



UNITED NATIONS  
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

## **MID-TERM REVIEW OF THE PROJECT: INVESTING IN CORAL REEFS AND BLUE ECONOMY (ICRBE) (2021-2025)**



***UNDP Quantum ID: 00126732***  
***Target country: Fiji***

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## Table of Contents

<b>Table of Contents.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Project Information.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Acknowledgement .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Acronyms .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Executive Summary.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1. Introduction.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>2. Description of the intervention and development context .....</b>	<b>13</b>
2.1 The blue economy concept.....	14
2.2 Project description .....	15
<b>3. Evaluation scope and objectives .....</b>	<b>18</b>
3.1 Objectives.....	18
3.2 Evaluation criteria and Questions .....	18
3.3 Methodologies .....	20
3.4 Data analysis.....	22
<b>4. Findings .....</b>	<b>23</b>
4.1 Relevance/coherence.....	23
4.2 Effectiveness .....	26
4.2.1 Project outputs .....	26
4.2.2 Project activities update .....	29
4.2.3 Remaining barriers to achieving the project objective .....	45
4.3 Efficiency .....	46
4.3.1 Management Arrangements .....	46
4.3.2 Work planning .....	48
4.3.3 Finance and co-finance.....	48
4.3.4 Stakeholder engagement .....	49
4.4 Impact.....	51
4.5 Sustainability .....	53
4.5.1 Risk and potential trade-offs .....	53
4.5.2 Continuation of positive effects: Actual and prospective sustainability.....	57
4.5.2 Exit Strategy.....	57
4.6 Cross-cutting issues' .....	58
<b>5. Conclusions and Recommendations.....</b>	<b>60</b>
5.1 Conclusions .....	60
5.2 Recommendations .....	61
<b>6. Annexes .....</b>	<b>63</b>

6.1 MTR ToR (excluding ToR annexes).....	63
6.2 MTR evaluative matrix (evaluation criteria with key questions, indicators, sources of data, and methodology).....	81
6.3 Example Questionnaire or Interview Guide used for data collection.....	83
6.3 Ratings Scales .....	86
6.4 List of persons interviewed .....	86
6.5 List of documents reviewed .....	87
6.7 Signed UNEG Code of Conduct form .....	88
6.8 Signed MTR final report clearance form.....	90

Project Information		
<b>Project title:</b>	Investing in Coral Reefs and Blue Economy (ICRBE) Project	
<b>Quantum ID:</b>	00126732	
<b>Corporate Priorities:</b>	<p>COOPERATION FRAMEWORK OUTCOME INVOLVING UNDP #1: By 2027, people, communities and institutions are more empowered and resilient to face diverse shocks and stresses, especially related to climate variability impacts, and ecosystems and biodiversity are better protected, managed, and restored.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Output 1.3: Institutions and communities have improved capacities to protect and manage ocean and land ecosystems</li> </ul> <p>COOPERATION FRAMEWORK OUTCOME INVOLVING UNDP #2: By 2027, more people, especially those at risk of being left behind, contribute to and benefit from sustainable, resilient, diversified, inclusive and human-centered socio-economic systems with decent work and equal livelihoods' opportunities, reducing inequalities and ensuring shared prosperity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OUTPUT 2.2: Policy frameworks and financing available to leverage the potential of blue/green economy</li> </ul>	
<b>Country:</b>	Fiji	
<b>Region:</b>	Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific	
<b>Date project proposal signed:</b>	30 November 2020	
<b>Project dates:</b>	<b>Start date:</b>	<b>Planned end date:</b>
	March 2021	March 2025
<b>Project budget:</b>	\$10,503,769.19 [GFCR \$5,164,331.43 & Joint SDG Funds \$5,339,437.76]	
<b>Project expenditure at the time of evaluation:</b>	<p>UNDP \$548,248 (51% of funds received)</p> <p>UNCDF \$2,214,380 (45% of funds received)</p> <p>UNEP \$86,375 (21% of funds received)</p> <p>Total Expenditures \$2,849,003</p>	
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Evaluation information		
Evaluation type (project/outcome/thematic/country programme, etc.)	Investing in Coral Reefs and Blue Economy (ICRBE) Project-Fiji	
Final/midterm review/other	Midterm review	
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	2020	2023
Evaluator	Patrick Fong	
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## Acronyms

BAD	Beqa Adventure Divers
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
FDB	Fiji Development Bank
GoF	Government of Fiji
ICRBE	Investing in Coral Reefs and Blue Economy
JP	Joint Programme
LMMA	Locally Managed Marine Area (LMMA) Networks.
MPA	Marine Protected Areas
MTR	Midterm Review
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NCCP	National Climate Change Policy
NDP	National Development Plan
OECD	Organization of the Economic Cooperation Development
PIR	Project Implementation Reviews
PIU	Project Implementation Unit
PMO	Project Management Office
PMU	Project Management Unit
PSC	Project Steering Committee
ROC	Resident Coordinator's Office
SPE	Special Purpose Entity
UNCDF	United Nation Capital Development Fund
UNDP	United Nation Development Programme
UNEP	United Nation Environment Programme

## Executive Summary

The “Investing in Coral Reefs and Blue Economy (ICRBE) project, is a joint programme (JP) by UN agencies including United Nation Development Programme (UNDP), UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and United Nation Environment Programme (UNEP). Coral reef ecosystems provide important cross-cutting SDG co-benefits for local communities through entry points such as coral reef tourism, food security, shoreline protection, and human health and wellbeing. The JP seeks to create a blended finance facility and build capacity to mobilize private and public investment capital for initiatives that have a positive impact on Fiji’s coral reefs and the communities that rely on them. The JP aims to construct a pipeline of bankable projects providing a blend of technical assistance, performance grants and concessional.

The ICRBE project period is March 2021-March 2025, with a total project budget of \$10,503,769.19 (GFCR \$5,164,331.43 and Joint SDG Funds \$5,339,437.76).

The Midterm Review (MTR) of the project was conducted for the period January-March 2024. The three key objectives of the MTR are to assess progress towards the achievement of the ICRBE Joint Programme (JP) Outcomes and its corresponding Outputs, assess early signs of project delay or failure with the goal of identifying the necessary changes to be made in order to set the project on-track to achieve its intended results and give clear direction to the Project Steering Committee/Board, Donors, and PMU on suggested ways to improve progress towards JP Outcomes.

The primary target audience for the MTR are the members of the Project Board, the Government of Fiji (GOF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as the Project Convening Agent along with the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) as Participating UN Organisations (PUNOs), the project donors, the participating stakeholder. The report will also be shared with other project stakeholders in government, development partners, UN Agencies, civil society, and private sector and will be publicly accessible.

The MTR followed UNDP key principles of evaluation and has used the Organization of the Economic Cooperation Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC)’s Evaluation Criteria as a basis for the evaluation and include the following six evaluation criteria: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. Key measures were taken to ensure that the MTR was independent, impartial, transparent, ethical, and credible and based only on data and evidence

The MTR was based around a **participatory approach** that ensured the full engagement and involvement of the project management team, project beneficiaries and other key in-country stakeholders. The MTR was conducted through the detail review of project documents and **interviews with key stakeholders**. Data gathered from interviews and documents review were triangulated and analysed



This MTR finds the project to be **relevant** to the policy context and well aligned with government plans for the protection of coral reefs and building back-efforts for the COVID-19 economic recovery. The ICRBE project contributes to the National Development Plan through the establishment of and improvement of marine protected areas with effective management. Also, it supports the following policies including the Fiji National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) 2017-2024 and its Implementation Framework, National Climate Change Policy (2018–2030) (NCCP). Moreover, the JP is well aligned to the United Nations Pacific Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2023-2027) which sets regional direction for accelerating progress towards the 2030 development agenda.

In terms of **coherence**, the Project's objectives are within the Joint SDG Fund, three PUNO and National Priorities and it addresses a very significant sustainable development challenge, and the barriers and threats at different levels are relevant and well described. The Project Document follows global designs and standards for such type of projects, with content that is well informed and well-articulated. Lessons learned from other similar projects were used for the design, which is in line with national priorities

Despite the Project Document stating that various work had progressed across the four transactions prior to project commencement (section 2.8 of the Project Document) the project had to curate all transactions from complete scratch, except for the Beqa Adventure Divers (BAD) investment which was built around a pre-existing and successful business. Despite these inherent and unfortunate challenges, the Project has been able to show positive progress across all 16 of the 17 project activities, with 5 activities achieved, 11 partially achieved or on track to be achieved and 1 not achieved needing complete recalibration. The low utilisation of project funds is largely attributed to two large transactions, namely the Western Landfill Project and the Fertile Factory Project which have not drawn down on the lending finance being handled by UNCDF. Some of the remaining barriers to achieving the project objective include competing priorities, all transactions are being developed from scratch and this requires time to develop, get a senses of market realities, and be matured enough to be investment ready, national process and regulations take longer than expected to facilitate, change in government and the Project has not been able to create enough communication pieces around the financial leveraging components.

The day-to-day administration of the project implementation responsibilities rests with the **Project Management Unit** or **Project Implementation Unit (PMU, PIU)** hosted at UNDP Pacific Multicounty Office. Stakeholders acknowledge that the PMU is "stretched", and that the **team may need strengthening**. It is evident that the collaboration among the PUNOs - UNDP, UNCDF, and UNEP - in implementing JP is exemplary and being recognized by Government, financial sector stakeholders and NGOs that were interviewed.

In general **Government ownership** is forthcoming in terms of support for the PMU and project implementation. The UN Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO) plays a crucial coordination and oversight role in ensuring the effective implementation of JP.

The actual project **delivery rate as at 23 February 2024** against funds received from the both donors is 45% with the largest share of unutilised funds in Output 2. Despite these challenges, the Project is on track to meet its US \$50 million leveraging target having already leveraged US \$21.7 million in co-financing mobilised or committed funds.

In terms of impact, the Project has been able to create linkages with ongoing initiatives in and related to the coral-reef and marine biodiversity space, especially with Ministry of Fisheries, Ministry of Local Government and the Water Authority of Fiji to better align public policy and finance towards addressing key drivers of Coral Reef Degradation.

The Project has been consistently updating its Risk Register and reflecting this in the overall project management plan and these were part of the quarterly, semi-annual and annual updates to donors.

To guide the effective completion of the ICRBE project, key recommendations from the MTR were identified and include the following:

- A thorough review of the logframe and Indicator Framework, such that the indicators are smart and targets are clear and practical. Another strategy is to develop aggregating indicators and targets for all the six transactions
- Select a new implementing partner for Outcome 1 through a Request for Proposal process that would on-board a locally based NGO that has significant experience in establishing and supporting the management of Locally Managed Marine Area (LMMA) Networks.
- Pivot Outcome/ 1 to create a dedicated lending facility in collaboration with the Fiji Development Bank (FDB) for LMMAs in Fiji that would be jointly identified with the proposed new implementing partner for Outcome 1. FDB provides its lending eco-system, ICRBE Project provides either a credit guarantee or concessional lending to FDB for on lending, and the proposed implementing partner provides implementation and monitoring & evaluation support.
- Review the performance of Outcome 2 implementing partner and devise a revised workplan if performance is below par.
- PMU needs a Project Coordinator to support the Project Manager conduct daily project administration. This will allow the Project Manager to put more attention on soliciting new and additional financing for the project to achieve its 1:5 leverage ratio. Also, an environmental specialist is needed to provide technical knowledge and guidance.
- Given the progress and the remaining timeframe - Seek no cost extension for the Project from the current project end date of March 2025 to December

2025 to support Transactions under Outcome 1 (LMMA Lending Facility) and Outcome 2 (Western Sanitary Landfill Project which is currently commencing with a tender process and will begin actual implementation in early 2025).

- Seek potential costed extension until end of 2026 to support Monitoring and Evaluation across all four transactions (LMMA Lending Facility, Bio-fertilizer Factory, Western Sanitary Landfill, and large scale sustainable aquaculture through the Technical Assistance Facility).
- Increasing communications and visibility of the ICRBE Project with an emphasis on the innovative financial structuring and solutions that the Project is championing.
- Enhance coordination with bilateral and multilateral partners to co-finance investments.
- Consistent meeting of Project Steering Committee, monthly progress update to board members, creation of centralized repository for project information accessible to Project Steering Committee and consistent site visits need to be improved on.

## 1. Introduction

This report presents the result of the Mid Term Review (MTR) for the “Investing in Coral Reefs and Blue Economy (ICRBE) project, a joint programme (JP) by UN agencies including United Nation Development Programme (UNDP), UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and United Nation Environment Programme (UNEP). The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability were used to frame evaluation questions and methodology for the evaluation.

The MTR serves two immediate purposes: decision-making and taking stock of initial lessons from experience. Specifically, this MTR provides the project and project management team with a basis for identifying appropriate actions to: (a) address particular issues or problems in design, implementation and management, and (b) reinforce initiatives that demonstrate the potential for success. Also, the MTR provides forward-looking recommendations regarding specific actions or revisions that will be used and implemented to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of the programme.

The primary target audience for the MTR are the members of the Project Board, the Government of Fiji (GOF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as the Project Convening Agent along with the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) as Participating UN Organisations (PUNOs), the project donors, the participating stakeholder. The report will also be shared with other project stakeholders in government, development partners, UN Agencies, civil society, and private sector and will be publicly accessible.

The ICRBE Project is a joint fund program (JP) which began in April 2021. The JP seeks to create a blended finance facility and build capacity to mobilize private and public investment capital for initiatives that have a positive impact on Fiji’s coral reefs and the communities that rely on them, particularly women and youth. The JP aims to construct a pipeline of bankable projects providing a blend of technical assistance, performance grants and concessional. These projects are to leverage finance from private investors and other financing facilities. The outcomes of the ICRBE project include Outcome 1: “Protection and effective management of Fijian priority coral reef sites and climate change-affected refugia are sustainably financed.” And Outcome 2: “Transforming the livelihoods of coral reef-dependent communities”.

The MTR begins by giving an overview of the ICRBE project, it then details the MTR objectives and methodology and presents the MTR findings structured under the evaluation criteria and responding to the evaluation questions. This is followed by conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned from the MTR

## 2. Description of the intervention and development context

**Fiji has an extensive and high diversity of marine habitats, including coral reefs** and slope, estuaries, sea grass, macro-algal assemblages, protected and exposed soft shores. Fiji's coral reef area covers more than 10,020 km<sup>2</sup> and this reef system is a biodiversity hotspot for corals in the South West Pacific, with diverse reef formations. Fiji's coral reefs are generally in an above-average state compared to the global average, showing 50% live coral cover (above the global average)<sup>1</sup>. Also, the country has the third largest area of mangrove within the Pacific Island region (517 sq km).

In Fiji, coral reefs, together with other habitats support a rich biodiversity, and a major subsistence and moderate commercial inshore fisheries. So far, researchers have identified 1,198 species of fish, 1,056 marine invertebrates and approximately 1,000 coral reefs in Fiji. The country's inshore fisheries sector plays an important role in the livelihood of all Fijians, as it is closely linked to the local and national economy, generates employment opportunities and is an important food source<sup>2</sup>. A study on the Vatu-i-Ra Seascape by Wildlife Conservation Society, estimates the value of recreational services provided by coral reefs throughout Fiji in 2013 to be between USD 79.7M and 377M (WCS). Additionally, Fiji's coral reefs and mangroves provide critical shoreline protection services, protecting infrastructure and people's livelihoods from storms, large waves and erosion.

However, **Fijian coral reefs, their biodiversity and the ecosystem services they provide are at risk**. The main drivers of coral degradation identified in Fiji are the compounded effects of local impacts from overfishing and coastal development along with climate change stressors (reefresilience.org). Two thirds of Fiji's reefs are being threatened by local activities, with pollution, eutrophication and coastal development threatening coral reefs near urban centers (UNEP-WCMC, 2015). Other reported threats include destructive fishing methods, coral harvesting for the curio and live aquarium trade, and degradation due to climatic or natural events (often exacerbated by human activity) including cyclones, coral bleaching and predator outbreaks such as crown-of-thorns starfish. Further, uncontrolled waste management including dump expansion are leading to direct mangrove forest loss in Fiji, additional areas of mangrove forest around dumps have begun to degrade. The toxicity of run-off from Agricultural fertilizers is also having continued deleterious effects on the coral ecosystem in Fiji (WWF 2019, University of Newcastle Australia 2019).

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<sup>1</sup> Moritz C, Vii J, Lee Long W, Tamelander J, Thomassin A, Planes S (editors). (2018) Status and Trends of Coral Reefs of the Pacific. Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network

<sup>2</sup> FAO 2022. Fishery and Aquaculture Country Profiles. Fiji. Country Profile Fact Sheets. Fisheries and Aquaculture Division. Rome.

According to Joint SDG Fund<sup>3</sup>, women played important roles in the establishment of coral reef conservation initiatives including: helping to decide conservation rules, assisting with the implementation of environmental projects in their villages like waste management and water system improvement, playing an active role with enforcement and compliance efforts, and assisting with research to evaluate the status of their fishing ground.

**Urgent financial resources are required to pursue active adaptation strategies to save the reefs** from climate change and multiple local anthropogenic threats. Well managed and financed Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and blue economy projects are the cornerstones of international efforts to “replenish biodiversity and nourish the growing human population” (IUCN, 2018). Benefits that flow from improved marine ecosystems include enhanced food supply and fishing incomes for coastal communities, opportunities for nature tourism businesses, shoreline protection and greater resilience to climate change (and contribute to SDGs no 14, 1, 5, 8 and 13). Despite the commercial viability of blue economy initiatives with positive impact on coral reefs, neither public nor private funding is invested in adequate sums.

Conservation projects, particularly around marine ecosystems, are not attracting impact capital at the same pace as the rest of the impact investment market (GIIN, 2018), largely due to a shortage of investment-ready projects and organizations developing future opportunities, private sector perceived risk of investing in blue natural capital and the resulting high interest rates to get blue economy businesses operationalized. Development finance is a scarce and precious resource, so the mobilization of additional funds from commercial investors into marine conservation is indispensable for meeting the financing needs of the 2030 Agenda.

## 2.1 The blue economy concept

The Fiji economy, like many Pacific SIDS, is projected to record an historic economic contraction of 15% in 2020 because of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Challenges, such as debt sustainability stress, high dependency on tourism, limited natural resources and climate disaster risks are common across the Pacific SIDS and are exacerbated by the impact of COVID-19.

Recently the concept of the “blue economy” is being explored as an economic force for development in SIDS. As defined by the World Bank the blue economy is the “sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods, and jobs while preserving the health of the ocean ecosystem.” Developing the blue economy is a promising avenue to “build back better” the economies of Pacific SIDS.

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<sup>3</sup> Joint SDG Fund. (2022). Women With Vision: Enhancing coral reef conservation in rural Fiji, these women show how our shared future is blue. <https://jointsdgfund.org/article/women-vision-enhancing-coral-reef-conservation-rural-fiji-these-women-show-how-our-shared>

As highlighted in UNDP’s discussion paper on financing the SDG’s in the Pacific, “the challenge is to identify (catalytic) investment opportunities, new and innovative investments in the blue economy as well as opportunities for established industries to transition to more environmentally sustainable practices.” To address this challenge, the Government of Fiji has established the Drua Incubator during its COP23 presidency; a think tank and incubator housed under the Ministry of Economy, which is mandated to operate as a regional body to promote the development of innovative climate finance projects with an aim to replicate and scale to other Pacific island countries.

