

Terminal evaluation of "Strengthening global capacity to effectively manage areas beyond national jurisdiction"

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**Terminal evaluation of
“Strengthening global capacity to
effectively manage areas
beyond national jurisdiction”**

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Acronyms and abbreviations

ABNJ	Areas beyond national jurisdiction
BBNJ	Biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction
CoP	Community of practice
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
GOF	Global Ocean Forum
RFMOs	Regional fisheries management organizations
RLP	Regional Leader Program
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNDOALOS	United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme

Executive summary

Introduction

1. This terminal evaluation, a requirement of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), is being conducted for both accountability and learning purposes and to improve formulation of a follow-up programme for the GEF V Common Oceans ABNJ (areas beyond national jurisdiction) Program. The terminal evaluation consists of simultaneous evaluations of the full-sized tuna and deep-sea projects, the medium-sized capacity project and this evaluation of the Program as a whole (which includes the assessment of the coordination project).
2. The project on Strengthening global capacity to effectively manage areas beyond national jurisdiction (hereinafter referred to as the "Project" in this document) aimed to support improved capacity of decision makers and linking global and regional ABNJ processes, by facilitating cross-sectoral policy dialogue, knowledge management and outreach, and increased capacity for decision-making at various levels to address these pressing issues and work towards achieving effective management of marine areas beyond national jurisdiction. It was also intended to play a role in synthesizing the knowledge generated and lessons learned from all of the ABNJ projects and disseminate lessons learned, experiences and best practices to relevant stakeholders, including governments, organizations with competence in ABNJ, and global and regional ABNJ processes.

Main findings

3. **Relevance.** The project design focussed on bridging knowledge and capacity gaps in cross-sectoral approaches to the governance of ABNJ and was aligned to GEF focal areas strategies. Overall, the project design was logical with an upstream and cross-sectoral orientation, but there were overlaps with components of the programme's other projects (tuna and deep-sea projects especially).
4. **Effectiveness.** The project made a tangible contribution to strengthen the capacities to engage in international policy processes by supporting a pipeline of emerging negotiators and exposed them to the ongoing biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ) negotiations. The project made opportunistic use of the BBNJ negotiations calendar to convene key stakeholders to its high-level policy sideline events. Although collectively they brought continuity to the project, individually, many were more of light networking gatherings than intensive knowledge exchange and influencing experiences. However, the communities of practice (CoPs) – the key knowledge nodes for the project - were not used effectively and to their intended purpose in the project. The project did not effectively engage in media outreach to communicate flagship results and generate discussion on marine ecosystem and common ocean issues. There was no structured lesson-learning and communications targeted at specific interest groups and stakeholders. Benefits from the awareness raising and capacity development actions will ensue only in the long-term and depend on the effective conclusion and implementation of the BBNJ agreement.
5. **Efficiency.** Project implementation was satisfactory in terms of time and within budget record of completion; however, early completion of the project's deliverables limited its utility to the programme as a whole due to the lack of engagement of stakeholders of the other projects.

6. **Sustainability.** With the small scale and one-off nature of outputs, the project's outcome pathways are indeterminate. With the project's small scale, one-off outputs and non-activation of the communities of practice, there were few elements designed for sustainability. The knowledge and continued engagement of the Regional Leader Program (RLP) graduates and the pre-existing networks of the Global Ocean Forum (GOF) are the only means to sustain and build on the project's results.
7. **Co-financing.** The project enlisted significant amounts of co-finance. However, in the absence of input-based budget breakdowns, the specific utilization of co-finance in the project's activities was unclear.
8. **Stakeholder engagement and partnerships.** Stakeholder engagement was focussed highly on negotiators and had scope for improvement in engagement with fisheries and other industrial actors key to the BBNJ processes. The project ensured a good gender balance in its activities, tracked through systematic documentation.
9. **Factors of performance.** The main enabling factors of performance were: GOF credibility and convening power; opportunistic engagement with the BBNJ processes, and the approach of 'informal consultations' around ABNJ issues. The main debilitating factors were: under-resourcing; lack of synchronization with other projects, and fisheries sector perceptions and lack of engagement in the project.

Lessons learned

10. The project's experience holds three important lessons for a possible next phase:
 - i. Robust stakeholder mapping and analysis, to understand and adapt to diverse positions and priorities of sector stakeholders.
 - ii. Adequate threshold of investment in knowledge assets, expert networks and outreach channels to sustain the absorption and percolation of knowledge and capacities.
 - iii. Tailored and segmented communication strategies to connect to different stakeholders.

Conclusions

Conclusion 1. Project design was appropriate, focussing on addressing the cross-sectoral coordination and dialogue among the separate ongoing processes - a key gap that limited effective ecosystem-based management of ABNJ.

Conclusion 2. The project supported the development of individual capacities to engage in discussions on cross-sectoral governance of ABNJ; however, it focussed on a narrow constituency related directly to the BBNJ negotiations and had limited engagement with other significant economic stakeholders, especially fisheries.

Conclusion 3. Due to limitations in design, low budgets and unclear accountability, the project could not play its foreseen role in cohesion and coordination and synthesize the lessons from the other ABNJ projects to inform and influence important global and regional processes.

Conclusion 4. Notwithstanding its overall usefulness, project scale was too small and limited to influence intended impacts. No structures or mechanisms were created to ensure sustainability of cross-sectoral dialogue beyond the project.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1. (To GEF SEC) Provide clear guidance as to the importance and appropriateness of a specific outcomes linked to BBNJ negotiations for a follow-on programme.

Recommendation 2. (To FAO) Clearly articulate and distinguish accountabilities for project output delivery and programme coordination aspects and resource them accordingly.

Recommendation 3. (To GOF) Use the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and other relevant capacity development frameworks to inform scoping of capacity development interventions, and sufficiently allocate resources for project components that represent investment in capacity building, especially knowledge assets and expert networks, to derive intended benefits from knowledge and awareness-based interventions.

Recommendation 4. (To GOF, FAO and GEF SEC) GEF Secretariat should issue clear and unambiguous guidelines on reporting application of co-finance towards project results. Details of application of cash co-financing should be mentioned in project reports. Input based budget sheets should also be prepared for co-financing contributions.

GEF rating table

FAO-GEF rating scheme	Rating	Summary comments
1) Relevance		
Overall relevance of the project	S	There were no or minor shortcomings in terms of relevance and design.
2) Effectiveness		
Policy dialogues	MS	There were moderate shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of effectiveness.
Capacity development	S	There were no or minor shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of effectiveness.
Outreach and knowledge synthesis	MS	There were moderate shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of effectiveness.
Overall assessment of project results	MS	There were moderate shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of effectiveness.
3) Efficiency, project implementation and execution		
Timely completion and financial utilization)	S	There were some shortcomings and quality of execution more or less meets expectations.
Quality of execution	S	There were some shortcomings and quality of execution more or less meets expectations.
Efficiency (including cost effectiveness and timeliness)	S	There were some shortcomings and quality of execution more or less meets expectations.
4) Sustainability		
Legal/Regulatory	L	There is little or no risk to sustainability.
Institutional	ML	There are moderate risks to sustainability.
Political	ML	There are moderate risks to sustainability.
Financial	ML	There are moderate risks to sustainability.
Overall sustainability	ML	There are moderate risks to sustainability.
5) Factors affecting performance (M&E and stakeholder engagement)		
Overall quality of stakeholder engagement	S	There were moderate shortcomings in engaging with key stakeholders in the other projects and in key sectors.

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the evaluation

11. This terminal evaluation is a requirement of the Global Environment Facility (GEF). It is being conducted for both accountability and learning purposes of the implementing agency (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, FAO), the executing partner (Global Ocean Forum, World Bank), participating institutions and governments. Currently, FAO and its partners are preparing a follow-up programme for the GEF-Common Oceans ABNJ (areas beyond national jurisdiction) Program. The terminal evaluation will serve as an input to improve future project formulation and implementation of similar projects.
12. The Common Oceans ABNJ Program is one of the first programmes under GEF 5 and was formulated as a response to this global need to have a concerted effort in bringing various stakeholders to work together to manage and conserve the world's common oceans. The programme aimed to achieve transformational changes in the management and sustainability of resources in the high seas. It had a wide scope of coverage: tuna and deep-sea fisheries management, policy, conservation of biodiversity, capacity development, building networks, testing, documenting and disseminating best practices, and improving the interface of science and policy for improved decision-making.
13. The Program was implemented globally covering all four major oceans of the world - Atlantic Ocean, Indian Ocean, Pacific Ocean and Southern Ocean. The programme is implemented by FAO, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the World Bank. Besides GEF funding amounting to USD 50 million, co-financing by various partners is estimated to be USD 370 million.
14. The programme consists of five child projects, including three full-sized projects: Tuna, Deep-Sea, and Ocean Partnerships, a mid-sized Capacity project and a mid-sized Program Coordination project. The Capacity project was conceptualized as a separate child MSP (4 582) with focus on capacity development activities for key stakeholders. However, the Capacity project also had some elements of coordination among all ABNJ projects, programme level communications (website portal) and synthesis of knowledge from all projects, some of these were also elements in the subsequently-designed Coordination project. Terminal evaluations of the Tuna project, Deep-Sea project and the Capacity project as well as the evaluation of the programme as a whole have been undertaken concomitantly, and the respective evaluation reports are available. The Capacity project and the Program level evaluations were carried out by Team Leader S. V. Divvaakar, with the assistance of Fabio Hazin (evaluator of the Tuna Project), Jean Jacques Maguire (evaluator of the Deep-Sea project), and Raquel Cabello (who developed case studies of the tuna and capacity projects).
15. The primary audience and intended users of the evaluation are:
 - i. Implementing GEF agencies of the Program (FAO, UNEP, World Bank); project execution partners (FAO and GOF), FAO divisions such as the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, the Climate and Environment Division which houses the FAO-GEF Coordination Unit, who will use the findings and lessons identified in the evaluation to plan for sustainability of results achieved and improve formulation and implementation of similar projects.

- ii. GEF and other donors who will use the findings to inform strategic investment decisions in the future.
 - iii. Regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs), regional seas programmes (RSPs), large marine ecosystem (LME) programmes, and their national government focal points, other relevant government agencies (e.g., foreign affairs), executing partners (foundations, ocean research institutes, advocacy groups, museums/aquaria, and private sector, especially fisheries industries) who will use the evaluation findings and conclusions for future planning.
16. The secondary intended users include donors, national governments and organizations interested in supporting sustainable fisheries management and biodiversity conservation.
17. The results framework for the Capacity project is presented below for reference (Table 1).

