 million USD, over half of the co-financing total. From the discussions with WWF CRRI and UQ, it is highly unlikely that Allen Coral Atlas or Blue Ventures are ever going to provide co-financing

commitment letters as the former relationships with these organisations has been ruptured due to personnel moving onto other organisations, or have finished. The co-financing target needs to be reduced to \$27 million US to reflect this. Rare may have an opportunity with re-engagement in the Philippines. The new total is still a substantial amount of co-financing to aim for to complement strategically a \$7 Million GEF funded project. Co-financing is not well understood, even by WWF network or other international NGOs. This is a gap.

Results/Impact

Overall, the project rating was Satisfactory for the results. Of the 12 possible outcome indicators, 7 showed demonstrable over performance and score highly satisfactory, The DO rating was 81% with calculation adjustments (i.e. the use of mean average), this is significantly higher than the rating score 6 months ago at the end of year 2. Therefore, the rating of this project of Satisfactory is agreed by this evaluation as a fair reflection of the performance so far. Note that an effectiveness recommendation is that the outcome indicators are revised.

The implementation delays have had an impact on the delivery of results, however, the RF design is also under

reporting the results due to how the indicators have been measured/calculated, for all the many tracking tools, output delivery was not being specifically monitored, but was tracked within the AWP. The PMU has addressed this (see the output table in Annex 5.1c) and out of the possible 95 project output documents or products; 20 outputs are complete, another 19 are nearly completed (Year 3) as they have been started and significant progress has been made. They have been drafted and need approval of their National Hub or feedback. For those 60 in the pipeline; 33 are expected by the end of year 3, and 29 in year 4 and another 13 remain with uncertainty. Stakeholders themselves identified key results from the project, listed below.

The top 12 project achievements identified by stakeholders that are leading to changes

1. Increased awareness of the situation of coral reef and their importance
2. Creation of the National Hub and technical working groups
3. More Coordination and collaboration between various stakeholders on Coral Reefs
4. National Action Plan for Coral
5. Coral Reef Network - community of practice - learning & sharing - website
6. Increase in community voice and participation
7. Status of Coral Reefs - data base
8. Improved coral management through training and community participation
9. Research technical reports (Threats, opportunities, cost-benefit)
10. Consultative process with communities and provincial/local government
11. Sustainable financing - trust fund for coral
12. Increase in Political will of government to act in the interests of Coral

We would add the 3 MOOCs and the Data Portal to this list as significant achievements leading to potential impact. The project results overall are on track, but more time will be needed to consolidate these expected results as the results are not evenly spread across the 6 countries; with the following list of countries in order of progress made; Tanzania, Fiji, Indonesia, Solomon Islands, Madagascar and Philippines. With the most successful countries achieving the most items on the AWP list. It should be noted that several Tanzanian

government stakeholders tended to only enthusiastically consider the positive achievements when reporting their results and engagement with other stakeholders. Other stakeholders were more measured. This may indicate optimism bias is at play.

There is significant potential for transformational change with the project supporting coral friendly businesses and the resulting guidance could also support a blue economy element. Similarly where there are local or regional trust funds set up to sustain coral conservation work, this could transform the coral reef ecosystem by ensuring sustained management interventions. The MOOCs and Data Portal and awareness raising are going to have indirect effects that will be difficult to predict but it should be noted they are new offerings that provide additional ways to present and direct any professional or student towards an increased understanding of coral reefs, their threats and potential solutions.

Project Impact is measured by the achievement of the three GEF core Indicators (GEF 4.1, 7.4 and 11). For GEF

11 indicator states the project has reached 4959 beneficiaries at the MTE stage, which is 71% of the Year 2 target and of those with a known gender; 46% are Female. The project is on track to achieve its ambitious target of 9850 beneficiaries in year 4 if it has a 6 month extension, although the sources of the beneficiaries will be different than planned. Core indicator 7.4 overachieved, reaching a level 4 engagement in the IW:

Learn

conference. Core Indicator 4.1 has no target value until Year 4.

Sustainability

Overall the project outcomes are Likely to be sustained. The sustainability risk table considers several factors and 3 of which consider there to be a moderate risk that in terms of severity and effect (Finance, Socio-political, Environmental), with 2 areas assessed (Institutional and Governance and Other risk) as low risk; overall rating being likely because most of the risks can still be mitigated within the planned activities, some countries have already putting mechanisms in place, but more implementation time is required as part of the mitigation. The most concerning risk is the potential disruption from elections to be held in Fiji, a dictatorship

in Madagascar and recent elections held in Tanzania. Financially the risks are in terms of funds for NAP implementation and continuation of the National hubs, two countries are already looking at ways to mitigate this. Environmental risks are the potential of floods, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes and typhoons. These can be locally devastating on reefs, but most countries consider more than one BCU site. Other risks category was

seen as the lack of cross country learning opportunities, which can still be mitigated.

Four countries are scheduled to develop a sustainability strategy in Year 3. Tanzania has set up a Coral Trust fund to support the implementation of the National Action Plan, but there was not a sustainability strategy draft shared with the MTE. In Fiji there is a potential that the National Hub could develop a Coral Trust Fund to ensure there are resources to support the National Hub going forward. Solomon Islands and Indonesia are both scheduled to complete their strategy by the end of year 3.

There are currently no global resources focusing on sustainability strategies, even for the four MOOCs, that are currently free, nor the Data Platform; both of these activities require a clear exit strategy to be developed, to decide whether they are taken over by UQID as part of its enterprise activities or another part of the University of Queensland agrees to take them on and maintain them.

There is a long-term vision of local ownership via the National Hubs and National Action Plans in all the countries where there is a national government. Local ownership of the MOOCs in their current form is limited, partly because they are not in the local languages and some stakeholders have suggested they have not enough local context material in them. This is acknowledged by the development team, but has arisen because the MOOC content had to be created at a time when the National Hubs and NTFs were not set up or functioning. Note a follow on project has activities designed to address this. There is evidence to suggest that the increased awareness of the importance of coral reefs and their climate resilience has increased and may endure as a lasting legacy. However, materials are not in local languages and there are not yet enough video clips to engage with the public interest.