UNDP’s “Building Back Blue” aims to provide technical and financial assistance to support the development of a blue economy investment portfolio and promote regional South-South knowledge sharing and blue economy investment matchmaking.

The relatively rich biodiversity of Fiji’s Great Sea Reef (known locally as Cakaulevu) and other coral reefs, paired with Fiji’s relatively strong capacity to develop a pipeline of revenue generating projects make it the ideal candidate to serve as a regional financial hub for coral reef conservation and development initiatives. This JP can showcase the success of blended finance to leverage private and public investment and engagement in the blue economy. A regional hub in Fiji will share expertise and lessons learned from this JP with other South Pacific SIDS so they also harness the potential of their burgeoning blue economies.

## 2.2 Project description

The **objectives of the ICRBE project** are to create a blended finance facility and build capacity to mobilize private and public investment capital for initiatives that have a positive impact on Fijian coral reefs and the communities that rely on them. The project aims to construct a pipeline of bankable projects providing a blend of technical assistance, performance grants and concessional capital for de-risking. Projects will leverage finance from private investors and other financing facilities. The JP’s expected results include:

1. Private sector investment in a US\$10M blended finance facility for effective management of 30 Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMAs) in Fiji. The JP will accelerate the short-term investment readiness of a pipeline of 10 LMMA projects (US\$3.1M target) and bring the wider pipeline to market (US\$10M target). Business model include reef-first businesses such as eco-tourism, visitor center, sustainable fisheries
2. Private sector investment in a US\$14M blended finance facility for sanitary landfill project before replicating the approach to other landfill projects in the country.
3. Private sector investment in an eco-fertilizer factory before replicating the approach to other 5 reef-first SME projects in the pipeline.

4. Established and operational gender responsive Technical Assistance Facility (TAF) for blue economy SMEs and financial instruments. The TAF will:
  - Bring expertise during the pre-investment and post-investment life cycle of the Blue Economy SMEs Aggregate and pool the investments and other financial instruments reducing transaction costs and reducing risk profile
  - Work with Government to improve regulatory framework
  - Fundraise development and private finance
  - Leveraged a total US\$50M in public and private investments in reef-first SMEs and financial instruments.
  - Measurement and verification of positive economic and environmental impacts to vulnerable coastal communities (>70,000 beneficiaries) and coral reefs, of which 50% will be women and youth.

This is a 4- year project that started in March 2021, with a total grant of USD 5,340,000 from the Joint SDG Fund, and with co-financing from the Global Fund for Coral Reefs of USD 4,700,000.

The participating UN Organizations (PUNO) and Partners participating in this project include the following:

- PUNO
  - United Nations Development Programm (UNDP), United Nation Environment Programme (UNEP) and United Nation Capital Development Fund (UNCDF)
- Partners/National authorities
  - Ministry of Finance (formerly known as Ministry of Economy), Ministry of Fisheries, Ministry of Forestry and Ministry of Local Government
- Civil society organizations and NGOs
  - Fiji Hotel and Tourism Association and Fiji Locally Managed Marine Area Network (LMMA)
- Private sector
  - Sustainable Ocean Fund - Althelia/Mirova (Private Investment) and Matanataki (Technical Assistance and Implementing Partner)
- Funds
  - Global Fund for Coral Reefs, a coalition of Private and Public entities (Grant Co-Funding; public and private investment through GFCR investment)

The initiative specifically addresses the following outcomes from the UNPS:

- Outcome 1: Climate Change, Disaster Resilience, and Environmental Protection
  - By 2022, people and ecosystems in the Pacific are more resilient to the impacts of climate change, climate variability and disasters; and environmental protection is strengthened
- Outcome 3: Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Empowerment



- By 2022, people in the Pacific, in particular youth, women, and vulnerable groups, benefit from inclusive and sustainable economic development that creates decent jobs, reduces multi-dimensional poverty and inequalities, and promotes economic empowerment.

Coral reef ecosystems provide important cross-cutting SDG co-benefits for local communities through entry points such as coral reef tourism, food security, shoreline protection, and human health and wellbeing. The JP will work to create a pipeline of investable deals/projects to accelerate flows of impact investment focused on protection and enhancement of the marine and coastal natural capital that plays a critical role in contributing to human rights and the SDGs. The priority coral reef sites that the project initially target include the Great Sea (Cakaulevu) Reef, Shark Reef Marine Reserve (SRMR), Korolevu-i-Wai/Koroi-Nasau, Beqa Lagoon and Kuata Lagoon.

Specifically, the JP will help to underpin the human development challenge by working for and with women and men in reef-adjacent communities, as well as their right to a standard of living adequate for health and well-being, which will have an impact on Fiji's achievement of SDGs 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12 and 15 - in addition to the JP's central SDGs of 14, 8 and 17.

The main targeted SDGs are as follows:

- Goal 8: Sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth is targeted specifically through the promotion of and investment in LMMA's and SPE's that provide for new economic activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, and as such encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises that focus on the blue economy and promote sustainable tourism (SDG 8 targets to be addressed: 8.3 and 8.9).
- Goal 14: Life below water, the proposal centers on coral reefs and the blue economy. SDG 14 is severely underfunded and requires additional resources and innovative projects to safeguard biodiversity rich ecosystems and reef-dependent communities as found in Fiji. (SDG 14 targets to be addressed: 14.1, 14.2, 14.3, 14.4, 14.5, 14.6, 14.A, 14.B.)
- Goal 17: Partnerships for the goals is targeted through use of a blended financial instrument that promotes innovation and offers a unique public/private partnership, bringing together UN organizations, Member States, philanthropy (Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation and Paul G. Allen Family Foundation), private investors (e.g., BNP Paribas, Althelia), nonprofit organizations (Blue Finance, WWF), and oceans-focused networks in which the UN is an active member or founder (for instance, ICRI and ORRAA). (SDG 17 targets to be addressed: 17.1, 17.3, 17.7, 17.9, 17.15, 17.16, 17.17, 17.19.)

### 3. Evaluation scope and objectives

The MTR was conducted to prepare a report that provides an independent assessment (based on the six criteria namely relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability) of the project design, progress towards results and key lessons learned, and recommendations for the remaining project period. The MTR covers the duration of the project since its start in November 2020 to December 2023, covering all interventions by the JP.

#### 3.1 Objectives

The objectives of the MTR are:

- To assess progress towards the achievement of the ICRBE project objectives, outcomes and outputs
- To assess early signs of project success or failure with the goal of identifying the necessary changes to be made in order to set the project on-track to achieve its intended results
- To give clear direction to the Project Steering Committee/Board, Donors, and PMU on suggested ways to improve progress towards JP Outcomes

#### 3.2 Evaluation criteria and Questions

The MTR followed UNDP key principles of evaluation and has used the Organization of the Economic Cooperation Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC)'s Evaluation Criteria as a basis for the evaluation and include the following six evaluation criteria: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. In addition, the cross-cutting issues criteria was added in the TOR. Key measures were taken to ensure that the MTR was independent, impartial, transparent, ethical, and credible and based only on data and evidence.

Key questions that the MTR seeks to answer are included below and are elaborated in more depth in annex 2.

**Relevance:** Were the project's strategies, design, and implementation arrangements relevant to the needs and priorities of Fiji? This includes relevance to national policy frameworks, the SDGs, the project design, the evolving context in Fiji including post Covid-19 economic recovery and sustainable development of coral reef biodiversity.

**Coherence:** How well does the intervention fit? The compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in Fiji and also for the marine sector.

**Effectiveness:** How effective was the project in achieving the objectives (outputs and outcomes)? This includes assessment of the project's results framework.

**Efficiency:** To compare the benefits of the project with the budget to assess the overall efficiency of the project and to provide practical recommendations regarding how to improve efficiencies.

**Impact:** What difference does the intervention make? The extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects.

**Sustainability:** How sustainable are project achievements and have the project approaches been adopted and owned by government? What is the capacity of partners to replicate the programme and how are lessons learned being documented to inform future programming?

**Cross-cutting issues:** Are cross-cutting issues such as human rights, gender equality and leaving no one behind incorporated into the project implementation. Were women and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups consulted and meaningfully involved in project planning, implementation, and monitoring?

Figure 1: The six evaluation criteria and their related questions



Source: OECD with cross-cutting issues also included

### 3.3 Methodologies

The methodologies for the MTR included an integrated mix of methods to ensure cross-referencing and validation. This included a holistic approach grounded in a comprehensive process driven by the need to ensure that a broad spectrum of stakeholders is consulted to gather rich evidence on the six evaluation criteria. The methodology took account of UNDP performance standards and ethical considerations<sup>4</sup>. The MTR **provides evidence-based information** that is credible, reliable and useful. The Monitoring and Evaluation Consultant – Joint SDG - follow a collaborative and participatory approach ensuring close engagement with the Project Team, government counterparts, the UNDP Fiji Country Office and other implementers and key beneficiaries and other stakeholders.

The MTR was based around a **participatory approach** that ensured the full engagement and involvement of the project management team, project beneficiaries and other key in-country stakeholders. The process as a whole aimed to provide succinct and useful directions and recommendations based on sound analysis and these are presented in Section 5.2 of this report

The MTR Consultant **reviewed in detail all relevant sources of information**, including documents prepared during the preparation phase, e.g. Project Document, Project Inception Report, Project Progress Reports, Project Implementation Reviews (PIRs), Project Workplans, Mission and Back To Office Reports, Workshop Reports, Technical and Project Steering Committee Minutes and Project Financial Statements. lessons learned reports, national strategic, policy and legal documents, and any other materials that the team considers useful for this evidence-based review, see also Annex 6.5.

In view of the scope, timeline, it was not possible to reach all stakeholders. Therefore, the evaluation adopted a mix of purposive and convenience sampling strategies. The list of key informants was finalized with the help of the project team, considering their level of involvement/participation in project design, implementation and benefits received, also depending on their availability. **Interviews with key stakeholders** were conducted to supplement the written documentation and provide an opportunity for project management team, project beneficiaries and other key project stakeholders to present their views directly to the MTR Consultant. A total of 18 key informants were interviewed from 22 December to 16 January 2024 virtually, via telephone and face-to-face for stakeholders based in Suva (including 6 women). Interviews targeted a diverse array of stakeholders, especially those with project responsibilities, project beneficiaries, government representatives, civil society organizations, the private sector and local government officials. The 18 key informants provide a good representation of the stakeholders involved in the project and the feedback gathered

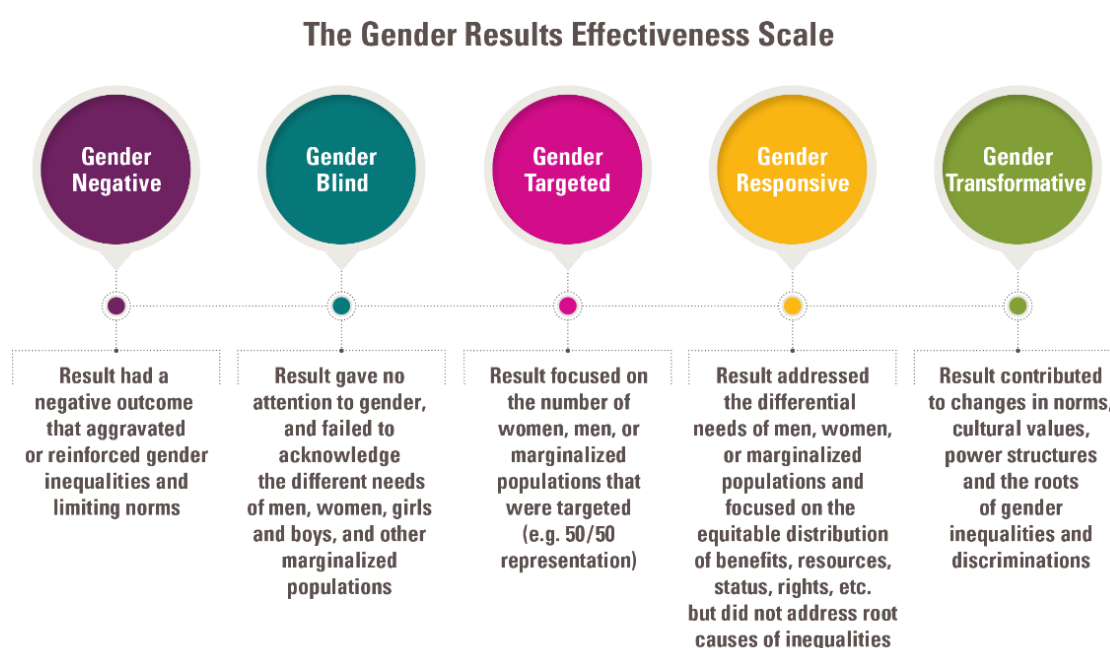
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<sup>4</sup> See UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluators

from them confidently influence the result of the MTR. See Annex 6.4 for a list of Interviews held.

The following Evaluation Categories (Relevance/Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, Sustainability and Cross-cutting issues) were assessed for project progress; further reflected and detailed in the **Evaluative Framework** in Annex 6.2.

For the cross-cutting issues evaluation criteria, the Gender Results Effectiveness Framework (GRES) evaluation methodology was used and GRES provides guidance on implementing a gender responsive analysis of results in evaluations or assessments<sup>5</sup>. The GRES was created to capture variation in the type of gender results with five categories, as shown in Figure 2 below:



Source: Adapted from the Evaluation of UNDP Contribution to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, IEO, UNDP, 2015

For this MTR, there were some **limitations**. The MTR was scheduled for December 2023-January 2024 period and this is during the festive season and holiday period in Fiji, where people are busy travelling and away from work.

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5 Future Guidance Notes will focus on diverse use cases, highlighting how to integrate the GRES in programme design, implementation and evaluation phases and how different UN agencies and beyond have used the GRES tool.

### 3.4 Data analysis

A wide range of Project documentation were collated to ensure a comprehensive review of documents. Information gathered through the review of project documents was triangulated through sampling several sources and analysing also international/regional literature and best practices around blue economy approaches, also drawing on coral reef conservation literature. These review stages were then used to inform the development of the evaluation methodology and interview guides.

Throughout the interviews, some of the same questions were asked and probed around key evaluation criteria to ensure that data was triangulated. Additionally, follow up clarifications were conducted through additional meetings, emails where findings were not clear or disputed. As stated in the methodology a wide range of stakeholders were consulted at all levels – these levels of the evaluation; beneficiary/commune level to national/ international provided a critical means of validating data gathered.

Data gathered from interviews was analysed as the MTR unfolded with extensive notes being taken and these were thoroughly reviewed to draw out key findings and also formulate follow-up questions where appropriate. This created a snowballing effect where key findings were accumulated and verified and reinforced. Towards the end of the information gathering, an initial debrief was held with key the co-chair of the Project Steering Committee and UNDP staff to share findings. This was an opportunity for this forum to make any clarifications or raise concerns. The draft report was compiled and comments were received. Once these comments and review were addressed, the MTR report was then finalised.

## 4. Findings

### 4.1 Relevance/coherence

The 5-year National Development Plan (NDP) (2017-2021) for the Fisheries sector: The Government of Fiji strives to sustainably manage inshore fisheries through the further establishment of Marine Protected Areas (MPA) and other measures to provide for better catch management. The Government also continues to support the revitalization and conservation of mangroves and corals. To meet the increasing demand for fisheries product, private sector investments are supported in aquaculture projects through tax incentives, provision of juvenile fry and post-larva stocks, and research and extension services. The project is aligned with the strategic priorities of the 5-year National Development Plan (NDP) (2017-2021) for the Fisheries sector: The ICRBE project contributes to the NDP through the establishment of and improvement of marine protected areas with effective management. The project will develop blue carbon credits, sustainable fisheries, and aquaculture products through the Special Purpose Entity (SPE) model and the Technical Assistance Facility (TAF).

National Climate Change Policy (2018–2030) (NCCP): A central policy instrument endorsed by the Fijian Government to protect Fiji's development priorities from current, future and intergenerational climate change risks. The project aims to channel finance to locally driven businesses and financial instruments that promote the resilience of coral reef ecosystems to climate change by mitigating local threats. By doing so, the important coral reef ecosystem services of shoreline protection, subsistence, and income from tourism and fishing will be safeguarded and enhanced, thus building the resilience of local communities that are most vulnerable to climate change.

Also, ICRBE project supports the Fiji National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) 2017-2024 and its Implementation Framework that seeks to strengthen the sustainable use, management and protection of the country's terrestrial, freshwater and marine biodiversity. The ICRBE project was developed with the NBSAP principles, including community participation and ownership, ecosystem-based management, managed and protected areas, gender mainstreaming and equality, and financial stability and accountability.

UNDP and UNCDF are the project implementing partner and UNDP is responsible and accountable for managing this project, including achieving project outcomes, monitoring and evaluation, and the effective use of resources. The Project Management Office (PMO) at UNDP is provided by the Blue finance expert team, and this arrangement was to ensure a management focus on strategy execution, revenue generation and entrepreneurial capacities. Additional support is provided by technical consultants.

Although the Government of Fiji is currently in the final phase of development of its National Ocean Policy, it currently does not have a dedicated strategic framework for coral reef conservation or the blue economy. The JP will work with Government to deliver on multiple key objectives set out in several of its cross-cutting SDG frameworks in order to sustain and harness the multiple benefits of healthy coral reef ecosystems for planet and people. This will be done through the following relevant plans and policies:

Moreover, the JP is well aligned to the United Nations Pacific Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2023-2027) which sets regional direction for accelerating progress towards the 2030 development agenda. The JP is helping achieve the following aspects of the Cooperation Framework:

- Strategic Priority 1: Planet
  - Sub-outcome 1: Better protected, managed and restored biodiversity/ environment/ ecosystems
    - Indicator SDG 14.2.1 Number of ecosystem-based approaches to managing marine areas
    - SDG 14.6.1 Degree of implementation of international instruments aiming to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing
- Strategic Priority 3: Prosperity
  - Sub-outcome 3: Transformation of agri-food systems
    - SDG 14.b.1 Degree of application of a legal/ regulatory/ policy/institutional framework which recognizes and protects access rights for small-scale fisheries

The Project's objectives are within the Joint SDG Fund, three PUNO and National Priorities and it addresses a very significant sustainable development challenge, and the barriers and threats at different levels are relevant and well described. The Project Document follows global designs and standards for such type of projects, with content that is well informed and well-articulated. Lessons learned from other similar projects were used for the design, which is in line with national priorities. The project document includes a detailed Theory of Change, and takes into account lessons learned from other similar projects in Fiji, including the Great Sea Reef Resilience Programme (WWF-Pacific and the WWF Landscape Finance Lab), GEF 5 STAR Fiji Ridge to Reef (UNDP), My Fiji Shark Initiative (Beqa Adventure Divers with support from UNDP), Governance for Resilience (UNDP) and Building Back Blue (UNDP).

**An important aspect of project design is the participatory approach** that takes into consideration the involvement of beneficiaries in the decision-making process that affects them. Feedback from interviews highlighted that consultations during project development were limited, and this was due to some reservations by key decision-makers over the details of the project. In particular, stakeholders from the



Government of Fiji were not familiar with complex blended finance solutions in the marine conservation space as there were no local precedence to reflect on. The inherent traditional and political complexities of working in inshore fisheries spaces – Locally Managed Marine Areas and the traditional fishing grounds (*iqoligoli*) – created scepticism about the JP's approach under Output 1 amongst Government and non-government agencies during the design phase.