Table 1: Project results framework summary

Objective: To promote effective global and regional coordination including exchange of information, on marine ABNJ to ensure sustainable fisheries and conservation of globally significant biodiversity in the oceans			
Component expected outcomes	Outputs	GEF grant	Co-financing proposed
<p>Component 1. Global and Regional Cross-Sectoral Policy Dialogue and Coordination.</p> <p>Outcome 1: Strengthened and broadened cross-sectoral dialogue and policy coordination in the ABNJ, leading to improved implementation of ecosystem approaches.</p>	<p>Output 1.1 Linkages established through two major Cross-Sectoral Multi-Stakeholder Workshops, involving the actors of the ABNJ Program and representatives from governments, industry groups (especially fishing), IGOs, NGOs, and international organizations operating at global and regional levels.</p> <p>Output 1.2 Three to five High-Level Policy Dialogues (including platforms for policy discussion, networking, etc.) are organized at major relevant meetings, targeting key decision-makers among stakeholders, including Ministries of Finance, Fisheries and Environment.</p> <p>Output 1.3 Coordination across ABNJ projects in messaging, outreach and stakeholder engagement related to achievements and lessons learned supported through quarterly coordination calls and preparation of at least 2 Program-wide knowledge syntheses to provide a summary, analysis and review of the knowledge generated across all 4 projects.</p>	404 000	1 027 500
<p>Component 2. Capacity Development.</p> <p>Outcome 2: Strengthened capability of decision-makers, especially from developing countries, to manage activities in ABNJ and to participate in international/regional processes related to ABNJ.</p>	<p>Output 2.1 Two ABNJ Communities of Practice established and linked as part of global network of practitioners dealing with ABNJ-related issues.</p> <p>Output 2.2 Regional ABNJ Leaders Fellowship Program, with at least 10 qualified candidates, established to enable the participation in global ABNJ processes.</p>	309 000	1 048 750

Objective: To promote effective global and regional coordination including exchange of information, on marine ABNJ to ensure sustainable fisheries and conservation of globally significant biodiversity in the oceans			
Component expected outcomes	Outputs	GEF grant	Co-financing proposed
Component 3. Knowledge Management and Outreach. Outcome 3: Improved and broadened public understanding of the ecosystem threats and services related to ABNJ, particularly by high-level decision-makers.	Output 3.1 Public Outreach Network established and made up of journalists, ABNJ practitioners, leaders from museum/ aquaria, and other outreach specialists. Output 3.2 ABNJ Web Portal set up for stakeholders and general public to provide information, best practices and knowledge on ABNJ, including information from ABNJ Program projects.	134 500	2 017 750
Component 4. Project Monitoring and Evaluation. Outcome 4: Project implementation conducted with adaptive results-based management, supported by efficient monitoring and evaluation.	Output 4.1 One percent of IW budget allocated to support IW: LEARN activities, including linkages with ABNJ Portal, Experience Notes, and participation in IW conferences. Output 4.2 Project Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system established. Output 4.3 Final project evaluation/ review report.	62 500	105 000
Subtotal		910 000	4 199 000
Agency Fee		90 000	400 000
Total		1 000 000	4 599 000

1.2 Scope and objectives of the evaluation

18. The ABNJ Capacity Project Terminal Evaluation Report is an assessment of project results against its results framework, contribution to transformational changes leading to GEF International Waters and Biodiversity focal area outcomes, and its added value in harvesting and disseminating valuable lessons, experiences and results of all the related ABNJ projects in relevant cross-sectoral policy dialogue and outreach platforms.¹

1.3 Methodology

19. In line with GEF Evaluation Policy requirements and guidance as of May 2019, the evaluation followed the latest GEF guidance on terminal evaluations in the selection of evaluation criteria. The list of evaluation questions for the programme and child projects is presented in Table 2. A detailed evaluation matrix can be found in Appendix 2.

¹ Page 8 of the Project Document lists the transformational changes, in the section ' Scenario without GEF resources'.

Table 2: Evaluation questions by area of analysis

Relevance	Were the programme and projects outcomes congruent with the GEF focal areas/operational programme strategies, FAO global and regional priorities, and the international agreements and frameworks on the ANBJ?
Achievement of project results	To what extent have programme and projects objectives been achieved, and were there any unintended results? To what extent can the attainment of results be attributed to the GEF-funded component?
Efficiency, project implementation and execution	(implementation) To what extent did FAO deliver on programme and projects identification, concept preparation, appraisal, preparation, approval and start-up, oversight and supervision? How well risks were identified and managed? (execution) To what extent did the execution agency effectively discharge its role and responsibilities related to the management and administration of the programme and projects?
Monitoring and evaluation	(M&E design) Were the programme and projects monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan practical and sufficient? (M&E implementation) Did the M&E system operate as per the M&E plan? Was information gathered in a systematic manner, using appropriate methodologies? Was the information from the M&E system appropriately used to make timely decisions and foster learning during programme and projects implementation?
Sustainability	What is the likelihood that the programme and project results will continue to be useful or will remain even after the end of the project? What are the key risks which may affect the sustainability benefits brought about by the programme and projects?
Stakeholder engagement	Were other actors, such as civil society, indigenous population, private sector or other important stakeholders involved in programme and projects' design or implementation, and what was the effect on projects results?
Environmental and social safeguards	To what extent were environmental and social concerns taken into consideration in designing and implementing the programme and projects?
Gender	To what extent were gender considerations taken into account in designing and implementing the programme and projects? Were the programme and projects implemented in a manner that ensures gender equitable participation and benefits?
Co-financing	To what extent did the expected co-financing materialize, and what are their contribution to the programme and projects result?
Progress to Impact	To what extent may the progress towards long-term impact be attributed to the programme and projects?
Knowledge Management	To what extent was knowledge management used by programme and projects?

20. More details on the methodology can be found in the inception report.
21. To arrive at its findings and conclusions, the evaluation used four data collection tools: i) document/literature reviews; ii) in-depth key informant interviews (project implementing and executing agencies, direct participants and ultimate beneficiaries, other key relevant actors); iii) direct observation of the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) 3 events; and iv) a case study of the Regional Leaders Program (RLP).
22. **Document Reviews.** The evaluation team received a sizeable set of documents for all projects, in a single comprehensive depository (the ANBJ evaluation library). The repository includes: project preparation documents, progress reviews, implementation reports, mid-term evaluations, steering committee notes, and details of various outputs under the projects. A list of documents perused can be found in the Bibliography.

23. **Key informant interviews.** Given that the target direct beneficiaries of the projects are anchor functionaries in relevant institutions connected to different parts of the ABNJ, a purposive sampling approach was used to select relevant informants for face-to-face and Skype interviews (Table 3). Specific guidance questions were prepared for each interview. The response rate was rather low, and several persons stated that their exposure to the project was at one or two events only. Project direct beneficiaries consisted of the following:
 - i. 134 workshop attendees
 - ii. 392 high-level policy event attendees²
 - iii. 44 RLP attendees/graduates.
 - iv. 53 CoP members
 - v. 23 Regional Leaders who also attended the workshops or high-level policy events.
24. Of these, 12 persons who had attended three or more workshops/high-level policy events, were considered priority informants to get insights on the substantive aspects. In addition, a list of 33 participants was compiled by the executing agency and categorized under: representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), representatives of intergovernmental organizations; and representatives of national governments (Countries). Besides these, interviews are proposed with a selection of RFMOs and private sector associations.
25. Specific guidance questions were prepared for each group of stakeholders to gauge their perceptions of benefits and outcomes from their involvement in the capacity project and linkage to their functions and other complementing initiatives on the issues focussed.
26. **Direct observation.** The evaluation also used the opportunity of evaluators attending key events: the Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) negotiations (IGC3) (New York, 19-30 August 2019); the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM, Rome, 15-19 September 2019) and the International Symposium of Fisheries Sustainability (Rome, 18-21 November 2019) is an opportunity for the evaluation to witness deliberations first-hand and interview delegates (including project beneficiaries) at the sidelines of the events.
27. **Case studies.** For the capacity project, a case study of the Regional Leaders Program was carried out to analyse its results effectiveness, in particular its influence on the knowledge and capacities of negotiators and key influencer representatives of relevant institutions - government ministries, regional intergovernmental institutions and fisheries management organizations/arrangements, lead international NGOs, special interest and advocacy groups.
28. **Analysis.** In line with the non-experimental design of the evaluation, the main emphasis of analysis was on the emerging evidence of transformational changes and environmental benefits from the data and qualitative observations from a diversity of stakeholders, mainly those that participated directly in the programme. The GEF's Review of Outcomes to Impacts (ROtI) approach was consulted for assessing progress towards impacts, with the preparation of a (reconstructed) theory of change that incorporated two levels of

² High-level policy dialogue at BBNJ PrepCom 1: 72; BBNJ PrepCom 2: 40, BBNJ PrepCom 4: 56, BBNJ IGC Organizational Meeting: 82, BBNJ first session of IGC: 62, BBNJ second session of IGC: 80.

intermediate outcome states. The evaluation considered irreversible positive changes (identified scalable good practices, formulation of policies, legal frameworks and management strategies for sustainable use and biodiversity conservation, behavioural changes and best practice adoption) as intermediary states having likelihood of longer term outcomes and impacts beyond the programme's span.

1.4 Structure of the report

29. Following this introduction, Chapter 2 presents the main findings based on the evaluation questions. Lessons learned are presented in Chapter 4, followed by conclusions and recommendations in Chapter 5.

2. Evaluation questions: key findings

2.1 Relevance

Finding 1. The project design focussed on bridging knowledge and capacity gaps in cross-sectoral approaches to governance of ABNJ and was aligned to GEF focal areas strategies.