Component 3: Coral Friendly Businesses – This area of work is too emergent to assess. It has a great deal of potential, as long as smaller scale operations are considered, there is significant capacity building in financial management and fewer number of businesses are selected to provide more effective support.

Adaptive Capacity

The project is rated Satisfactory as it has been adaptively managed from the onset as the design has underestimated the time taken to contract all the NTFs. The AWP was adapted as Component 3 activities were delayed a year. There were four other adaptations; Madagascar, Fiji and the Philippines, as well as minor changes to a few RF indicators. As already stated the four-component design is solid, but the implementing countries have challenging conditions for a project starting off, and during implementation, agreements take longer to negotiate and clarify than expected. A project across this number of countries, has to be adaptively managed to ensure delivery.

Proposed RF Indicator changes: Core Indicator 7.4 cannot change its Year 4 target. However, we would like to

encourage greater engagement of all country representatives through IW:Learn conferences and other international ocean symposiums or conferences, even if it is only able to be reported via the PPR. The project has already achieved the Year 4 target in Year 2. Core indicator, 4.1, needs to be replaced with Core indicator 5: defined as the Area of Marine ecosystem under improved management. This would better reflect the stories and analysis that can be drawn out of activity 4.1.2.4 in the AWP, while allowing the Year 4 target value to remain unchanged. Indicator 4.1 was intended to prioritize the “Ridge to Reef” approach. However, the NAPs

so far developed, have focused on prioritising “Reef to Ridge” activities as the National Hub members have initially prioritised stopping damage, restoring, and protecting coral reefs. Consequently, indicator 4.1 is no longer valid within this project timeframe and needs to be amended. Further details are in the description of the second proposed follow on project.

All RF indicators have all been reviewed (see Tables 24, and 25) and recommendations made (see Table 26) to measure progress using the mean average achievement of these milestones, or by adjusting expectations in Year 4. In several cases the Year 4 target should be increased because the project has exceeded the Year 2 target and is likely to do the same in Year 4 and is likely to continue outperforming.

The project requires effective M&E systems. The M&E design was rated Moderately Satisfactory due to issues with the RF indicators. However, implementation of M&E system is rated as Highly Satisfactory due to the additional tools developed and used across the project. Five monitoring and data collection tools have been created. Regular remote meetings between PMU and the NTF teams complement these tools, and provide frequent project updates. Regional meetings also take place, but time zone differences make it difficult to gather all six project NTFs at the same time. The only meeting attended by representatives of all six NTFs, PMU and WWF GEF US, was at the inception workshop in Bali in March 2023. From an M&E perspective, and to ensure effective data gathering, validation and verification, we would recommend another meeting of all parties six months before project closure. Even more could be achieved if this were held before any project extension begins.

The project uses a range of tools, extending significantly beyond just using the AWP, RF and PPRs these include:

1. M&E system and reporting: Coral Huddle: 2. Kobo Survey Tools for gathering additional data across all RF indicators: 3. Disaggregation activity mapping: which tracks every activity contributing to the RF indicators in an Excel file to show what data each NTF is delivering. 4. Activities Status Tracking tool, 5. Spatial site mapping: In which Bio-Climatic Units (BCUs), project communities and their economic zones are mapped using ArcGIS.

Project Progress reports are completed six months, and AWP and RFs tools are completed annually as planned. An annual reflection meeting is also facilitated remotely by the PMU, although results have been mixed because NTFs often treat it as an additional reporting opportunity. Although the reports give good insight into completed activities and current challenges, they lack reflection on the significance of achievements and do not provide a cross-country synthesis of progress or a summary of results from the technical reports. Although photos are provided, these are not always embedded into the PPRs, which would help provide context. There is regular reporting to WWF GEF US through remote meetings with PMU that helps fill these gaps. However, it would be beneficial for future reports to include these reflections, especially as project activities are begin to deliver on outcomes and more significant results.

GEF Related Criteria

Gender

The GAP provides ten guiding rules for the CRR project and generally, the PMU and NTFs comply with the

them. However, full implementation would require guidance of the NTFs on how best to incorporate them in the projects, although the communications strategy has a section on understanding gender and voice. Gender is disaggregated in the Results Framework inconsistently. No rationale is given in the GAP for the different targets. It's mathematically challenging to have lower percentages cascade into a higher percentage, which needs to be reconsidered. Overall, the NTFs are promoting the inclusion of women in the project activities, but there is no detail on the quality of their participation. Gender and vulnerability mainstreaming may remain superficial and needs deeper integration. In their activity reports the NTFs apply different age categories hampering a unified analysis and presentation of the participation of youth or young people in project activities. GESI reports have been produced for Fiji and Solomon Islands, but they do not include analysis. Although Indonesia does not have a report, the National Hub does have a GESI task force.

Gender inclusion is still a challenge for patriarchal cultures, for example Tanzania is yet to adopt separate consultations for women to encourage their participation. This approach has been successful in Indonesia. All genders indicated that activities with communities would increase the participation of women. Other stakeholders suggested including women or youth associations that can represent them. Without deliberate strategies for women, vulnerable groups, and remote communities, the hub risks reinforcing existing silos and power imbalances. The quality of participation will be crucial in Component 3, the support to coral reef friendly businesses, in which women are identified as primary beneficiaries.

The MOOCs have been very successfully at embedding gender and local voice concepts, especially CRR104 due to the inputs from Care's gender mainstreaming expert. Similarly the Communications strategy has a section on the use of language, gender and inclusion. However, this document is only available in English.

Safeguards

The assignment of "C" categorization for the CRR project appears correct for the implementation to date. However, caution may be required going forward. The NTF in Tanzania, MPRU, is taking the opportunity of CRR to introduce an MPA in one of the Districts. There is some confusion and concern on how an MPA will affect the livelihood of communities. Caution needs to be taken and simple mitigation by awareness raising should be done. This may be a lesson for Component 3 in which the NTFs will work with selected groups of community members or businesses. Without clear equity and gender guidance, this activity could create mistrust and conflict among communities. The implementation of small, on the ground projects with businesses and communities are within the examples of the Category "Medium" in WWF's ESSF.

