



GLOBAL FUND FOR
CORAL REEFS

**ANNUAL NARRATIVE REPORT:
Impact Funding for BahamaReefs
Project**

January – December 2022

Report submitted by:

The Nature Conservancy

Fredrick Arnett, *Coral Projects Specialist & Asst. Caribbean Diving & Boating
Supervisor*

frederick.arnett@tnc.org

(242)-326-0024



Program Overview

Program Title & Project Number		Program Duration
Program Title: Impact Funding for BahamaReefs Program Program Number: 00129653		Start Date: January 2022 End Date: December 2029
Program Location	Co-recipient Organisation/s and Implementing Partners	
Country/ies: Commonwealth of The Bahamas Priority Coral Reef Site/s: BahamaReefs Priority Coral Climate Refugia Sites (see Annex A)	Co-recipient Organisation/s: The Nature Conservancy (TNC) & UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) Implementing Partner/s: Coral Vita (CV), Access Accelerator Small Business Development Centre (AASBDC), Bahamas Protected Areas Fund (BPAF), Bahamas National Trust (BNT), Blue-Finance, Elizabeth Harbour Conservation Partnership (EHCP), Perry Institute for Marine Science (PIMS)	
Total Approved Budget		
Total GFCR Budget: \$7,975,669 [Convening Agent]: The Nature Conservancy- \$4,900,000 [UNCDF Blue Bridge, if applicable]: Blue Bridge- \$3,075,669 [Co-recipient, if applicable]: N/A Total Approved co-financing from other sources: \$2,024,331 GFCR Preparatory Grant awarded from proposal development: (Y- \$100,000)		
Program -Level Indicators	Targets	2022 Progress
Reef Fish Biomass	TBD	0
Live Coral Cover	TBD	0
Proportion and Area (Ha) of reefs in associated ecosystems with effective management	3,615	0
Investment capital leveraged	US\$ 15,500,000	0
Grant co-financing leveraged	US\$ 2,024,331	US \$1,145,480.00
Beneficiaries	83,000	0
Coral-positive Enterprises	25	0
Livelihoods Impacted	256 (50% women)	0



Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	1
I. Program Objectives.....	3
II. Program Implementation & Results.....	4
A. Program Results Overview	4
B. Monitoring and Evaluation	7
C. Protected Areas Management Effectiveness	7
D. Enabling Policy Environment	8
E. Complementary Initiatives	8
F. Indicator-Based Performance Assessment (Logical Framework)	10
G. Reef Positive Solution Case Studies	15
H. Gender Mainstreaming	18
III. Program Governance & Management.....	19
A. Program Governance	19
B. Program Management	20
C. Program Operations	21
IV. Resource Mobilisation.....	23
A. Resource Mobilisation Efforts - Grants	23
B. Resource Mobilisation Efforts - Investment	23
C. Resource Mobilisation Efforts - Revenue	23
V. Communications and Visibility.....	24
A. Communications	24
B. Visibility	24
External Media Coverage	24
Published Program Content	25
Event Features	25
Primary Creative Assets	25
Reef Positive Solutions Case Studies	26
Speakers identified and featured as program Champions	26
2023 Communications Strategy	26
VI. Risk Management and Mitigation.....	27
VII. Adaptive Management.....	31
Annexes.....	33

Annex A: [BahamaReefs Priority Coral Climate Refugia Sites]	33
Annex B: Technical Assistance Request	34
Annex C: Communications Campaign	35
Annex D: Template for Reef Positive Solution Case Studies	37
Annex E: Gender Mainstreaming	38

Executive Summary

The Bahamas is highly dependent on the goods and services provided by coral reefs. However, the climate crisis has outpaced global and local efforts to protect and restore these fragile ecosystems. In early 2022, *Impact Funding for BahamaReefs* was launched in response to this challenge with the support of the GFCR. The BahamaReefs Program is designed to operationalise innovative financial mechanisms by leveraging blended finance to unlock the resources needed to develop and fund reef positive solutions that tackle the drivers of reef degradation.

The BahamaReefs Program aligns with and directly contributes to the GFCR's mandate to "Protect", "Transform", "Restore" and "Recover" priority coral reef sites and reef-dependent communities. BahamaReefs is building a pipeline of investable opportunities within the Blue Economy to promote long-term coral reef conservation and restoration success. The program will support the most promising and innovative solutions and expects to achieve the following outcomes over the lifetime of the project:

1. Improved management effectiveness of climate refugia and MPAs;
2. Livelihoods of reef-dependent communities are strengthened; and
3. Coral reefs, associated ecosystems and local communities are restored.

To increase the resilience of corals and reef-dependent communities, the project will pilot interventions and reef positive solutions in at least four program implementation areas across The Bahamas:

- Grand Bahama,
- Abaco,
- Andros, and
- Exuma.

During year 1 of the BahamaReefs Program, the following program results were achieved:

1. A climate refugia model and a series of virtual stakeholder consultations (to select priority climate refugia sites) were completed for The Bahamas. The results of this work will be used to produce a Coral Refugia Report, inform national-level decision-making and the development of a National Coral Reef Conservation Plan.
2. The GFCR approved using project funds to pilot a voluntary opt-in program which will allow visitors to make donations to the Bahamas Protected Areas Fund. This additional revenue stream will help to fund the effective management of marine protected areas across The Bahamas.
3. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Access Accelerator Small Business Development Centre. The MoU provides for joint collaboration on the design and launch of a Blue Economy Accelerator Programme. This initiative will support investments in MSMEs within the Blue Economy that protect, restore, transform, and increase the resilience of climate refugia and reef-dependent communities in The Bahamas.
4. Blue Bridge approved and disbursed funding to the Elizabeth Harbour Conservation Partnership to install moorings and provide pump out services to vessel operators in Exuma. This reef positive solution is expected to mitigate the threats of pollution and anchor damage to corals and other benthic habitats in Elizabeth Harbour.
5. The Conservancy facilitated virtual consultations and convened an in-person mangrove restoration workshop to garner local support and build capacity to restore mangrove habitats devastated by Hurricane Dorian on the islands of Grand Bahama and Abaco.
6. Key stakeholders were invited to participate in online webinars to learn about TNC's post storm response model and options (such as parametric insurance) for funding coral monitoring and restoration efforts after storm events.



7. The Perry Institute for Marine Science (PIMS) received funding through the Blue Bridge Window to scale up the Reef Rescue Network's (RRN) operations and create a financially sustainable business model. Specifically, PIMS will provide training to RRN members on coral reef restoration, business planning and marketing.
8. TNC assisted the GFCR with the development of a monitoring and evaluation guidance document. The Conservancy also drafted a Performance Monitoring Plan that outlines proposed targets, indicators of success, milestones, and timelines for reporting on program interventions and tracking project success.
9. A Technical Assistance Letter was executed between the Conservancy and the Ministry of the Environment & Natural Resources. This agreement enables TNC to collaborate with The Bahamas Government on the development of key project deliverables such as the National Coral Reef Conservation Plan, co-management framework for the sustainable management of fisheries and MPAs, and recommendations for improving the government's Access Benefit Sharing permitting system.
10. The Hon. Vaughn Miller, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, and Acting Director Gregory Bethel, Department of Marine Resources, were identified as program champions.

With the remaining project funds, The Nature Conservancy will seek to implement the following activities in year 2,

- A. organize a climate refugia in-person meeting with government, MPA managers and local scientists to discuss the results of the climate refugia assessment and obtain support for the protection of priority coral reef sites;
- B. organize and facilitate an Inception Workshop to clarify roles and responsibilities, set project expectations, introduce sustainable financing, discuss M&E and reporting requirements, and share project communication goals and objectives;
- C. establish the BahamaReefs Project Steering Committee to guide the project;
- D. execute agreement with BPAF to fund the voluntary opt-in contribution;
- E. finalize remaining deals with the BahamaReefs Pipeline partners;
- F. support the design and launch of the Blue Economy Accelerator Programme;
- G. implement the GFCR M&E framework and finalize the BahamaReefs performance management plan;
- H. advance discussions on TNC's post storm response model with the GFCR, government, insurers, local conservation trust fund (BPAF) and other key stakeholders;
- I. execute agreement with the Bahamas National Trust to support the development of Climate Smart Management Plans;
- J. advocate for and support the development of the National Coral Reef Conservation Plan;
- K. continue to explore and screen new reef-positive solutions and investment opportunities for inclusion in the pipeline;
- L. recruit and onboard a Conservation Finance Specialist and Policy Advisor;
- M. develop and implement a gender action plan for the BahamaReefs Program;
- N. finalize and produce the BahamaReefs Factsheet; and
- O. prioritize and implement key aspects of the BahamaReefs Communications Plan.

I. Program Objectives

The Bahamas' economy and society are highly dependent on the services provided by coral reefs. Current initiatives and resources directed to protect and restore these ecosystems are insufficient and cannot properly tackle the main drivers of reef degradation. This shortfall could lead to the significant decline and eradication of Bahamian reefs as climate change accelerates, risking the future of livelihoods that depend on them and increasing the country's climate change vulnerability.