Moreover, the JP's preference to use entirely new implementing partners with no strong experience in implementing conservation-based projects in Fiji was also questioned by other NGOs who were already working in large scale local projects. This was rationalised by the project design team by underscoring the need for the implementing partners to have strong business and transaction based skill sets in addition to basic conservation experience. But finally, consultations seem to have been comprehensive and inclusive, and have sufficiently informed the project. The second satisfactory aspect is the consideration of gender (participation of women) in project activities. Also, the Project Management Unit is doing a great task for continuous socialisation of the project amongst the above mentioned stakeholders and for generating sufficient support for JP implementation.

**The solutions and strategy for addressing the problem statement are relevant and valid.** The Results Framework is fit for purpose and addresses country priorities through outcomes on: Protection and effective management of Fijian priority coral reef sites and climate change affected refugia are sustainably financed; Transforming the livelihoods of coral reef-dependent communities.

**Country ownership is safeguarded with the involvement of the GoF** as the co-chair of the Project Steering Committee/Board. GoF involvement in the project is through the Ministry of Finance (formerly known as the Ministry of Economy (MoE)), the institution to deal with climate change and finance facility in Fiji – however, with the change in Government in early 2023, this function has moved to the newly established Ministry of Environment and Climate Change with some aspects of climate finance being shared with the Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Fisheries mandated to lead the whole-of-nation approach towards sustainably managing Fiji's fisheries resources, including coral reefs; Ministry of Forestry mandated to ensure sustainable forestry; Ministry of Local Government mandated to oversees the operation of thirteen municipal councils. In addition, the project also involves some local non-state actors including the FHTA, LMMA, Fiji Hotel and Tourism Association, Fiji Locally Managed Marine Area Network (LMMA), Sustainable Ocean Fund and Matanataki.

## 4.2 Effectiveness

The Project is unique in many facets, enabling it to not only have promising development impacts but also face numerous challenges. The dual priorities of coral reef protection and effective financial leveraging do not always blend together, especially in the Pacific where viable private sector led solutions are hard to come by in mainstream sectors, let alone in the unique blue economy/conservation sector.

The Project Document states on p. 44 that: “The JP seeks to create a blended finance facility and build capacity to mobilize private and public investment capital for initiatives that have a positive impact on Fijian coral reefs and the communities that rely on them. The JP will construct a pipeline of bankable projects providing a blend of technical assistance, performance grants and concessional capital for derisking. Projects will leverage finance from private investors and other financing facilities”.

The above development objective mentioned in the Project Document focuses on connection between coral reefs and sustainable development interventions. However, the project itself is not likely to lead to many examples of such connections.

Despite the Project Document stating that various work had progressed across the four transactions prior to project commencement (section 2.8 of the Project Document) the project had to curate all transactions from complete scratch, except for the Beqa Adventure Divers (BAD) investment which was built around a pre-existing and successful business. This meant that the investment readiness phase assumed in the project document was over ambitious and did not take into consideration inherently long time needed to establish private sector led or investment centric solutions in Fiji. The Project Document takes little to no consideration of ease of doing business in Fiji which ranks amongst the lowest (102) in the world according to the World Bank Group<sup>6</sup> and places excessive emphasis on foreign investment leveraging for the project without clearly identifying and addressing the domestic barriers of setting up investment ready businesses in Fiji and the Pacific in general.

The Project design severely downplays the customary, political and environmental challenges associated with the four transactions. The Project design does not appropriately account for costs and time delays associated with Environment Impact Assessments and Monitoring and Evaluation needs at the transaction level. Moreover, the selection of the implementing partner, Blue Finance, for Outcome 1 is highly questionable given that Blue Finance is a Vanuatu registered business based in France with no local presence and context of the high degree of sensitivities surrounding LMMAs and land rights issues in Fiji. The inability of Blue Finance to localise itself in Fiji to set up investment ready initiatives further emphasises the poor design of the Project.

### 4.2.1 Project outputs

A critical analysis of the results framework was conducted to establish whether it has the necessary elements and whether it enables measurement of success and progress to success. The original results framework included in the Project Document does not contain the above declared development objective and starts only at the intermediate outcome level. This is a

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.doingbusiness.org/content/dam/doingBusiness/country/f/fiji/FJI.pdf>

deviation from the common practice that dictates that a results framework is centred on the project goal and development objective, the achievement of which represents the ultimate impact envisioned for a set of project activities. Consequently, the project results framework does not contain indicators for the project development objective and the indicators' target values that normally serve as a gauge for measurement of progress and achievement at the level of the project development objective.

The results framework is composed of 2 Outcomes and 7 Outputs. For measuring the achievements of the project, the results framework contains indicators and their target values at the level of the Outputs. The indicators together with the targets were designed to facilitate monitoring and eventual conduct of remedial actions during the project implementation, as well as enable evaluation of the project in order to determine status of delivery of planned outputs and outcomes and make judgement about progress towards and/or achievement of the project intended results, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: MTR update on results framework

Outcome	Results / Indicators	Baseline	Targets				MTR Score	MTR Comments
			2021	2022	2023	2024		
Outcome 1: Protect priority coral reef sites and climate change refugia	1.1 Area of new climate refugia and priority sites designated as MPAs or LMMAs (km <sup>2</sup> )	0	9000	15000	25000	30000	0	There is disconnect between the objectives, outcomes and indicators highlighted  The targets are unrealistic and need to be changed to reflect achievable ones
	1.2 Coral and fish species richness in MPAs	Actual species richness = 100	100	105	110	120	0	
	1.3 Number of coral reef and ridge to reef conservation related resolutions, declarations and laws passed	0	1	2	3	4	0	
	1.4 MtCO <sub>2</sub> e per year sequestered through protection and/or restoration of threatened mangrove and seagrass ecosystems	Baseline = 100	100	100	110	120	0	
	1.5 Management Effectiveness of MPAs	Initial METT	1 MPA with METT score >60	2 MPAs with METT score >70	3 MPAs with METT score >70	4 MPAs with METT score >70	0 MPAs	

		score per MPA						
Outcome 2: Transform the livelihoods of coral reef-dependent communities	2.1 Number of locals/entrepreneurs and women employed in businesses with a positive impact on coral reefs	Tbd	Tbd	Tbd	Tbd	Tbd		Again, disconnect in objective, outcomes and indicators
	2.2 Increased private investment in sustainable initiatives and blue economy SMEs related to Coral Reefs	Tbd	Tbd	Tbd	Tbd	Tbd		Absence of baseline
	2.3 Water quality and reduction of nutrient inputs	100	100	105	110	120	0	Resolutions, declarations and laws passed are high level, need to also
	2.4 Number of TAF incubated blue economy SMEs that become investment ready	0	2	3	4	6	4	include community action plans etc.
	2.5 Number of new government strategies and plans to support financing for improved marine biodiversity protection and the blue economy	0	0	1	2	3	0	
	2.6 Number of new government incentives to support financing for improved marine biodiversity protection and the blue economy	0	0	1	2	2		

Overall, the outputs indicators in the result framework contains several indicators for coral reef stress reduction and coral reef status. However, the project appears to be mostly process-oriented and hence will not immediately lead to coral reefs stress reduction or changes of environmental status, at least during the project implementation period. As a result of this design shortfall, the majority of targets pertaining to the project outputs have not been achieved.

#### 4.2.2 Project activities update

Despite these inherent and unfortunate challenges, the Project has been able to show positive progress across all 16 of the 17 project activities, as shown in Table 3 below with 5 activities achieved, 11 partially achieved or on track to be achieved and 1 not achieved needing complete recalibration.

The low utilisation of project funds is largely attributed to two large transactions, namely the Western Landfill Project and the Fertile Factory Project which have not drawn down on the lending finance being handled by UNCDF. The following narrative explains the non-financial consideration behind this.

#### **Outcome 1: Protection and effective management of Fijian priority coral reef sites and climate change-affected refugia are sustainably financed.**

With regard to Transaction 1 - SPEs for effective management of LMMA networks, the inability to commercialise an LMMA without proper legal recognition under Fijian law prevents LMMAs to be securitised and financial leveraging to happen. Legal recognition of LMMAs in Fiji requires relinquishment of traditional fishing and access rights of vulnerable coastal communities who remain severely cautious of doing businesses that would take away their traditional rights. The legal reforms needed to create viable investments in the LMMA space in accordance to the Project design will take many years to complete and even more years to implement which far beyond the scope of the Project. The review of the Fisheries Act (1941), the legislation under which LMMAs can get legal recognition, has been underway for almost a year now with no near-term sight of completion.

Therefore, Outcome 1 deliverables of the project need to be recalibrated to better reflect immediate possibilities of financial leveraging for investments that circumvent the legal recognition issues and directly support community led solutions and solutions that are built around existing businesses/cooperatives. The Project needs to collaborate with existing local NGOs who have been working the LMMA space for numerous years and are in need of securing financing solutions to implement interventions that can help create community based LMMA protection. The project team has identified and developed the idea of developing credit guarantee or equity grant facility with the Fiji Development Bank targeted towards fisher folks and coastal communities with well-developed LMMA structures or and existing businesses looking to pivot into reef-positive solutions but need financial support to thrive. A tripartite financial solution between the Project, the Fiji Development Bank and a locally based NGO partner working in the LMMA space can be a quick win high impact solution that puts Outcome 1 deliverables on track without changing the overall theory of change for the Project.

The Project has been able to test two very important approaches in this regard providing valuable lessons. The very successful Beqa Adventure Divers transaction shows that reef positive solutions built around pre-existing businesses have a higher propensity to succeed as the governance and institutional modalities of a business are already in place and funding support from the Project can be a catalytic boost rather than an optimistic seed capital. The unsuccessful Korolevu-i-wai transaction demonstrates how a business should not be forced onto a community that is already extremely cautious about losing its traditional access rights to their LMMAs. Moreover, complex financial transactions, no matter how catalytic or transformative, are not feasible in a community

that has very limited knowledge of doing business. The Korolevu-i-wai transaction wanted to develop a complicated SPE that would establish a sea sensorium along with other complex tourist ventures that the community had no prior experience in. The community reluctantly agreed to the transaction but wanted to oversee the daily operations of the SPE to ensure their customary interests were protected but this did not go down well with Blue Finance as their investors wanted Blue Finance to manage daily operations. The inability for Blue Finance to have proper in country representation and its insistence to 'remote control' such a sensitive transaction from other parts of the world with very limited to no understanding of multi-faceted sensitivities set the transaction on a doomed pathway. Such transactions need to build trust with the community and the community needs to see that their interests are being protected by an investor that is in Fiji and understands their way of life rather imposing some cookie cutter solution from other parts of the world.

Therefore, it is highly recommended that the Project onboard a new Fiji based implementing partner for Outcome 1 through a competitive process that takes into consideration pre-existing experience of successfully working in LMMAs. Agencies like Conservation International working on the Lau Seascape, WWF working on the Great Sea Reef and Fiji Locally Managed Marine Area Network working on the Astrolabe Reef should be considered amongst others. It is further recommended that JP and the new implementing partner build on the PUNO's existing partnership with the Fiji Development Bank (FDB) to finalise the design of a robust lending product for LMMAs in Fiji that is backed by a credit guarantee from the JP (UNCDF instruments). Given the limited implementation time remaining for the JP, this proposed approach with FDB is a reliable alternative to achieve the JP's expected results as stipulated in the project document without needing to change the JP's Theory of Change.

It is strongly recommended that a no cost extension be given for Outcome 1 of the Project until December 2025 to allow for this recalibration, facilitate the transaction and conduct robust M&E.

### **Outcome 2: Transforming the livelihoods of coral reef-dependent communities**

With regard to Transaction 2 - Western Sanitary Landfill, this is the largest transaction with very high public visibility and political interest. This transaction was delayed for 12 months due to the indeciveness of key stakeholders, including the Fiji Government to give proper direction on how they would like to be formally involved in the project and what formal solicitation process should be used resulted in delays of over 12 months. Another reason of the delay was the change in national Government in 2023, after the project has been implemented for three years and this change resulted in the need for such a high profile investment to be re-socialized amongst the new Government hierarchy.

The Project design failed to comprehend the complex nature of un-solicited bids that require long term formal commitment from the Fiji Government. The Fiji Government has made it clear that commitments such as long term concessions, guaranteed gate fees for municipal waste and any form of capital subsidization will need to go through a competitive bidding process allowing other private sector partners – not just Matanataki which is the implementing partner for the ICRBE Project – to have a chance to propose their solutions. Anything apart from this will result in significant legal and public consequences.

It must be highlighted that the ICRBE project, its donors and the Participating UN agencies run the risk of significant backlash if this high visibility project is not done through a competitive bidding process. The ICRBE Project must realise that it does not have to place funds into Matanataki – rather it is to place funds into this transaction regardless of Matanataki winning the competitive bidding process or not. ICRBE Project is aligned to national needs rather than the needs of the project implementing partner. Moreover, the Project must be mindful of Matanataki's obscure role of transaction facilitator (which is what the implementing partner role is designed for) and now an investor (which creates some levels of conflict of interest to independently advise the ICRBE project on investment that serve the project's interest rather than Matantaki's own investment interests). This distinction must be made clear in writing by the ICRBE Project Steering Committee co-chairs to Matantaki to avoid any misunderstanding and unreasonable expectations.

The ability of the Project team to navigate such a complex transaction and secure Fiji Government's concurrence to proceed with a competitive bidding process must be commended as it demonstrates skilled diplomacy and tact. An independent advisor is on the verge of being hired to support the Ministry of Local Government to expedite the competitive bidding process without placing undue burden on limited Government capacity. This also commendable and is deemed to be a great strategy to achieve this transaction.

It is strongly recommended that a no cost extension be given for Transaction 2 of the Project until December 2025 to allow for the competitive bidding process to be completed, a private sector partner selected by Government and the transaction facilitated (US \$3.5 million concessional lending through UNCDF). Furthermore, this transaction will likely need a costed extension beyond 2025 as the eventual construction and implementation of this complex transaction is not expected to be done by December 2025 to enable the PUNO's to continue playing a facilitative role between and amongst Government and non-government stakeholders to ensure the construction completes in a timely manner, support the Fiji Government to conduct monitoring and evaluation for at least 2 years post construction and support the Fiji Government in additional resource mobilisation to replicate the project in the northern division of Fiji (on Vanua Levu which is Fiji's second largest island). It is recommended that the Project Team submit a revised completion timeline to the donors through the Project Steering Committee to make a decision on a costed extension beyond December 2025.

With regard to Transaction 3 – Fertile Factory, the Project has advanced well despite over 14 months of delay caused by delays in getting Environmental Impact Assessment clearances by the Fiji Department of Energy and delays in securing land tenure from the Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources. The transaction loan drawdown negotiations are completed and awaiting final clearance from UNCDF head office before construction begins. No major issues have been found for this transaction but retrospective assessment once again highlights the poor Project design which did not take into consideration the time and cost needed for a robust Environmental Impact Assessment to be done for such an environmental centric transaction.

With regard to Transaction 4 – Technical Assistance Facility, the Project has done well to identify 5 high impact projects, develop robust business cases and leverage financing. A performance-based agreement was signed between UNCDF and Matanataki in the sum of USD321,405 (fully



disbursed based on all deliverables being met) to generate 5 new investment ready businesses/projects with impact on coral reef protection / blue economy development. Matanataki had successfully incubated and provided investment readiness services to 5 businesses and provided the Project with the business cases and financial models for preassessment. These 5 businesses are:

- **Sealink:** processing of agriculture produces, and seafood harvested sustainably.
- **Mango Fish:** sustainably managed tilapia aquaculture.
- **Siga Damu:** Sea cucumber aquaculture.
- **Yavahuna Pte Ltd:** farmers and fishers cooperative supplying raw material for food processing and bio-fertilizer production
- **Sunshine:** food processing using agri and fish goods supplied sustainably.

Of these five businesses, Mago Fish and Yavahuna Pte Ltd have been selected for financing by the UNCDF Project with the following financing approach, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Detail of UNCDF financing of two businesses

Partner	Status Quo	Blended Instrument	Timeline
I. Concessional debt and other blended finance instruments to crowd in private sector capital for investment ready projects from developed pipeline under TAF ( <b>Budget Available: USD505K</b> )			
Yavahuna Pte Limited	Preassessment of the business case and financial model is being undertaken to ascertain the feasibility of the project.	Investment need: FJD2.55M  Concessional debt (ICRBE): USD200K	Q2 2024 –
Mango Fish Pte Limited	Preassessment of the business case and financial model has been completed and soft commitment has been received from FDB for the project, circa FJD7M.	Investment need: USD11.07M  Reimbursable Grant (ICRBE): USD300K	Q2 2024 –

It is important to highlight that the TAF has been to successfully leverage US \$15.3 million in mobilised and committed co-finance from a combination of bilateral and multilateral sources demonstrating the success and need for further support to reef positive businesses that are not overtly large like Transactions 1 to 3 but small enough for low risk investments. This has been a funding for other similar climate/development initiatives in the Pacific<sup>7</sup>.

It should be of no surprise that it has taken over 2 years to get the highly ambitious transactions investment ready given the abovementioned challenges.

<sup>7</sup> <https://dt-global.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/usaaid-climate-ready-lessons-learned.pdf>



Table 3: MTR update on project activities.