Local and traditional voices are being included in the NAP processes and the extent that communities recognise the inclusion of their voice is being monitored through the RF. There are established grievance/complaints mechanisms in place and on the UQ website, but they can be forgotten during workshops and their access is not explained in the local languages. This grievance mechanism is in addition to that provided by GEF WWF US team. However, stakeholders were not able to describe any of the grievance processes available.

Stakeholder Engagement

The SEP does not provide examples of strategies and approaches on how to improve participation and quality of consultations, for example Participatory Rural Appraisal techniques or workshop facilitation skills. The National Hubs and technical working groups are the key stakeholder engagement mechanisms so far. Without exception all of the countries aim to work with the relevant government agencies. It's perceived to be easier for a government agency as the NTF to engage other colleagues and ministers. It was noted that an NGO as the National Hub secretariat took away the administrative burden that comes with the role, allowing government to lead the engagement process. Key ministries are involved in all countries (excluding Philippines

and Madagascar), but none of the National Hubs have representation of the Ministry of Women, or an equivalent agency. National women networks or those representing other vulnerable groups also do not have a fixed seat on the national Hubs. With the possible exception of Tanzania, the countries do not seem to have tapped into the list of stakeholders in the SEP, or the reason behind their exclusion (by choice or by design) is not documented.

Only two of the National Hubs (Tanzania and Indonesia) include members from the private sector beyond environmental consultants, and none include regular engagement with tourism sector. The Ministry of Tourism did attend the last Fijian National Hub meeting. Stakeholders that may be missing from some of the Hubs are: Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Women, FLMMA Network (Fijian Locally Managed

Marine Areas), the religious groups, Navy and BMKG (National Climate Agency), Tourism, and Fisheries, as well

as sanitation and waste engineers. Some of these stakeholders will be engaged in the future, as future iterations of the NAP are developed, but each Hub may need to check with the design document stakeholder lists to clarify whether they have gaps.

B. Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder Engagement Plan

The SEP reviewed is an updated, post-inception workshop version of 2023 (Annex 5.6). The plan prescribes further revisions as needed per annual reflection meetings, but no further changes were made. The SEP presents the key stakeholders under each of the types for each country. The lists are elaborate, and all the stakeholder types are supposed to be represented in National Hubs, with CRRI partners, alongside government. They are also expected to have seats on national and global steering committees. All groups are indicated as possible members of the National Hubs, and for some, like community organizations the outputs are mentioned where they should be explicitly involved and consulted. In addition, the document has a stakeholder analysis, describing for each their general role, and their relevance to the project.

The SEP includes a stakeholder analysis providing names, mandate, and relevance to an organisation to the project. It also provides a summary of who should be engaged and why, but beyond meetings like National Hubs the plan provides little guidance on how. A general notion is made towards communities that need to

participate in ‘visioning’ exercises, and considerations that need to be made to ensure the views of women and other relevant groups are taken seriously. Examples given are the deployment of capacitated, inclusive and gender-sensitive project teams, and project activities, which are accessible to women and other relevant groups, considering location, timing, transportation etc. The SEP does not provide examples of strategies and approaches on how to improve participation and quality of consultations, for example the use of Participatory Rural Appraisal techniques or workshop facilitation skills.

SEP Implementation:

Without exception all of the countries aim to work with the relevant government agencies. This is perceived easier in Tanzania with a government agency as the NTF, improving the outreach to colleagues in other agencies. In the other countries some key ministries are involved, but in none of the National Hubs there is representation of the Ministry of Women or youth, or equivalent agency. National women networks or those representing other vulnerable groups also do not have a fixed seat on the national Hubs. With the possible exception of Tanzania, the countries do not seem to have tapped in the list of stakeholders, or the reason behind their exclusion is not documented.

Only two of the National Hubs (Tanzania and Indonesia) include members from the private sector beyond environmental consultants, and none include regular engagement with the tourism sector. The Ministry of Tourism did attend the last Fijian National Hub meeting. Stakeholders considered missing from some of the Hubs are: Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Women, FLMMA Network (Fijian Locally Managed Marine Areas), the inter-denominations - the religious groups, Navy and BMKG (National Climate Agency), Tourism, and Fisheries. See Annex 5.1d for further detailed survey evidence on Stakeholder Engagement.

The project has established in several countries the harmonization of coral data collection and storage, as a direct result of increased collaboration between key ministries, NGOs and technical experts. Tanzania was able to establish collaboration between ministries, NGOs, and scientists through the National Action Plan and the Coral Reef Task Force. This is a major contribution to CRR’s governance and partnership outcomes. The creation of shared databases, joint decision-making, and cross-sectoral representation shows that trust and coordination are improving, transforming previously fragmented data ownership into a collaborative governance culture. It confirms progress toward CRR’s objective of strengthening stakeholder networks for integrated reef management. The limited engagement of stakeholders in Fiji and the Solomon Islands indicate that improvements should be possible without a large effort.

Responses to the surveys indicate the level of stakeholder satisfaction participating in workshops, policy development and the establishment of the Hub and TWGs. Figure 3 below visualizes the various levels of satisfaction for the survey of NTF participants in project activities. It shows the level of satisfaction in the various stakeholder engagement activities, taken from the view point of the NTFs themselves. Where level 5 is most satisfied, and level 1 is least satisfied. Level 0 means that the activity has not taken place yet. What is shown is the average level of satisfaction in each activity per country. Out of the respondents more than 90% participated in Workshops and meetings, and 68 – 86% in Hub and TWG related activities. Leaving Madagascar and Philippines results as being reflective of implementation delays in these countries, most other activities have scored above level 4. There is room for improvement, but most NTFs are satisfied with the quality of their engagement activities in the project. There is room to discuss with Indonesia why their satisfaction scores are less than 4 in four areas of activities. Equally Solomon Islands scored level 2 satisfaction in terms of the workshops and training, and this needs to be clarified with the team.