The objective of the BahamaReefs Program is to operationalise innovative financial mechanisms that can leverage private finance to complement public and philanthropic funding, then local actors and partners will have the resources to develop reef protection and restoration initiatives and reef-positive businesses. With this in mind, the BahamaReefs Program will implement the following interventions:

- **Research and planning:** science-based assessments, policy framework support, advocacy for the use of new conservation finance mechanisms, and planning processes in coordination with national authorities;
- **Pipeline development:** institutional setup of business-support facilities, provision of technical assistance, training, development of business partnerships and piloting;
- **Execution of investment opportunities:** project sourcing and appropriate development, access to grants, and inclusion in concessional and commercial capital pipelines for review and decisions to be made by lenders and investors, and the implementation of environmental and social impact frameworks;
- **Monitoring and evaluation:** it is expected that project activities may evolve during implementation based on results from the monitoring and evaluation process and adoption of adaptive management techniques.

Through these interventions, the BahamaReefs Program expects to achieve the following three outcomes:

4. **Improved management effectiveness** of priority coral reef sites, including climate refugia;
5. **Livelihoods of reef-dependent communities are strengthened** by reef-positive businesses; and
6. **Coral reefs and associated ecosystems are restored** to increase resilience.

These outcomes contribute directly to those of the GFCR, "Protect", "Transform" and "Restore". TNC recognizes the importance of the fourth GFCR outcome, "Recover," which is embedded in the BahamaReefs Program expected results.

To improve the long-term financial stability for coral reef conservation and restoration, the BahamaReefs Program is building a pipeline of investable opportunities over the life of the program with a strong focus on developing innovative and sustainable finance instruments. The pipeline will support the most impactful interventions required to address the drivers of coral reef degradation in priority sites. Businesses will be recommended for different forms of financial support depending on their maturity and compliance with the program's criteria. Initial implementation of the program will take place in four focal areas:

- Grand Bahama,
- Abaco,
- Andros, and
- Exuma.

These initial sites were selected based on global reef resilience studies (50 Reefs, Coral Futures, Blue Hope Spots and TNC's mapping and coral science work) and the presence of known coral reef conservation and restoration initiatives and investment opportunities.

II. Program Implementation & Results

A. Program Results Overview

During the reporting period, the BahamaReefs Program made progress towards achieving the project's outcomes. Under **Outcome 1- Improved management effectiveness of priority coral reef sites, including climate refugia**, TNC completed a climate refugia model for the Northern Caribbean, hosted a virtual climate refugia webinar to share results of the model, and conducted a series of virtual stakeholder meetings to select the top 3-4 climate refugia sites for each of the focal areas.

The climate refugia model for the Northern Caribbean, inclusive of The Bahamas and Turks & Caicos Islands, was successfully completed in February, 2022. Coral reefs across The Bahamas were ranked based on their ability to survive the impacts of climate change. The model was analyzed by TNC's Caribbean Science Team and the top 25% of climate resilient corals were pre-selected for each of the four implementation sites within the BahamaReefs Program. This work aligns with **Output 1.1 Climate change refugia are identified and prioritized for effective management** of the BahamaReefs Program. The results of the model are available interactively and for download at CoralRefugia.tnc.org.

In July, TNC hosted a virtual [Climate Refugia Webinar](#) to share the results of the model with key stakeholders (including local experts, protected areas managers, scientists, and technical officers) and encourage support for the protection of climate resilient corals. Thirty-three (33) individuals participated in the webinar. Women outnumbered men 2:1.

During September, the Conservancy facilitated a series of virtual stakeholder meetings for the islands of Andros, Grand Bahama, Abaco and Exuma. These areas were mapped and used to inform site selection for the effective management of climate resilient corals. Stakeholders were asked to validate the refugia model, provide input on priority sites and the local enabling conditions (such as protection status, presence of local NGOs, current projects in the area, accessibility, the presence of local threats, etc.) to support effective management. Participatory mapping exercises were also conducted to select the top 3-4 coral refugia sites for each of the implementation areas. In total, 48 stakeholders attended the consultations. Eight (8) fishers were among those engaged during this period.

The results of this work will be used to produce a Coral Refugia Report and inform national-level decision-making and the development of a National Coral Reef Conservation Plan, which will advocate for the protection and restoration of coral reefs. A workshop to share the climate refugia assessment and stakeholder feedback with protected areas managers, scientists, decision-makers and local government officials is scheduled for Q1 of 2023.

TNC will support the development of 3-4 climate smart management plans commencing in 2023. This work aligns with **Output 1.2- Drivers of degradation within MPAs are identified and prioritized for intervention to support resilient coral reefs and adjacent communities** of the project. Preliminary discussions with protected area managers are underway. It is anticipated that MPA sites will be selected during YR2 of the project. An assessment of the main drivers of degradation negatively impacting the effective management of marine protected areas (MPAs) will also be completed. This assessment will include priority interventions to mitigate the threats identified and will also serve as an essential input into the management planning process.

Work on **Output 1.3- Increased long-term funding for management of priority sites and capacity created to operate proceeds with new financial mechanisms-** has had mixed results. Although several iterations of a project workplan were submitted to TNC and UNCDF by Blue Finance (BF) and the Bahamas National Trust (BNT), little progress was made during the second half of the reporting period. Despite several interventions by the Conservancy, BF and BNT were unable to agree on the scope of the sustainable financing MPA project for Andros including budgetary allocation, roles and responsibilities and project implementation. It was agreed that the parties would reconvene, agree on next steps and provide TNC and UNCDF with an update in early 2023.

Partner discussions with the Bahamas Protected Areas Fund (BPAF) on identifying and implementing new financial mechanisms to support the protection of climate resilient corals and the effective management of MPAs are advancing. GFCR approved a promising financial mechanism identified by BPAF in Year 1 of the BahamaReefs Project. BPAF is in negotiations with the Bahamas Government to develop a voluntary opt-in program which will allow visitors to make donations to BPAF for the effective management of the Bahamas Protected Areas Network. Implementation is expected to begin in 2023.

Outcome 2- Livelihoods of reef-dependent communities are strengthened by reef-positive business.

The Government of the Bahamas declared November as National Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) month. A series of events and activities spearheaded by the Access Accelerator Small Business Development Centre (AASBDC) were held throughout the month to support the evolution of MSMEs, maximise the creation of economic impact through strategic partnerships, increase the ability of the small business sector to provide employment, create wealth and drive the development of a robust and resilient Blue Economy in The Bahamas. During, National MSME month TNC signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with AASBDC to formalize a mutual collaboration, with the purpose of supporting the development of and investment in MSMEs in the Blue Economy that protect, restore, transform, and increase the resilience of priority coral reef sites, associated ecosystems, and local reef-dependent communities in The Bahamas. The Conservancy also worked closely with AASBDC to develop and refine the Blue Economy Accelerator Program project proposal for consideration and approval by the GFCR.

Under **Output 2.2- Reef-positive businesses receive investments-** the Elizabeth Harbour Conservation Partnership (EHCP) received approval and an initial tranche of funding through the Blue Bridge Window in November to begin work on the establishment of mooring and pump out services in Exuma. EHCP will use the funding to address the threat of pollution in the harbor and the physical damage caused by indiscriminate anchoring to seagrass beds, corals and other benthic habitats. EHCP will also include a monitoring and evaluation program to track progress against their interventions.

During this period, the Conservancy was actively engaged in the screening of new opportunities for inclusion in the BahamaReefs Program. TNC held preliminary discussions with four (4) prospective partners (Blue Action Lab, Clean Marine Group, Rotary Club of East Nassau and Abaco Zero Waste). TNC also learned about each organization, their work and proposed interventions. Each of the entities are excited about the prospect of joining the BahamaReefs Pipeline. Introductory meetings with the GFCR will be scheduled in early 2023 to advance discussions.

TNC is responsible for two finance instruments in **Outcome 3- Coral reefs and associated ecosystems are restored to increase resilience-** a Blue Carbon Project and Reef and Mangrove Insurance. Combined these financial mechanisms can make coastal development projects more sustainable and resilient by offsetting impacts and improving coastal protection.



During the reporting period, the Government of The Bahamas requested all matters relating to Blue Carbon and the development of Carbon Credits be managed by the Office of The Prime Minister and its consultants. Therefore, The Bahamas Government has the exclusive right to explore the development and sale of Blue Carbon Credits in The Bahamas. This may have implications for TNC's plans to "Take Blue Carbon Credits to Market". Consequently, TNC has pivoted and is primarily focused on,

- providing technical advice to the government (when solicited);
- mapping mangrove habitats in focal areas (Grand Bahama and Abaco);
- completing feasibility studies for project pilot sites in Grand Bahama and Abaco;
- establishing a mangrove restoration partnership/alliance with key stakeholders to help restore degraded habitats;
- facilitating work planning sessions and workshops with partners in the alliance to advance project activities; and
- finalizing carbon project documents to guide restoration work.

See table F (Output 3.1- Milestones) for more information.

Coral reefs are at risk due to the increasing frequency and intensity of storms in the Caribbean. Sustainable financing is needed to mitigate the impacts of storms, scale-up recovery efforts, and increase the resilience of coral reefs and local communities. TNC is taking a coordinated approach by engaging government authorities, private sector and local communities to establish and facilitate successful post storm recovery efforts.

TNC invited public and private sector stakeholders in the BahamaReefs focal areas to participate in a series of virtual calls to learn about the Conservancy's post storm response model including financing options and provide initial feedback. Generally, meeting attendees were amenable to the concept of post storm response and financial solutions such as parametric reef insurance to fund recovery efforts. In 2023, TNC plans to hold meetings with key government agencies, insurers, the national trust fund and other stakeholders to build the case for reefs to be repaired and insured.