Expected outputs	Planned activities	Targets for planned activities	Actual against the target and current Activity progress	Status
<b>Output 1: Protection and effective management of Fijian priority coral reef sites and climate change-affected refugia are sustainably financed</b>				
<b>Activity result 1.1:</b> Increased area of new climate refugia and priority sites designated as MPAs or LMMAs	<b>Activity 1.1.1:</b> LMMA screening, feasibility study and selection of priority sites.	At least 20 sites identified using multi-criteria analysis for financial support.	Multicriteria analysis has been completed by blue finance and report submitted to UNDP/UNCDF for consideration. Unfortunately, the Implementing Partner is not willing to pursue any further business ventures in the areas identified due to lack of presence in Fiji.	<b>Achieved</b>
	<b>Activity 1.1.2:</b> Design of the LMMAs high-level business plan and set-up of the Special Purpose Entities (SPEs - co-management body for the LMMAs)	Business plan and high-level financial model to be developed for the sea-sensorium business at Korolevu-i-Wai.	Business plan developed by Blue Finance and sense checked by an independent consultant. While the community has rejected the business plan due to extensive disagreement with the implementing partner, Blue Finance, around the management of the SPV. The community wanted to manage the daily activities themselves while Blue Finance and their proposed investors wanted Blue Finance to manage the SPE while the community would be an arms-length share holder.  Blue Finance also developed a business plans and investment models for two other MPAs – Kuata Marine Management Area Network and Beqa Lagoon Seascape. The private sector custodians for both sites have been facing lease renewal and legal recognition problems with the traditional land and qoliqoli owners. Blue Finance has indicated that investment is not possible until early 2026.	<b>Partially achieved</b>

Expected outputs	Planned activities	Targets for planned activities	Actual against the target and current Activity progress	Status
	<b>Activity 1.1.3:</b> Design of the blended finance solution and fundraising	Design a blended finance solutions for one SPV to protect and conserve at least 500 hectares of coral reefs per year.	Blue Finance had designed the blended finance facility and conducted fundraising exercise with 2 financiers providing soft commitment on the basis that Blue Finance would handle daily operations of the SPV. As mentioned in Activity 1.1.3, the disagreement with the Korolevu-i-wai community resulted in the investors pulling out of investing in Fiji completely.  Blue Finance had secured funding for two other MPAs mentioned under Activity 1.1.2 above but financing did not eventuate due to land/lease/legal recognition issues.	<b>Partially achieved</b>
	<b>Activity 1.1.4:</b> Stakeholder engagement and advocacy	Conduct 3 stakeholder meetings with stakeholders involved in the establishment of the MPAs.	Blue Finance, through its local partner, had conducted 3 community discussions and 2 leadership discussions with the people of Korolevu-i-Wai to develop the Trust Deed for the Sea-sensorium SPV. Blue Finance also conducted online discussions with Barefoot Kuata Island and Pacific Blue Foundation to develop the business plan and financial model for investment in the Kuata Marine Management Area Network and Beqa Lagoon Seascape.	<b>Achieved</b>
<b>Activity result 1.2:</b> Established SPEs financed by revenue generation activities within and around LMMAs and a blended finance	<b>Activity 1.2.1:</b> Investment readiness of the SPEs for investment in Korolevu-i-wai MMA, and Shark Reef Marine Reserve (Business	Business plan and Investment Plan developed for SPVs in Korolevu-i-Wai and Shark Reef Marine Reserve	Further to Activity 1.1.3, Blue Finance developed a comprehensive business plan for the Korolevu-i-Wai sea-sensorium project. This was peer reviewed by an independent consultant and refined further to support further investment leveraging. However, the business plan was rejected by the community and the local partner for Blue Finance also ended ties with each other.  Shark Reef Marine Reserve already had robust investment readiness plans in place and did not need support to	<b>Partially achieved</b>

Expected outputs	Planned activities	Targets for planned activities	Actual against the target and current Activity progress	Status
facility with high leverage potential for the private sector	planning and SPE incorporation)		commence work on the loan/financing facility under Activity 1.2.3.	
	<b>Activity 1.2.2:</b> Environmental readiness of the SPEs for investment in Korolevu-i-wai MMA, and Shark Reef Marine Reserve.	Complete SESP Screening for Korolevu-i-Wai and Shark Reef Marine Reserve as well as conduct complete Environment Impact Assessments (EIA) with associated mitigation measures identified by the EIA.	SESP screening completed for both KiW and SRMR. Given that the KiW investment did not eventuate, the EIA was not done. The EIA for the SRMR was screened and deemed not needed by the Department of Environment as it mostly entailed the construction of a dive base on land far away from any ecological sites, upgrade of existing dive vessels and equipment, and enhanced patrolling of the SRMR.  Funds have largely been unspent in this activity.	<b>Not achieved</b>
	<b>Activity 1.2.3:</b> Concessional debt and other blended finance instruments to the SPE for investment in Korolevu-i-wai MMA, and Shark	Performance Based Grants offered to develop business case and ensure investment readiness of the SPEs for investment in Korolevu-i-wai MMA, and Shark	<b>Performance Based Grants: Blue Finance</b> – USD200K (USD20K yet to be disbursed) to develop business case to ensure SPEs are investment ready.  <b>Bega Adventure Divers</b> – USD150K (USD133,380 disbursed) to initiate projects in line with sustainability and the ocean. The remaining tranche will not be disbursed as per the request from the partner as all the milestones as per the PBA have been completed.  <b>Concessional debt:</b>	<b>Partially achieved.</b>

Expected outputs	Planned activities	Targets for planned activities	Actual against the target and current Activity progress	Status
	Reef Marine Reserve.	<p>Reef Marine Reserve.</p> <p>Subject to investment readiness of the SPEs, concessional debt or other blended finance instruments deployed to SPEs.</p>	<p>A concessional loan agreement with BAD was executed in November 2021 in the sum of FJD720,000 to purchase new engines for boats and construction of a new and sustainable base station for diving and marine research, including a new building.</p> <p>The new base station is nearing completion with some work pending. The total loan amount disbursed has been exhausted and BAD is utilizing internal cash flow to complete the remaining works in phases.</p> <p>BAD had honored the first and second loan repayment, in sum of \$55,647 (interest only) and \$65,131 (principal plus interest); respectively.</p> <p>Before the next loan repayment due on 29 December 2023, in the sum of \$113,735 (Principal - \$90,000 and Interest - \$23,735), BAD requested for a loan restructuring, that is, extension of loan tenor and reduction in principal repayments to avoid pressure on cash flow.</p> <p>The loan restructuring was approved and BAD made loan repayment of FJD68,735 based on the revised loan amortisation schedule.</p> <p>Further, once approval is provided to pivot from BF to a new partner (selected through an RFA), the team will design a suitable blended finance instrument to enable businesses in</p>	

Expected outputs	Planned activities	Targets for planned activities	Actual against the target and current Activity progress	Status
			MPA's to access funding for sustainable business development.	
<b>Activity result 1.3:</b> Strengthened management, enforcement and monitoring systems of LMMAs by SPEs.	<b>Activity 1.3.1:</b> Project Management Office for the SPEs and capacity building to upskill SPEs and LMMAs on social entrepreneurship and sustainable business management	Establish Project Management for each of the SPVs successfully operationlised.	Since none of the LMMAs were operationalized by Blue Finance and only SRMR was successfully implemented, partial funds have been used from this Activity to support cost overruns incurred by Beqa Adventure Divers (proponents of the SRMR) to implement its grant-based initiatives such as mangrove rehabilitation and increased fish warden patrols.	<b>Partially achieved</b>
	<b>Activity 1.3.2:</b> Performance indicators for the SPE and Environmental and Social Action Plan (ESAP)	Complete SESP Screening for Korolevu-i-Wai and Shark Reef Marine Reserve as well as conduct complete Environment Impact Assessments (EIA) with associated mitigation measures identified by the EIA.	As mentioned in Activity 1.2.2, only SRMR was successfully implemented and the EIA screening deemed an Environmental Management Action Plan as not being needed.  Funds to develop key performance indicators for the whole programme is still not used and available.  However, performance indicators have for the programme have bee developed using the M&E framework and indicators produced by the GFCR.	<b>Partially achieved</b>

Expected outputs	Planned activities	Targets for planned activities	Actual against the target and current Activity progress	Status
<b>Activity result 1.4:</b> Established coral reef and ridge to reef conservation legal and regulatory frameworks to promote protection and mitigation of local threats.	<b>Activity 1.4.1:</b> Support the development of a comprehensive legal framework for establishment, management and financing of MPAs	One legal framework developed to support the creation of a National Ledger System for LMMAs in Fiji.	Extensive discussions have been held with the Ministry of Fisheries to leverage the ongoing review of the current Fisheries Act of 1947. With the help of the SRMR project proponent, Beqa Adventure Divers, the ICRBE Project has submitted a concept note to circumvent the legal recognition LMMAs and prosecution of illegal activities in the LMMAs in Fiji using a national ledger system. A three phased intervention is suggested with the ICRBE Project funding the pilot of a national ledger system that will tie back to all other financing of LMMA activities under Output 1 of this Project and supports the need to engage Conservation International to pilot this initiative in the well-developed Lau Seascape.	<b>Partially achieved</b>
<b>Output 2: Transforming the livelihoods of coral reef-dependent communities</b>				
<b>Activity result 2.1:</b> Established Technical Assistance Facility, managed by local investment manager Matanataki, supported by UNCDF to develop a pipeline of	<b>Activity 2.1.1:</b> Pipeline development through scoping, technical assistance and training to upskill local businesses operating in the blue economy on social entrepreneurship, sustainable business and	Generate 5 new investment ready businesses/projects with impact on coral reef protection / blue economy development through the Origination and Technical Assistance Facility [TAF], whereby origination	<p>A performance-based agreement was signed between UNCDF and Matanataki in the sum of USD321,405 (fully disbursed based on all deliverables being met) to generate 5 new investment ready businesses/projects with impact on coral reef protection / blue economy development.</p> <p>Matanataki had successfully incubated and provided investment readiness services to 5 businesses and provided UNCDF with the business cases and financial models for preassessment. These 5 businesses are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Sealink:</b> processing of agriculture produces, and seafood harvested sustainably.</li> <li>• <b>Mango Fish:</b> sustainably managed tilapia aquaculture.</li> </ul>	<b>Achieved.</b>

Expected outputs	Planned activities	Targets for planned activities	Actual against the target and current Activity progress	Status
investment ready	financial management to build a portfolio of investment ready businesses and projects	activities include scoping, pre-selection, due diligence, community and other stakeholder engagement, business plan development, regulatory approvals and financial structuring.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Siga Damu:</b> Sea cucumber aquaculture.</li> <li>• <b>Yavahuna Pte Ltd:</b> farmers and fishers cooperative supplying raw material for food processing and bio-fertilizer production</li> <li>• <b>Sunshine:</b> food processing using agri and fish goods supplied sustainably.</li> </ul>	
	<b>Activity 2.1.2:</b> Technical assistance and training to upskill local businesses on methodology to measure, monitor and manage the environmental impact of their business		<p>Technical assistance will be provided through UNEP to monitor and measure ecological indicators to substantiate progress across Output and Output 2 interventions.</p> <p>M&amp;E Framework for the project has been completed and is being enhanced in line with revised global indicators of the Global Fund for Coral Reefs. A locally based technical NGO is being recruited to conduct detailed baseline setting for each investment as they get into investment readiness stage.</p>	<b>Partially Achieved</b>
<b>Activity result 2.2:</b> Mobilized	<b>Activity 2.2.1:</b> Provide blended	The Fertile Factory Company Limited	A performance-based agreement was signed between UNCDF and Matanataki in the sum of USD230,000 (fully disbursed	<b>Achieved.</b>

Expected outputs	Planned activities	Targets for planned activities	Actual against the target and current Activity progress	Status
public and private investment in priority sustainable initiatives related to addressing coral reef degradation drivers	finance and technical support to unlock private capital for Fertile Factory	(TFFC) is investment ready.	<p>based on meeting all deliverables/milestones) to deliver investment readiness services to TFFC.</p> <p>Based on the investment readiness services provided by Matanataki, UNCDF has approved concessional loan of USD750,000 to TFFC for CAPEX and working capital.</p> <p>Despite the loan agreement being executed in January 2023, the loan drawdown had not been processed as the condition's precedent had not been fulfilled (specifically the EIA clearance).</p> <p>All conditions have been met by TFFC and the disbursement package is ready for approval. We expect disbursement in February 2024.</p>	
	<b>Activity 2.2.2:</b> Provide blended finance and technical support to unlock private capital for Western Landfill and Regional	The Vulavula Sara (Western Sanitary Landfill) and Regional Transfer Stations project is investment ready and able to	A performance-based agreement was signed between UNCDF and Matanataki in the sum of USD481,500 (fully disbursed based on meeting all deliverables/milestones) to deliver investment readiness services to the Vulavula Sara project. This included the business case and financial model to be submitted to UNCDF and Fijian Government for independent review.	<b>Partially achieved.</b>



Expected outputs	Planned activities	Targets for planned activities	Actual against the target and current Activity progress	Status
	Transfer Stations project	leverage private capital.	<p>The independent review of the business case by the Fijian Government is yet to commence. A TOR for engagement of a consultant to undertake the independent review of the business case on behalf of the Fijian Government has been shared by UNDP. However, the TOR has not been cleared to enable UNDP to engage a consultant.</p> <p>In the interim, UNCDF has engaged a consultant to undertake the preassessment work to enable decision making by the UNCDF management on whether we will proceed to due diligence to access the concessional loan component allocated in the joint programme in sum of USD3.5M.</p>	
	<b>Activity 2.2.3:</b> Concessional debt and other blended finance instruments to crowd in private sector capital for investment ready projects from developed pipeline under activity 2.1.1	Concessional debt or other blended finance instruments offered to businesses/projects incubated and which are investment as per the Technical Assistance Facility.	<p>Matanataki under Technical Assistance Facility has successfully incubated and provided investment readiness services to 5 businesses and provided UNCDF with the business cases and financial models for preassessment.</p> <p>Of the 5 businesses/projects submitted to UNCDF, the update on the preassessment work for each project to enable decision making to proceed to full due diligence is provided below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Sealink:</b> preassessment work has been completed however, delay from the founder on the next steps. Offer received from HFC Bank to finance the debt component.</li> </ul>	<b>Partially achieved.</b>

Expected outputs	Planned activities	Targets for planned activities	Actual against the target and current Activity progress	Status
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Mango Fish:</b> preassessment work has been completed and the same is with UNCDF LDCIP Loans and Investment Team to review and advise if we should move to full due diligence.</li> <li>• <b>Siga Damu:</b> not yet commenced as Matanataki is working with the owners in revising the business plan to suit the market dynamics.</li> <li>• <b>Yavahuna Pte Ltd:</b> preassessment work is completed.</li> <li>• <b>Sunshine:</b> due to the owner's unwillingness to sign the NDA, this project will not move to preassessment. It should be noted that from the services rendered by Matanataki under the TA Facility, Sunshine was able to raise debt of FJD2M from commercial bank.</li> </ul> <p>USD1.01M has been allocated under this activity for concessional loan or other blended finance instruments. The team will ensure that thorough due diligence is done to ensure that funding is made available to projects that will realize their full potential and provide value for money and have positive impact on coral reef protection / blue economy development.</p>	
<b>Activity result 2.3:</b> Strengthened and harmonized policies, strategies, plans and financing	<b>Activity 2.3.1:</b> Develop financing strategy for Government of Fiji focused on protecting coastal ecosystems and	Develop and promote at least one national financing strategy focused on protecting coastal ecosystems and	The National Blue Town Framework to be developed with support from the ICRBE Project will inculcate reef positive principles aligned to GFCR theory of change. This will not only help identify up to 10 reef positive investment opportunities under the Savusavu Blue Town Master Plan (to be developed in collaboration with SPREP and funding from EU) but also enable the development and sandbox implementation of	<b>Partially achieved</b>

Expected outputs	Planned activities	Targets for planned activities	Actual against the target and current Activity progress	Status
from the government of Fiji for improved environmental biodiversity protection	investment in the blue economy	investment in the blue economy.	<p>National Regulations for Coral Reef Protection and Conservation. Fiji ICRBE Funds will be used to recruit a technical consultant to develop the National Blue Town Framework and draft Guidelines for a National Blue Economy Coordination Committee and a Savusavu Blue Town Master Plan Steering Committee. The development of the Master Plan will be funded using funds raised by SPREP through the KiWA initiative.</p> <p>A Cabinet Paper has been drafted by the ICRBE Team upon request of the Deputy Prime Minister, Hon. Manoa Kamikamica and submitted to the Office of the Prime Minister – this has been endorsed at by National Economy Sub-committee made up of all three Deputy Prime Ministers of Fiji and Chaired by the Prime Minister of Fiji.</p> <p>Seeking Steering Committee approval to commence hiring of technical consultant to commence drafting of the National Blue Town Framework and draft guidelines for national and subnational coordination mechanisms.</p>	
<b>Activity result 2.4:</b> Establish recognition, rewards and monitoring	<b>Activity 2.4.1:</b> Support the development and promotion of a government	Develop and promote at least one national incentive scheme supporting	The ICRBE Project has helped develop the Waste Water Sector Feasibility study and the development of the Fiji Waste water Strategy. The project has also helped create a baseline asset assessment through a comprehensive Condition Assessment	<b>Achieved</b>

Expected outputs	Planned activities	Targets for planned activities	Actual against the target and current Activity progress	Status
systems to incentivize the private sector to act sustainably	incentive scheme to attract additional investment in the blue economy	investment in blue economy space.	and has also created a robust Waste water PPP model for use by the Water Authority Fiji.	

#### 4.2.3 Remaining barriers to achieving the project objective

- **Competing Priorities:** The project is dealing with two distinct donors. Whilst the Global Fund for Coral Reefs (GFCR) focuses more on conservation and addressing core drivers of coral reef degradation, the Joint SDG Fund focuses more on financial leveraging to support SDGs through viable investments/transaction. These two distinct priorities result in investment pipelines that are not always financially viable as conservation considerations seldom result in positive IRR – this is exemplified by the financial burden of monitoring complex impact indicators and facilitating expensive environmental impact clearances.
- All transactions are being developed from scratch and this requires time to develop, get a sense of market realities, and be matured enough to be investment ready. The inherent time and cost of doing business in the Pacific is challenging especially in nascent sectors like the blue economy space.
- National process and regulations take longer than expected to facilitate, particularly environment impact clearances which can take up to a year to get cleared. These processes are beyond the control of the Project team and need to be respected from a sovereign process point of view. The project carefully lobbies to accelerate approvals through the Project Steering Committee co-chaired by the Permanent Secretary for Finance and the UN RC. However, internal Government processes naturally take time to process.
- There was a change in Government after 16 years which required at least six months for things to settle down and the projects to be re-workshopped with the national government. This has been strategically handled by the project team with appropriate caution being taken to not force the blue economy agenda onto the new Government
- The Project has not been able to create enough communication pieces around the financial leveraging components and success stories despite creating an impressive pipeline of Transactions that have mobilised or committed US \$33.3 million in co-financing. The Project Team needs to be strengthened with a Strategic Communications person who is well versed with finance projects.

## 4.3 Efficiency

### 4.3.1 Management Arrangements

The day-to-day administration of the project implementation responsibilities rests with the **Project Management Unit** or **Project Implementation Unit (PMU, PIU)** hosted at UNDP Pacific Multicounty Office made up of staff from Participating UN Organisations (UNDP/UNCDF/UNEP – UNEP staff are based in Samoa and Nairobi). The Unit consists of a Project Manager (UNDP), Investment Specialist (UNCDF) 2 Administration and Finance Officers (UNDP and UNCDF), an Associate Expert (UNEP) and a Monitoring and Evaluation Analyst (UNDP). The PMU Team seem to be positively regarded by most stakeholders, with a knowledgeable project Manager and solid administrative support. Especially the ability to make linkages with ongoing and new innovative initiatives within the Fiji Government with the ICRBE activities is highly commended.

The Project Team is supported by a UNDP Programme Analyst who provides the required immediate programme oversight for the Project and an SDG Finance Specialist who helps support resource mobilisation for the Project. The institutional oversight for the Project is provided by UNDP's MPO Team in UNDP's capacity as the Convening Agent for the Project which is designed as Joint Programme across the three PUNOs. There are also other technical consultants, notably experience investment advisors, who is involved in screening the transactions on the journey towards investment readiness and financing from UNCDF through the so called 'Blue Bridge Facility' that UNCDF manages – essentially most of the investment funds apportioned to UNCDF in the Project is put under the Blue Bridge Facility.

Stakeholders acknowledge that the PMU is “stretched”, and that the **team may need strengthening**. In particular, there is a need to put in place a Strategic Communications Specialist that can amplify the intricate and transformative work being delivered by the Project and a need to hire technical consultants that can provide legal and regulatory guidance on sensitive matters such as setting up LMMAs in traditional fishing grounds (iqoliqoli).