30. The complexity of ocean ecosystems and the large number and diversity of the stakeholders involved necessitate more effective coordination and a unified legal/regulatory framework for the marine areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ) to ensure sustainable resource use and biodiversity conservation.
31. The project identified as its key issue the inadequacy of sectoral management in ABNJ and the need to improve linkages among sectoral management approaches to address cumulative impacts on the marine environment. According to the rationale as explained in the project document, lack of adequate coordination among global and regional processes has been noted as a key problem. Debates on ABNJ in various forums have been characterized by diverse perspectives and disagreements among nations regarding issues related to governance principles as well as to considerations for access and benefit-sharing. The various instruments addressing ABNJ issues at the global and regional level address issues and adopt different approaches based on their respective mandates. While these processes can be effective in achieving sectoral management goals, in many cases the lack of coordination and dialogue among the separate ongoing processes limits the ability to achieve effective (multi-sectoral) ecosystem-based management of ABNJ.
32. The absence of a legal framework for ABNJ and the limited expertise and resources, low awareness and appreciation of the issues and threats in ABNJ has also inhibited investments, especially by developing countries, to effectively engage in discussions for a comprehensive, multi-sectoral approach to manage ABNJ.
33. Complementing the sectoral emphasis of the other projects in the ABNJ Program, the project on Strengthening Global Capacity to Effectively Manage ABNJ (hereinafter referred to as the "Project") aimed to facilitate cross-sectoral policy dialogue, improve knowledge management and outreach, and contribute to increased capacity for decision-making at various levels (including global and regional levels) to address these pressing issues and work towards achieving effective management of marine areas beyond national jurisdiction. Its intended contributions to the GEF focal area outcomes are mapped in Table 4, which shows the project's emphasis on fostering and applying knowledge networks to influence regional and global policy processes to improve management of ABNJ.
34. This project was also designed to ensure a coherent and coordinated outreach of the knowledge generated and lessons learned from all projects in the programme, specifically, synthesize and disseminate lessons learned, experiences and best practices to a wide range of stakeholders at global and regional levels.

Table 3: ABNJ Capacity project components mapped to GEF focal area outcomes

GEF focal area outcomes	Relevant elements in Capacity project
Objective IW-4 Outcome 4.1 ABNJ (including deep-sea fisheries, oceans areas, and seamounts) under sustainable management and protection.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establishment and linking of communities of practice as part of a global network of practitioners. 2. Creation of an ABNJ Web portal. 3. Knowledge products for IW: LEARN, broadening and improving awareness and engagement of the public at large on ABNJ potential and issues.
IW-4 Outcome 4.2 Plans and institutional frameworks for pilot cases of ABNJ have catalytic effect on global discussions (including marine protected areas [MPAs] from BD area).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cross-Sectoral Multi-Stakeholder Workshops as well as High-Level Dialogues on ABNJ issues, targeting key decision-makers, particularly from relevant government ministries. 2. Regional ABNJ Leaders Fellowship program aimed at strengthening the capability of selected decision-makers on ABNJ issues and processes.
BD Objective 1: Improve Sustainability of Protected Area Systems and will contribute to BD Outcome 1.1.: Improved management effectiveness of existing and new protected areas.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cross-Sectoral Multi-Stakeholder Workshops as well as High-Level Dialogues on ABNJ issues, targeting key decision-makers, particularly from relevant government ministries. 2. Dissemination of guidance and best practices related to vulnerable marine areas, especially vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs) and ecologically or biologically significant areas (EBSAs).

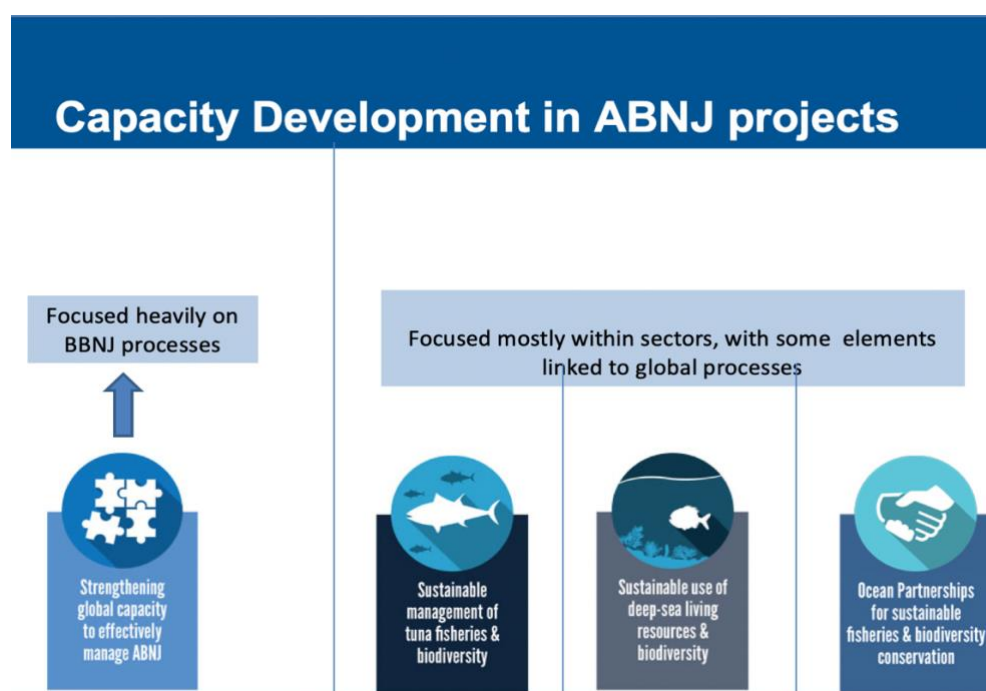
Source: ABNJ Program Framework Document and Capacity Project Document

Finding 2. Overall, the project design was logical with an upstream and cross-sectoral orientation, but there were overlaps with the other projects of the programme which limited the exploitation of synergies.

35. **Rationale for a separate capacity project.** The evaluation noted that all ABNJ projects had significant capacity development components. The purpose and justification of a separate capacity project when capacity development was an ingrained feature in all projects was not clarified sufficiently in the programme document. However, the capacity project document explained that actions including pilot activities in the three other projects will generate numerous and valuable practical experiences and precedent-setting lessons of relevance and great interest for other regions, as well as at the global level. Accordingly, an essential role of this Project was 'to work with the other ABNJ projects to synthesize these experiences and lessons in a systematic, coherent, and consistent manner, and ensure a coordinated approach to messaging and outreach to stakeholders, thereby amplifying the transformational impacts of the ABNJ Program'.
36. **BBNJ negotiations.** An area of work unspecified in the initial design that later led to divergent perceptions among stakeholders in other projects was the opportunistic orientation of the capacity project around the international agreement on BBNJ. The implementation of the project's key components was largely isolated from the tuna and deep-sea projects whose stakeholders represented an important grouping for the negotiations of the draft texts. However, during implementation, the capacity project reoriented strongly to support for the BBNJ process, which was opportunistic yet somewhat tangential to the focus of other projects. The primary beneficiaries of the capacity project were negotiators, and not fisheries regulatory organizations, who were key partners in the Tuna, Deep-sea and, to an extent, the Ocean Partnerships project.

37. **Component overlaps.** There were overlaps among projects which are rooted in the lack of coordination in the design stages. The most salient overlaps are with the deep-sea project: area-based multisectoral planning was an important theme in both projects, as a full component in the Deep-sea project, and as one of the two policy briefs for the communities of practice in the Capacity project. However, there was practically no interaction between the projects to coordinate their activities to benefit their key stakeholders and to share knowledge and expert resources. The lack of synchronization led not only to fragmentation of activities (the communities of practice could have been a resource to the deep-sea project as well) but also poor utilization of the resources and results between projects.
38. **Capacity and Coordination projects.** Roles and responsibilities for knowledge management were shared by both the Capacity project and the Coordination project, and also divided between the Global Ocean Forum (GOF) and FAO which led to ambiguities. While the management of the ABNJ knowledge portal and external communications were with FAO, media outreach and synthesizing lessons from all the projects, and the coordination calls among projects was under GOF. This led to ambiguity of responsibilities and accountability for the project as a whole.

Figure 1: Depiction of the isolated pursuit of capacity development in the programme



Source: Evaluation team

39. **Comparative advantage of GOF.** The Global Ocean Forum,³ brings together ocean leaders from several countries and facilitates open and constructive policy dialogue for supporting the formal processes that have been or may be established by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) concerning ABNJ management. GOF's work includes policy analyses, cross-sectoral dialogues, and special sessions at the global ocean conferences and UN fora addressing ABNJ issues. GOF's approach is to clarify the issues, lay out various perspectives,

³ The International Coastal and Ocean Organization (ICO), the Secretariat of the Global Ocean Forum (GOF), carried out the responsibilities of the GOF.

discuss options and identify possible avenues for consensus-building among disparate interests.

40. GOF has played an important role in tracking the major commitments on the sustainable development of the ocean, including the conservation and sustainable use of resources in the marine ABNJ. GOF was influential in the adoption of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) targets on oceans, coasts and small island developing states (SIDS) in 2002, and its reports on “how well are we doing” in meeting the commitments on oceans, coasts, and SIDS have been widely acknowledged and recognized for their usefulness in tangibly tracking progress on global ocean goals. The evaluation considers that the project was possible only because of GOF’s pre-existing networks.
41. **Comparative advantage of FAO.** FAO is the leading intergovernmental agency on fisheries and aquaculture with a mandate and recognized history in capacity building and promoting regional collaboration in fisheries, including through its country and regional offices as well as its technical/administrative support to RFMOs. FAO has been at the forefront of developing global and regional governance instruments for sustainable fisheries. FAO has a wide range of knowledge networks and communities of practice supported by global fisheries statistics, authoritative publications and knowledge products (State of Fisheries and Aquaculture) and learning tools.

Table 4: Relevance rating

Element	Rating	Description
Congruence with GEF focal areas strategies, and international frameworks	S	The project had no or minor shortcomings.
Appropriateness of strategy, entry points	S	The project had no or minor shortcomings.
Quality of design	MS	The project had moderate shortcomings.
Overall	S	The project had no or minor shortcomings in terms of relevance and design.

2.2 Effectiveness

42. This section of the analysis focusses on the key outputs which are discrete and constitute the building blocks to interpret the project’s results effectiveness. Thus, instead of the three outputs, it is structured around six discrete elements: cross sector policy dialogues; high-level policy dialogues at the sidelines of international events; the Regional Leaders Program (RLP); the Communities of Practice (CoP) and policy briefs; the public outreach network (PON), and ABNJ portal and knowledge dissemination.

2.2.1 Cross-sector policy dialogue and multi-stakeholder workshops

Finding 3. In addition to the intensive multi-stakeholder workshops, the project made opportunistic use of the BBNJ negotiations calendar to convene key stakeholders to its high-level policy sideline events. Collectively, they brought continuity to the project by providing participants several touch points for knowledge exchange and influence.

43. Over the life of the project, eight high-level policy dialogues on ABNJ in direct connection with the BBNJ process and three side events on topics that concern ABNJ, such as oceans and climate change, and oceans and sustainable development, were conducted by the project (see Table 5 below).
44. An important aspect of the dialogue events was that several attendees were also connected to other outputs of the programme. Of the 135 participants at the project workshops and 392 participants at the high-level policy dialogues (from 77 countries), 53 were involved in other outputs of the project: 18 were members of the communities of practice; 39 of them were in the Regional Leaders Program, and 10 attended the media outreach events. The evaluation understands this brought continuity and contributed to more effective development of capacities and clarity of the key messages on cross-sectoral approaches.