The GFCR also recommends TNC consider Grand Bahama as a priority site for reef insurance. Weller Development and Pegasus Capital Advisors (PCA) have initiated plans to site an eco-friendly boutique hotel in Grand Bahama. It is anticipated the property will be interested in parametric insurance to mitigate storm damage.

Output 3.2- Partnerships and training are facilitated to develop business models around restoration that are investable-In November, the Perry Institute for Marine Science (PIMS) successfully received approval and funding from the Blue Bridge to scale up Reef Rescue Network (RRN) operations and create a financially sustainable business model. Specifically, PIMS will use the funding from the GFCR to,

- consider alternative revenue streams for financing coral restoration through the network-making RRN sustainable and more profitable for partners;
- add new partners to the RRN to scale up impact; and
- build local capacity within the dive industry to restore degraded reefs.

PIMS' capacity building efforts will emphasize gender equality and empowering women to become PADI Dive Masters and Instructors.

Coral Vita is the only for-profit company in the BahamaReefs Pipeline. The company built the world's first commercial land-based coral farm for reef restoration in Freeport, Grand Bahama. Under **Output 3.4- Investments made into coral restoration-focused businesses-** Coral Vita will take a commercial approach



to unlock critically needed sustainable financing to support ecosystem-scale restoration. The land based farm will also serve as an educational center, R&D hub, and a revenue-generating eco-tourist attraction.

To unlock the GFCR funding, Coral Vita submitted several iterations of a project workplan for review and approval by TNC and the GFCR. Since then, the GFCR recommended Coral Vita couples its restoration services with an eco-friendly boutique investment in Grand Bahama led by Weller Development and Pegasus Capital Advisors. It is anticipated the Blue Bridge will approve Coral Vita's project and will provide an initial preparation grant in mid-2023.

B. Monitoring and Evaluation

During the reporting period, the GFCR collaborated with convening agents to draft a monitoring and evaluation guidance document for tracking program success. Concurrently, TNC developed a Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) for the BahamaReefs Program. The PMP outlines proposed targets, indicators of success, milestones, timelines for reporting, and includes a Logframe matrix to monitor the program's interventions. In June, a first draft of the PMP was submitted to the Fund for review and approval. At the same time there were staffing changes within TNC that left the project without an M&E officer.

In October, TNC recruited a new M&E officer, to finalize the PMP and lead the development of the monitoring, evaluation and learning component of the project. Since then, TNC and the Fund held several discussions on the draft GFCR M&E Guidance document, proposed PMP for the BahamaReefs Program and the way forward. Based on the GFCR's feedback and an updated list of Fund core indicators, TNC revised the BahamaReefs PMP and facilitated a virtual meeting with BahamaReefs Consortium Partners in December.

During the meeting, TNC shared with partners the GFCR's core indicators, reviewed the draft PMP, and discussed methodologies and timelines for data collection and reporting on the BahamaReefs Program. Based on partner feedback, the PMP was amended to include revised metrics for the GFCR's further consideration. TNC is currently waiting on the GFCR's list of finance indicators for the Investment Fund and final review of the PMP supported by UNEP.

As next steps, an in-person M&E meeting is planned for March 2023 to,

1. update consortium partners on GFCR M&E framework and indicators; and
2. agree on monitoring activities and the creation of an M&E working group.

The M&E working group will be responsible for coordinating monitoring activities and collecting and analyzing data for reporting back to the donor. A final PMP with revised project indicators, targets and timelines will be submitted to the GFCR for approval by June 2023. More information on project metrics can be found in section F of this report.

C. Protected Areas Management Effectiveness

Protected area management effectiveness remains a key priority of the BahamaReefs Program. TNC and UNCDF were in discussions with Blue Finance (BF) and BNT about developing and implementing tangible revenue streams for the effective management of four (4) MPAs around Andros Island, The Bahamas. Approximately, 4,161 hectares of reef will receive protection from the effective management of the four marine parks. And more than 7,530 community members are expected to benefit. The goal of the BF-BNT project is to increase the resilience of reef-dependent communities by protecting or enhancing ecosystem function/services and ecological processes of coral reefs, mangroves, seagrasses and other marine habitats within the Andros network.



It was envisioned Blue Finance would provide advisory and technical assistance, facilitate access to investments, develop sustainable business models to finance the MPAs, support local coordination and management, and identify and review social and environmental performance indicators for the parks. As the protected areas manager, BNT will have responsibility for monitoring and managing all activities in the MPAs and implementing park management plans. Unfortunately, BF and BNT were unable to agree on the scope of work for this project during the reporting period. It was agreed that BF and BNT will reconvene, agree on next steps and provide TNC and UNCDF with an update in early 2023.

D. Enabling Policy Environment

In April 2022, TNC executed a Technical Assistance Letter with the Ministry of the Environment & Natural Resources. The letter seeks to strengthen the working relationship between both parties, allow for sharing of scientific data, technical guidance/advice, policy support and outreach for the sustainable management and protection of key marine ecosystems such as coral reefs, mangroves, seagrass, etc. The agreement enables TNC to collaborate with The Bahamas Government on the development of the National Coral Reef Conservation Plan, co-management framework for the sustainable management of fisheries and MPAs, and provide technical support to improve the new Access Benefit Sharing permitting system. See Annex B. No other agreements were signed with local authorities or cooperatives during the reporting period. TNC is planning to hire a policy advisor in 2023 to advance the policy outcomes of the BahamaReefs Program.

E. Complementary Initiatives

The GEF project entitled, “Meeting the Challenge of 2020 in The Bahamas”, is a complimentary initiative that seeks to strengthen and integrate MPA management into broader landscape planning to reduce pressures on ecosystem services and biodiversity. This 5-year project was launched in 2019 with the support of UNEP and is funded by the Global Environment Facility. It is designed to improve the financial sustainability and effective management of MPAs; prevent, control and manage invasive alien species; manage human-biodiversity interfaces and promote the timely development, demonstration and financing of low-carbon technologies and mitigation options. The Conservancy is a contributor on the GEF 2020 Project- providing scientific expertise and technical support and other forms of in-kind and in-cash co-financing.

Similar to BahamaReefs, the GEF 2020 Project sites are located on the islands of Grand Bahama, Andros and Exuma. TNC intends to work closely with the BNT, a strategic partner on the GEF 2020 Project, to ensure both initiatives are aligned and are used to scale up impact within the focal areas rather than duplicate efforts.

Blue Action Lab is an emerging accelerator in Grand Bahama seeking to empower a network of industry leaders, impact investors, research institutes, non-profits and entrepreneurs to test, structure, finance and scale climate solutions and technology to mitigate the impacts of climate change. Its proponents are focused on revitalizing the economy of Grand Bahama, which was devastated by Hurricane Dorian and the global pandemic, and developing viable models to increase the resilience of coastlines, critical marine ecosystems and vulnerable communities. TNC has held several discussions with the Blue Action Lab to determine how best to collaborate and harmonize efforts to complement each other’s initiatives on the island of Grand Bahama. The Conservancy is committed to engaging Blue Action Lab in the upcoming reporting period and will explore formalizing a partnership through the BahamaReefs Program.



TNC was invited to serve on the project steering committee for the GEF full-size project, “Integrated Landscape Management for Addressing Land Degradation, Food Security and Climate Resilience Challenges in The Bahamas” or Integrated Landscape Management (ILM). The ILM Project was approved by UNEP in 2022 with the objective of enhancing climate-resilient food production across agricultural landscapes through sound Integrated Landscape Management and Land Degradation Neutrality approaches in The Bahamas. This initiative is being implemented by the Department of Environmental Planning & Protection (DEPP) on 7 islands including Grand Bahama, Abaco and Andros. TNC is well positioned to encourage project leads to consider synergies between BahamaReefs and the ILM Project. The Conservancy will encourage the use of a Ridge to Reef approach to reduce vulnerability and protect coastal ecosystems by mitigating environmental degradation in the uplands/ridge that impact mangroves, seagrass, coral reefs and coastal communities.

During the preparatory grant phase, TNC held several discussions with representatives from the UN SDG Joint Fund (UN Women) to scope the possibility of collaborating together to amplify SDG Goal# 5 (Gender Equality). In solidarity, the Conservancy attended the launch of the Joint SDG Programme entitled “Building Back Equal through Innovative Financing for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment for Bahamas” in May 2022. The Conservancy will re-engage representatives from UN Women in 2023 to advance discussions on how best to collaborate to meet the objectives of the GFCR Programme.