With regard to effectiveness of three UN agencies working on a JP, it is evident that the collaboration among the PUNOs - UNDP, UNCDF, and UNEP - in implementing JP is exemplary and being recognized by Government, financial sector stakeholders and NGOs that were interviewed. Each agency brings unique expertise and resources to the table, contributing to a holistic and comprehensive approach which stakeholders mentioned as being unprecedented in the marine conservation space. UNDP's experience in sustainable development and project management, UNCDF's focus on finance and investment structuring, and UNEP's environmental expertise creates a synergistic partnership that addresses the complex challenges of marine conservation and economic development. This collaboration ensures that the project is grounded in both scientific knowledge and practical, scalable solutions which are responsive to Fiji's sustainable development agenda.

The coordination mechanisms established among the agencies are effective in promoting efficient communication, joint decision-making, and resource optimization. Regular coordination meetings, joint planning sessions, and shared monitoring and evaluation frameworks facilitate alignment of goals and activities – this has been determined after sighting numerous emails, joint meeting minutes and feedback from key external JP stakeholders. Such a joint approach enables the agencies to leverage each other's strengths, avoid duplication of efforts, and maximize impact on the ground. The clear delineation of roles and responsibilities further enhances accountability and transparency in project implementation. Overall, the collaborative efforts of the PUNOs demonstrate a high level of coordination, coherence, and effectiveness in advancing the objectives of the JP.

In general **Government ownership** is forthcoming in terms of support for the PMU and project implementation. But strategic guidance (through Steering Committee / Board Meetings and inter-ministerial coordination) needs to improve. Steering Committee / Board Meetings need to happen consistently now that leadership changes in core Government ministries is completed and a steady Government Chair – Permanent Secretary for Environment and Climate Change – is now in place.

The **Project Steering Committee (PSC) or Board**, has met only three times in the project lifetime – in July 2021, May 2022 and February 2024 – there were no formal board meeting in 2023 due to uncertainty within Government about who should participate as the Project co-chair. This has caused a lapse in independent oversight of the project and progress reports were not officially endorsed.

The UN Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO) plays a crucial coordination and oversight role in ensuring the effective implementation of JP relative to the UN Resident Coordinator's role as the co-chair for the Project Steering Committee alongside the Permanent Secretary for Environment and Climate Change. In this regard, one of RCO's key functions is to facilitate inter-agency collaboration and alignment of activities amongst the three PUNOs. The JP seems to have benefitted from the convening capabilities of the RCO with high level Government stakeholders being consistently present during the Project Steering Committee meetings and country leaders being well aware of the JP's flagship projects (the Western Sanitary Landfill project and the bio-fertilizer Factory project) which are mentioned in high level statements. Ultimately, the RCO seems to be providing a great platform to the JP for regular communication, coordination meetings, and joint planning sessions, enabling project stakeholders to share information and expertise.

In addition to coordination, the RCO's technical team is playing an oversight role in monitoring and evaluating the progress of the JP as well as providing high level quality assurance. This includes tracking performance against set targets, assessing the quality and relevance of activities, and identifying challenges and opportunities for improvement – the PMU sends all its semi-annual and annual reports for review by

the RCO before finalization. Through regular monitoring and reporting mechanisms, RCO ensures accountability and transparency in the implementation process of the JP. It also supports learning and knowledge-sharing among stakeholders, facilitating adaptive management and continuous improvement. Overall, the UN Resident Coordinator's Office plays a critical role in driving coordination, oversight, and accountability to achieve the objectives of Joint Programmes effectively.

#### 4.3.2 Work planning

There was a 6 month delays in commencement of the project, with recruitment of PMU staff happening in January 2022 due to UNDP HR/administrative delays. **Workplans** were developed on the basis of the Multi-Year Workplan from the Project Document and compared to yearly progress and approved by each of the PUNOs.

Despite the lapse in Project Board meeting in 2023, the Project has detailed and robust workplans in place along with M&E Plans, Risk Register, Field Monitoring Plan, Procurement Plan, HR Plan, Communications Plan, Resource Mobilisation Plan, Gender Action Plan and donor reporting calendar in place.

The Project would benefit from providing at least bi-annual progress updates to the Project Board for quick and effective guidance rather waiting every 12 months. Given the depth of work delivered by the Project and multiple stakeholders it benefits, frequent guidance from the Project Board can help guide proactive tweaks to work planning in response to immediate needs and foreseen risks.

#### 4.3.3 Finance and co-finance

Project financing management and controls seem in order as per records pulled from the Quantum Database.

The project **financial status** is as follows (report from 23/02/2024)

Output	Funds Received Till Date (Consolidated)			Total Expenditure (Consolidated)			Funds Available (Consolidated)			Delivery as % of Funds Received		
	Total GFCR+JSDGF Programme	GFCR - Programme	Joint SDG Fund - Programme	Total GFCR+JSDGF Programme	GFCR - Programme	Joint SDG Fund - Programme	Total GFCR+JSDGF Programme	GFCR - Programme	Joint SDG Fund - Programme	Total GFCR+JSDGF Programme	GFCR - Programme	Joint SDG Fund - Programme
Output 1	1,187,218	421,045	766,173	936,678	295,416	641,263	250,540	125,629	124,910	79%	70%	84%
Output 2	4,462,523	2,014,186	2,448,337	1,603,541	780,998	822,544	2,858,982	1,233,189	1,625,793	36%	39%	34%
Output 3												
Project Management Costs	693,756	227,094	466,663	303,133	111,253	191,880	390,623	115,840	274,783	44%	49%	41%
Total	6,343,498	2,662,325	3,681,173	2,843,353	1,187,667	1,655,686	3,500,145	1,474,658	2,025,487	45%	45%	45%

The actual project **delivery rate as at 23 February 2024** against funds received from the both donors is 45% with the largest share of unutilised funds in Output 2 under the control of UNCDF as investments for the Western Landfill Project and the Fertile Factory Project. The low delivery rate of Output 3 is attributed to the PMU being funded by another UNDP project called the Fiji Blue Bond Project which cost shared the PMU resources. With that project ending in 2023, the entire salary burden of the PMU will now be on Output 3 which will be used up significantly in 2024. The very low delivery in Outcome 2 (36%) is noteworthy and corresponds to the pending



transactions under Outputs 1 (LMMA Financing Facility) and 2 (Western Landfill Project and Fertile Factory Project). Given the results not yet achieved at MTR, the delays and uncertainties caused multiple project complexities across a broad number of transactions and the fact that delivery is still at 45%, it can be recommended that the project life is extended with possibly 1 year, until mid-2016 at no cost to account for the recruitment delay of PMU and poor project design considerations not factoring in delays caused by Government approval processes. Given that there are sufficient funds under Output 3, a 6 month no cost extension is feasible subject to endorsement from donors – the Project Steering Committee/Board, during its February 2024 sitting, gave clearance to the Project Team to seek donor agreement for this. It is highly likely that a costed extension may be needed beyond 2025 to see through the Western Sanitary Landfill Transaction and continue to conduct robust M&E across all transactions until 2025. However, the exact cost of this extension is best left to be calculated by the Project Team and reviewed by the donors.

Despite these challenges, the Project is on track to meet its US \$50 million leveraging target having already leveraged US \$21.7 million in co-financing mobilised or committed funds (Please See Annex x for details). While not all of these funding is confirmed, it must be noted that they are ready to be mobilised as soon as the transactions are ready to receive funding – in particular the Western Landfill Project, the Fertile Factory Project and the 2 TAF projects will take up most of the committed funding.

#### 4.3.4 Stakeholder engagement

Numerous stakeholder coordination meetings have been held with Fiji Government officials from Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Trade, Dept. of Environment, Ministry of Fisheries, Office of the Prime Minister, Investment Fiji and Office of the Solicitor General to help facilitate successful implementation of the projects. Some of the key meetings and outcomes are follows:




- **October 2022:** Ascertain a clear pathway for Fiji Govt endorsement, support and co-investment for the Vulavulasara Western Landfill Project. Decision was made to not go through a comprehensive time-consuming tender process since this is a private sector led project rather than a Govt. issued project. The 5 Case Business Model was presented to the Fiji Govt as means to guide the process of receiving conditional agreement for the project to commence.
- **February to May 2023:** Series of meetings with the Director for Environment and team to unlock issues related to two clauses in the Environment Impact Assessment clearance for TFFC. The latest meeting in May was chaired by the Hon. Assistant Minister for Office of the Prime Minister This will allow TFFC to now secure land lease and begin construction from August 2023.

- **March and September 2023:** High level meeting held with Deputy Prime Minister for Fiji and the Minister for Trade to present VWL and TFFC projects. Strong support from the DPM and willingness to help understand how Fiji Govt can best help in expediting processes.
- **April and November 2023:** Meeting with Ministry of Local Government Minister, Assistant Minister, Permanent Secretary and Director Local Government to present VWL project. Strong support received and next steps agreed to secure conditional agreement.
- **October 2023:** Presentation done to Ministry of Fisheries and Office of the Solicitor General resulting in endorsement to work on developing a national LMMA ledger system that legally recognises LMMAs under the revised Fisheries Act so that they can be securitised and effective policing can be done to protect inshore fisheries.
- **December 2023:** Introductory and Strategic meetings held with the incoming and now current Permanent Secretary for Environment and Climate Change to brief him on project, his role as the incoming Steering Committee Co-chair and the need to secure co-finance from Global Environment Fund facilities to supplement ICBRE project deliverables.
- **March 2023 to December 2023:** Multiple meetings, stakeholder engagements and brainstorming sessions held to support the development of a Waste Water Sector Feasibility Study/Condition Assessment for all 14 waste water treatment plants in Fiji and the development of the Fiji Waste water Strategy which helped inform the largest component of the Fiji Sovereign Blue Bond issuance (the waste water projects made up 32% of the entire USD \$10 million issuance). Multiple meetings done with:
  - Asian Development Bank's Frontier Fund Project to secure co-finance for the Bio-Fertilizer Transaction (The Fertile Factory Company),
  - Regional Environment Lead of the World Bank to develop a joint funding proposal for the Climate Investment Fund to support cofinancing for Output 1 and the Western Landfill Project Transaction – the proposal is being finalised for final sign off by Fiji Government.
  - Managing Director – Asia Pacific of United States Development Finance Corporation for concessional lending support to the Western Landfill Project. An investment profile has been developed with Matanataki and submitted to DFC.

In addition, implementing Partners continue to have multiple meetings with non-government agencies and community groups on a weekly basis. Records of some have been provided in the latest annual report.

## 4.4 Impact

With the Ministry of Fisheries, the Project is working under **Activity 1.4.1: Support the development of a comprehensive legal framework for establishment, management and financing of MPAs**, the Project is working on developing a national LMMMA ledger system that legally recognises LMMAs under the revised Fisheries Act so that they can be securitised and effective policing can be done to protect inshore fisheries. This is being done under a three tiered approach that links up to the entirety of Outcome 1 of the Project and would be tied to the proposed credit guarantee/equity grant facility with the Fiji Development Bank and with maritime security efforts with the Fiji Police Force and Fiji Navy. The project is working on securing additional funding from the Global Environment Fund's Global Biodiversity Framework Fund to accelerate operationalisation of this integrated three tiered approach.

 <b>Legal and Regulatory Support</b>	 <b>Financial Mechanism</b>	 <b>Monitoring and Evaluation</b>
<p><b>a. MPA Ledger</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a country-wide central ledger of declared no-fishing areas, managed by Fisheries and containing the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Name of tabu</li> <li>Geographical coordinates</li> <li>Managing entity (e.g. village, hotel, dive shop etc.)</li> <li>Any already existing management guidelines</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>b. Regulation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft and gazette a simple regulation stating the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a registered ledger of no-take MPAs</li> <li>Nobody may take from, throw into, or anchor in those areas (with exemption for research)</li> <li>Non-compliance leads to fines and/or imprisonment</li> <li>The registered managing entity can monitor and enforce the fishing ban and any registered management guidelines</li> <li>There will be guidelines for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adding or retracting MPAs to/from the ledger,</li> <li>Adding/retracting/amending any management guidelines.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>As part of their Blue Bond support to the Fiji Government, UNDP and UNCDF are working with FDB to develop a Blue Lending Framework for FDB and create the lending terms for a FDB lending product that will be targeted towards supporting blue economy related activities using a value chain perspective e.g. funding the entire value chain for fishing from boats, to processing facilities, to cold storage, to market connectivity solutions.</p> <p><b>Their approach is tiered into three phases as follows:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborate with an existing well developed groups of MPAs to pilot the lending product through FDB. UNDP/UNCDF will support this work by putting up a US \$400,000 credit guarantee for FDB to enable lending risk reduction and quick rollout of the lending facility. The credit guarantee will be from the Investing in Coral Reefs and Blue Economy Project funded by the Global Fund for Coral Reefs and Joint SDG Fund – to be rolled out by August 2024.</li> <li>Collaborate with a reputable to do an investor roadshow to raise funding from financiers and philanthropies to help capitalize an LMMMA/MPA/Seascape fund (Managed by FDB with guidance from Ministry of Fisheries in collaboration with UNDP/UNCDF) to further support blue economy businesses and coastal cooperatives through a combination of preparatory grant support and flexible lending through FDB. – will be done in parallel to phase i above and first round of donor support to come in by November 2024 (target is to raise at least \$US 5million).</li> <li>Based on the success of phases i and ii, support the Fiji Government to raise the second tranche of the Blue Bond that will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>directly support FDB, HFC and other financial institutions to secure credit guarantee support (UNDP seeks to use Reserve Bank of Fiji to channel this support) and</li> <li>add funding support to the proposed fund in phase ii above to continue providing preparatory grant support</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<p>UNDP and UNCDF are working on developing a pilot project to minimize inshore poaching activities, enhance maritime safety and support digitization of maritime surveillance.</p> <p>The proposal is to raise funding from bilateral donors and through thematic bond issuances to fund the purchase and installation of GPS tracking devices on outboard vessels as part of a requirement for their annual boat licensing.</p> <p>Discussions are underway with potential real-time solutions providers to understand the financial and legal requirements for such an initiative.</p>

With Ministry of Local Government, the Project is working under **Activity 2.3.1: Develop financing strategy for Government of Fiji focused on protecting coastal ecosystems and investment in the blue economy, to develop the National Blue Town Framework**. This will not only help identify up to 10 reef positive investment opportunities under the Savusavu Blue Town Master Plan (to be developed in collaboration with SPREP and funding from EU) but also enable the development and sandbox implementation of National Regulations for Coral Reef Protection and Conservation. The ICRBE Funds will be used to recruit a technical consultant to develop the National Blue Town Framework and draft Guidelines for a National Blue Economy Coordination Committee and a Savusavu Blue Town Master Plan Steering Committee. The development of the Master Plan will be funded using funds raised by SPREP through the KiWA initiative.

A Cabinet Paper has been drafted by the ICRBE Team upon request of the Deputy Prime Minister, Hon. Manoa Kamikamica and submitted to the Office of the Prime Minister – this has been endorsed at by National Economy Sub-committee made up of all three Deputy Prime Ministers of Fiji and Chaired by the Prime Minister of Fiji.

With the Water Authority of Fiji, the Project is working under **Activity 2.4.1: Support the development and promotion of a government incentive scheme to attract additional investment in the blue economy**, having completed the development of a Waste Water Sector Feasibility Study/Condition Assessment for all 14 waste water treatment plants in Fiji and the development of the Fiji Waste water Strategy which helped inform the largest component of the Fiji Sovereign Blue Bond issuance (the waste water projects made up 32% of the entire USD \$10 million issuance). This is now being used to structure a Public Private Partnership arrangement between Water Authority of Fiji and two large scale private developers to build and operate new waste water facilities for coastal tourism developments – financing leveraged from this can be counted towards the overall project leveraging. This ties up with the Project’s overall focus on addressing key drivers of coral reef degradation with liquid waste and coastal development needing to be addressed as part of an integrated Ecosystem Approach.



## 4.5 Sustainability

### 4.5.1 Risk and potential trade-offs

The risks are well laid out in the project document and Risk Management Plan and these were always reported and/or updated by the Project Management team, as mandated by the UNDP reporting structure. The Project has been consistently updating its Risk Register and reflecting this in the overall project management plan and these were part of the quarterly, semi-annual and annual updates to donors. Risks will be reported as critical when the impact and probability are high. Risk management done by the project team offers a systematic approach to guiding the project's environmental, social, and governance (ESG) performance and its impact on biodiversity and economy.

The projected risks, impacts and mitigation measures as reported in the updated Risk Register are presented in Table 4 below, with in the last column an update as given by the MTR.

Table 4: Updated Risk Register for the project

RISKS	CAUSES	IMPACTS	RISKS LEVEL (Likelihood x Impact)	LIKELIHOOD	IMPACT	MITIGATING MEASURES	NOTES MTR (MAR. 24)
				(Essential - 5, Likely - 4, Possible - 3, Unlikely - 2, Rare - 1)	Essential - 5, Major - 4, Moderate - 3, Minor - 2, Insignificant - 1		
FINANCIAL Risks							
There is a risk that delivery project will be affected by Global and domestic climate, economic and/or fiscal shocks.	As a result of Global and domestic climate, economic and/or fiscal shocks, there is a likelihood of increase in the global price of oil in particular and construction materials.	This will lead to increasing cost of importing goods and services which will dramatically increase the operating and capital costs of projects which lead to budget revisions, incomplete deliverables, projects milestones not achieved and pushes the PUNO and implementing partners attention	Moderate	3	3	Discussions and negotiations with government and implementing partners on flexibility of implementation. Assessment and revisions of the programme in response to any relevant changes in the implementing environment. This will allow the PUNO to focus on achieving the results in the ICRBE projects.	The COVID-19 pandemic has put even more strain on government budgets and decreased revenues, and the further consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and its recovery are yet to be felt.

		away from the Joint Project					
There is a risk that of projected affected by scarcity of investor capital, including domestic investors' lack of familiarity with blended financing structures.	As a result of lack of familiarity with blended financing structures, there is scarcity of investor capital.	Which will impact in lack of interest and commitment of capital towards reef positive business.	Low	3	2	Mobilization of international concessional and commercial loans through the GFCR and other financial partners will help attract investors to the unfamiliar market of marine natural capital. More investor capital available, including domestic investors to participate in blended finance solutions.	As mentioned in the above in different places, there is a major risk to financial sustainability. The buy-in to finance projects is still to be promoted. Capacity building is key in the remaining project period so that investors are familiar and willing.
There is a risk that unintended effects on costs and prices, project cost over-runs, misutilization of funds or resource capture at national or	As a result of intended effects on costs and prices, project cost over-runs, misutilization of funds or resource capture at national or subnational	Which will impact in cost of doing business and intended outputs and outcomes of projects not achieved due to increasing costs.	Moderate	2	3	Careful financial planning, milestones and reporting developed to ensure financial accountability and accurate expenditure throughout the programme. Programme manager in place to oversee the functioning of the ICRBE. The treatment will allow ensure there is no unintended effects on costs and prices, project cost over-runs, misutilization of	



subnational levels.	levels the project costs fluctuations					funds or resource capture at national or subnational levels.	
Social and Environmental Risks							
There is a risk of major natural disaster in the project area delaying progress and/or damaging/destroying the reef.	As a result of Natural Disasters - Cyclones, Flooding, Storm Surge, Sea Warming	Which will impact by delaying progress in project implementation and destroying the reef and reef ecosystem.	Low	3	2	This risk is difficult to mitigate and may jeopardize the site if the reef is destroyed. Project will raise this risk in discussions with women and men in reef adjacent communities, the tourism industry and the government to put cultural and financial backstops into place early, as well as to support physical barriers to protect the reefs which may be available in high-risk areas. Additionally, UNCDF's Pacific Insurance and Climate Adaptation Programme specifically addresses this risk and will align their work with this initiative. The treatment will ensure that the risks when natural disasters happen are mitigated and the community and their coral reef ecosystem recovers quickly from these natural events.	The UNDP Environmental and social safeguard requirements have been followed in the development of the this project. In accordance with the UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Procedure, the project is categorized as medium risk and is not expected to have significant negative environmental or social impacts that cannot be effectively managed through simple risk management actions.