Table 5: List of policy dialogue and capacity workshops held in the project

Type of Event	Details
Multi-stakeholder workshop 1	21 October 2013. Importance of areas beyond national jurisdiction and evolving capacity development needs IMPAC 3, Marseille France
Multi-stakeholder workshop 2	18-20 February 2015. Linking Global and regional levels in management of areas beyond national jurisdiction, FAO Rome
Multi-stakeholder workshop 3	18-21 May 2016. Capacity development to improve management of marine area beyond national jurisdiction, St George's, Grenada
BBNJ Ad hoc Working Group side event	9 January 2015. Capacity development and ABNJ: national and regional perspectives, examples from Africa, Latin America and Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific Islands
BBNJ PrepCom1 side event	30 March 2016. Regional and national perspectives on area-based management and capacity development needs in ABNJ: examples from Africa, Asia, Latin America and Caribbean, and Pacific Islands
BBNJ PrepCom2 side event	26 August 2016. Capacity development for area-based management in ABNJ: needs, experiences, options and opportunities
BBNJ PrepCom3 side event	31 March 2017. Ocean scale Science for effective Marine Governance: a new approach to Managing Atlantic Ecosystems
BBNJ PrepCom4 side event	17 July 2017. Capacity development in ABNJ: experiences, lessons possible ways forward
BBNJ IGC Org Meeting side event	17 April 2018. Capacity building as a key aspect of a new international agreement on marine BBNJ and options on approaches, modalities and strategies
BBNJ IGC 1 side event	6 September 2018. Options on approaches, modalities and strategies on capacity development for a new international agreement on marine BBNJ
BBNJ IGC 2 side event	26 March 2019. Possible modalities for implementing BBNJ capacity development regarding area-based management, environmental impact assessment and marine genetic resources

Type of Event	Details
BBNJ IGC 3 side event	28 August 2019. Informal meeting of the friends of the BBNJ, capacity building and Technology Transfer
Initial ROCA side event	22 May 2017. Advancing the oceans and climate agenda for the next five years
Un Ocean Conference	8 June 2017. Addressing oceans and climate and building the blue economy: essential to SDG 14 implementation
Total participants	392 participants at sideline events, 135 participants in workshops.

Source: Project progress reports

45. The evaluator also had the opportunity to attend the BBNJ Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) 3 in August 2019 for a first-hand experience of the side events, besides conducting face-to-face interviews with the project's beneficiaries and contributors. Meetings with several RLP beneficiaries, members of communities of practice and contributors to the policy briefs indicated high appreciation of the project's initiative on cross-sectoral approaches to ABNJ governance. However, more than the ABNJ project, it was the stature, long experience and networking power of GOF on ocean issues that engendered the participation of experts and influencers on ABNJ issues. A major reason for the participation of official delegates in the sideline events organized by GOF was the trusted reputation of GOF and also the 'informal' nature of discussions, which did not present any risks of 'influencing' discussions on the floor or representation of any official institutional or national positions on the issues under negotiation.
46. However, several respondents also mentioned that a limitation of the side events was their short duration (not exceeding 90 minutes) and large attendance (20-25 people, with each person having a two-four-minute intervention) which was not conducive for in-depth discussions. Some respondents observed that the expertise congregating at the IGC events could have been put to better use with a few participants presenting analyses and insights summarizing the state of the negotiations rather than each attendee making a short and general statement on the theme. The evaluator's first-hand experience at the sideline event on Capacity building and technology transfer confirmed this observation.
47. The evaluation also noted that the policy dialogue events focussed overly on the 'capacity development' section of the BBNJ agreement rather than exploring ways to promote shared understanding among the diverse sector stakeholders attending the negotiations (especially fisheries sector). It is the gaps in understanding and positions of stakeholders on definitions and jurisdictions and the gaps between developed and developing countries on freedom of the high seas that have impeded the BBNJ agreement. The project could have made a much more significant contribution to the BBNJ processes by engaging its communities of practice to provide guidance and engage cross-sectoral dialogue as a way of bridging these gaps, and undertaking activities around the events (this is covered in more detail in Section 2.2.3).
48. The Capacity project's emphasis seems to have been more on policymakers and negotiators and less on sector level institutions, which can be justified in context of the BBNJ negotiations. The evaluation got the impressions from both fisheries sector stakeholders and conservationists that the project's direct support on the substance of negotiations would have adversely affected the 'informal' convening power of GOF. As a

result, the project could not engage directly with the regional fisheries management bodies, which were being supported at the negotiations from the resources of the ABNJ Tuna and Deep-Sea projects, with negligible interactions with the capacity project (which was supposed to enhance awareness and understanding of cross-sectoral approaches).

49. The evaluation also noted concerns from some stakeholders, including intergovernmental agencies that the Capacity project's emphasis on capacity development modalities and mechanisms cited in the BBNJ agreement texts – particularly on technology transfer and marine genetic resources - were not a high priority area for other programme partners from a sustainable fisheries and resource management perspective. Issues relating more to emerging economic avenues in the ABNJ (bioprospecting, biopharmaceuticals, biotechnology, etc.) and involving contentious issues of intellectual property rights are not the primary focus of the Program or the implementing agencies. Thus, though the capacity project included analysis of emerging economic uses of the ABNJ, an advocacy for the contours of capacity development and technology transfer mechanisms applying to the implementation of the BBNJ agreement were considered somewhat tangential to the Program priorities and key programme partners.
50. The alignment to the BBNJ processes, while being positive and relevant for the project, distanced it from the fisheries stakeholders who were still grappling with the relevance and significance of a new agreement and its implications for the existing governance mechanisms in the fisheries sector. There were also perceptions that the Capacity project's engagement represented an endorsement by the implementing agencies (especially FAO) of the principles and emerging texts of the BBNJ agreement, which caused concern to fisheries organizations who believed that the FAO Fish Stocks Agreement, the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, the Port State Measures Agreement and FAO Guidelines on Deep-Sea Fisheries were already in place to ensure the minimum ecosystem impact of the fisheries sector in ABNJ.

2.2.2 Regional Leaders Program

Finding 4. The project made a tangible contribution to strengthen the capacities to engage in international policy processes by supporting a pipeline of emerging negotiators and exposing them to the ongoing BBNJ negotiations.

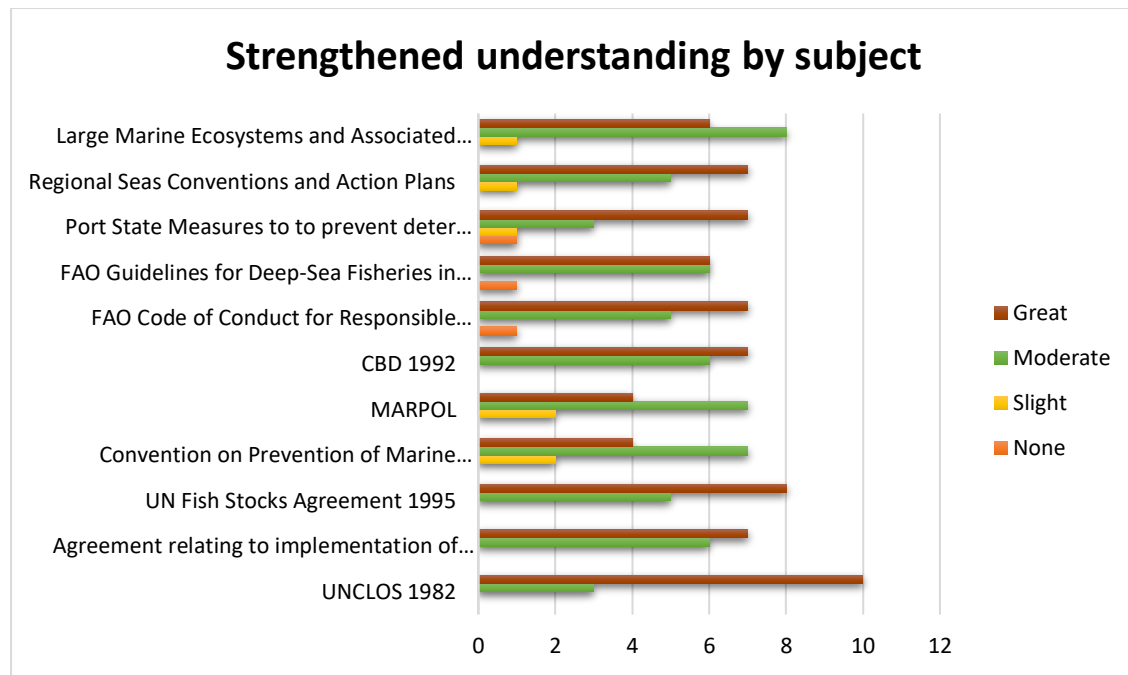
51. One of the most important results from the Capacity project was the ABNJ Regional Leaders Program, designed to strengthen the capacity of leaders from developing countries and small island developing states to better address issues and to more effectively participate in global and regional ABNJ processes. The curriculum was developed and organized by the University of Delaware and GOF, involving several partners and supporters, and taught at the United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (UNDOALOS). The project expanded its beneficiary coverage by training several UN Nippon Foundation of Japan Fellowship Programme (2016 batch) which consisted of Government officials and other mid-level professionals from developing states, selected based on their need to obtain the necessary knowledge to assist their countries to formulate comprehensive ocean policy and to implement the legal regime set out in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and related instruments..
52. The RLP's two sessions (2015 and 2016) trained a total of 43 people from 34 countries (22 from Asia Pacific, 13 from Africa, 7 from Latin America and Caribbean, and 1 from FAO subregional office in Barbados). Of the 14 candidates for the first batch (21 percent

women), 8 were funded by the Capacity project; 1 by the Deep-Sea project; 1 by FAO Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC); 2 by the Government of Singapore; 1 by the China Institute for Marine Affairs; and 1 by the Government of Tonga. Invitations were also sent to all RFMO's and other relevant organizations, and 12 of the 14 candidates were from developing countries.