F. Indicator-Based Performance Assessment (Logical Framework)

OUTCOME	OUTPUT	TARGET INDICATORS (BY PROGRAMME CLOSE)	BASELINE MEASUREMENT (YEAR COLLECTED)	BASELINE SOURCE / COLLECTION METHOD	MILESTONE AS OF DECEMBER 2022	REMARKS	
Outcome 1: Improved management effectiveness of priority coral reef sites, including climate refugia	Output 1.1: Climate change refugia are identified and effectively managed within and outside existing MPAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate refugia identification completed in year 1 % area (ha) of reefs in associated ecosystems with effective management Target for this indicator will be measured based on increase of management effectiveness scoring after project implementation, which in turn will allow for calculation of % of coral reefs under improved management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2019 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BNT – combination of METT and RAPPAM survey methodology (https://tnc.box.com/s/v5617bvknd3l25gxp583k9b8kd5omvuu) A new baseline assessment shall be conducted in 2023. Assessment is contingent on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> submission of BNT’s new project proposal; MPA sites selected for climate smart management planning; and date agreement is executed between BNT and UNCDF/Blue Bridge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate refugia modelling completed for The Bahamas Results of model and maps shared with key stakeholders for feedback Mapping products updated and climate refugia priority sites selected based on partner input 	The Bahamas Government adapted its data collection tool for effective management of protected areas. A combination of METT, RAPPAM and IDB survey tools are being used	
	Output 1.2: Drivers of degradation within MPAs are identified and prioritized for intervention to support resilient coral reefs and adjacent communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Same indicator as above 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please see above 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please see above 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please see above 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	Preliminary discussions held with protected area managers to advance planning for climate smart management plans in 2023
	Output 1.3: Increased long-term funding for management of priority sites and capacity created to operate proceeds with	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grants co-financing leveraged. Target for this indicator is to achieve 1:1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2022 (0): the baseline for co-finance of Marine managed areas in The Bahamas is 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners logs (BNT)/ Other means – official documents TBD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GFCR approved voluntary opt-in mechanism to fund BPAF and effective management of protected areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	The baseline includes the amount of co-finance that project partners interventions are able to leverage

	new financial mechanisms (e.g., an endowment fund, MPA co-management model, etc.)	co-financing, matching GFCR financing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of additional / innovative revenue streams secured for priority sites/MPAs. Target: to be confirmed with the BNT. 	currently zero, since implementation has not started.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working draft of grant agreement to fund new financial mechanism for BPAF 	
	Output 1.4: Enabling policies are catalysed to support coral conservation and restoration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of policy instruments to protect coral reefs in The Bahamas, developed with project support. Target is 3 policy instruments developed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2022 (0) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners logs, government's logs and/or supporting letters. (count) The 3 project policy instruments include the Natl. Coral Reef Conservation Plan, policy framework for co-management of MPAs and fisheries, and climate smart management plans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting with stakeholders in government to advance discussion on effective management 	TNC will actively contribute to the drafting of the National Coral reef Conservation Plan during the project.	
Outcome 2: Livelihoods of reef-dependent communities are strengthened by reef-positive businesses	Output 2.1: A reef-positive business accelerator is designed and implemented for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reef positive Business accelerator designed and launched (target 1 instrument designed and launched) # of reef positive business incubated (target 25 businesses) # of women owned and operated businesses in Blue Economy (target 30% of businesses supported) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2022 (0) – the Business accelerator has not been designed and launched yet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners logs / (count) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TNC signed MOU with SBDC 	The Blue Economy Accelerator Report will be made available for consultation and shared with other countries as a model.	

	<p>Output 2.2: Reef-positive businesses receive investments (e.g., community-based organizations, larger businesses, etc.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of people trained (including women) (Target at least 25 people) • # of jobs created (# of livelihoods impacted) disaggregated by gender (target 216 new jobs) • # moorings deployed in Elizabeth Harbour (Target: at least 60 moorings) • Improvement in water quality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2022 (0). Progress based on dependency from outcome 2.1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners logs and other formal registries (count) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EHCP received grant and initial tranche of funding from GFCR 	
<p>Outcome 3: Coral reefs and associated ecosystems are restored to increase resilience</p>	<p>Output 3.1: Blue Carbon Resilience Credits (BCRC) methodology is tested in pilot sites and replicated if feasible</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • area (ha) of mangroves restored in project sites (target 5,000 ha) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2022 (0) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners logs / (count) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submitted policy brief to the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) on Article 6 and its implications for The Bahamas; • Provided OPM with technical advice on the new Climate Change and Carbon Markets Initiative Bill, 2022 • Mangrove restoration planning workshop completed • Completion of mangrove validation mapping on Abaco and Grand Bahama • Draft MOU to formalize partnerships with members of 	

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> mangrove restoration alliance Partners in alliance submitted a proposal for additional funding in response to an invitation by the GEF Small Grants Program 	
Output 3.2: Partnerships and training are facilitated to develop business models around restoration that are investable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reef fish biomass Live coral cover Other TBD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Previous assessments will be referenced for baseline data on Exuma, Grand Bahama, Andros and Abaco. TNC will work with PIMS to analyze existing data and identify indicators in 2023. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners logs / (count) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PIMS received grant and initial tranche of funding from GFCR 		
Output 3.3: Climate risk and resilience products, including reef and mangrove insurance, are developed, and launched	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of climate risk and resilience products developed (Target is 1) # of climate risk and resilience products launched (Target is 1) # of institutional arrangements and policies developed for reef insurance (Target: TBD) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2022 (0) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners logs / Government official documents when applicable (count) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritization of potential reef insurance sites based on spatial data and stakeholder consultations. Draft report submitted on response capacity to repair reef damage after a storm. Guide meets Bahamas context and needs. Contractor selected to conduct economic assessment of losses to The Bahamas economy and livelihoods as a result from hurricane reef damage. Report on mangrove insurance for the Caribbean and The Bahamas. Facilitated stakeholder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GFCR recommending reef insurance be packaged with Weller Development, which is planned for Grand Bahama 	

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consultations on post storm response and reef insurance for focal areas Preliminary legal assessment of laws and regulations governing mangrove and reef insurance in The Bahamas 	
	<p>Output 3.4: Investments made into coral restoration-focused businesses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment capital leveraged (Target TBD – Coral Vita) Reef fish biomass (see output 3.2) Live coral cover ((see output 3.2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2022 (0) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coral Vita submitted several iterations of draft workplan for TNC and UNCDF approval. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GFCR recommending Coral Vita provide restoration services for low-impact Weller Development in Grand Bahama

G. Reef Positive Solution Case Studies

During year 1, TNC collaborated with UNCDF to prioritize deals within the BahamaReefs Pipeline. Consortium partners submitted individual workplans and proposals to ensure alignment with the GFCR and BahamaReefs Outcomes. Two reef positive solutions were approved during the reporting period:

- Minimizing the ecological impact of tourism in Elizabeth Harbour led by the Elizabeth Harbour Conservation Partnership (EHCP); and
- Reef Rescue Network led by Perry Institute for Marine Science (PIMS).

Agreements with PIMS and EHCP were executed in November and funds were transferred to both organizations for implementation. It is expected that successes, best practices, and lessons learned from these solutions will be shared at the end of 2023. See Case Studies 1 & 2 below for additional details.

Case Study #1	
Programme Solution	Linked Programme Output/s
Minimizing the ecological impact of tourism in Elizabeth Harbour and Moriah Harbour Cay National Park	Output 2.2: Reef-positive businesses receive investments (e.g, community-based organizations, larger businesses, etc.)
Location Implemented	Implementing Partner/s
Elizabeth Harbour, Great Exuma	Elizabeth Harbour Conservation Partnership (EHCP)
Driver/s of Degradation	Target Stakeholder/s or Beneficiary/ies
This reef positive solution will aim to improve management and water quality in Elizabeth Harbour by minimizing the impacts of boating tourism to seagrass beds and coral reefs. EHCP will install mooring fields and provide pump-out services to watercraft operators using the harbour.	Watercraft operators
Actual Result/s to Date	
N/A	
Expected Results and Outlook	
Reduction in pollution inflows and damage to seabed from vessel operators. EHCP has not committed to any other financial instruments beyond the initial preparation grant.	
Stakeholder Testimonials	
TBD	
Related Initiatives	Co-Financing and Capital
Potential collaborators include BNT, PIMS, and SBDC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USD\$30,000.00 committed as co-finance (grants) by private donor to complete benthic habitat study for Elizabeth Harbour, Exuma. • No revenue generated to-date. • Projected revenue <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Year 1: USD\$100,000 o Year 2: USD\$175,000 o Year 3+: USD\$200,000

Case Study #1	
Best Practices and Lessons Learned	
TBD	
Links to supporting media	
TBD	

Case Study #2	
Programme Solution	Linked Programme Output/s
Reef Rescue Network- Deliver capacity building on reef restoration, business planning and marketing for local dive shops	Output 3.2: Partnerships and training are facilitated to develop business models around restoration that are investable
Location Implemented	Implementing Partner/s
Nationwide	Perry Institute for Marine Science (PIMS)
Driver/s of Degradation	Target Stakeholder/s or Beneficiary/ies
Reduction in coral disease and climatic impacts.	Dive shops, NGOs and other tourism related businesses
Actual Result/s to Date	
N/A	
Expected Results and Outlook	
Funding during the first 2 years will be used to (1) expand capacity of the Reef Rescue Network by adding new partners; (2) create a sustainable program by making coral restoration more profitable; and (3) build local capacity for coral restoration within the dive industry, including an increased involvement of local dive masters with a focus on gender equity.	
Stakeholder Testimonials	
TBD	
Related Initiatives	Co-Financing and Capital
Potential collaborators include Coral Vita, BNT, and EHCP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USD\$592,500.00 committed as co-finance (grants) through private-public funding to build capacity and develop marketing and business plans for the Reef Rescue Network (RRN). • No revenue generated to-date. • Projected revenue \$USD3,000,000.00 million annually.
Best Practices and Lessons Learned	
TBD	

Case Study #2

Links to supporting media

TBD

UNCDF and TNC will prioritize review and approval of the remaining deals in the first half of 2023.