#### 4.5.2 Continuation of positive effects: Actual and prospective sustainability

The PMU should shift to a bi-annual discussion of risks and mitigation measures since some of these could prove critical for the overall success of the project. The project should also maintain an updated SESP that reflects new risks.

##### **Financial risks to sustainability**

As mentioned in the above in different places, there is a major risk to financial sustainability. The buy-in to finance projects is still to be promoted. Capacity building is key in the remaining project period so that investors are familiar and willing. Also, being a small island developing state, Fiji would still need continuing external aid funding.

##### **Socio-economic risks to sustainability**

The increase in population and high demand for coral reef fisheries resources has led to unsustainable fishing practices and overfishing. This therefore needs a ratcheted up effort for effective communication and outreach around the threats to coral reefs and how the blue economy concept can provide positive impacts, both in the biodiversity and economic lens.

##### **Institutional framework and governance risks to sustainability**

As the main Policy and Strategy documents are not yet in place, the **institutional and policy environment is not conducive for effective blue economy**, and hence this is not sustainable.

##### **Environmental risks to sustainability**

Without more effective conservation of coral reefs, the **environmental risks** to sustainability are major. For instance, overharvesting of resources can lead to the imbalance of the reef's ecosystem through the disturbance of the food chain.

#### 4.5.2 Exit Strategy

The JP PMU have done commendable work to socialize the four transactions with key stakeholders who will ultimately be responsible for the sustainability of the investments beyond the JP's end date.

For Output 1, the recalibrated approach identified by the PMU allows for FDB and the selected local implementing partner to continue lending to coastal communities even after the JP ends. FDB is already lending to fisherfolks but in an uncoordinated manner with too many duplicative lending products and NGOs in Fiji such as Conservation International already have long term plans and funding support to work with financial institutions like FDB to create financing solutions. The JP is leveraging off this symbiotic relationship and helping catalyze a financing solution – through creation of a credit guarantee backed lending product – that will be self-sufficient in the future. Discussions are already underway with FDB to secure credit guarantee support from the Fiji Government for the proposed lending facility after the JP exists – similar to an existing Government credit guarantee for lending to the agriculture sector. The JP is working with FBD and will do so with the new Implementation Partner to develop a M&E reporting system that will not be used to inform the proposed lending facility but also feed information back to UNDP to inform the United Nations Pacific Sustainable

Development Cooperation Framework (2023-2027) to which the Fiji Government is a signatory.

For Output 2, all transactions apart from the Western Landfill Project are private sector led and will not require perpetual support of the JP as they have already been brought to a stage of investment readiness with healthy equity injection from the project proponents and, in some cases, Matanataki itself – please refer to truncation table annexed for details. However, the private sector project proponents have not budgeted for long term M&E as they see this as an additional business cost and they are under no obligation to report back to the PUNOs after the JP ends. They are requesting the JP to support at least 3 year of post investment M&E for which additional funding will be needed – this came out strongly during the interviews with project stakeholders. It is recommended that the JP be provided additional funding as part of the suggested costed extension to build capacity within the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change and the Department of Cooperatives within Ministry of Trade Ministry of Trade, Co-operatives and Small and Medium Enterprises and Communications to engage consistently with the projects proponents, conduct M&E and report back to the UNDP via the reporting process of the United Nations Pacific Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2023-2027) and the NBSAP.

For the Western Landfill Project, a costed extension is needed to enable the JP to continue to play crucial facilitative role in ensuring that the transaction/ construction is completed on time and additional resource mobilisation is done from bilateral and multilateral sources to support long term operations costs and replication of similar transaction in the Northern Division of Fiji. This is recommended in light of limited implementation capacity within the Fiji Government to oversee such a complex and large investment as has been communicated by senior management of the Ministry of Local Government. It is too early for the MTR to provide an affirmative exit strategy for this transaction.

#### 4.6 Cross-cutting issues'

**Cross-cutting issues are addressed** in the Project Document, and clear actions have been included in Outcomes, Outputs and activities. The JP's gender strategy ensures an inclusive approach throughout the project and the results framework include indicators and set targets that reflect balanced social and economic benefits. The M&E plan also ensure adherence to gender- sensitive indicators.

List of marginalized and vulnerable groups	Dedicated Outcome	Dedicated Output
Women and girls	Cross-cutting Outcome 1 and 2	1.3, 2.1 And 2.4

Increased coordination led by UNEP, the convening agent and the Implementing Partners enabled preliminary baseline assessments and surveys to be conducted by a UNEP hired technical consultant (has made two trips to Fiji 2023, in addition to working remotely from Australia) and completed the M&E Framework in April 2023. This work sets set the platform for developing Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) Action Plan for the project that takes

a transaction level gender mainstreaming approach rather than at a project level. This is expected to ensure targeted gender mainstreaming across the Project. However, the Project needs to expedite this process as the GESI Plan TOR to hire a consultant has resulted in no responses when it was advertised twice since May 2023. It is recommended that the UNDP either engages a consultant through its LTA modality or seeks support from UN Women to develop the GESI Action Plan.

The TAF projects are expected to create at least 10 jobs per project. Assuming four projects being fully financed and implemented by 2025, there will be 40 additional jobs created.

Total: 120 jobs are expected to be created by 2025 of which at least 45% should be for Women.

The Project is working with Matanataki to empower women-led business development. Of the 2 businesses earmarked for financing via the TAF and currently undergoing pre-assessments by UNCDF, one is a women lead marine and agricultural logistics business called Sealink, that supports women fishers in coastal communities to transport their produce freshly to markets. While investment due diligence by UNCDF remains impartial of gender, the PUNOs have been working with Matanataki to provide tailored support to Sealink to have its investment ready. The Convening Agent is working on signing an MoU with Women in Fisheries, an NGO that looks at supporting women fishers and businesses, to identify promising businesses that can be referred to Matanataki or other parallel initiatives run by the Convening Agent such as the Blue Accelerator Grant Scheme.

From the analysis of ICRBE project using GRES, so far the scale for the project is Gender Transformative.

## 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The following are the conclusions from the MTR team, drawn after going through all relevant documents, undertaking interviews with a wide array of stakeholders and further in-depth analysis. These conclusions are derived from the main findings from the previous chapter. These conclusions respond to the evaluative framework that was developed, and are structured around the main categories: Project Strategy; Progress Towards Results; Project Implementation and Adaptive Management; and Sustainability.

### 5.1 Conclusions

#### **Relevance/coherence**

1. The Project is well aligned with Fiji's national policies including the National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan for Fiji (2020-2025) and National Ocean Policy (2021)
2. The Project is aligned well designed and the project Document well written. However, the indicator framework was found to be weak , with some indicators lacking "SMARTness", no baselines and arbitrary targets. Some changes were already proposed during the Project Inception Workshop but were never formalized.
3. The target groups for Outcome 1 (iqoliqoli stakeholders and resource owners) and Outcome 2 (private sector led business solutions) remain highly relevant in line with national plans, policies and strategies. The emphasis on women fishers and women-led business interventions under both outcomes also remain highly relevant.

#### **Effectiveness**

4. There is good appreciation of the project by the main stakeholders and interviewees. However, progress is falling behind and is not well reported and communicated. This unfavourable progress is mainly due to unsatisfactory indicators, missing baselines and targets, which makes it difficult to assess progress towards project results. For example, the outputs indicators in the result framework contains several indicators for coral reef stress reduction and coral reef status. However, the project appears to be mostly process-oriented and hence will not immediately lead to coral reefs stress reduction or changes of environmental status, at least during the project implementation period.

#### **Efficiency**

5. Whilst budget utilization rates have been slow, the PMU has been able to progress preparatory fund utilization well and bring 3 of the four transactions (except for the Western Landfill Project) to investment readiness. The bio-fertilizer loan drawdown is expected to push overall delivery from current 45% to 57% and the commitment of initial funding to the Western Landfill Project will boost overall delivery to 80% based on total funds received.
6. Monitoring is taking place at activity level. However, monitoring at Project Outcome and Objective level has been weak, with progress reports not reporting towards results and targets.
7. Reporting and communication about results in the project is weak, which makes that some stakeholders, but also relevant policy-makers, development partners and reviewers are not well aware of the project undertakings and results.

8. Even though there is a communication plan in place for the project, more emphasis is needed for the communicating on the innovative financial structuring and solutions that the Project is championing.
9. Although there is a “Gender Analysis and Action Plan” for the project, there is no reporting against it.

### **Impact**

10. The Project has been able to create linkages with ongoing initiatives in and related to the coral-reef and marine biodiversity space, especially with Ministry of Fisheries, Ministry of Local Government and the Water Authority of Fiji to better align public policy and finance towards addressing key drivers of Coral Reef Degradation.

### **Sustainability**

11. Risks were comprehensively laid out in the project document and been updated and this very important to identify potential areas that need to be addressed to avoid issues that may affect the project and its sustainability
12. So far the project has been able to socialize four transactions with key stakeholders, and these stakeholders will ultimately be responsible for the sustainability of the investments beyond the JP’s end date.

### **Cross-cutting issues**

13. The JP’s gender strategy ensures an inclusive approach throughout the project and the results framework include indicators and set targets that reflect balanced social and economic benefits. The M&E plan also ensure adherence to gender- sensitive indicators.
14. From the analysis of ICRBE project using GRES, so far the scale for the project is Gender Transformative.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

The following are the main recommendations from the MTR team, based on the conclusions and further findings articulated above. The recommendations respond to the main evaluation categories: Project Strategy; Progress Towards Results; Project Implementation and Adaptive Management; and Sustainability

### **Project Strategy**

1. It is recommended that the PIU and main project proponents and stakeholders re-look at the Logical Framework and proposed changes, when undertaking a planning exercise after this MTR. Proposed changes should be subsequently endorsed by the Project Steering Committee / Board
2. Organize a comprehensive Stock-take and Planning Workshop post MTR for refocusing and better implementation of the project. This should include review of indicators, targets, modalities, partnerships, delivery, COVID-19 recovery, gender aspects, etc. This should lead to a refocused and prioritized multi-year workplan until the end of the project. These proposed changes to Logical Framework and Multi-Year Workplan should be presented to and endorsed by the Project Board.

### Progress Towards Results

3. A new implementing partner need to be contracted for Outcome 1 through a Request for Proposal process that would on-board a locally based NGO that has significant experience in establishing and supporting the management of Locally Managed Marine Area (LMMA) Networks.
4. Also a review of the performance of Outcome 2 implementing partners need to be done and a revised workplan be developed with the partners if performance is below par.
5. As part of Outcome/ 1, a dedicated lending facility need to be created, in collaboration with the Fiji Development Bank (FDB) for LMMAs in Fiji that would be jointly identified with the proposed new implementing partner for Outcome 1. In this arrangement, it is envisioned that FDB provides its lending eco-system, ICRBE Project provides either a credit guarantee or concessional lending to FDB for on lending, and the proposed implementing partner provides implementation and monitoring & evaluation support.

### Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

6. The **project Implementation Unit will need to be strengthened** for more effective and speed up implementation. PMU needs a Project Coordinator to support the Project Manager conduct daily project administration. This will allow the Project Manager to put more attention on soliciting new and additional financing for the project to achieve its 1:5 leverage ratio. Also, an environmental specialist is needed to provide technical knowledge and guidance. Increasing communications and visibility of the ICRBE Project with an emphasis on the innovative financial structuring and solutions that the Project is championing.
7. Enhance coordination with bilateral and multilateral partners to co-finance investments.
8. Given the low progress and delivery to date, but also considering that a reasonable foundation has been laid by the project, and given that with above recommendations implementation can become more effective and speed up, **it is recommended to extend the project for 1 year (no cost extension)**, , in order to achieve still meaningful and sustainable results. The no cost extension for the Project from the current project end date of March 2025 to March, 2026 is to support Transactions under Outcome 1 (LMMA Lending Facility) and Outcome 2 (Western Sanitary Landfill Project which is currently commencing with a tender process and will begin actual implementation in early 2025).Also, seek potential costed extension until end of 2026 to support Monitoring and Evaluation across all four transactions (LMMA Lending Facility, Bio-fertilizer Factory, Western Sanitary Landfill, and large scale sustainable aquaculture through the Technical Assistance Facility).

## 6. Annexes

### 6.1 MTR ToR (excluding ToR annexes)

#### Mid Term Review – Terms of Reference Individual Contractor

##### Assignment Information

<b>Assignment Title:</b>	Mid Term Evaluation – Investing in Coral Reefs and Blue Economy (ICRBE) Project
<b>Cluster/Project:</b>	Investing in Coral Reefs and Blue Economy (ICRBE)
<b>Post Level:</b>	Senior Specialist
<b>Contract Type:</b>	Individual Contractor (IC)
<b>Duty Station:</b>	Office based Fiji
<b>Expected Place of Travel:</b>	Not applicable
<b>Contract Duration:</b>	6 Weeks (November – December 2023)

##### 1. Background and context

The Investing in Coral Reefs and Blue Economy (ICRBE) Project is a joint fund program (JP) which began.

in April 2021. The JP seeks to create a blended finance facility and build capacity to mobilize private and public investment capital for initiatives that have a positive impact on Fiji's coral reefs and the communities that rely on them, particularly women and youth. The JP will construct a pipeline of bankable projects providing a blend of technical assistance, performance grants and concessional. Projects will leverage finance from private investors and other financing facilities. The JP's expected results include:

1. Private sector investment in a US \$10 million blended finance facility for effective management of 30 Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMAs) in Fiji. The JP will accelerate the short-term investment readiness of a pipeline of 10 LMMA projects (US \$3.1 million target) and bring the wider pipeline to market (US \$10 million target). Business model includes reef-first businesses such as eco-tourism, visitor centre, sustainable fisheries, and blue carbon credits.
2. Private sector investment in a US \$14 million blended finance facility for sanitary landfill project before replicating the approach to other landfill projects in the country.
3. Private sector investment in an eco-fertilizer factory before replicating the approach to other 5 reef-first SME projects in the pipeline.
4. Established and operational gender responsive Technical Assistance Facility (TAF) for blue economy SMEs and financial instruments.

Reporting on the Joint SDG (Sustainable Development Goals) Fund will be results-oriented, and evidence based. A Mid-term progress review report (MTR (Mid Term Review)) to be submitted halfway through the implementation of Joint Programme. The MTR will be conducted through a decentralized review process procured by the PUNO(s) with joint management arrangements including the RC/O, JP team, national government, and Joint SDG Fund Secretariat to ensure stakeholder oversight of the assessment and follow-up response. The MTR is conducted at the mid-point of the JP and is expected to be completed by the end of 2023.

PROJECT INFORMATION		
<b>Project title:</b>	Investing in Coral Reefs and Blue Economy (ICRBE) Project	
<b>Quantum ID:</b>	00126732	
<b>Corporate Priorities:</b>		
<b>Country:</b>	Fiji	
<b>Region:</b>	Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific	
<b>Date project proposal signed:</b>	30 November 2020	
<b>Project dates:</b>	<b>Start date:</b>	<b>Planned end date:</b>
	March 2021	March 2025
<b>Project budget:</b>	\$10,503,769.19 [GFCR \$5,164,331.43 & Joint SDG Funds \$5,339,437.76]	
<b>Project expenditure at the time of evaluation:</b>	UNDP \$548,248 UNCDF \$2,214,380 UNEP \$86,375 Total Expenditures \$2,849,003	
<b>Funding source:</b>	GFCR & Joint SDG	
<b>Implementing party:</b>	UNDP, UNCDF (United Nations Capital Development Fund), UNEP (UN Environment Programme), Blue Finance, Matanataki, Beqa Adventure Divers	



## **2. Evaluation purpose, objectives, scope**

### **2.1 Purpose**

The ICRBE Project team is looking for a talented Evaluation Consultant to perform a mid-term review to assess progress towards the achievement of the JP objectives and key results, both developmental and financial, as specified in the Project Document and assess early signs of programmatic success or failure with the goal of identifying the necessary changes to be made, if required, in order to set the JP on-track to achieve its intended results. The MTR will also review the JP's strategy and its risks to sustainability.

The Evaluation Consultant is to perform the review based on the following four categories using the OECD principles of evaluation as per the UNDP Evaluation Policy:

- i. Design.
- ii. Progress/Results to date;
- iii. Management efficiency; and
- iv. iv) Risk management and sustainability.

### **2.2 Objectives**

The specific objectives of this independent evaluation are to:

- Assess the relevance and strategic positioning of the project to respond to the needs and challenges
- Assess the extent to which the project contributes to the national priorities, development goals, strategies and plans, and the UNDP country programme (CPD (Country Programme Document) 2019-2023).
- Review and assess the overall achievements of the project (outputs, outcomes, and impacts levels).
- Review the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and suitability of the indicators in the results framework.
- Review the extent to which the planned project activities can lead to the project's outputs/outcomes.
- Assess factors, if any, that contributed to or hindered project's performance and, eventually, to the sustainability of results
- Assess whether and how the project enhanced the application of a human right-based approach, gender equality and women's empowerment, and participation of other groups such as youth persons with disabilities, and private sector etc.
- Assess the design, implementation, and management of the project and provide recommendations on any changes in approach that may be considered in the future of project design and/or should be factored in the project exit strategy. The following elements under each project's output will be considered:
  - Identify lessons learned (including unsuccessful practices) in relation to the design, implementation, monitoring and management of the project, and any best practices which should be or have shown significant potential for replication and inform the design of the scaling-up of the social protection program.
  - Document potential areas for future interventions building on the achievement/lesson from the project.

The intended users of this final evaluation include:

- UNDP teams at different levels including project team and UNDP senior management at the UNDP Multi-Country Office (MCO) in Fiji,

Information from the evaluation will be used to:

- Improve future project design and implementation.
- Ensure accountability; and
- Increase knowledge and understanding of the benefits and challenges of similar interventions in future.

## Scope

The MTR report will also include a conclusion section summarizing the findings and recommendations, and a rating section based on the findings and assessments of the four categories.

### i. Design

- Review how the JP addresses key country priorities especially considering the JP's intended focus on unlocking additional resources for the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals).
- Review the relevance and effectiveness of the proposed financial instruments and other programmatic interventions.
- Review the country ownership – both from public and/or private sector partners.
- Review if the JP strategy is in line with the national development priorities and UN (United Nations) Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework of the country.
- Review the extent to which relevant gender issues and other Leaving No One Behind (LNOB) issues were raised in the JP design, including reviewing that the results framework incorporates key considerations on gender and other LNOB dimensions both in their development and financial results.
- Undertake a critical analysis of the JP's log frame indicators and targets, assess how SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound) the indicators are, and whether the midterm and end-of-project targets are realistically achievable. Suggestions on specific amendments/revisions to the targets and indicators must be added to the Conclusions and Recommendations section.