Figure 3: Average Participant Satisfaction per Activity per Country

Progress reports indicate that expenses and time constraints have challenged stakeholder availability for activities. As a remedy, countries decided to maximize stakeholder availability by conducting several activities within one workshop or meeting, and where appropriate hold virtual meetings. The effectiveness of the gatherings in terms of participant learning are rarely measured, and having 5 major topics in a half day, as documented in Tanzania, does suggest that sessions may be superficial, and discussion and participation interaction limited. A session in one of Tanzania's target districts was not pursued as planned, thus the expected actual observation was not conducted. Another issue, certainly in Fiji, but this may be more widespread, is ensuring that documents or materials are sent in advance to the participants so they can prepare having read and reviewed those documents.

In an inquiry in the survey looking at whether the project processes enable people's participation, 77% of the 30 respondents were positive. In Indonesia community participation is through partners or intermediaries, and it was suggested that community groups should be provided with direct opportunities to share their views and experience. Fiji enabled this successfully through facilitating early on a community visioning workshop. Community members in Tanzania and Fiji expressed the same desire to participate in the project, learn more, and in particular have community level activities. A long-term commitment to communities supports the need for the National Hub and a National Action Plan. Stakeholders need to plan together, coordinate and prioritize their resources to reach communities. In Tanzania for example the country is vast, and important coral reefs spread across different parts of the country. There are numerous NGOs active on the ground in awareness raising and coral restoration that can coordinate at the national level, as well as within local hubs, to support the National or local action plan.

The National Hub is a key strategy for stakeholder engagement. The Hubs are key to participatory governance of the project and hopefully coordinating coral reef restoration initiatives beyond the project. The hubs and their members play crucial roles in guiding the project implementation and its different components, ensuring that stakeholders continuously are involved in the project. From the themed responses 11% indicate the importance of the national Hub as a step to improved coordination and collaboration between stakeholders. *"The inauguration of the national plan of the Coral Reef, the big milestone that we have reached. Also, we have the hub... NH and local hub... this is a big achievement because we have a place where all stakeholders work together."*

The National Hub for Coral Reefs are praised for their focus and strong links to the government and existing policies; 10% of the themed responses voice the strength of national ownership the project establishes. Dialogues at Hubs build trust between communities and the national government. This is a major CRR objective; bridging local and national governance. Evidence that trust is growing shows the hub is working as a social contract mechanism, which is essential for resilience, compliance, and long-term conservation outcomes.

Practical initiatives themed around common challenges can also strengthens trust. The collaborative effort to collect, analyse, and publish national coral reef data under a unified framework demonstrates the project's ability to overcome traditional silos between government agencies, scientific institutions, and NGOs. By building a shared evidence base, *"we collect many data, analyse together"*, the project fosters transparency, joint ownership, and credibility of information among partners.

C. Gender Equality

Gender Assessment and Gender Mainstreaming - GAP

The GAP document's title Gender Mainstreaming Action Plan accurately reflects the scope of the GAP. The plan, in sections III and IV, recognizes that there are differences between countries in regard to the participation of men and women and addressing their different needs are important to achieve more favourable outcomes. The GAP's targets seek to mainstream gender within the implementation process of the project, for example considerations in ToRs and strategy documents, and through measuring the participation of women and to a lesser extent of youth. For the project activities, the GAP measures output level mainstreaming through the percentage of women and youth participation in activities. The project does aim to increase women's leadership participation in various activities, but it's not stated explicitly at the country level, equally well. The GAP would have benefitted from clearer actual action points, guidance or tools on how NTFs and their partners could increase and improve the quality of women's participation and inclusion.

GAP Implementation

The GAP provides 10 guiding rules for the CRR project. In general, the PMU and NTFs comply with the rules, but full implementation would require guidance of the NTFs on how best to incorporate them in the projects (See Annex 5.1d for more details on gender).

Gender in the RF disaggregation indicators is highlighted in table 12, and is inconsistent in the design: Core indicator 11 the target is 50%, in 1.1a, its' target is 30%, in 2.1a its' target 40% and 15% youth, in 2.2. its' target is 35% and finally indicator 3.1, its' target again is 30%. There is no rationale in the GAP for these different target values. It is mathematically challenging to have lower percentages lead into a higher percentage value. The participation of women and different age groups was not recorded consistently from the start of the project. The collection of sex-disaggregated data has gradually increased, but even with these considerations 46% of those beneficiaries with a known gender, are female.

The MOOC has attracted a total of 2027 enrollees, 1193 identified their gender, and 61% identified as female. There were 834 participants with an unspecified gender. The topics on women in marine conservation and other roles was appreciated by stakeholders, demonstrating that training modules are successfully shifting perceptions and may go on to encourage gender participation in local conservation activities.

Overall, the NTFs are promoting the inclusion of women in the project activities, but there is no detail yet on the quality of their participation, so that Gender and vulnerability mainstreaming may remain superficial and needs deeper integration. In Tanzania engaging women during meetings continues to be mentioned as a challenge. Observation however also indicates that given the opportunity, women do speak up in meetings or consultations, but this can vary by location. A member of academia was very positive when looking forward: *"I hope women are also involved (in the project). Traditionally they've been left behind, but nowadays a lot of them have come forward. Many women have woken up; there's a lot of women participation now."* This insight directly advances capacity and inclusion objectives and CRR's gender-mainstreaming commitment. It shows that cultural and physical barriers remain, but targeted interventions, such as training, life-jackets, having female trainers and women's leadership can be transformative entry points. The recognition of improvement demonstrates the social impact and empowerment potential when gender actions are deliberate and practical.

The quality of participation will be crucial in Component 3, which seeks to support to coral reef friendly businesses, in which women are identified as primary beneficiaries. Objective 5 and Objective 6 in the GAP emphasize the integration of coral reef initiatives into local institutional and financial mechanisms. Strengthening these ties could ensure post-project continuity and local ownership. One stakeholder noted their preference to work with women groups as funding channels because of their higher accountability compared to their own^[1]. While not a comprehensive gender strategy, this reflects an implicit acknowledgment of gender as a pathway for accountability. For CRR, this is an entry point to strengthen gender-responsive design, linking women's leadership to effective resource management.