H. Gender Mainstreaming

In year 2, The Nature Conservancy will develop and implement a Gender Action Plan. The BahamaReefs Program will seek to create economic opportunities for women while encouraging gender equality through project interventions and solutions. The project management plan will include specific gender metrics and indicators. These will be monitored and tracked under Outcome 2 as seen below.

Linked Programme Outcome	Objective	Action	Indicator	Milestone 2022	–	Remarks
Outcome 2: Livelihoods of reef-dependent communities are strengthened by reef-positive businesses	Project aims to address issues of gender and social inclusion with clear metrics, timelines, and delivery routes (e.g., more economic opportunities for women)	Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership. The Reef Rescue Network and the BNT-Blue Finance project. have targets for women economic empowerment. The Blue Economy Programme Accelerator will also adopt a gender criterion in the selection of businesses to receive support.	No. of women and men reporting awareness and understanding of MPA plans, rules and regulations (existing and expansion plans)	Roles and responsibilities (clarity and appropriateness of governing and policy frameworks) with local employment favoured and gender balanced		

[See Annex E: Template on Gender Analysis/ Assessment and Gender Action Plan](#)

III. Program Governance & Management

A. Program Governance

TNC established an internal Project Management Team (PMT) at the beginning of the year. The PMT met weekly to discuss program progress, breakdown the work, resolve roadblocks, clarify issues and agree on next steps. The team was composed of the BahamaReefs Project Manager, National Coordinator, Northern Caribbean Program Director, M&E officer, and the Director of Development for NatureVest.

TNC also participated in weekly meetings with UNCDF to review and provide feedback on partner workplans and prioritize the deals within the BahamaReefs Pipeline. Routine working meetings were held with each consortium partner to refine workplans and provide feedback. TNC, GFCR and UNCDF collaborated in monthly check-in meetings during the reporting period to discuss progress, address challenges, identify solutions and share project updates.

Key decisions made during the reporting period include,

- Consortium partners to submit individual workplans for review and feedback as part of the pipeline prioritization process;
- UNCDF to execute agreements directly with each of the pipeline partners. TNC to provide language for the agreements to ensure partners meet GFCR requirements;
- Consortium partners to receive preparatory grants to assist with the development of full project and structuring revenue streams;
- Deals that may be impacted by The Bahamas Government's permitting system should identify and prioritize work streams that are not dependent on permit approvals;
- Pipeline partners need financial support with developing revenue generation models for their projects. TNC not best positioned to provide financial guidance to partners. UNCDF to provide guidance and support through its technical facility.
- TNC deprioritized "Taking Blue Carbon Credits to Market" due to government mandate. According to The Bahamas Government, the Office of the Prime Minister and its contractors have the exclusive right to explore the development and sale of Blue Carbon Credits in The Bahamas.
- TNC prioritized Grand Bahama as a reef insurance site to support Weller Development and Pegasus Capital Advisors Investment based on GFCR's recommendation; and
- Coral Vita to restructure its project proposal to lay the foundation for providing commercial restoration services for the Weller Development and Pegasus Capital Advisors Investment in Grand Bahama.

The BahamaReefs Project Steering Committee will be established in year 2 of the program and will be co-chaired by the GFCR and TNC. The steering committee is intended to provide strategic guidance, programme oversight, feedback, and approval of the BahamaReefs Program workplans and budgets, technical and financial reports.

B. Program Management

Several adjustments/changes to the BahamaReefs Workplan & Budget occurred during the reporting period:

- Activity 1.1.1: Climate change refugia and level of current protection assessment- Originally, TNC allocated USD\$15,000.00 to hire a contractor to lead the modelling and mapping of climate refugia sites in The Bahamas. However, the Conservancy used USD\$1,980.00 as co-finance to pay for this activity. Considering the modelling work for the entire Bahamas is complete, the USD\$15,000 can be reallocated where there is a shortfall within the budget i.e. grant to BPAF.
- Initially, TNC planned to support BPAF in two phases: a) Activity 1.3.1: Completing an assessment and developing roadmaps for new national and regional financial mechanisms to mobilize additional resources to effectively manage MPAs; and b) Activity 1.3.2: Funding the implementation of the most promising financial mechanism(s) identified during the assessment.

In discussions with BPAF, TNC was informed of an emerging opportunity BPAF wished to leverage before completing the full assessment. TNC reached out to the GFCR for guidance. After some deliberation, the GFCR approved the immediate use of project funds to finance the new financial mechanism. This change has a few implications for the project. First, BPAF will receive a grant to fund both activities concurrently. Secondly, BPAF will exhaust the funds allocated to implement phase two of the work without having the findings and recommendations of the assessment. Thirdly, BPAF requested an additional six thousand dollars (USD\$6,600) to implement both streams of work. Originally, TNC budgeted USD\$80,000 for both activities. Therefore, funds will have to be reallocated from another budget line to cover the shortfall. TNC is recommending a portion of the excess funds under Activity 1.1.1 be reallocated to support this stream of work.

- Activity 3.1.4: Take Blue Carbon Resilience Credits to Market- Due to The Bahamas Government's position on exclusive management rights of carbon assets, TNC will focus on providing scientific and technical advice, mapping mangrove habitats, implementing the feasibility study for project pilot sites and restoring degraded habitats through the mangrove restoration partnership/alliance on the islands of Grand Bahama and Abaco. The Conservancy will continue to softly engage the government to determine if it has changed its position on the management of carbon assets.
- Activity 3.2.1: Deliver capacity building on reef restoration, business planning and marketing for dive shops part of the Reef Rescue Network (RRN)- Originally TNC agreed to transfer a grant to the Perry Institute for Marine Science to fund the sustainable development of the Reef Rescue Network. However, after further consideration TNC recommended that the funds for the RRN flow through UNCDF. Both UNCDF and the GFCR agreed. Additionally, TNC allocated USD\$45,560 in salaries to manage the grant and the engagement with PIMS. Note, this amount of funding is no longer needed to support this work. TNC is recommending reallocating most of these funds to other budget line items i.e. developing communications assets, co-management of fisheries and MPAs, etc.

C. Program Operations

Human resources

During the first half of the reporting period, there were significant changes in the BahamaReefs Project Management Unit (PMU) team composition. In April, Ms. Shenique Albury-Smith was promoted to Deputy Director of the Caribbean Division. A few months later, NatureVest's Director of Development and the BahamaReefs M&E Officer left the project to pursue other professional opportunities. These team members were instrumental in the early success of the BahamaReefs Program especially during proposal development and the initial project implementation. This reduction in project staffing has interrupted, slowed and strained program progress.

TNC informed the GFCR of these staffing changes, reprioritized program activities and recruited new team members. In February, a National Coordinator was hired to assist with project activities and provide support to the BahamaReefs Project Manager. A Communications officer was retained in June to lead the development and implementation of the project's communications and media tactics. In the fall, TNC recruited a new M&E officer to lead the development of the monitoring, evaluation and learning component of the project. The Conservancy is aiming to recruit and onboard a Conservation Finance Specialist by the second half of 2023.

Knowledge sharing and capacity building

Local communities and actors in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) need considerable levels of investment, capacity building and support to successfully meet the requirements and expectations of the GFCR Programing. Specifically, consortium partners require technical assistance to develop and implement revenue generation models for their reef interventions/solutions. A technical assistance facility should be deployed to help consortium partners incorporate blended finance and innovative financial solutions into projects. TNC will reengage NatureVest in YR2 to obtain financial advisory services for the BahamaReefs Program and its pipeline partners.

Processes and Procedures

To advance project planning and implementation, TNC met with the GFCR and UNCDF monthly. The Conservancy also participated in weekly meetings with UNCDF to prioritize deals in the project pipeline. Working meetings were scheduled with consortium partners to provide updates, discuss project workplans, resolve roadblocks, clarify issues and agree on next steps.

No other formal processes or procedures were employed during the reporting period. However, TNC intends to implement a formal system for screening new pipeline opportunities in YR2. The program is considering implementing a "call for proposals" and review period for streamlining and managing this aspect of the program.

Systems and Technology

No formal systems were implemented to accelerate project implementation or mitigate inefficiencies. However, a camera was procured to assist the project's Communications Specialist with capturing events, highlighting project partners and champions, documenting program process and capturing major wins.

COVID-19 response

In response to COVID19, TNC predominately engaged partners virtually to advance program activities and ensure operational continuity. More than 80 stakeholders were virtually reached during the reporting period. Stakeholders represented a diverse grouping of actors within the Blue Economy.

The Conservancy also organized and facilitated an in-person mangrove restoration workshop on the island of Grand Bahama in September. Approximately, 35 participants attended the workshop. COVID-19 protocols were observed to increase the likelihood of workshop success and reduce the spread of the novel corona virus.