### ii. Progress/Results to date

- Review the key results achieved against the JP results framework especially in relations to the key outcome indicators and their end-of-project targets. Colour code progress in a 'traffic light system' based on the level of progress achieved per outcome area, assigning a rating on the progress for the JP objective and each outcome. Recommendations for areas marked 'yellow' and 'red' must be added to the Conclusions and Recommendation section.
- Incorporate Identify remaining barriers to achieving the JP objective for the remainder of the project.
- By reviewing the aspects of the JP that have already been successful, identify ways in which the JP can further expand these benefits. Assess the extent to which the solution(s) developed to date could be scaled to other countries/regions of economic sectors. The corresponding suggestions must be added to the Conclusions and Recommendations section.

- Review the scope and scale of additional financing leveraged by the JP including whether co-financing targets are being realized using the Financial Leverage Monitoring Table (below) based on inputs from the JP team. Assess the reported financial leverage based on evidentiary documents and direct financial flows to the financial instruments. Provide reflections on ways in which the JP has been able to unlock additional financing or why additional financing has been limited.

**Financial Leverage Monitoring Table:**

Source of financing (e.g. private, public, IFI, bilateral, etc.)	Name of investor	Type of financing (e.g. grant, loan, bond, guarantee, equity, etc.)	Actual Amount Leveraged at MTR (US\$)	Note on supporting documents, targets and linkages to specific financial instruments
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>US\$</b>	<b>% of target at MTR</b>

- Review whether the results/progress to date has the potential to achieve transformative change and/or demonstrative impact in the future beyond the JP to catalyse change, innovation and evolution in the financial sector – either public, private or developmental – in the country to devise new means or solutions to unlock additional financing for the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals).
- Review whether the financial solutions/instruments developed have led to (or has the potential to lead to) developmental impact for the local communities and population with a focus on geographies and people left behind in terms of accelerating SDG achievements.

### iii. **Management efficiency**

#### Management arrangements:

- Review overall efficiency of JP management as outlined in the Project Document. Have changes been made and are they efficient? Are responsibilities and reporting lines clear? Is decision-making transparent and undertaken in a timely manner? Is a JP governance body formally established with clear roles?
- Review the quality of execution of the PUNOs/Implementing Partner(s).
- Review the role and quality of coordination and oversight provided by the RC/O.
- Recommendations on the above areas must be added to the Conclusions and Recommendations section.

#### Work planning and financial management:

- Review any delays in JP start-up and implementation, identify the causes and examine if they have been resolved.
- Are work-planning processes results-based?
- Evaluate the financial management of the JP, with specific reference to the cost-effectiveness of interventions.
- Has the JP developed and leveraged the necessary and appropriate partnerships – both public/private and developmental – to achieve its intended results?
- Recommendations on the above areas must be added to the Conclusions and Recommendations section.

#### Reporting and communications:

- Assess how well the JP team and partners undertake and fulfil Joint SDG Fund reporting requirements.
- Assess how lessons derived from the JP have been documented, shared with key partners, and internalized by partners.
- Review external communication: Are proper means of communication established or being established to inform the JP progress and intended impact to the stakeholders and the public at large? Was a JP communication strategy developed and is it being followed? Do communications products reflect the “joint” nature of the programme?

#### iv. Risk Management and Sustainability

- Validate whether the risks identified in the Project Document, Annual Reports are the most important and whether the risk ratings applied are appropriate and up to date. Suggestions to revise the risk matrix must be added to the Conclusions and Recommendation section.
- What is the likelihood of financial sustainability of the financial solutions/instruments devised and launched once the Joint SDG Fund support ends?
- Assess the level of monitoring and reporting against the social environmental screening process (SES)
- Are there any socio-economic, political or other risks that may jeopardize sustainability of the JP outcomes?
- Does the financial solution/instrument have sufficient country buy-in from the relevant public and private partners, from the demand and supply sides, to ensure sustainability following the completion of the JP? Does the programme have a realistic and feasible exit strategy and approach to phase out assistance? Are the actions and results from project interventions likely to be sustained, ideally through ownership by the local partners and stakeholders?
- What are the key factors that will require attention to improve prospects of sustainability, scalability, or replication of project outcomes/outputs/results?
- Can any unintended or unexpected positive or negative effects be observed because of the JP interventions?

### 3. Evaluation criteria and guiding questions

The final evaluation will generate evidence of progress, lessons, and challenges, helping to ensure accountability for the implementation of the project, as well as identifying and sharing knowledge and good practices. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria of relevance,

coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability will be used to frame evaluation questions and methodology for the evaluation. Indicative lists of evaluation questions are presented below and will be broadened and agreed further between UNDP and the independent evaluator during the inception phase. The Consultant will be expected to critically reflect on them during the development of the evaluation questionnaires.

#### **4. Approach and Methodology**

The methodology will be further refined after the selection process is completed during the inception phase. However, in general, the design of the final evaluation is expected to be guided by the “Theory of Change (TOC)” approach to determine causal links between the interventions that the project supported and the pathways through which the interventions contribute to achieving the intended results, including the overall objective of contributing to promoting youths’ participation as agents of peace and change in the Solomon Islands. The theory of change will then inform the appropriate methods of data collection and analysis. Given the remote nature of the actual location of the project activities (Rennel and Bellona province), it is anticipated that consultant will adopt mixed methods consisting of both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis tools to generate complementary evidence to substantiate all findings. The methodology should be participatory and collaborative in its approach, that facilitate continuous engagement with UNDP teams, implementing partners, direct beneficiaries, and other stakeholders. The methodology should include sampling methods for selecting stakeholders and methods for assessing results stated in the results frameworks. The methodology for this final evaluation would include, but not be limited to the following elements:

- **Document review** of key documents underpinning the project, including but not limited to:
  - Project proposal (including Theory of Change)
  - Project Results framework.
  - Annual workplans (AWPs).
  - Contribution Agreement
  - Financial and narrative reports (Quarterly, annual etc).
  - Highlights of project board meetings etc.

An agreed primary **data collection** method which will include but not limited to:

- **Interviews and meetings** with key stakeholders (men and women) such as key government counterparts, donor community members, representatives of key civil society organizations, and implementing partners:
  - **Semi-structured interviews**, based on questions designed for different stakeholders based on evaluation questions around relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability.
  - **Key informant** and **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)** with men and women, project beneficiaries and stakeholders.
  - All interviews should be undertaken in full confidence and anonymity. The final evaluation report should not assign specific comments to individuals.

- **Surveys** to include male and female participants in the project, surveys, and other stakeholders at strategic and programmatic levels etc. Online survey can be developed and used to help collect the views of additional stakeholders (e.g. government counterparts, implementing partners, etc.), if deemed appropriate.
- **Field visits** and on-site validation of key tangible outputs and interventions.
- Other methods such as outcome mapping, observational visits, group discussions, etc.
- **Data review and analysis** of monitoring and other data sources and methods. To ensure maximum validity, reliability of data (quality) and promote use, the evaluation team will ensure triangulation of the various data sources.
- For the above interviews, the consultant will need to propose the approach/tool, e.g., survey, semi-structured interview, focus group discussion, etc.
- **Gender and human rights lens:** All evaluation products need to address gender, disability, and human rights issues. Hence, the consultant will need to design the tool allowing the collection of the data to provide the evaluation from those lenses.
- Kindly note that the consultant is required to propose other approaches and multiple ways of engaging, including target groups disaggregated by gender, age categories, disability, urban and rural to ensure representation of different stakeholders. The consultant will share the inception report, the proposed approach/methodology to interpret the qualitative data, and/or the input information received from stakeholders as relevant.

**Data Validation:** Data and information collected from different sources and through various means will be triangulated to strengthen the validity of findings and conclusions. The consultant should highlight his/her approach to address this in the inception report. All conclusions, judgments, and opinions must be qualified by evidence and not be based on opinions. Once on board, the consultant will propose the methodology in close consultation with UNDP. The final methodological approach including interview schedule, field visits, and data to be used in the evaluation should be clearly outlined in the inception report and fully discussed and agreed upon between UNDP and the evaluator.

**Post-data collection debriefing:** the consultant will have a debriefing with project key stakeholders on the preliminary finding after the completion of data collection. The meeting will also serve as an opportunity to identify areas requiring further analysis and any missing information and evidence before the consultant will enter a full synthesis and drafting phase.

Identification and selection of final respondents will be done independently by the consultant and is under their full responsibility. Assistance will be provided by the UNDP/WVI PBF project teams in contacting final respondents selected by the consultant and in facilitating the schedule of interviews, focus groups and site visits, when and where required. However, this is fully under the responsibility of the consultant. Cross-cutting issues should be integrated into the final evaluation report. The final methodological approach including interview schedule, field visits and data to be used in the evaluation should be clearly outlined in the inception report and fully discussed and agreed between UNDP and the evaluator. The consultant will be assisted by the PBF Project Manager or their delegated individual with authority.

Overall, the evaluation will be carried out in accordance with UNDP evaluation guidelines and policies, the United Nations Group Evaluation (UNEG) Norms and Ethical Standards, the OECD/DAC evaluation principles and guidelines and DAC Evaluation Quality Standards.

## 5. Evaluation products (key deliverables)

The consultant is expected to produce the following products as part of deliverables:

The consultant is expected to produce the following products as part of deliverables:

- i. **Evaluation inception report (7-10 pages. excluding Annexes) and PPT (PowerPoint presentations) presentation:** The inception report should be carried out following the desk review and based on preliminary discussions with UNDP. It should detail an understanding, to address the expectation as mentioned in the methodology section above, of what is being evaluated and why, showing how each evaluation question will be answered by way of proposed methods, sources of data, and data collection procedures. The inception report should include a proposed schedule of tasks, activities, and deliverables. The inception report must include detailed data collection tools and questions to be asked of the different stakeholders. The updated Evaluation matrix should be included in the inception report. The evaluation matrix is a tool that the evaluator creates as a map and reference in planning and conducting an evaluation. It also serves as a useful tool for summarizing and visually presenting the evaluation design and methodology for discussions with stakeholders. It details evaluation questions that the evaluation will answer, data sources, data collection and analysis tools or methods appropriate for each data source, and the standard or measure by which each question will be evaluated. Below is the sample of the evaluation matrix template.

Relevant evaluation criteria	Key questions	Specific sub-questions	Data sources	Data collection methods/ tools	Indicators/ success standards	Methods for data analysis

- ii. **First field data-collection mission:**
- iii. **Evaluation debriefing: Debrief of preliminary evaluation result:** Immediately following the completion of fieldwork and data collection, the consultant is expected to provide a preliminary debriefing and findings to UNDP and key stakeholders.
- iv. **Knowledge Product:** (1 – 2 pages max.) to highlight success stories from the project particularly focused on gender, poverty alleviation, and economic empowerment, if applicable. Otherwise, success stories could result from the effect the project had on beneficiaries.
- v. **Draft evaluation report (30 pages) excluding annexes** to be submitted to the evaluation commissioner (see Annexes for suggested report format). The first draft report shall cover the evaluator's findings from the document review and analysis of the data collected

during the field mission. The first draft will be reviewed by the Project management team and selected stakeholders to ensure that the evaluation meets the required quality criteria, standards, and that the evaluation's purpose and objectives are fulfilled. The comments shall be addressed in the second draft report and submitted to the evaluation Commissioner. The content of the report should consist of the following:

- List of Acronyms and Abbreviations (1 page)
- Executive Summary summarizing the key findings with rating scale, and recommendation (1-2pages)
- Introduction (1 page)
- Evaluation Scope and Objective (1-2 pages)
- Evaluation Approach and Methods (1-2 pages)
- Data analysis, finding, including a table of progress against indicators (15-20 pages)
- The report will also reflect human/best practice narrative as per the evidence collected from the field visit.
- Conclusion, recommendations and Lessons Learned (5 pages)
- The report should consist of good flow reflecting clear linkage from data analysis to each finding, its relevant conclusion, and recommendation.
- The recommendation should be focus, specific, and actionable.
- The lesson learnt should be elaborated based on the reflection from the project performance, coupled with the experience from the consultant. The lesson learnt should be able to serve the purpose to inform the current project and could be leveraged to inform other future project/programming.
- Annexes: Survey/ questionnaire questions and analyses, List of contacts, and other relevant information.

UNDP will coordinate with key stakeholders to review the draft evaluation report and provide comments to the evaluator within an agreed period (within two weeks after receiving the document), addressing the content required (as agreed in the TOR (Terms of Reference) and inception report) and quality criteria as outlined in these guidelines.

- vi. **Final evaluation report and audit trail:** After comments from all stakeholders, the evaluator shall update the draft report into a final report to be submitted to the evaluation commissioner. Feedback received on the second draft evaluation report should be considered when preparing the final report. The evaluator should produce an audit trail in track changes, indicating whether and how each comment received was addressed and integrated into the Final Report.



Note: inception and final reports must meet UNDPs (United Nations Development Programme)' Independent Evaluation Office (IEO's) Quality criteria. There will also be multiple iterations with relevant UNDP units until the report is considered approved.

All deliverables are subject to UNDP approval before they are considered final, and before corresponding milestones payment can be released. Upon submission of any report (draft inception, draft evaluation, and final evaluation) as required under the expected deliverables, UNDP will formulate comments and indicate any factual errors within appropriate timeline of receipt. Comments will be formulated based on Quality Control Checklists that will be provided to the consultant at the beginning of the evaluation. The consultant should consider all comments before the reports are considered completed. The consultant shall take note of these comments and decide whether to revise the reports and, where appropriate, succinctly explain why comments cannot be considered. The consultant is expected to submit a revised version of the assessment report to UNDP clearly highlighting the incorporation of suggested changes made for consideration. It should be noted that the above list of deliverables, together with the below implementation timeframe are subject to review and revision in discussion with the consultant.

In the event of unexpected changes to the context/ working environment in Solomon Islands during the consultancy period and in line with the UNDP's financial regulations, when determined by the UNDP Country Office that a deliverable or service cannot be satisfactorily completed due to genuine and unavoidable limitations to the assignment, it shall be discussed and agreed mutually with the consultant in relation to payments.

Comments and changes by the evaluator in response to the draft report should be kept in "track changes" by the evaluator to show how they have addressed comments in this Audit Trail Report.

**8. Final Mid Term Review Evaluation Report:** The Consultant will revise the draft based on the inputs provided and submit the final report within two weeks after receiving the comments. The evaluator is expected to develop a brief PowerPoint presentation and present the evaluation results (max two times) to UNDP, the project board or relevant stakeholders as suggested by the project team.

No.	Deliverables/Outputs	Estimated Duration to Complete	Target Due Dates	Review and Approvals Required
1	Deliverable 1: Submission of the evaluation Inception report produced with detailed review methodology, including timelines.	5 days	12 February 2024	MTR team submits inception report to JP team.  JP team to share inception report with MTR reference group and receives feedback and validation (via call or email).

2	Deliverable 2: Completion of field work exercise, and provision of presentation of preliminary findings (Evaluation Debriefing) to key stakeholders	10 days	26 February 2024	MTR team presents to JP team and the MTR reference group (via call or email).
3	Deliverable 3: Submission of a draft version of the evaluation report	6 days	8 March 2024	<p>MTR team submits draft MTR report to JP team.</p> <p>JP team to share draft MTR report with MTR reference group and receive feedback and validation (via call or email).</p>
4	Deliverable 4: Knowledge Product	4 days	11 March 2024	<p>MTR team submits draft MTR report to JP team.</p> <p>JP team to share draft MTR report with MTR reference group and receive feedback and validation (via call or email).</p>
5	Deliverable 5: Submission of satisfactory final evaluation report incorporating comments at the quality required in compliance with	5 days	15 March 2024	MTR team submits revised MTR report to JP team.

	the required Evaluation Report Outline, PowerPoint of evaluation results, and attached with Audit Trail Report.			JP team to share with MTR reference group.
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All deliverables are subject to UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) approval before they are considered final, and before corresponding milestones payment can be released. Upon submission of any report (draft inception, draft evaluation, and final evaluation) as required under the expected deliverables, UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) will formulate comments and indicate any factual errors within appropriate timeline of receipt. Comments will be formulated based on Quality Control Checklists that will be provided to the consultant at the beginning of the evaluation. The consultant should consider all comments before the reports are considered completed. The consultant shall take note of these comments and decide whether to revise the reports and, where appropriate, succinctly explain why comments cannot be considered. The consultant is expected to submit a revised version of the assessment report to UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) clearly highlighting the incorporation of suggested changes made for consideration. It should be noted that the above list of deliverables, together with the below implementation timeframe are subject to review and revision in discussion with the consultant.

In the event of unexpected changes to the context/ working environment in Solomon Islands during the consultancy period and in line with the UNDP's financial regulations, when determined by the UNDP Multi Country Office that a deliverable or service cannot be satisfactorily completed due to genuine and unavoidable limitations to the assignment, it shall be discussed and agreed mutually with the consultant in relation to payments.

## **6. Evaluation ethics**

Evaluations in the UN (United Nations) are conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluations'<sup>8</sup>. The consultant must safeguard the rights and confidentiality of information providers, interviewees, and stakeholders through measures to ensure compliance with legal and other relevant codes governing collection of data and reporting on data. The consultant must also ensure security of collected information before and after the evaluation to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of sources of information where that is expected. The information knowledge and data gathered in the evaluation process must also be solely used for the evaluation purposes and not for other uses with the express authorization of UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), World Vision International, and their partners.

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<sup>8</sup> See here for details of UNEG guidelines: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/100>

## 7. Implementation arrangements

The project evaluation is jointly commissioned by UNDP and WVI and the joint commissioners for this evaluation will be UNDP's Resident Representative in the Multi-Country Office in Fiji. Principally, the consultant will report to the Management and Performance Unit, who will continuously collaborate with the WVI and respective project managers who will support the process by providing both substantive and logistical support to the consultant. Assistance will be provided by the UNDP and WVI senior management and PBF project teams. Additional assistance will be provided jointly by UNDP/WVI including contacting stakeholders and organizing meetings and facilitating field visits when necessary.

Where necessary, UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) and WVI field teams will support the consultant in data collection and information gathering based on discussions with, and approval of UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) and WVI. This TOR (Terms of Reference) forms the basis upon which compliance with assignment requirements and overall quality of services provided by the consultant will be assessed by UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) and WVI.

As part of the assignment:

- UNDP will provide office space with access to internet and printer when in-country in Honiara.
- UNDP and WVI will provide list of additional documents as per TOR Annexes.
- The consultant is expected to:
  - Use their own laptop/s, and other relevant software/equipment.
  - Use their own communication platforms, mobile, personal email address etc., during the consultancy period, including when in-country.
  - Make own travel arrangements to fly in-country and transportation arrangements where necessary.