53. The training's usefulness was corroborated by the spurt in interest from other institutions, which resulted in a second batch of 29 participants plus 1 observer (55 percent women). 19 candidates were funded by external sources - 11 from Nippon Foundation of Japan Fellowship Programme; 4 from Pacific Small Island Developing States Fellowship on Ocean Policies; 2 from Republic of Korea; and 1 each from Netherlands and UNEP. It must be noted that for the 11 people of the Nippon Foundation, the RLP was included as the first week orientation course in the nine-month fellowship in UNDOALOS, providing the overview of various laws and conventions related to the Law of the Sea.
54. The evaluation considers the RLP to be the most tangible and potentially impactful result of the project. The project enhanced the trainees' awareness of cross-sectoral linkages in the governance of ABNJ, and exposed them to the BBNJ processes (Ad Hoc Working Group and Prep Com) as observers attached to their negotiating delegations. 19 of the 43 graduates are now officially involved in the negotiations and making substantive contributions to the submissions as was seen in the IGC 3. Nine leaders collaborated in the preparation of the policy brief on capacity development (covered in section 2.2.3). For both sessions of the RLP, participants gave presentations on regional and national perspectives on capacity development and area-based management in ABNJ during the side events at the BBNJ Ad Hoc Working Group Session 9 and PrepCom1, respectively.
55. For a more detailed assessment of benefits, six RLPs were interviewed individually at the sidelines of the IGC 3 event, August 2019, and an email survey was administered to 39 beneficiaries and drew 13 responses (including 6 from women). The following insights emerged on the application of the RLP training (Figures 2, 3, and 4):
 - i. The RLP training strengthened understanding of a number of laws and conventions, mostly United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea 1982, UN Fish Stocks Agreement 1995, Convention on Biological Diversity 1992, and Regional Seas Conventions.
 - ii. The trainings contributed to individual capacities in terms of broadening vision and improving understanding of ABNJ management issues, policy frameworks and preparations for the BBNJ discussions.
 - iii. Participants consider the greatest influence of the training to be contributions to improve biodiversity conservation, fisheries policies and regional ocean policies.
56. Many RLPs stated that they have been able to influence their country delegation in international and regional processes for management and coordination of ABNJ issues. A large number are involved in official capacity to support their national delegations and are taking active part in the preparations and the actual negotiating sessions. In some countries, the RLP trainees were among the few people with specific knowledge of ABNJ issues which enabled them to take on more active roles in the preparation of national positions.

57. People interviewed confirmed that because of the training, they understand better the complexities of governing the ABNJ, and the RLP training not only added to their knowledge, but also enhanced their motivation as change leaders. For instance, one trainee has chosen the ABNJ for the PhD thesis - the first of its kind, and another has moved over from a fisheries management role to pursue a marine research career. The evaluation also noted from the questionnaire survey and in-person interviews that RLP participants have remained in touch with one another and have interacted at events related to the negotiations, thus becoming an informal community of emerging negotiators.

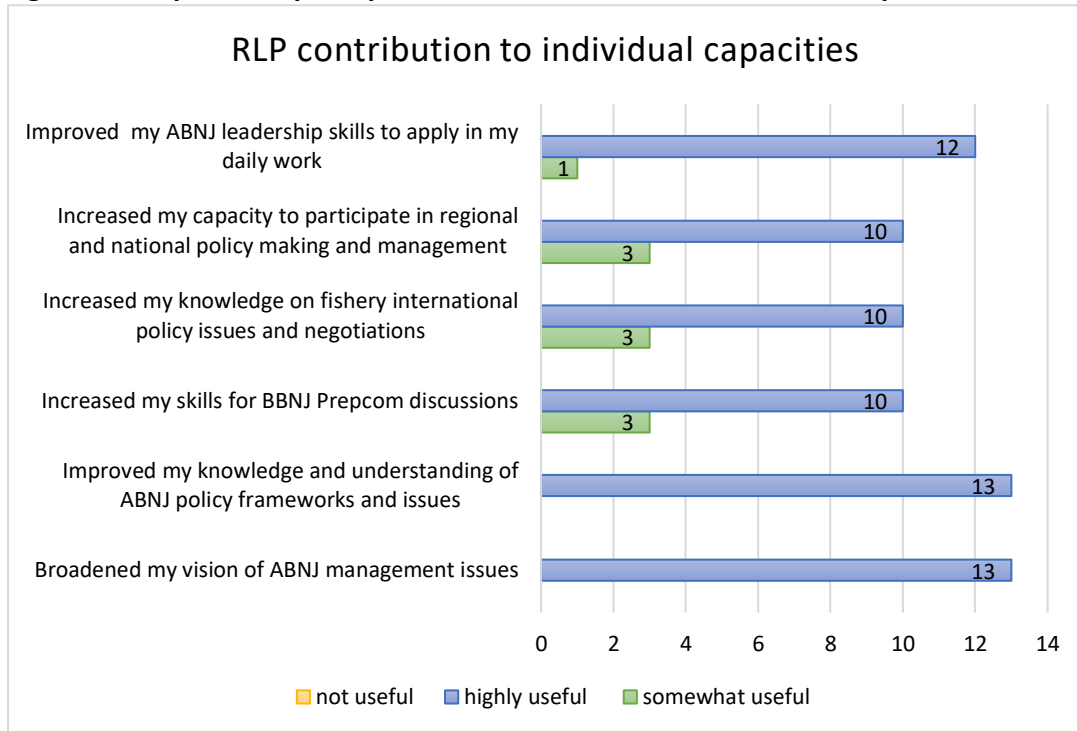
Figure 2: Respondent perceptions of strengthened understanding by subject



Source: Evaluation team

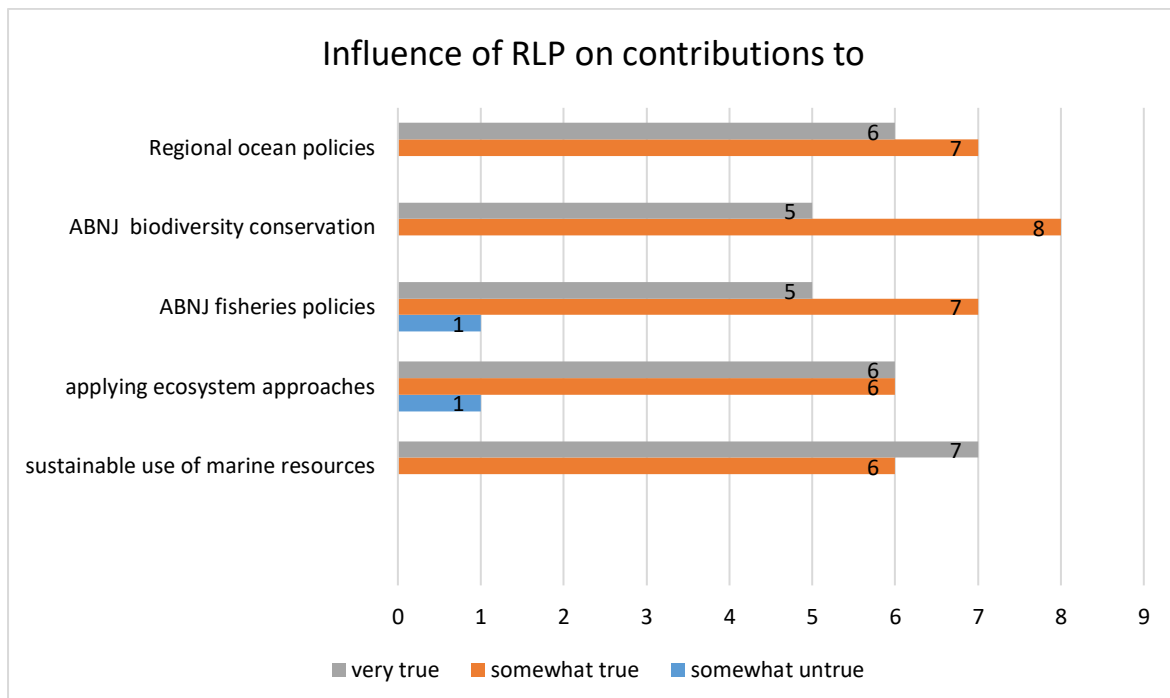
58. The project also made due effort (including through the ABNJ Tuna project) to reach out to RFMOs to propose candidates for the training; with 8 out of 44 participants working in the fisheries sector. In addition, the Project followed the recommendations from the Tuna and Deep-Sea Projects, which funded three participants of the RLP.

Figure 3: Respondent perceptions of contributions to individual capacities



Source: Evaluation team

Figure 4: Respondent perceptions of potential contributions to various ABNJ areas



Source: Evaluation team

2.2.3 Communities of practice and policy briefs

Finding 5. Communities of practice – the key knowledge nodes for the project - were not used effectively and to their intended purpose in the project.

59. The project created two communities of practice, the **Community of Practice on Fisheries, Biodiversity and Climate Change** (57 members including 18 in core group), and the **Community of Practice on Multi-sector Area-based Planning** (51 members including 10 in core group), besides a **Public Outreach Network** (21 members). A perusal of the membership of these communities shows a significant incidence of common memberships at least 21 persons were part of two CoPs or at least one CoP and the public outreach network. These three networks were the project's key mechanisms for knowledge sharing and dissemination on selected relevant issues identified by the members as being important for a cross-sectoral approach to governance of the ABNJ.
60. **Communities of practice.** The aim of setting up communities of practice was to have in each CoP 10-20 core group members and 25-50 active peripheral members representing a variety of ABNJ stakeholders who would actively exchange information on ABNJ management and governance through monthly discussions, and contribute to joint analysis and formulation of policy and other solutions (Terms of Reference of the communities of practice and project document). The CoPs, to be hosted and facilitated by GOF, were to interact regularly through online discussion platforms, web-based communication, teleconferences, and in-person meetings, coordinated by GOF. Online discussion platforms were to be the main venue for substantive discussion, and the outputs were to be uploaded to the ABNJ Web portal. An individual familiar with the Project, the ABNJ Program, and the broader context of ABNJ issues was to be designated the facilitator for each CoP. The facilitator was to guide discussion, pose provocative questions and topics for discussion, identify opportunities for synergies with other CoPs and other activities in ABNJ Program, and update the CoP on relevant developments in the field. Recognizing the importance of learning and interaction among members of CoPs in a multidisciplinary context, the Project also proposed a cross-fertilization of ideas and practices between the two CoPs, to encourage learning across CoPs, acknowledging other CoPs' perspectives, and challenging assumptions.
61. The Project developed terms of reference and a preliminary work plan (2015-2017) outlining the engagement of the members around these questions:
 - i. What are the interactions among fisheries, biodiversity and climate change?
 - ii. What are the implications for coastal/island populations and for ocean users?
 - iii. What are possible policy responses that can be deployed to address the negative aspects of the interactions among fisheries, biodiversity and climate change?
62. The Community of Practice on Multi-sector Area based Planning identified the following questions (among others) for its deliberations- these were highly relevant to developing understanding of implications of the BBNJ agreement texts:
 - i. What are the special difficulties/challenges that are faced in the application of multi-sector area-based planning in ABNJ compared to areas within national jurisdiction?
 - ii. What capacity is needed to carry out multi-sector collaboration?