IV. Resource Mobilisation

A. Resource Mobilisation Efforts - Grants

During YR1, a total of USD\$1,145,480.00 of combined grant co-financing was committed and or mobilized from the public and private sector in support of BahamaReefs Program Outcomes. A breakdown of the resources that were mobilized are listed below:

- **Outcome 1**
 - USD\$1,980.00 of private funding leveraged as co-finance (grants) to complete climate refugia modelling for The Bahamas. Funds expended and climate modelling completed.
 - USD\$20,000.00 committed as co-finance (grants) by donor (Bloomberg) to support the development of a Natl. Coral Reef Conservation Plan. Funds in-hand and available for use.
- **Outcome 2**
 - USD\$30,000.00 committed as co-finance (grants) by private donor to complete benthic habitat study for Elizabeth Harbour, Exuma. Benthic study pending.
- **Outcome 3**
 - USD\$150,000.00 committed as co-finance (grants) by public funder (GEF Small Grants Programme) to scale mangrove restoration partnership on the islands of Grand Bahama and Abaco. Approval pending for disbursement of funds for mangrove restoration partnership.
 - USD\$176,000.00 of philanthropic funding leveraged (TBI) as co-finance (grants) to test Blue Carbon Methodology at pilot sites in Grand Bahama and Abaco and scale mangrove restoration partnership. Funds currently in use to advance this work.
 - USD\$592,500.00 committed as co-finance (grants) through private-public funding to build capacity and develop marketing and business plans for the Reef Rescue Network (RRN). The funds are currently being leveraged to scale the RRN and design a financially sustainable business model for implementation.
 - USD\$175,000.00 of philanthropic funding (AXA XL) leveraged as co-finance (grants) to complete coral and mangrove insurance feasibility study for FL, Mexico and The Bahamas. Funds expended to complete insurance feasibility study.

B. Resource Mobilisation Efforts - Investment

This data is unavailable as the program was primarily focused on project planning and pipeline prioritization for much of the reporting period.



C. Resource Mobilisation Efforts - Revenue

This information not yet available as consortium partners are in the preliminary stages of implementing work agreed upon and as outlined in grants received through the Blue Bridge Window. Revenues have not yet been derived by reef positive solutions and project interventions.

V. Communications and Visibility

A. Communications

During the reporting period, TNC used several platforms and mediums to bring awareness to the challenge of coral reef degradation, raise the profile of the BahamaReefs Program, and solicit local support and identify project champions. The primary avenues used to reach stakeholder groups were local media outlets, social media platforms, and messaging apps. Project information was also posted to Trello and Ubuntu. Shareable communications products were created during Year 1 of the project, which included articles, photo essays and short video interviews.

To increase community awareness and support, TNC shared presentations with audiences from various sectors. These included key government agencies, civic organizations, corporate Bahamas, financial institutions, and the public.

Analytics for television news coverage revealed that the story covering the launch of the Blue Economy Accelerator Program reached 55k households on Cable Bahamas, 22k households on Flow TV, 2k on Youtube Live, 900 web viewers, 800 live viewers on Facebook, and 200 live viewers on ZNS App.

In December 2022, TNC recruited a Regional Communications Content and Social Media Specialist, who will be responsible for TNC Caribbean's social media management, content creation and analytics. This new hire will support Michelle Butler, BahamaReefs Communications Officer, with developing and implementing the project's communications campaign in early 2023.

B. Visibility

External Media Coverage

Within the reporting year, the BahamaReefs Program was featured in a number of external media outlets. In June of 2022, TNC attended the UN Oceans Conference with Hon. Vaughn Miller, The Bahamas Minister of Environment and Natural Resources. Minister Miller highlighted the government's commitment to prioritize coral reef conservation through blended finance. Reference was also made to the partnership between the Government of The Bahamas and TNC to tackle coral reef decline through the launch of the BahamaReefs Program. This event was featured in the evening newscast of The Broadcasting Corporation of The Bahamas and on its webpage.

Link to media feature:

[Blue Carbon Project being developed for The Bahamas - ZNS BAHAMAS](#)

Another highlight for the BahamaReefs Program was the strategic partnership forged between TNC and the Access Accelerator Small Business Development Centre (AASBDC). In November 2022, TNC signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with AASBDC, which will encourage the sustainable development of the Blue Economy by supporting investments in reef positive businesses. The MOU signing ceremony was covered by several media outlets including three of the leading local television



networks: The Broadcasting Corporation of The Bahamas (ZNS), Cable 12, and Jones Communications. This story was also published by The Nassau Guardian and The Tribune, two local newspapers. A featured article was posted on the official webpage of the Government of The Bahamas.

Links to media features:

[MOU Signed Between Nature Conservancy and SBDC - Our News](#)

[SBDC receives funding for blue economy accelerator program - The Nassau Guardian](#)

[Partnership to give \\$400k boost for 'blue economy' | The Tribune \(tribune242.com\)](#)

[The Nature Conservancy and SBDC partner for sustainable Blue Economy business initiatives -](#)

[Government - News \(bahamas.gov.bs\)](#)

[Small business tie-up eyed for green, blue economies | The Tribune \(tribune242.com\)](#)

In November 2022 at COP27 in Egypt, TNC's Deputy Director for the Caribbean Division, Shenique Albury-Smith, and the Bahamas Program Director, Marcia Musgrove, both presented during key events and panel discussions, highlighting the BahamaReefs Program. Their presentations were carried by a number of media outlets.

Link to media features:

[Coral Reef Rescue Initiative | News | Summary: CoP27 Premiere Coral Reef Event - Adaptation Solutions for Coral Nations](#)

[Adaptation Solutions for #Coral Nations - YouTube](#)

Published Program Content

During the reporting period, content published included stories on the TNC & AASBDC Blue Economy Partnership and the Bahamas Institute of Chartered Accountants (BICA) Multi-coloured Economy forum. Additionally, several interviews were conducted with Bahamas Mangrove Restoration Partners.

Event Features

In July 2022, TNC presented at the Rotary Club of East Nassau on the protection and restoration of corals using a blended finance approach. The presentation was delivered by Frederick Arnett, BahamaReefs Project Manager.

In September 2022, TNC hosted a mangrove restoration workshop in Grand Bahama, and invited ten local partner organizations and agencies to participate. The purpose of the meeting was to garner local support and obtain commitments to meet the objectives of the BahamaReefs Program specifically under Outcome 3. Partners were encouraged to coordinate research and restoration efforts to rehabilitate mangrove habitats destroyed by Hurricane Dorian in Grand Bahama and Abaco.

In November 2022, Frederick Arnett presented at The Bahamas Institute of Chartered Accountants (BICA) Conference, on safeguarding the future of corals through innovative investments in reef positive businesses and other interventions within the Blue Economy.

Primary Creative Assets

The BahamaReefs Program created and disseminated a Climate Refugia Write-up and Post Storm Response informational sheet during the reporting period. In addition, TNC funded the creation and circulation of coral reef educational public service announcements on social media. The program also began drafting a BahamaReefs Factsheet. The factsheet addresses the challenge of coral reef decline and



offers blended finance as a possible solution through the BahamaReefs Program. It is anticipated the BahamaReefs Fact sheet will be completed in Q1 of 2023.

Reef Positive Solutions Case Studies

TNC in collaboration with implementing partners, will showcase the program's various reef positive solutions using the REEF+ platform. This will allow the BahamaReefs Program to obtain greater reach and visibility while contributing towards the GFCR's pool of solutions. Knowledge-sharing will be prioritized as new information and breakthroughs become available. A detailed accounting of project findings, successes and challenges will be documented on the platform, which other programs can reference as they seek to gain support for their interventions.

TNC is developing the business case for reefs to be repaired after storm events. Last fall, TNC facilitated several virtual stakeholder consultations to socialize the idea of building post storm response capacity through innovative financing mechanisms such as insurance. Additional consultations with insurers, government and other key stakeholders are planned for early 2023.

Speakers identified and featured as program Champions

In year 1 of the project, two champions were identified. The first champion to support and promote the BahamaReefs Program was the Director of Marine Resources, Gregory Bethel. Mr. Bethel endorsed BahamaReefs and its innovative approach through a [letter of support](#) for the protection, restoration and sustainable financing of coral reef interventions and the effective management of MPAs.

The Bahamas Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Hon. Vaughn Miller, is another champion of BahamaReefs. Minister Miller has publicly stated his support of the project, and has raised the profile of the BahamaReefs Program through local and global media platforms.

Excel Link: [Bahamas_Programme_Champions_Coalition_Roster.xlsx \(live.com\)](#)

2023 Communications Strategy

In 2023, TNC will establish a brand identity for BahamaReefs Program through a communications campaign using an array of media assets and tools developed in-house for national, regional and global audiences. The goal of the BahamaReefs campaign is to influence positive attitudes around the protection of climate resilient corals, the effective management of MPAs, and garner support for blended finance approaches. The campaign will highlight the need for long-term coral conservation success, MPA management effectiveness and the importance of safeguarding livelihoods within the Blue Economy. A social media blitz will be used to target community members, policymakers, and key stakeholders. BahamaReefs communications assets such as videos, written stories, photography, infographics, and press releases will incorporate the voices of pipeline partners, local champions, and respected community leaders.

These communications tools will be used to illustrate how innovative finance mechanisms translate to long-term coral conservation success. They will also promote food security, investments in reef positive businesses, project interventions, and increased resilience of coral reefs and reef dependent communities. See Annex C.