## 8. Time frame for the evaluation process

The timeframe for this consultancy is 6 weeks beginning from no later than 23 October 2023. The consultant should ensure the completion of all deliverables within this timeframe. <b>ACTIVITY</b>	# <b>WORKING DAYS</b>
Document review and preparing MTR (Mid Term Review) Inception Report	5 days
MTR (Mid Term Review) data collection: stakeholder meetings, interviews, field visits	10 days
Preparing draft MTR (Mid Term Review) report	10 days
Incorporating audit trail on draft report and complete the final MTR (Mid Term Review) report	5 days
<b>Total</b>	<b>30 days</b>

### Indicative allocation and schedule for evaluation deliverables

Activity description and expected workflow	# of days	Date of completion	Place	Responsible Party
<b>Desk review and inception report:</b>				
Organize a Joint briefing between consultant, UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) & WVI PBF project teams (joint Project Managers and project staff as needed).	1	At the time of signing contract (in March 2024)	UNDP Office	UNDP
Share relevant documentation with the evaluator.	-	At the time of signing contract (in March 2024)	Shared Folder	UNDP
Desk review, <b>inception report</b> drafting/submission including evaluation design, methodology, evaluation matrix, workplan and proposed list of stakeholders to be interviewed.	2	Within 7 days of signing contract, with draft report submission expected last day of desk review (TBD)	-	Consultant
PPT (PowerPoint presentations) presentation of the inception report (15 pgs. max) including all annexes.	1	Within 2 days following submission of inception report (TBD)	-	Consultant
Comments and approval of <b>inception report (deliverable 1)</b> .	1	Within 5 days following submission of inception report (TBD)	-	UNDP
<b>First field data-collection mission:</b>				
Consultations and <b>field visits</b> , in-depth interviews, and Focus Group Discussions etc.	9	Within 3 weeks of contract signing (TBD)	Field work	Consultant
Debriefing on <b>field work</b> to joint UNDP and WVI teams ( <b>deliverable 2</b> )	1	Within 3 days of completing field work (TBD)	TDB	Consultant
<b>Draft evaluation report writing:</b>				
Preparation of <b>first draft evaluation report</b> (50 pgs. max excluding annexes) ( <b>deliverable 3</b> )	7	Within 2 weeks of completing field mission (TBD)	-	Consultant
PPT (PowerPoint presentations) presentation of the <b>first draft evaluation report</b>	1	On the last day of submitting evaluation report (TBD)	UNDP Office	Consultant
Comments to draft evaluation report	1	Within one week of submission of draft report (TBD)	-	UNDP
Consolidate UNDP/WVI comments into a second draft evaluation report, and submission of second draft report (with comments addressed)	1	Within 3 days of receipt of draft report with comments (TBD)	-	Consultant

Activity description and expected workflow	# of days	Date of completion	Place	Responsible Party
<b>Desk review and inception report:</b>				
Preparation of <b>final draft evaluation report</b> (50 pgs. max excluding annexes)	3	Within 5 days after the second field data collection mission (TBD)	-	Consultant
Finalization & submission of <b>Final evaluation report</b> incorporating additions and comments provided by project staff, stakeholders, & UNDP/WVI teams ( <b>deliverable 4</b> )	2	At least 3 days before end of contract (TBD)	-	Consultant
<b>Estimated total workdays for the evaluation</b>	<b>30 days</b>			

## **9. Minimum Qualification of the Individual Contractor.**

### **Competencies:**

- More than 10 years of proven professional experience of undertaking/participating in projects and/or evaluations in areas of sustainable development financing or investments.
- More than 5 years of proven professional experience in designing and conducting development evaluation that apply relevant mixed-methods evaluation approaches with good understanding of mainstreaming gender and other cross-cutting priorities.
- Knowledge and experience of working for the UN (United Nations) system and the UN (United Nations) development system reform is highly preferred.
- Competences in results-based management and adaptive management.
- Fluency in English and country official language is a requirement, with excellent written and presentation skills.

### **Qualifications:**

Minimum Advanced university degree (master's degree or equivalent) in Development/Development Studies, Economics, Statistics, Business Administration/Management, Public Administration, Social Policy/Sciences, International Relations, or related field is required.

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## **10. Application submission process and criteria for selection**

1. Interested Individuals (firms) must submit the following documents/information to demonstrate their qualifications. Please group them into one (1) single PDF document as the application only allows to upload maximum one document:
  - Letter of Confirmation of Interest and Availability using the template provided in Annex II (Individual IC).
  - Personal CV or P11, indicating all past experience from similar projects, as well as the contact details (email and telephone number) of the firm and at least three (3) professional references.
  - Technical proposal, including a) a brief description of why the firm considers itself as the most suitable for the assignment; and b) a methodology, on how the firm will approach and complete the assignment.
  - Financial proposal, as per template provided in Annex II. Note: All applicants must quote prices in United States Dollars (USD).

Incomplete and joint proposals may not be considered. Consultancies with whom there is further interest will be contacted. The successful consultancy shall opt to sign an Individual Contract or a Reimbursable Loan Agreement (RLA) through its company/employer with UNDP.

Note: Successful individual will be required to provide proof of medical insurance coverage before commencement of contract for the duration of the assignment.

For any clarification regarding this assignment please write to [Mr. Dale Kacivi - procurement.fj@undp.org/dale.kacivi@undp.org](mailto:Mr.Dale.Kacivi@undp.org)

All applications must be clearly marked with the title of consultancy and submitted by 5:00pm, 13th November 2023 (Fiji Time) via Quantum.

The Consultant must send a financial proposal based on Lump Sum Amount. The total amount quoted shall be all-inclusive and include all costs components required to perform the deliverables identified in the TOR (Terms of Reference), including professional fee, travel costs, living allowance (if any work is to be done outside the IC's duty station) and any other applicable cost to be incurred by the IC in completing the assignment. The contract price will be fixed as an output-based price regardless of extension of the herein specified duration.

Technical Criteria for Evaluation (Maximum 70 points) [Please add/adjust the below criteria and points awarded to each as necessary]

- Criteria 1: A minimum Advanced university degree (master's degree or equivalent) in Development/Development Studies, Economics, Statistics, Business Administration/Management, Public Administration, Social Policy/Sciences, International Relations, or related field is required. – Max 10 points
- Criteria 2: More than 10 years of proven professional experience of undertaking/participating in projects and/or evaluations in areas of sustainable development financing or investments –  
Max 15 points
- Criteria 3: More than 5 years of proven professional experience in designing and conducting development evaluation that apply relevant mixed-methods evaluation approaches with good understanding of mainstreaming gender and other cross-cutting priorities – Max 15 points
- Criteria 4: Knowledge and experience of working for the UN system and the UN development system reform is highly preferred E – Max 15 points
- Criteria 5: Experience in and/or knowledge and understanding of Fiji context – Max 15 Points

Only consultants obtaining a minimum of 49 points (70% of the total technical points) would be considered for the Financial Evaluation.



### 11. Indicative payment schedules

The consultant is expected to deliver the following deliverables. It should be noted that the following list of deliverables might be subject to review and revision in discussion with the consultant. Payments will be made upon acceptance and approval by UNDP focal point of the planned deliverables, based on the following tentative payment schedule:

Terms of Payment	Percentage (%)
• First payment will be paid upon submission and acceptance of <b>inception report</b> including work plan and methodology ( <b>deliverable 1</b> )	10%
• Second payment will be paid upon submission and acceptance of the first <b>draft evaluation report (including PPT (PowerPoint presentations) presentation)</b> ( <b>deliverable 2&amp;3</b> )	50%
• Final payment will be paid upon submission and acceptance of <b>final evaluation report (deliverable 4)</b>	40%
<b>Notes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The payment is deliverable based, i.e., upon satisfactory completion and acceptance of the deliverable by the UNDP focal point.</li><li>• Each payment claims must be approved by the UNDP focal point.</li><li>• UNDP focal point will make the payments within 14 days from receipt of invoice.</li></ul>	

### Note on travel and accommodation.

- *All envisaged travel costs must be included in the financial proposal including all travel within Solomon Islands or outside the duty station/repatriation travel. UNDP does not accept travel costs exceeding those of an economy class ticket.*
- *In cases where UNDP arranges and provides travel and/or accommodation due to unforeseen circumstances, and other reasons, it should be noted that these costs will be recovered from the payments to the consultant. UN rates applies.*
- *In the case of unforeseeable travel, payment of travel costs including visa, tickets, lodging and terminal expenses should be agreed upon in writing, between UNDP and the consultant prior to travel and will be reimbursed.*

## 6.2 MTR evaluative matrix (evaluation criteria with key questions, indicators, sources of data, and methodology)

The following is the evaluative matrix, specifying the main review criteria, and the indicators or benchmarks against which the criteria will be assessed. The “Evaluative

Questions” are to be considered as “Guiding questions”. Not all of these questions need to be asked in every interview (some interviewees may be strategically, technically or more management oriented and hence only the relevant questions may be asked), and the wording can be adapted based on the interview circumstances.

<b>Relevant evaluation criteria</b>	<b>Key questions</b>	<b>Specific sub questions</b>	<b>Data sources</b>	<b>Data collection methods/tool</b>	<b>Indicators/success standards</b>	<b>Method for data analysis</b>
Relevance and coherence	Refer to Section 6.3	Refer to Section 6.3	Project documents and stakeholders	Documentation review and stakeholder consultations	Triangulation of data and ensuring the same trends observed by the different methods	Transcribing of information and qualitative analysis
Effectiveness	Refer to Section 6.3	Refer to Section 6.3	Project documents and stakeholders	Documentation review and stakeholder consultations	Triangulation of data and ensuring the same trends observed by the different methods	Transcribing of information and qualitative analysis
Efficiency	Refer to Section 6.3	Refer to Section 6.3	Project documents and stakeholders	Documentation review and stakeholder consultations	Triangulation of data and ensuring the same trends observed by the different methods	Transcribing of information and qualitative analysis
Impact	Refer to Section 6.3	Refer to Section 6.3	Project documents and stakeholders	Documentation review and stakeholder consultations	Triangulation of data and ensuring the same trends observed by the different methods	Transcribing of information and qualitative analysis
Sustainability	Refer to Section 6.3	Refer to Section 6.3	Project documents and stakeholders	Documentation review and stakeholder consultations	Triangulation of data and ensuring the same trends observed by the different methods	Transcribing of information and qualitative analysis
Cross-cutting issues	Refer to Section 6.3	Refer to Section 6.3	Project documents and stakeholders	Documentation review and stakeholder	Triangulation of data and ensuring the same trends observed by	Transcribing of information and

Relevant evaluation criteria	Key questions	Specific sub questions	Data sources	Data collection methods/tool	Indicators/success standards	Method for data analysis
				consultations	the different methods	qualitative analysis

### 6.3 Example Questionnaire or Interview Guide used for data collection

6.3.1 Relevance/coherence - to assess the relevance of the project's strategies, design, and implementation arrangements to the needs and priorities of Fiji Islands;

- To what extent did the project strategy, expected outputs, and proposed activities reflect the strategic priorities of Solomon Islands' policies, the donor, and UNDP's Multi Country Programme Document
- To what extent is the project contributing to the theory of change for the country programme outputs and outcomes and relevant to the achievement of the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals)?
- To what extent were the methods, activities, and outputs aligned with the overall objectives and goals of the project?
- To what extent does the project adopt gender-sensitive, human rights-based and conflict sensitive approaches, in compliance to the principle of Leaving No One Behind (LNOB)
- How do stakeholders perceive the relevance of the project and how has the activities implemented improved local conditions? Are there any stories of change?
- To what extent does the project address national development challenges, considering UNDP's comparative advantage and the roles of the other key development players?

6.3.2 Effectiveness - to assess how effective was the project in achieving the objectives (outputs and outcomes) using the project's result framework as a basis for the assessment.

- To what extent did the project achieve the intended results of i) strengthening youth's role in conflict resolution; ii) strengthening youth's participation in developing local solutions for the management of land and natural resources; and iii) empowering local communities to manage and transform land use through adapting conflict resolutions tools?
- To what extent did the project contribute to creating an enabling environment for youth participation as agents of change in building local peace and dialogue and facilitating transmission of knowledge? Were there any unintended effects whether positive or negative?
- How effective are the strategies and tools used in the implementation of the project?

- What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?
- Which programme areas are the most relevant and strategic for UNDP to scale up or consider going forward?

6.3.3 Efficiency: to assess the relevance of the project's strategies, design, and implementation arrangements to the needs and priorities of Solomon Islands

- To what extent have the project management structure and the resources allocated been efficient in achieving the expected results? Does the actual or expected results (outputs and outcomes) justify the costs incurred?
- To what extent were resources used to address inequalities and gender issues?
- To what extent did the monitoring and evaluation systems put in place helped to ensure that the project is managed efficiently and effectively?
- To what extent did UNDP engage/coordinate with different beneficiaries, implementing partners, other actors, and national counterparts to achieve outcome-level results?
- To what extent were quality country programme outputs delivered on time?
- To what extent were partnership modalities conducive to the delivery of country programme outputs?
- To what extent did monitoring systems provide management with a stream of data, disaggregated by sex, that allowed it to learn and adjust implementation accordingly?
- To what extent have UNDP practices, policies, processes, and decision-making capabilities affected the achievement of the country programme outcomes?

3.4 Impact:

- To what extent did the project contribute to or is likely to contribute to the goal of promoting youths' participation as agents of peace and change in Solomon Island? Are there any concrete examples of successful models of promoting youths' participation?
- To what extent will men, women and vulnerable people benefit from the project interventions in the long-term?

6.3.5 Sustainability: The evaluation will assess how the project achievements contribute to sustainability by engaging appropriate Government, Non-Government, and other relevant stakeholders.

- To what extent did the project establish partnerships with other stakeholders, including national institutions, NGOs (Non-Government Organization), United Nations agencies, the private sector and development partners, to sustain the attained results?
- To what extent do national partners have the institutional capacities, including sustainability strategies, in place to sustain the outcome-level results?

- What components or which interventions of the project are likely to be sustainable and/or scalable, and why?
- Which key factors are required to improve prospects of sustainability of project outputs and outcomes and the potential for replication?
- To what extent are policy and regulatory frameworks in place that will support the continuation of benefits for men and women in the future?
- How likely is it that the exit strategies, and approaches to phase out assistance provided by the project will be effective considering existing contributing factors and constraints?
- To what extent will resources be available to sustain the benefits achieved by the project?
- Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outputs and the project contributions to country programme outputs and outcomes?
- To what extent did UNDP actions pose an environmental threat to the sustainability of project outputs, possibly affecting project beneficiaries (men and women) in a negative way? What is the

#### 6.3.6 Cross-cutting themes

##### Human Rights:

- To what extent is the project promoting a rights-based approach for all groups of persons, especially to promoting international laws and commitments made by Solomon Islands?
- To what extent have the youths and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefitted from the project?

##### Gender Equality

- To what extent has gender been mainstreamed within the design, implementation, and monitoring of the project?
- To what extent has the project promoted positive changes in gender equality and empowerment of women?
- To what extent did UNDP establish mechanisms to ensure the sustainability for female and male beneficiaries of the country programme outcomes?
- To what extent do mechanisms, procedures and policies exist to carry forward the results attained on gender equality, empowerment of women, human rights, and human development by primary stakeholders?

##### Leaving No One Behind

- Were women and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups consulted and meaningfully involved in project planning, implementation, and monitoring?

The above guiding questions for the final evaluation will be further refined and jointly agreed by the consultant, UNDP, and other relevant stakeholders.

### 6.3 Ratings Scales

<b>Highly Satisfactory (HS)</b>	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve or exceed all its end-of-project targets, without major shortcomings. The progress towards the objective/outcome can be presented as “good practice”.
<b>Satisfactory (S)</b>	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets, with only minor shortcomings.
<b>Moderately Satisfactory (MS)</b>	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets but with significant shortcomings.
<b>Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)</b>	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve its end-of-project targets with major shortcomings.
<b>Unsatisfactory (U)</b>	The objective/outcome is expected not to achieve most of its end-of-project targets.
<b>Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)</b>	The objective/outcome has failed to achieve its midterm targets, and is not expected to achieve any of its end-of-project targets.

### 6.4 List of persons consulted

Name	Organisation	Responsibility	Contacts
Vineil Narayan	UNDP	ICRBE Project Manager	<a href="mailto:vineil.narayan@undp.org">vineil.narayan@undp.org</a>

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Dirk Wagener	UNDP	Resident Coordinator	<a href="mailto:dirk.wagener@un.org">dirk.wagener@un.org</a>
Sivendra Michael	Government of Fiji	Permanent Secretary (Environment)	<a href="mailto:sivendra.michael@environment.gov.fj">sivendra.michael@environment.gov.fj</a>
Neomai Turaganivalu	Wildlife Conservation Society	Marine Manager	<a href="mailto:nturaganivalu@wcs.org">nturaganivalu@wcs.org</a> (former Director of Fisheries, Department of Fisheries Fiji)
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Victor Bonito	Korolevu-i-wai	Community rep	<a href="mailto:staghorncoral@hotmail.com">staghorncoral@hotmail.com</a>
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Orisi Cagilaba	Pacific Blue Foundation	Community Coordinator and Beqa Community Rep	<a href="mailto:oriscagi@gmail.com">oriscagi@gmail.com</a>
Nilesh Chand	Savusavu Town Council	Chief Executive Officer	<a href="mailto:ceosavusavu@gmail.com">ceosavusavu@gmail.com</a>

## 6.5 List of documents reviewed

- UNDP Project Document
- Co-Financing Letters
- UNDP Environmental and Social Screening results
- Project Inception Report

- All Project Implementation Reports {PIR's}
- Annual / Quarterly Workplans
- Quarterly / Annual progress reports
- Audit reports
- Monitoring reports prepared by the project
- Project operational guidelines, manuals and systems
- UNDP country programme document(s)
- Minutes of the Board Meetings and other meetings (i.e. Project Appraisal Committee meetings, Technical Committee Meetings)
- Project site location maps
- Consultancy Reports (TORs, Inception, Technical, Final)
- Mission and Back to Office Reports
- Training Reports
- Any additional reports as relevant
- Co Financing Table

## 6.7 Signed UNEG Code of Conduct form

Evaluators/Consultants:

- Must present Information that is complete and fair in its assessment of strengths and weaknesses so that decisions or actions taken are well founded.



- Must disclose the full set of evaluation findings along with information on their limitations and have this accessible to all affected by the evaluation with expressed legal rights to receive results.
- Should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual informants. They should provide maximum notice, minimize demands on time, and respect people's right not to engage. Evaluators must respect people's right to provide information in confidence, and must ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source. Evaluators are not expected to evaluate Individuals, and must balance an evaluation of management functions with this general principle.
- Sometimes uncover evidence of wrongdoing while conducting evaluations. Such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body- Evaluators should consult with Other relevant oversight entities when there is any doubt about if and how issues should be reported.
- Should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty In their relations with all stakeholders. In line with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evaluators must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender equality. They should avoid offending the dignity and self-respect of those persons with whom they come in contact in the course of the evaluation. Knowing that evaluation might negatively affect the interests of some stakeholders, evaluators should conduct the evaluation and communicate its purpose and results In a way that clearly respects the stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.
- Are responsible for their performance and their product(s). Responsible for the clear, accurate and fair written and/or oral presentation of study limitations, findings and recommendations.
- Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent In using the resources of the evaluation.

#### MTR Consultant Agreement Form

Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System:

Name of Consultant: Patrick Fong

I confirm that I have received and understood and will abide by the United Nations Code of Conduct for Evaluation.

Signed at (Place) on (Date)

Signature

## 6.8 Signed MTR final report clearance form

### **Midterm Review Report Reviewed and Cleared By:**

#### **Commissioning Unit**

Name:

Signature:

Date:

#### **UNDP-ICRBE Project Manager**

Name:

Signature:

Date:

*Annexed in a separate file:* Audit trail from received comments on draft MTR report  
*Annexed in a separate file:* Relevant midterm tracking tools