- iii. What lessons can be learned and applied from experiences in multi-sector area-based planning in areas under national jurisdictions to areas in the ABNJ?
 - iv. How can one reconcile/better coordinate multiple forms of area-based planning in ABNJ, including marine protected areas, ecologically or biologically significant areas, vulnerable marine ecosystems, PSSAs, APEIs?
 - v. How can regional fisheries management organizations/regional fishery bodies strengthen their role in multi-sector area-based planning?
 - vi. What might be the costs of carrying out multi-sector area-based planning in specific ocean regions in ABNJ, and how might funding for such costs be obtained?
63. The evaluation notes the significance of these topics to the project's objectives and their immediate relevance to the ongoing BBNJ processes (the Prep Com and the IGCs which occurred during the project's timeline). The evaluators hold that deliberating these questions more effectively with stakeholders from the various sectors could have made a strong contribution to the BBNJ discussions.
64. The evaluation learned that, after all the efforts that took place during the organization and the communication mechanisms put in place, the communities of practice could not be commissioned to implement their work plans and never convened in a face-to-face meeting after the inception meeting in February 2015. Also there was a proposal for web-based platform for online interaction among members, the portal was set-up but never activated with posts, and is now a static page with no content. The evaluation was told by key persons at the executing agency that the communities of practice and the portal could not be continued due to the time constraints of the GOF senior policy expert to fulfil the role identified as facilitator. Another possible reason for the communities of practice not being activated was that the participants were expected to bear their own travel costs for attending events and making contributions. This was a non-starter in the evaluation's view: as one of the key influencers of change, CoPs should have been resourced adequately to implement the work plan as formulated, with funding for at least a minimum number of participants for each event or theme. Given the huge co-financing commitments of more than USD 1.37 million in cash, including over USD 1 million from the two lead agencies GOF and FAO, it is unclear why co-financing could not cover costs of the CoPs to implement their work plans. However, the policy briefs have been widely appreciated by the ABNJ policy community, with very positive appreciation comments made during the BBNJ meetings about the added value provided by the policy briefs, especially by 135 developing countries represented by the G77.
65. The evaluation was informed by the executing agency that instead of having the communities of practice engage in more resource-intensive work plans, the commissioning of policy briefs was an act of adaptive management given the rather small budget of the project. The insufficient budgets for the communities of practice is partly a limitation of the project design but also a programme-level shortcoming which lay beyond the project's control. However, the net result remains that the expertise identified by the project could not be fully utilized (unlike the strong example of the Oceans Partnership project, which is part of the same programme),.
66. **Policy briefs.** In lieu of the communities of practice work programmes, the project developed two policy briefs, one on *Capacity Development as a key aspect of a new International Agreement on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction* and the other on

Possible Modalities for Addressing Area-based Management, EIA and Marine Genetic Resources in the context of Climate Change. These were developed in December 2018 and March 2019, at the very end of the project timeline. Both briefs were disseminated at the sidelines of relevant events. The evaluation perused the contents of both policy briefs.

67. The brief on '*Capacity Development as a key aspect of a new International Agreement on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction*' was based on a capacity needs assessments conducted by the project,⁴ and presented the capacities needed at institutional, societal and individual levels, past and existing capacity development efforts relevant to BBNJ, possible modalities for linking and financing capacity building for BBNJ, and possible clearing house mechanisms. The key message of the brief was that 'a well-structured BBNJ capacity building system involving global, regional and national levels, and with adequate and stable financial support will be essential for achieving the major purposes of the Agreement on area-based management, environmental impact assessment and marine genetic resources.' It also highlights that UNCLOS 1982 does not have a standing financial mechanism unlike other related conventions (UNFCCC; CBD; and United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, UNCCD) and relied mainly on voluntary contributions that have been insufficient for its implementation. Accordingly, the need for a sustained public finance mechanism to finance implementation of the new BBNJ agreement is advocated. The brief reviewed financial mechanisms of 12 international agreements and the functionalities of nine clearing house mechanisms as possible guidance for a BBNJ clearing house.
68. The brief on *Possible Modalities for Addressing Area-based Management, EIA and Marine Genetic Resources in the context of Climate Change* drew on the BBNJ President's Aid to negotiations (IGC2) which presented a number of options for objectives, processes and modalities area-based management tools including marine protected areas, environmental impact assessment and marine genetic resources. The brief also provided an overview of the impact of climate change on oceans and people in coastal and island nations, and the need for urgent action and investment in mitigation and adaptation to protect marine environments and dependent human populations. Thus, designated areas will need flexibility given the influence of ocean temperature and dynamic currents on migration and shifting of marine organism centres (From texts of the policy brief on ABMT, EIA and MGR, p. 34). The brief also notes the inadequate assessments of environmental impacts in ABNJ, and the need for baseline assessments and regular monitoring programmes to track environmental changes. Moreover, it proposed a theory of change analysis for capacity building on BBNJ area-based management.
69. The heavy emphasis of the policy briefs on BBNJ agreement themes (especially the intensive assessments of capacity development needs, mechanisms and modalities), while representing an opportunity for engagement with the BBNJ calendar, comes across as somewhat cross-grained in the overall weave of the ABNJ Program, which did not have a BBNJ outcome as a major programme-level objective. In the evaluator's view, the project's opportunistic engagement with the BBNJ processes was pursued somewhat in isolation of the other projects:

⁴ Global survey of capacity needs in 2016, capacity development workshops in 2015 and 2016 and survey of existing efforts, funding mechanisms of 12 conventions and review of 9 clearing house mechanisms.

- i. Engagement with BBNJ processes were at the project level rather than as an initiative of the ABNJ program as a whole, i.e. in active consultation and coordination with the other projects. The timeline of activities was mismatched with those of other projects.
 - ii. Lack of coordination led to non-engagement of the capacity project with RFMOs, a key stakeholder in the negotiations. RFMOs attending the negotiations were not present at the policy dialogue events of the Capacity project. Almost all RFMO secretariat officials met by the evaluators had no knowledge of the activities of the Capacity project.
 - iii. Independent of the Capacity project, the Tuna project facilitated RFMO delegations to the IGC3 and held sessions on the texts of the agreement, completely outside of the capacity project.
 - iv. However, the capacity project made strong efforts to coordinate with the other projects and invited collaboration at its events and forums.
70. Some stakeholders met by the evaluation noted that the distancing of RFMOs from/by the capacity project was due to the position (although unstated explicitly) of conservationists and civil society actors that inadequate governance of the fishing sector was a key challenge in the ABNJ, whereas the fisheries sector agencies felt strongly that the self-governance measures in place in fisheries were far more developed than those of other sectors involved in the deep-sea environments. The fisheries sector stakeholders also posited that texts of the BBNJ were much broader than fisheries (some issues were not relevant to fisheries) and did not sufficiently recognize pre-existing instruments and their jurisdictions over the fishing sector. The project did not demonstrate any actions to address these concerns in the sideline events that could close the gaps in perceptions across sectors, and some RFMO secretariat staff partnering in the tuna project but also conversant with the programme remained cautious and sensitive to outputs and knowledge products from the capacity project. The evaluation considers this to be a weakness in stakeholder analysis, as these sectoral positions should have been identified a priority in the design of the project's, outputs especially those related to the BBNJ negotiations.

2.2.4 Outreach and knowledge management

Finding 6. The project involved a wide range of anchor stakeholders with potential to implement behavioural changes towards ABNJ governance. However, it could not effectively engage in media outreach to communicate flagship results and generate discussion on marine ecosystem and common ocean issues.

71. Outreach and knowledge dissemination were key features of the project, and the project had a considerable footprint in terms of number of people reached through its activities.
72. According to the project synopsis, 1 005 participants attended the project's cross-sectoral workshops, policy dialogues, media forum and other venues of interaction. With several participants attending multiple events, the project had net 538 participants, from over 90 countries. A good gender balance ranging from 40 percent to 55 percent was observed in activities.
73. The evaluation notes that participants – policymakers, international negotiators, ocean experts and conservation champions – are anchor influencers in key relevant institutions, with the ability to promote and implement behavioural changes towards a cross-sectoral approach to governance of the ABNJ.

Table 6: Project activities and participants

Activity	Participants
Global survey of capacity development needs	138
Survey of capacity providers	36
Cross-sectoral workshops	152
Policy briefs	49
12 High-level policy dialogues	474
Global media forum	85
Net participants	538

74. **Public outreach network.** The Capacity project aimed at developing a public outreach network for informing and educating the public on ABNJ issues and lessons, experiences and results of the ABNJ Program. The target audience included journalists, especially those actively covering ABNJ-related fisheries and biodiversity issues, publishing in newspapers, magazines, online news outlets, and blog, ABNJ practitioners, individuals from museum/aquaria, and other outreach specialists.
75. The project developed a very informative media guide which can be considered a general primer for media and also policymakers on the economic, social and environmental benefits associated with the ABNJ, raises the profile of conservation and governance issues to be addressed. However, the evaluation noted only one outreach event under the component: the 'High-Level Dialogue and Global Media Forum on "Common Oceans–Why Marine Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ) Are Essential for People and Planet" was organized in June 2018 at Nausicaa, France, the world's largest marine museum exhibit. Nausicaa is the world's first large-scale high seas aquarium and exhibit, with hundreds of thousands of visitors, thus having the potential for large-scale outreach.
76. Interviews with the World Ocean Network (WON), the project's outreach partner, revealed that international marine museums with millions of footfalls every year had good potential for outreach. However, media engagement as planned proved to be a challenge for the project: media interest in ABNJ issues was found to be lukewarm in the Nausicaa event in 2017. The project observed the need to cultivate interest of reputed and celebrity anchors and editors in reporting ABNJ issues. However, the evaluation could find no evidence of actions undertaken to identify champion media persons, provide more focussed training on ABNJ issues, and build a constituency of influencers around the major lessons that were emerging from the programme.
77. At a minimum, a more targeted media briefing and engagement around key results from the programme could have been part of the project's outreach and communications plan. The good results from the other projects on bycatch assessment and mitigation, including sharks, seabirds, cetaceans and sea turtles, is a particular example in this regard. However, there are several other good results that the evaluation considers media-worthy and could have been leveraged well:

- i. how all tuna RFMOs are demonstrating stewardship for sustainable tuna fishing, by incorporating harvest strategy and improving monitoring, control and surveillance;
 - ii. how 18 new vulnerable marine ecosystems have been accorded protection;
 - iii. how a low-cost innovation in Pakistan gill-net fishing is saving sharks, cetaceans and turtles;
 - iv. how communities, conservationists and regulators are coming together to save billfish in the Caribbean.
78. These remained unhighlighted because of the weak programme coordination between the projects and also to an extent the lack of specific initiatives by the Capacity project beyond the one-off media engagement at Nausicaa. The evaluation's request for media coverage of the IGC3 event did not fetch any responses from the project outreach partners.
79. **ABNJ Common Oceans Portal.** The programme's Common Oceans portal was developed under the Capacity project and integrated into FAO portal. The portal (maintained by FAO), administered by a communications adviser, has seen a steady increase in traction over time as can be observed from the website and social media analytics (Table 7). The portal has a large volume of information from the various projects. Also, there has been regular social media engagement around specific topics. While these are useful metrics, the evaluation notes these more as passive consumption than an active engagement to influence anchor stakeholders and influencers. Also, there are no feedback loops to show evidence of how this outreach has translated into policy decisions or positions around international discussions.