VI. Risk Management and Mitigation

Event / Risk	Cause	Impact/s	Risk Category	Risk Level	Mitigation / Management Measures	Remarks
Permit approvals to restore degraded coral reefs and/or to scale-up coral restoration efforts delayed or denied	<p>Government agency understaffed and challenged with processing permits in a timely and consistent manner</p> <p>Online permitting system experiencing technical glitches</p> <p>Co-implementers permit applications lacking necessary information</p> <p>Delays in signing of permit agreements by co-implementers due to certain clauses and permit fees</p>	Aspects of program (especially interventions) significantly delayed or halted	Regulatory	<p>L= 4</p> <p>I= 4</p> <p>Substantial</p>	<p>GFCR & CA to engage government and advocate for and impress importance of programme and potential benefits to people and nature</p> <p>CA to engage government and provide technical support where possible</p> <p>Co-implementers to prioritize and advance aspects of work not dependent on government approvals and permits</p> <p>Co-implementers constructively engage government officials and follow-up routinely</p> <p>Co-implementers ensure permit applications meet all government requirements</p>	The timeline regarding government approvals uncertain but the governing body is taking steps to address capacity needs.



<p>Coral refugia and project implementation sites may be subject to the spread of SCTLD and other coral diseases</p>	<p>Act of God</p>	<p>Loss of coral refugia</p> <p>Increase in prevalence of degraded reefs</p> <p>Hesitancy of government to permit coral restoration activities</p> <p>Positive benefits to coral reefs reduced</p> <p>Increased vulnerability of corals and reef-dependent communities</p>	<p>Operational</p>	<p>L= 4 I= 4 Substantial</p>	<p>Co-implementers to select intervention sites free of SCTLD</p> <p>Co-implementers to apply antibiotic treatments to project sites to mitigate infections (if/when necessary)</p>	<p>Uncertain. Timeline regarding how corals will respond to treatment and efficacy of treatment uncertain</p>
<p>Launch and early implementation of GFCR funded programme subject to scope creep and uncertainty</p>	<p>Lack of clarity on administrative processes and procedures</p> <p>Lack of program guidelines and supporting templates</p> <p>Shifting priorities</p> <p>Unclear roles and responsibilities</p>	<p>Organizational performance below optimal</p> <p>Staff morale negatively impacted</p> <p>Reputational risks</p>	<p>Organizational & Reputational</p>	<p>L= 4 I= 4 Substantial</p>	<p>GFCR should invest in internal project planning before embarking on implementation</p> <p>Ensure program requirements are communicated early and clearly</p> <p>All parties should hire/recruit staff as necessary to support program</p>	



	Limited capacity and technical/administrative support available early on					
CA and partner assets used to implement program are likely to be impacted by hurricanes/tropical cyclones	Act of God	Exposure/loss of assets and people due to flooding, storm surge and high winds Program implementation delayed or halted Increased vulnerability of reef-dependent communities	Safety & Security	L=3 I= 3 Moderate	Secure people and assets prior to storm Develop and implement contingency plans and emergency response plans	
Uncertainties related to country climate commitments and eligible carbon market activities	Ongoing UNFCCC COP discussions around NDCs, carbon markets and avoiding double-counting	Work on carbon market project registration delayed or halted	Organizational , Reputational & Regulatory	L=3 I= 3 Moderate	Continue to engage UNFCC Focal Point for updates and follow COP27 outcomes Proceed with mangrove restoration and monitoring plans and permit apps	
Changes in staffing and time required to recruit new project staff might hamper program implementation	Loss of key project staff Extended timeline to recruit new staff	Program progress interrupted and negatively impacted Reduced time for delivering project	Organizational	L=3 I= 3 Moderate	Adjust/redistribute staff responsibilities as necessary Seek internal support to temporarily fill gaps until	



	<p>Limited number of qualified persons available for recruitment</p>	<p>activities and results</p> <p>Quality of project deliverables negatively impacted</p> <p>Possible financial losses within the project</p> <p>Reputational consequence</p>			<p>new hires have been recruited</p> <p>Streamline and improve hiring processes</p> <p>Expand recruitment efforts through partner networks</p>	
--	--	--	--	--	--	--

VII. Adaptive Management

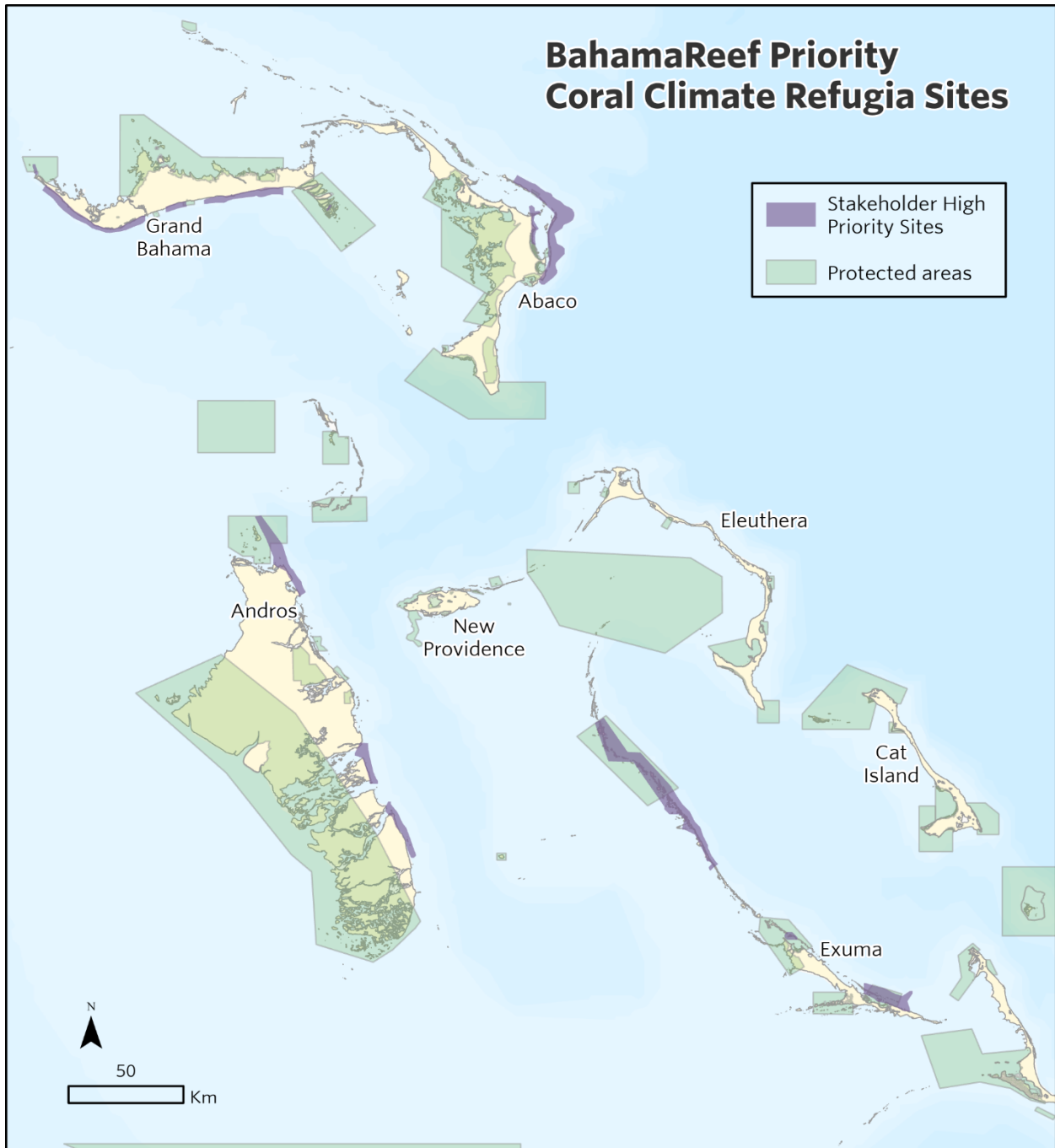
Best Practices & Lessons Learned

- The concept of using blended finance, innovative financial solutions, and business models to address the climate crisis is foreign to traditional actors. Many stakeholders struggle with “selling restoration as a service” or developing business models to protect or restore natural capital and assets e.g. corals, mangroves, seagrasses. This approach raises suspicion, distrust and confusion among government, NGOs, not-for-profits, scientists, conservation organizations and local communities. The GFCR, Blue Bridge and Convening Agents should invest significant resources and time in educating, training and preparing stakeholders and communities to become “investment ready” i.e. technical assistance facility, financial seminars/webinars, mentorship, etc.
- The funder should be realistic and flexible about project timelines, expectations and program requirements when working in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) i.e. availability of “shovel ready projects”; social, cultural and economic fabric of SIDS; challenges/limitations impacting project partners in developing countries; overly complex monitoring and evaluation frameworks and data collection methods are too burdensome for local communities, complicate relationships and hinder project progress; “BIG WINS” and “Reef positive outcomes” do not happen overnight rather they are the result of sustained effort over many years.
- Where deficient, pipeline partners should seek to build internal capacity to leverage and incorporate sustainable financing into project interventions. During pipeline prioritization and in discussions with partners, it was evident project partners were seeking to conduct business as usual i.e. secure grant funding for coral conservation or restoration activities. Partners were encouraged to focus project funding on designing financially viable and sustainable reef positive solutions. In many instances, it was recommended that pipeline partners recruit business development officers to guide their organizations through the business innovation and planning process.
- Although TNC serves as the Convening Agent, pipeline partners have no incentive to share data and reports without a formal agreement. This will likely create a reporting challenge considering TNC is tasked with sharing program updates with the funder. To mitigate this problem the Conservancy recommends the following:
 - o UNCDF take on a larger reporting role i.e. document and report on pipeline partner progress to the GFCR; or
 - o UNCDF execute side letters directing pipeline partners to share all project data and reports with The Nature Conservancy.
- Sufficient time and resources should be allocated for project planning and pipeline prioritization. The right level of investment is needed to develop robust project proposals, for successful project startup and implementation. For example, BahamaReefs benefitted from project teams and pipeline partners thinking through and clearly articulating project proposals and activities before embarking on implementation.
- Agreeing on project deliverables, breaking down the work, clarifying roles and responsibilities, holding team members accountable, engaging constructively and facilitating effective meetings



are principles, techniques and tools necessary for building highly effective teams and increasing the likelihood of program success.