In their activity reports the NTFs apply different age categories hampering a unified presentation of the participation of youth or young people in project activities. The recording of age or age group of activity participants was introduced around the second year of implementation as an additional column on the participant registration forms. There is an opportunity for PMU to facilitate further discussions with the NTF teams to understand what youth participation means and why it is a meaningful measure of engagement quality and bridging intergenerational gaps and sustaining benefits.

A more detailed discussion of how gender is implemented in each country is discussed in Annex 5.1d. In general, engaging women in project activities has been challenged in several countries due to the local culture. Male community members are more likely to occupy leadership positions and thus invited for meetings and workshops. Consequently, the women depend on the echoing of any information, which can be incomplete and possibly incorrect. Both sexes in several countries indicated that activities directly in communities will increase the participation of women. Other stakeholders suggest including women or youth associations that can represent vulnerable groups, or in their absence establish them. Without deliberate strategies for women, vulnerable groups, and remote communities, the hub risks reinforcing existing silos and power imbalances. Overall, some countries lack inclusive participation and the project lacks community level benefits. This may change depending on how Component 3 is implemented. A continuing gender imbalance could undermine the project's equity commitments.

Dedicated Resources: The only area where the Global budget has been dedicated to gender mainstreaming and inclusion has been in the development of the MOOC content. Care was contracted by the project for this. In terms of the NTFs; Tanzania has recruited a gender specialist for their GAP implementation. Madagascar has also just hired a GAP consultant. SI and Fiji have hired consultants to ensure gender inclusive approaches are mainstreamed into their project activities. The results of which have not yet been felt. However, outside of these, the NTFs do not have gender specialists assigned to the project nor do they have access to a gender advisor.

WWF Gender Policy Responsive Measures

The project complies with WWF and GEF's gender policies. Gender analyses were completed as part of the GAP. The GAP describes by country any gender differences in the access and utilization of marine resources. The project PMU and NTFs proactively aim for the equal participation of women in all of the activities, building on existing norms of affirmative action or purposely inviting women to events and trainings. A remaining challenge in some of the countries is that the quality of participation of women can be improved, and needs attention by the NTFs. However, there are no indications that activities exacerbate existing gender-related inequalities, or do harm to the position of women in their community or household.

In response to gender responsive measures CRR's RF includes Gender-Sensitive Indicators and gender-disaggregated targets. The collection of gender-disaggregated data was over time adopted by the NTFs, with full compliance at the time of the MTE. The gender-disaggregated data is presented in the PPRs and on the Coral Huddle, the online M&E data platform of the CRR project.

The PMU and NTF are aware of existing Gender Gaps in each of the countries. The CRR project mainstreams gender in its activities. Gender Gaps in resource access and use are acknowledged. To address a gap in benefits from resource use will require interventions that are beyond this project. Small achievements may be made if there are pilot investment projects in female led coral friendly businesses under Component 3.

[1] This is similar to findings from more comprehensive studies: https://www.macfound.org/media/article_pdfs/pb174_strengthenwomeninclusion_online.pdf

D. Knowledge Management

The project has a number of elements to be considered in this section, 1) Component 4: Awareness and Knowledge Management, 2) Component 1: three Online MOOC courses and 3) Quality of the outputs/reports and knowledge products produced by the project

KM Design and Implementation

Design approach

This component was designed to focus on strengthening support for climate refuge reefs and reach out to raise awareness to actors and institutions that have the most influence and impact on climate refuge reefs to ensure their survival. It wanted to create spaces for communities to share their own realities, their reliance on cultural and traditional ties to climate refuge reefs, using their own voices.

The project was designed to actively participate in and contribute to IW:Learn, including PMU attendance at regional meetings, the GEF IW Conference, and twinning exchanges. A commitment was made to have the project website hosted by the IW:Learn, so it could be linked and searchable through IW: LEARN's International Waters Information Management System. This would then allow it to be used to disseminate project results internationally and to relevant practitioners.

There was a strong emphasis to provide local communities the opportunity to share their wealth of traditional and indigenous knowledge within their countries and beyond. Focusing on the climate refuge reefs in priority areas, the project will support local communities to share their histories, customs and cultures through their own voices, ways of knowing and valuing. Narratives, lessons and experiences generated were to be shared through the knowledge platform and capacity strengthening activities under Component 1, through meetings of the National Hub (Component 2), with investors and government officials in the awareness raising

activities under Component 3 as well as regionally and globally through the IW:LEARN meetings, GEF International Waters Conference and other relevant events and platforms.

The project design document also stated it wanted a strong approach on knowledge management, learning and, in general, strengthening capacities of national institutions and would be designed considering existing institutional capacities. Evidence suggests that the project is on track to meet these design intentions. There were some challenges initially with hosting of the online courses, but this has now been resolved. The exception is the availability of project materials in French, Bahasa Indonesian has been covered to an extent because UQ has experience with working in Indonesia and pushed to establish that they really needed the online courses in their own language or there would be no uptick from Indonesia. The Madagascan team were not as explicit, none of the NTFs teams were, but as the project has progressed and the success of the online courses has become clear, they are requesting the availability of community friendly materials. Meeting this request at this stage is now outside the possibilities of this project, but needs to be considered in any further iteration. However, like Indonesia, Madagascar's working language for government is French or Malagasy, English is understood but it is a communication barrier.

Knowledge Activities and Products

- Three out of four online courses (MOOC) are actively engaging with participants.
- The Global team have produced a Communication Strategy and distributed it to the country teams and is now reviewing the communication strategies specifically designed by the NTFs. Madagascar, Tanzania, Indonesia and Solomon Islands strategies are in draft form being commented on by the global team. Fiji also has a draft strategy being reviewed by its NH members.
- Communication Strategy and Social Change Workshops facilitated by UQ Global team in Indonesia and Fiji (with Solomon Islands participation) and Tanzania (with Madagascan team participation)
- A project specific website has been developed (using the IW:Learn platform) as a mechanism to enhance visibility of the project and an informal WhatsApp group has been established to enable informal sharing between countries.
- The project team (PMU, NTFs and Government focal Ministry representatives from Fiji and Indonesia and WWF GEF Agency) represented the GEF CRR project at the IWC10. This provided an opportunity to network and share the national hub approach with fellow IW colleagues.