Figure 5: Salient details of knowledge communication and outreach

Knowledge and outreach content	Details
ABNJ Publications on CO portal	129 (Tuna 70, Deep-sea 35, OPP 15, Capacity 9)
Communication products	37 (Tuna 9, deep-seas 11, OPP 10, Capacity 7)
News items posted on website	26 (2014) – 44 (2019)
Web site hits (Jan-Jun)	221 in 2014 to 1086 in 2019 (more than five-fold increase)
Twitter followers	25,000 FAO FISH, 10,000 FAOPESCA
Newsletter mail list	7461 reads of 8 issues, average 900 per issue
Media mentions	More than 150 mentions, with more than 50 for tuna project
ABNJ workshops and High-level policy dialogue events	8 high-level policy dialogue events; 135 attendees, more than 50 continue interaction through membership in communities of practice and Regional Leaders Program beneficiaries GEF assembly meetings: Cancun, Marrakech, Viet Nam
Knowledge networks	
CoP – Fisheries, Climate Change	57 members, including 18 core members
CoP-Multi-sector Area Management	51 members, including 10 core members
Public Outreach Network	21 members
Contributions to IW LEARN	Two experience notes: Capacity Development Needs and Existing Efforts in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction Capacity Development as a Key Aspect of a New International Agreement on BBNJ and Possible Modalities for Addressing Area-Based Management, Environmental Impact Assessment, and Marine Genetic Resources in the Context of Climate Change

Source: Common Oceans portal and progress reports

Finding 7. The project did not have a structured lesson learning and communications targeted at specific interest groups and stakeholders.

80. **Programme level synthesis.** The project's task of programme level synthesis of lessons was not carried out: the reasons cited by GOF were that the other projects were still under implementation as of end 2018, and that time and resources in the capacity project were already expended. The evaluation notes that it was unrealistic for the Capacity project, without commensurate structures and specialist resources, to systematically harvest the knowledge from projects and provide the programme level synthesis. This task should have been under the programme coordination, along with the management of the ABNJ web portal. Also, the capacity project was entrusted with the management of coordination calls among the various projects, to enable exchange of information and experiences. Thirteen calls were held over the programme duration, besides several in-person bilateral coordination meetings. According to several persons interviewed, these calls were more of information reporting than coordination of activities to ensure synergies. They were seen as routine rather than strategic tools for programme coordination and synthesis.
81. **IW: LEARN.** The Capacity project was to submit two programme wide synthesis lessons to the IW: Learn portal. The two experience notes submitted were: a note highlighting the results of the ABNJ capacity survey; and the other highlighting the results of the two policy briefs on capacity building. The Project was also represented at the 7th GEF International Waters Conference (IWC7) in Barbados (October 2013) and the 9th GEF International Waters Conference (IWC9) in Marrakesh, Morocco (November 2018). The evaluation notes that both these experience notes were about capacity development needs in context of the BBNJ agreement and drew entirely from the Capacity project outputs, and not the other projects. Whether these were the most relevant and significant lessons from the programme for sharing with the IW: Learn can be debated, considering the significant knowledge also generated from other projects. The evaluation considers this to be more a box-checking action than a well-deliberated knowledge harvesting and disseminating exercise in the programme in line with the intent of the GEF requirement.
82. The lack of clarity on the role of the capacity project in programme level knowledge synthesis is an important factor in the gaps observed in knowledge synthesis and communication. While the Capacity project document clearly states these as being outputs of the capacity project, the evaluation considers monitoring, communications and knowledge management to be more the remit of the programme coordination project, and necessary adjustments should have been made to the scope and budget allocations of the two projects around the communications/media engagement and knowledge synthesis activities. As these were not made, the evaluation is constrained to assess these as outputs of the Capacity project.

2.2.5 Transformational changes

Finding 7. With the project's small budgets and one-off nature of outputs, the project's outcome pathways are indeterminate. Benefits from the awareness raising and capacity development actions will ensue only in the long-term and depend on the effective conclusion and implementation of the BBNJ agreement. Irrespective of the same, the project has concretely contributed to the development and strengthening of capacity among various ABNJ stakeholders.

83. The main **transformational change** sought through this Project⁵ was tangible improvements to cross-sectoral communication, capacities and information in relation to fisheries management and biodiversity conservation in ABNJ, through: i) increase informed participation in regional management and decision-making processes, with enhanced information sharing among nations and regional bodies and across sectors; and ii) improve the interest and capacity of high-level government officials and other participants in global and regional ABNJ processes to better articulate their priorities, align these priorities with other stakeholders and develop more tangible and action-oriented outcomes. The evaluation notes that the scope and scale of the Capacity project were too small to represent a requisite threshold of effort towards these major behavioural changes.
84. The most definitive indicator of transformation linking the Project's efforts would be the coming into force of an internationally binding (BBNJ) agreement, and the Project's 'transformative' contributions would need to be borne by a bridging of gaps among the various sectors for a common understanding of the provisions for cross-sectoral governance of the ABNJ. This cannot be inferred from the substantive engagement of the communities of practice and the engagement with sector stakeholders. The evaluator learned from several participants at the IGC 3 event that much progress was needed, and the initial expectations of the BBNJ negotiations concluding by 2020 will surely not be met. Based on the analysis of results and also keeping the scale and scope of the Project, its influence on cross-sectoral capacities and communications cannot be considered transformational.
85. While playing a useful supporting role at the negotiations (a good number of them became involved in their national BBNJ delegations), the trained RLPs can't be considered a lead influence on building the shared understanding on the BBNJ agreement provisions and implications. However, they could become lead influencers on cross-sectoral management in ABNJ in their own institutions.
86. The two communities of practices, composed of experts from various sectors, could have catalysed the transformation aimed in the project. Unfortunately, they were not engaged more systematically on the key issues (paragraphs 56-57) and work on contentious positions of diverse stakeholders on issues such as multi-sector area management, environment impact assessments, and pure issues of jurisdiction. The opportunity to bring together the diverse regional and global organizations, and sector representatives to clarify positions and bridge differences through technical discussions facilitated by the CoPs could not be effectively programmed.

⁵ As formulated in the Project document Section 2.5 Global environmental benefits/ Adaptational benefits.

87. The policy briefs developed under the Capacity project, while useful and even referred to in the BBNJ discussions, can't be considered a substitute for more structured discussions that could have sown the seeds of transformation.
88. Through interviews with several key stakeholders (especially intergovernmental agencies associated with the multiple sectors involved in the BBNJ discussions) the evaluation identified two plausible reasons for the absence of a more systematic stakeholder engagement on cross-sectoral governance in the Capacity project, and to some extent the ABNJ Program as a whole. The first is that several intergovernmental and member-based agencies could not engage formally in these activities due to risks of being perceived as promoting specific institutional positions that reflected the consensus of their constituencies. Thus, the involvement of contributing experts was individual and not official.
89. Also, institutional positions on key provisions of the BBNJ draft texts have not been converging, especially in respect of governance of fisheries (especially large and migratory pelagic). The fundamental difference of perspective is over the adequacy of existing fisheries governance instruments and covenants to effectively govern areas beyond national jurisdictions, especially areas that are not within the jurisdiction of regional fisheries management organizations. Also, the perceptions of fisheries sectors is that the cross-sectoral governance issues are more relevant in the demersal areas of the ABNJ where deep-sea fishing takes place, and the position that control over fisheries operations are not matched by similar governance measures in other sectors, and can even countervail the likely benefits from governance of deep-sea fisheries. The project's Chatham House rules and emphasis on informal channels of discussion and influence were an important factor in enabling the policy dialogue events. However, the Project's active engagement with the fisheries actors was not as evident as with the conservationist and biodiversity stakeholders. The lack of coordination between the Tuna project and the Capacity project did not facilitate closing this gap between stakeholder groups.
90. Similarly, the main **global environmental benefit** described in the project document was 'substantial reductions in the threats and consequently damages to species targeted or otherwise impacted by fisheries and to the selected priority vulnerable marine ecosystems and ecologically or biologically significant areas with the Project, thereby leading to improved sustainable benefits and more resilient biodiversity'. The premise was that key decision makers would be better informed and their policies more coordinated, which would contribute significantly to achieving sustainable fisheries and biodiversity conservation in the ABNJ. However, the evaluation did not find any specific transformative actions in the project that focussed on threats and damages to targeted species or otherwise impacted (which was a component in the ABNJ Tuna and the Ocean Partnerships project) and to selected vulnerable marine ecosystems and ecologically or biologically significant areas (which were a component in the ANJ Deep-Sea project). Rather, the Project remained somewhat isolated from these components in the respective projects. The Project's only tangible contribution was the policy brief on multi-sectoral approaches to management in ABNJ, which was not deliberated widely with the sector stakeholders.

Table 7: Ratings on effectiveness

Project	Rating	Description
Policy dialogues	Moderately Satisfactory	The project had moderate shortcomings in the achievement of its objective
Capacity development	Satisfactory	The project had no or minor shortcomings in the achievement of its objective
Outreach and knowledge synthesis	Moderately Satisfactory	The project had moderate shortcomings in the achievement of its objective
Overall	Moderately Satisfactory	The project had moderate shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of effectiveness

2.3 Efficiency – Quality of implementation and execution

Finding 8. Project implementation was satisfactory in terms of timely and within budget record of completion; however, early completion of the Project’s deliverables limited its utility to the programme as a whole.