Annex A: BahamaReefs Priority Coral Climate Refugia Sites



Annex B: Technical Assistance Request



MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES

Charlotte House
Shirley & Charlotte Streets
P.O. Box N-4849
Nassau, NP
The Bahamas
Telephone: (242) 322-6005/6

Shenique Albury-Smith
Northern Caribbean Program Director
The Nature Conservancy
Nassau, Bahamas

April 6, 2022

RE: Technical Assistance Request

Dear Mrs. Albury-Smith:

By this letter, the Ministry of The Environment and Natural Resources officially requests technical advice and assistance from The Nature Conservancy in connection with our efforts to strengthen the legal, legislative, regulatory, and policy framework for the protection of the environment and natural resources in The Bahamas. As part of your advice and assistance, I understand you will conduct an assessment of the legislative, regulatory, and policy framework concerning activities related to key marine ecosystems such as mangroves and coral reefs, including outreach to affected groups to determine how sustainable management can be strengthened.

We are interested not only in factual information that you can provide to us, but also in your analysis of the implementation process, relevant processes that may be adopted to assist in the roll out of new legislation, regulation, and policy on the protection of the environment and natural resources in The Bahamas, and feedback on strategies and resources available to enact such measures. This includes understanding the public's priorities and attitudes concerning various environmental matters and suggested new measures for The Bahamas.

In addition, the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources would like to take this opportunity to request that you continue to provide the technical advice and assistance in this area and on related matters in the future.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David Cates".

David Cates
Permanent Secretary

Cc: Dr. Rhianna Neely-Murphy, PhD. Director (Acting), Department of Environmental Planning and Protection.

Annex C: Communications Campaign

Campaign objectives:

- increase community, private sector, policymaker and key stakeholder support for long-term coral reef conservation;
- raise awareness about opportunities for the private sector and government to invest in reef positive businesses and interventions;
- promote policy frameworks that facilitate innovative finance mechanisms for sustainable coral conservation funding, reduce drivers of coral reef degradation, encourage co-management of fisheries and improve management of MPAs;
- promote blended finance approaches and sustainable livelihoods in the Blue Economy;
- elevate case studies of reef positive solutions as models that can be replicated globally to address coral degradation, support MPA management effectiveness and large-scale coral reef protection and restoration, and build more resilient reef-dependent communities.

Target Audiences: General Public | Local Communities | NGOs | Reef Positive Businesses | Government Officials |

<p>Increase support for taking immediate action to address coral degradation through sustainable financing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Highlight the importance, dependency and benefits of coral reefs to The Bahamas ● Educate stakeholders about the drivers of reef decline ● Promote innovative blended financing as a solution to coral reef decline ● Socialize the idea of investing in reef positive businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Publish Op-Ed on the economic benefits of climate resilient coral and the negative impacts of coral reef decline to economy ● Draft and circulate messaging Around: “taking action NOW” ● Brand 2023 as the year for recovery, protection and sustainable financing of coral reefs
<p>Build trust and collaboration among stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strategically engage government, reef dependent communities, industry leaders through targeted stakeholder engagement initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create educational products targeting key stakeholder groups ● Share campaign content with partners and other NGOs via email marketing ● Hold a policy maker breakfast to target government reps. ● Participate in local community initiatives to forge relationships

<p>Raise the profile of the BahamaReefs Program including coral interventions, reef positive businesses, sustainable financing for conservation, the effective management of MPAs, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Promote BahamaReefs through national and international media outlets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Deliver presentations on BahamaReefs Program at various forums, conferences, meetings, etc. ● Publish BahamaReefs article in Nature Magazine ● Create shareable assets (videos, info-graphics) ● Share BahamaReefs Factsheet with local and international media (interviews, press release) ● Publish success stories in print and online media Op-Eds ● Pitch BahamaReefs to colleagues, partners, and key stakeholders ● Coordinate news segments with local media houses i.e. ZNS, Cable Bahamas and Eyewitness News
---	--	---



Annex D: Template for Reef Positive Solution Case Studies

Case Study #1	
Program Solution	Linked Program Output/s
Location Implemented	Implementing Partner/s
Driver/s of Degradation	Target Stakeholder/s or Beneficiary/ies
Actual Result/s to Date	
Expected Results and Outlook	
Stakeholder Testimonials	
Related Initiatives	Co-Financing and Capital
Best Practices and Lessons Learned	
Links to supporting media	

Annex E: Gender Mainstreaming

Gender Analysis/ Assessment and Gender Action Plan

Refer to the Guidance note on the Gender Action Plan for information on how to complete this section.

Gender action plan template

An action plan is developed using the information gathered during the gender analysis and should include for each output of the programme:

- an objective related to promoting gender quality and women's empowerment
- the associated action indicator
- actor or institution responsible.

Presented below is a hypothetical case from the Blue Action Gender Guide.

Hypothetical Case:

A project involves the expansion of a marine protected area with new fishing restrictions. A gender-responsive approach would first analyse the patterns of resource use of women and men in these areas, understand the gender-differentiated impacts of the proposed interventions and identify any gaps or potential risks for either group, along with a plan to remedy identified gaps and risks. Imagine the gender analysis revealed that women have not been engaged in MPA discussions due to cultural and social barriers, yet new restrictions will affect their gleaning activities, which in turn impacts their income and household food security. The overall goal of the project is to improve MPA management and enforcement of regulations, ensure equitable social outcomes for all stakeholders and increase fish biomass.

Objective	Action	Indicator	Actor/Institution Responsible
Output 1: MPA management plans and expanded areas are established			
Strengthen women's participation in MPA management and ensure that all resource users' needs, ideas and priorities are reflected in plans.	Invite networks of local groups, including women's groups and cooperatives, among others, to help disseminate information and strengthen participation of women in communities, making information and communications materials appropriate and accessible (including consideration of language and illiteracy).	No. of women and men reporting awareness and understanding of MPA plans, rules and regulations (existing and expansion plans)	TBD (e.g. implementation NGO + local partners)
	Facilitate participatory capacity building sessions, workshops, and trainings to encourage knowledge sharing and ensure women's and men's	No. of women and men in attendance at workshops/trainings/discussions (50% female participation), with the majority (>75%) reporting	TBD (e.g. implementation NGO + local partner)

	priorities, needs and ideas are respected and recognised in MPA plan development/expansion and implementation.	that their concerns were adequately taken into account.	
Output 2: Resources, instruments, and capacities for the implementation of management plans of marine protected areas and their sustainable use are improved			
Contribute to shifting social and cultural norms that shape harmful ideas of masculinity and the marginalisation of women in resource management, access and control, in order to improve sustainability of resource use and mitigate risks of any unintentional consequences on the safety and health of women and girls.	Facilitate (with local partners) sensitisation workshops and discussions in communities, particularly with men, about gender equality and empowerment of women in marine resource management to help inform locally appropriate initiatives, ensuring community buy-in.	No. of individuals participating in sensitisation workshops and changes in beliefs/behaviours surrounding gender equality and masculinity/femininity.	TBD (e.g. implementation NGO + local partner)
Strengthen understanding of the differentiated social and cultural factors impacting women's and men's participation in, awareness and knowledge of conservation activities, and develop gender-responsive approaches to address these issues	Allocate adequate resources in the overall budget for gender analyses and assessments to fully understand the gender-differentiated impacts of MPAs plans and project outcomes	Allocation of resources within project budget to effectively deliver on gender-responsive measures (including activities in implementation, monitoring and evaluation, communication, and knowledge dissemination (e.g., costs associated with staffing and capacity building required to train staff or conduct gender activities and stakeholder consultations)	TBD (e.g. implementation NGO + local partner)
Output 3: Sustainable livelihoods are promoted			
Determine appropriate mitigation and adaption strategies that will not harm or diminish the ability for women or men to meet their income and livelihood needs	Collect data on gender-specific fishing/gleaning practices, such as gear used, seasons spent harvesting, and species targeted, as well as whether catch is used	No. of men and women engaged in different activities along fish value chain / utilisation of marine or coastal resources, as well as income earned from these activities or their	TBD (e.g. implementation NGO + local partners)

	primarily for income or for household subsistence	contribution to household food security (disaggregated by gender, age, ethnicity, etc.)	
Determine appropriate strategies and opportunities for women and men to engage in sustainable livelihoods, without undermining or negatively impacting the marine-based livelihood of either group	Collect data on viable supplemental or alternative livelihoods for women and men, through gender-sensitive communication channels that respect local cultural norms but also reflect the interests and needs of women and men respectively	No. of women, no. of men consulted and subsequently trained in supplemental or alternative livelihoods, with the majority (>75%) reporting satisfaction and benefit from these livelihoods	TBD (e.g. implementation NGO + local partners)