Participants in the IWC10 were able to interact with the PMU and take a short quiz on coral reef science to further engagement with the project in a CRR booth that was designed and run by PMU.

- Participation in two regional conferences; WIOMSA (with PMU, Tanzania, and Madagascar) and the Pacific Islands Ocean conference in Honiara (PMU, Global teams, Fiji and Solomon Islands)

Review of Knowledge Products – Project Deliverables

Online MOOCs: All are accessed through the Iwlearn.net hosted project site, having moved from edX site. There is slight confusion as 104 suggests you register for edX Edge site.

- CRR1 101x Coral Reefs: [Challenges and Solutions](#)
- CRR1 102x Coral Reefs: Data and Monitoring
- CRR1 103x Coral Reefs: [Sustainable Blue Economy](#)

- CRRI 104x Coral Reefs: [Climate Resilient Communities](#)

These courses are also accessed through the [WWF CRRI website via their knowledge hub](#), however the landing page does not acknowledge the project neither GEF. It does mention GEF and UQ in the about the hub section.

MOOC Recommendations: Several key point have been drawn from the MTE team member who participated in the online courses as a user to understand the full experience and these are presented in Annex 5.1g. The courses were completed over several weeks in a part-time capacity. They are of high quality and very engaging, noting the way gender and vulnerable voices are given prominence. Two of the several points made emphasized the need for more languages to be available and the info graphics and videos to be in downloadable format. A lot more detail is given in the Annex 5.1g.

Online GEF Project Knowledge Tools

- GEF CRR [Coral Reef Rescue Portal](#): the site has a couple of ways to get to the data sets; via a questionnaire or via filters.
- GEF CRR [Site map showing the location of the BCUs](#) and the communities that are engaged with the project via their NTFs.
- GEF CRR Coral Huddle^[1]: [Public facing portal](#), to see what the NTFs and PMU see you need to be a registered user.

Websites:

There are a number of websites where the project details appear.

1. UQ Global Partnership Webpage: [GEF 7 Coral Reef Rescue](#): Resilient Reefs Resilient Communities: has information about GEF 7 project, CRR, and the grievance process. Also has several news articles, a link the courses and the project document download.
2. IWLearn.net hosted project webpage: GEF 7 [Coral Reef Rescue Project landing page](#) with tabs taking you to about the project, Countries involved, News articles, the online learning and the coral reef rescue portal as well as knowledge sharing.
3. Reef Check Indonesia: [GEF 7 Coral Reef Rescue](#) project webpage: Grievance mechanism mention is on the page, but no link
4. ICRI Forum Website: International Coral Reef Initiative [GEF 7 Coral Reef Rescue](#) Data Portal link and Project website link

Knowledge Products Assessed

The Project has produced 28 other knowledge products: 8 articles, 6 news posts, 4 reports, 8 social media related posts and 2 newsletters. 17 were produced by the global team, 7 by Fijian partners, 4 by Solomon Islands partners, 2 by Tanzanian partners and 1 by the Philippines' partners. There was nothing on this list noted by Madagascar partners, however after searching, WCS Madagascar has [a facebook page about the project](#) in french. It should be noted that WCS does not have a link to the project on its global coral reef website, although it is a delivery partner in three of the six countries.

There were 8 products listed in the last PPR, however, this is an underestimation of the documents reviewed by the MTE team, these are in Annexes 5.1g and 5.6. The list and summaries of the 74 publications reviewed by the MTE team are provided in the Annex 5.6. It should be noted that not all the documents are easily accessible through Coral Huddle, although that is the idea; some teams are less diligent in posting documents into the system. Out of 83 documents provided, 74 were considered relevant to assess using the scale: Highly Satisfactory, Satisfactory, Moderately Satisfactory, Moderately Unsatisfactory, Unsatisfactory and Highly Unsatisfactory.

Table 1.: Summary of the Documents Assessed by Country

Country	HS	S	MS	MUS	US	HUS	Total
Design Documents	3	1	1				5
Global	3	9	5	1			17
Fiji			3	1	5		9
Solomon Islands			2	2			4
Philippines							0
Indonesia		4	1	1			6
Madagascar					2	1	3
Tanzania	1	11	6	8	3		29
	7 (9%)	25 (34%)	18 (24%)	13 (18%)	10 (14%)	1 (1%)	74

The project has produced a significant number of reports so far, 50 (67%) of which were either of high or good quality (HS, S or MS). The lack of an output list meant it was difficult to select all of the relevant documents or know what to ask for, some reports were just documenting a process, but were loaded into the Coral Huddle. There was no guidance (as far as we can tell) from PMU in terms of what structure to use or what is expected from these outputs in terms of cover and what evidence they need to include within the report, this may have been done verbally through the regular conversations. The overall evidence expected for each activity is in a column in the AWP and is also repeated in coral huddle.

The Needs assessment, communication strategy and the Terranomics progress year 3 progress report scored highly satisfactory for example, as did the Tanzanian harmonization of needs document. Other knowledge products, a series of economic analysis benchmark reports carried out at a global scale and as sectoral analysis for each country. There were two key concerns; 1) for all of them there needed to be a spatial sense of where the impacts and the opportunities or examples are located, so they can be assessed in relation to the BCUs for each country and 2) the country specific reports did not acknowledge the small scale nature of the economic activities in coastal communities in most of these countries. This limits how useful they can be to the

NTFs. We note that the methodology acknowledged that the reports were not based on field work, but mainly desk review based. More detailed analysis can be found in Annex 5.6. It would be helpful to NTFs and consultants to have guidance on what outputs may contain and critical feedback mechanism to ensure good quality analysis and outputs are produced. Common characteristics of the reports to note:

- **No Executive Summaries to longer reports:** Reports should include concise 1–2 page summaries highlighting key points.
- **Lack of Maps:** Despite the 6 countries and the large areas they cover, as well as the geographic link to BCUs We suggest a standard baseline map set should be created for consultant use or accessible to them.
- **Lack of Infographics:** Few diagrams or infographics were used; reports relied heavily on text. Infographics would improve clarity and reduce wordiness.
- **Lack of Photos in the Project Progress Reports:** It would be helpful for PMU/NTFs to have included photos as evidence of dynamic engagement, rather than have them as a separate database. Although it is noted the GEF system does not allow for embedded photos in the PIRs that are loaded on its system. Documentation of how stakeholders are engaging in activities is useful, and as providing more materials for posts, and
- **Lack of overviews or summary conclusions:** Reports often left the reader hanging or left to work out what it meant. Need to provide a synthesis; especially now that the project progress is maturing.
- **Dominance of English:** it is necessary to have key global reports in at least French and Bahasa Indonesian. Although the NTF personnel have a strong command of english, Government partners and key in country stakeholder may not. This would ensure messages get fairly shared.

There were two videos produced; Solomon Islands stakeholder testimony and Fiji Community Visioning workshop experience. These were very powerful and we would encourage more use of this technique, ensuring that perfect is not the enemy of good. The use of mobile phone and capturing stories is a powerful tool that needs to be encouraged for all of the projects. We suggest a guidance document or training workshop is provided by the global team – training the trainers approach so the NTF teams have the skills to train local stakeholders to use these, so they can have more voice and presence when they present at the National Hub meetings and it can be a way that women and youth get heard in forum where they are not always invited.

Lessons Learnt and Shared

PMU:

- A key lesson noted by the global team/PMU is the importance of a shared understanding of the project, and that developing such a shared understanding takes time and relationship building. As the Philippines comes onboard so late in the project cycle, effort will be needed to ensure this lesson is applied.
- Scheduling workshops have been challenging for all project countries as not all stakeholders can attend hub meetings on the proposed dates. As a result, country teams have realized the need to have flexible and forward planning schedules to ensure everyone can participate.
- Sharing lessons and activity outputs (e.g. ToRs) between project countries is an essential aspect to the project, both in terms of sharing knowledge to reduce time, problem-solving, accelerate learning, save money and enhance project outcomes. The Coral Huddle provides a platform to enable such sharing throughout the life of the project, it is not as flexible as PMU or the MTE would like to see, but it gives the opportunity for different teams to download the work of others.
- The importance of physically sitting in a room together for a shared experience and dialogue was emphasized by PMU and other NTFs. The benefits of in-person connections and engagement cannot be stressed enough. The

mission trip to the Philippines for meetings with DENR and PCSD showcased the value of face-to-face meetings and the increased productivity and collaborations that can occur when

- There is a need to enhance project visibility at both the national and global level. Attendance at the IWC10 provided an opportunity to share approaches and outcomes with fellow IW practitioners, with the increase in online learning course enrolments in the week after the event showcasing the importance of sharing such outcomes at different national and global fora. At the global level, with the exception of attendance at such events, there are no project funds within the existing budget to enable travel (for the PMU and project team members from different countries to meet in person). The value of building relationships through personal connections is important to enrich sharing and networking, thus enhancing project outcomes.

Technical Components:

- Component 1: During the development of the first online learning course, the global team realised the importance of standardised guidelines for course contributions, to enable course contributors to effectively use their time to contribute to the courses as well as meet course goals and standards required.
- It was also noted that valuing existing platforms is key to ensuring the achievement of project objectives. In fact, working with active projects and programs will facilitate the implementation of the frameworks and action plans that the project will deliver. Otherwise, there is a risk that the project outcomes will simply be written documents that are never used. This can be seen in the development of the data portal.
- Targeted promotion of online courses within partner countries was needed to increase knowledge of the offerings and participation. Despite the global reach of the EdEx platform, the number of learners from project countries was not high. This has been addressed with the production of promotional materials and core partner engagement to help advertise the courses (note these are in English).
- Engaging global consultants for Component 3 (Terranomics) and Component 4 (UQ's Centre for Communication and Social Change) has been hugely beneficial, however the timing of bringing them onboard was out of sync compared to NTF progress and their ability to take on another aspect of the workplan. Either more time or a bit more preparation to have national consultants onboard prior to engaging with global consultants would have made the initial engagements more productive and efficient.

There are a number of country specific lessons and recommendations that have been identified in Annex 5.1.e

Lessons Shared

The project is sharing lessons regularly through a newsletter update as well as via attending regional ocean's conferences where a booth is set up to tell others about the project as well as presentations to the IW learn conference. These efforts will be explored more in the Knowledge management section 3.7. The evaluators are confident that there are good mechanisms for sharing the project lessons with external stakeholders, however there are a number of areas of improvement going forward.

Cross country learning – there is a desire for this and a need which we predict will only increase as component 3 comes on board. There are already some common themes to potentially exchange within a region (pacific or SEA or East Africa) and between all of the countries. PMU attempts to do this remotely, but it's not having the desired outcomes. This inter-country exchange can be facilitated within the regular IW:learn conference framework or within other International Ocean Conferences.

Use of Local Languages- Only the Indonesian NTFs were clear from the onset that they needed project materials in Bahasa Indonesian, however, as the project has continued there is more courage to ask for this.

During consultations in the Philippines there was some reaffirmation of the needs analysis that MOOC in local language(s) would attract more enrollees.

Use of Videos – PMU asked for video documentation of some key project activities as a way to encourage cross learning and sharing of experiences. The NTF chose to video report on the community visioning workshops, this proved an insightful way of reporting, but it has not been repeated by the NTF Fiji team or others and this is a missed opportunity to do so.

^[1] There is a separate WWF CRRI coral huddle that is separate and distinct, although a majority of the GEF CRR Project activities do link to the CRRI coral huddle and complete activities/outputs when the GEF Project has completed them. The CRRI focal points in-country (WWF staff) are the registered users of the CRRI coral huddle and have greater admin access.

III. Core Indicators

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)
	4000		

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)
	4,000.00	0.00	

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 7 Shared water ecosystems under new or improved cooperative management

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

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

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

Indicator 7.2 Level of Regional Legal Agreements and Regional management institution(s) (RMI) to support its implementation (scale of 1 to 4; see Guidance)

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

Indicator 7.3 Level of National/Local reforms and active participation of Inter-Ministeral Committees (IMC; scale 1 to 4; See Guidance)

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

Indicator 7.4 Level of engagement in IWLEARN through participation and delivery of key products(scale 1 to 4; see Guidance)

Shared Water Ecosystem	Rating (Expected at PIF)	Rating (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Rating (Achieved at MTR)	Rating (Achieved at TE)
Global		4	4	

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)
Female	5,000	4,925	2,281	
Male	5,000	4,925	2,678	
Total	10,000	9,850	4,959	0

IV: Co Financing

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Anticipated at CEO(\$)	Materialized at MTR(\$)
Civil Society Organization	Arizona State University, The Alan Coral Atlas	Grant	Investment mobilized	20,500,000.00	
Civil Society Organization	Rare	Grant	Investment mobilized	808,166.00	
Civil Society Organization	Rare	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	193,612.00	
Civil Society Organization	Blue Ventures Conservation	Grant	Investment mobilized	22,893,355.00	
Civil Society Organization	WWF-Australia	Grant	Investment mobilized	2,198,251.00	
Civil Society Organization	Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)	Grant	Investment mobilized	5,451,637.00	5,542,157.00
Civil Society Organization	CARE	Grant	Investment mobilized	951,554.00	407,931.00
GEF Agency	WWF-US	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	840,000.00	1,597,191.00
Civil Society Organization	University of Queensland	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	1,019,842.00	652,092.00
Civil Society Organization	University of Queensland International Development	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	682,117.00	
Other	WWF-US: Margaret A Cargill Philanthropies	Grant	Recurrent expenditures	800,000.00	

Donor Agency	WWF-US (GCF Funding to WWF-Fiji and WWF-Solomon Islands)	Grant	Investment mobilized	15,000,000.00	
Civil Society Organization	WWF-Australia	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures		1,380,576.00
Civil Society Organization	CARE US- Phillipines				52,400.00
Total Co-financing				71,338,534.00	1,432,976.00

Comments

V: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS

Overall Project/Program Risk Classification

PIF	CEO Endorsement/Approval	MTR	TE
Low	Low Low	Low	

Measures to address identified risks and impacts

The PPRs for year 1 and 2 do not report any environmental and social concerns resulting from the project, and a **Category “C” categorization for the CRR project appears correct for the implementation to date.** For environmental aspects this is in particular the case, the project is only expected to have a positive impact on the environment. In regard to social concerns, some caution should be in place. The NTF in Tanzania, MPRU, is taking the opportunity of CRR to introduce an MPA in one of the districts. It is not yet clear whether project funds will be allocated to this, or other funds used^[1]. There is some confusion, and concerns on how an MPA will affect the livelihood of communities. The confusion roots in the insufficient exposure of the MPRU team in the field and explaining the relation of the project and an MPA, and the impact that an MPA might have on the communities. Caution needs to be taken and simple mitigation by awareness raising should be conducted. This may be a lesson for Component 3 in which the NTFs will work with selected groups of community members or businesses. Without clarity this could create mistrust and conflict among communities. Transparency needs to be key when potential projects are identified in the investment portfolios, and mitigation measures identified. The implementation of small on the ground projects with businesses and communities are within the examples of Category “Medium” in WWF’s ESSF. The environmental and social impacts that potential businesses could have are not identified in the Global and country specific studies conducted for Component 3 by Terranomics. General mitigation planning for potential social risks could be meaningful if it is included in the portfolio development process.

In general, no environmental and social risks have been identified. A common response in interviews is that everybody will benefit. *“I don’t think so... the management or the action plans will consider all groups... I don’t think anyone will be left behind.”*

However, the restrictions that protection measures, even if seasonal, on certain parts of reefs or surrounding areas, have raised concerns among some evaluation participants. For example, even just temporary closure for octopus the fisherfolk, including women, may be left out. *“Some of these fishers who need to fish within the area which are not allowed... when you put more force on conserving this area... they might need to use illegal fishing gears... Also, maybe the women and the youth who depend on fishing of the octopus... they may think or feel as if they are left behind because of some [kind] of closure [of reefs].”* This reveals trade-offs inherent in reef protection policies. While promoting resilience, enforcement can create short-term socio-economic tensions. This underscores the need for socially sensitive transition strategies, such as alternative livelihoods and participatory management, to prevent exclusion of vulnerable groups. PMU needs to facilitate cross country discussions around these topics as part of the learning and sharing themes going forward.

[1] If the Project funds are used to create the MPA, then ESS requirements will be needed.

VI. ANNEX

Uploaded Document

Document Category	Prefix	Title
M and E Document	Mid-term Review (MTR)	Mmgt Response WWF GEF Coral Reef Rescue MTE
M and E Document	Mid-term Review (MTR)	GEF Coral Reef Rescue Mid Term Evaluation ANNEXES_clean
M and E Document	Mid-term Review (MTR)	GEF Coral Reef Rescue Mid Term Evaluation Final Report Jan 2026
K and L Document	Mid-term Review (MTR)	GEF 7 CRR UQ Global Partnership page
K and L Document	Mid-term Review (MTR)	ICRI Forum Website CRR
K and L Document	Mid-term Review (MTR)	GEF CFF Coral Huddle Portal
K and L Document	Mid-term Review (MTR)	WWF CRRI website
K and L Document	Mid-term Review (MTR)	Climate Resilient Communities
K and L Document	Mid-term Review (MTR)	Sustainable Blue Economy MOOC
K and L Document	Mid-term Review (MTR)	Challenges and Solutions MOOC
Project Supporting Document	ESS Supporting Document	ESS Screen - GEF CRRI

Project Supporting Document	ESS Supporting Document	Signed_Categorization_Memo___Cor al_Reef_Rescue
Project Supporting Document	ESS Supporting Document	CRRI - ESSF PIF pre-screen