91. The Capacity project was very small and nimble compared to the other ABNJ projects, and was very efficient in delivering its outputs. Major outputs had been completed by 2017 and the project spent the allocated GEF funds, per the latest available data. The Project also exceeded its targets for high-level policy dialogues (13 against 5), RLP graduates (43 against 10), and had a sizeable participation of over 1 000 persons.
92. However, despite the high efficiency, the utility of the Project to the programme as a whole remained limited. The opportunities for the projects to benefit from each other were not utilized – while this was more to do with weak programme coordination, the net result is that the Capacity project operated as a lone ranger with few linkages with the other projects. Even though the Capacity project was in charge of coordination calls, the evaluation observes that there were no veritable attempts for coordination and synchronization key activities of the Capacity project with the Tuna and Deep-sea projects.
93. **Deep-sea and Capacity projects.** By the time the Deep-sea project could gain momentum, the Capacity project had already completed its capacity development surveys and begun engaging on policy dialogue and public outreach event, and the policy briefs were at advanced stages. Area-based multi-sectoral planning was an important theme in both projects, as a full component in the Deep-sea project, and as one of the two policy briefs for the communities of practice in the Capacity project. However, there was practically no interaction between the projects to coordinate their activities to benefit their key stakeholders and to share knowledge and expert resources. Also, the project did not activate the communities of practice as proposed, and did not complete the knowledge synthesis from all projects, which was an important deliverable. The lack of synchronization led not only to fragmentation of activities (the communities of practice could have been a resource to the Deep-sea project as well) but also poor utilization of the resources and results between projects. The fact that this was not discussed in coordination calls or reviewed at the Global Steering Committee meetings reflects the weak programmatic focus in implementation.
94. **Capacity and Tuna projects.** During implementation, the Capacity project reoriented strongly to support for the BBNJ process, which was opportunistic yet somewhat tangential to the focus at other projects. With the BBNJ process gathering momentum, RFMOs

became more active on the negotiations. However, there were few interactions between the activities of the Capacity project and other projects (and their stakeholders) on the texts of the BBNJ document which were strongly debated among fisheries, conservationists and other ocean stakeholders. The evaluation noted parallel consultation processes across the Child projects in supporting stakeholders at the IGC 3 New York, 2019, and the notable absence of diverse stakeholders debating and clarifying their perspectives and building a shared understanding of issues. This, in the evaluation’s view, was the greatest potential utility of the Capacity project that remained unharnessed. At the same time, the Capacity project role was limited to building understanding of cross-sectoral issues, but not securing consensus in the actual negotiations, which would have affected its neutrality which was the greatest strength of the Project.

95. The understanding among some stakeholders was that the Capacity project was to be the glue among all projects and coordinate capacity development functions across projects and synthesize key lessons for the programme. The role of the Capacity project as the programme’s glue is not shared among partner agencies, especially the executing agency GOF which saw the Capacity project’s focus to be external stakeholders rather than coordinating with other projects. This lack of clarity is compounded by the presence of a separate ABNJ coordination project, which has logical overlaps with three elements of the Capacity project – coordination calls, synthesis of programme level lessons, and the ABNJ portal –programme level areas. A possible cause of this difference in perceptions is that when the programme was designed, the Capacity project was envisaged also to play the coordination role among the four projects. However, later, a separate coordination project was developed (at GEF’s insistence) whereas the outputs and activities already agreed in the Capacity project remained unchanged. Rightfully, there should have been an amendment of the Capacity project document reflecting a transfer of the ABNJ portal, knowledge synthesis and coordination calls to the Coordination project. This would have implied steep reductions in budgets for the Capacity project.

Table 8: Ratings on timely completion and financial utilization

Project	Rating	Description
Timely completion and financial utilization)	Satisfactory	There were some shortcomings and quality of execution more or less meets expectation
Quality of execution	Satisfactory	There were some shortcomings and quality of execution more or less meets expectations
Overall	Satisfactory	There were some shortcomings and quality of execution more or less meets expectations

2.4 Sustainability

Finding 9. With the Project's small-scale, one-off outputs and non-activation of the communities of practice, there were few elements designed for sustainability. The knowledge and continued engagement of the RLP graduates and the pre-existing networks of GOF are the only means to sustain and build on the Project's results.

96. The contributors to sustainability assessed by the evaluation are:
- i. legal instruments and regulatory frameworks representing global minimum standards on ABNJ governance;
 - ii. political economy and inter-sectoral trade-offs;
 - iii. resource mobilization for upscaling and expanding the initiatives introduced.
97. In this regard, the Project has made some contributions towards regulatory frameworks (BBNJ processes) and institutional capacities (through the RLP capacities of functionaries).
98. **Legal/regulatory.** The most sustainable result of the Project is the pipeline capacity developed around ABNJ issues: several of the regional leaders trained in the Project are now formally engaged in the BBNJ negotiations and making increasing contributions towards the articulation of a definitive agreement. The successful conclusion of a BBNJ agreement is still indeterminate, but the Project's contributions through the RLPs are likely to continue bearing fruit in future phases of the negotiations.
99. **Institutional.** The strong networks GOF has built over time will remain in place beyond the Project's lifespan. However, the Project (and the programme) missed the opportunity to seed effective platforms or communities of practice for cross-sectoral policy dialogue with prospects of continuing beyond the Project, from other resources.
100. **Political.** The Project initiated the process of cross-sectoral policy dialogue on ABNJ governance, but its continuation beyond the Project requires strong institutional arrangements to revive the cross-sectoral communities of practice. The political risks of aligning directly with the BBNJ negotiations can be considerable for both GOF and the other partners, given the rather divergent positions of various sector stakeholders on issues of jurisdiction associated with multi sectoral governance. Depending on the participant mix in the project activities, there can be perceptions that the programme (through the project) endorses and promotes some perspectives over others.
101. **Financial.** With the Capacity project orienting more to the BBNJ processes and implementation of capacity development under the BBNJ agreement, the most important areas that require continued financial support are the cross-sectoral communities of practice and the outreach networks. The evaluation considers that GOF has strong institutional networks to be able to conceptualize a future project building on the present one, with good prospects for sector-agnostic and cross-sectoral policy dialogue proposals. However, the prospects of these being supported by a future GEF ABNJ programme depend on the priority GEF and other implementing agencies attach to the BBNJ negotiations in the theory of change. The evaluation's impression is that while the BBNJ agreement is desirable, it is not a primary objective for GEF (also due to the political risk mentioned above), and the indeterminate timeline could constrain GEF investments in such a component. Also, with the multi-sector scope with several non-fisheries sectors, these would fit better under an UNEP-led marine environmental intervention than an FAO-led

primarily fisheries-based intervention, especially in case of deep-sea ecosystems. Financial contributions would be more forthcoming from bilateral partners and foundations supporting biodiversity conservation and health of marine ecosystems.

Table 9: Rating on sustainability

	Rating	Description
Legal/Regulatory	Likely	There is little or no risk to sustainability
Institutional	Moderately Likely	There are moderate risks to sustainability
Political	Moderately Likely	There are moderate risks to sustainability
Financial	Moderately Likely	There are moderate risks to sustainability
Overall	Moderately Likely	There are moderate risks to sustainability

2.5 Co-financing

Finding 10. The Project enlisted significant amounts of co-finance. However, in the absence of input-based budget breakdowns, the specific utilization of co-finance in the Project's activities was unclear.

102. The overall co-financing raised by the ABNJ Capacity project was USD 4.83 million, **representing a co-finance ratio of 4.83:1 over the GEF grant of USD 1 million**. The Project received co-financing from 26 entities, including national governments, intergovernmental agencies, academia, and non-profit and research foundations. The largest amounts were mobilized by FAO and GOF together, accounting for nearly 65 percent of the co-financing for the entire programme (Table 11). The top five contributors of cash were GOF, FAO, Nausicaa, KIOST and FMPAA, accounting for USD 1.51 million.

Table 10: Project-wise co-financing of ABNJ Capacity project

Project	GEF funding	Co-financing proposed	Co-financing realized
Capacity	0.92	4.08	4.83
Co-finance entities	Cash	In kind	Total
FAO	0.50	1.00	1.50
GOF	0.71	0.83	1.54
Nausicaa	0.15	0.30	0.45
KIOST	0.10	0.05	0.15

Project	GEF funding	Co-financing proposed	Co-financing realized
FMPAA	0.05	0.05	0.10
WIOMSA	0.04	-	0.04
UNESCO IOC	0.03	0.10	0.13
UNESCO Nat Sc	-	0.10	0.10
Others	-	0.84	0.84
Total	1.58	3.35	4.83

Source: Co-financing details provided by project teams

103. **In-kind contributions: a black box.** The evaluation was unable to obtain breakdowns of in-kind resources in terms of human resources (number of staff, and percentage of their time allotted to ABNJ Program); contribution to infrastructure, equipment and hard assets acquired in the programme; and administrative overhead counted towards ABNJ co-financing. Responses were somewhat ambiguous as to how co-financing was actually interpreted; whether additional staff were recruited for ABNJ Program activities; and whether the ABNJ Program activities added to the expenditures of the entities or were the co-financing values merely extracted from existing expenditures.
104. The project document states that GOF contributions consists of expert staff time, space, facilities and equipment, and its vast network of expert collaborators in the Global Ocean Forum (250 experts from 70 countries) who will prepare policy briefs, reports and other information sources for the ABNJ Project. An analysis of input-based budgeting for the Project showed that of USD 823 500 disbursed by FAO to GOF, over USD 350 000 went into support of participant travel costs for capacity workshops and policy dialogue events, and USD 280 000 in agency human resources (USD 205 000 in funding GOF staff, and USD 79 500 for programme coordinator).⁶ Thus, it would be fair to assume that co-financing contributions did not fund major cash expenditures of events. The estimates of in-kind financing are based on the foregone time and professional remuneration of the 250 participant experts. Likewise, FAO's contributions consist of expert staff time, office space, facilities and equipment, and its vast network of FAO headquarters-based and other information sources for the ABNJ Project. How these have specifically contributed to the Project is indeterminate and thus ambiguous.
105. In the absence of specific and stringent guidelines on detailing of co-financing estimates, the evaluation notes a risk of mechanistic and potentially inflated estimates of contributions, which defeats the real purpose behind co-financing requirements. Interpretational ambiguities can arise if (as was pointed by some respondents) entities apply the definition of co-financing loosely to include all relevant areas of their regular work programmes that are aligned to the programme objectives.

⁶ Input based budget sheet shared by project staff.

2.6 GEF additionality

Finding 11. GEF funding was key to the Project having a cross-cutting role in the Program. However, the opportunity was unused, thus GEF additionality could not be leveraged well in the Project.

106. On one hand, with the considerable co-financing mobilized in the project, GEF additionality at the project level may not be significant; however, with a large share of co-financing coming from in-kind support, the application of GEF funding was critical for all activities involving cash expenditures – GEF funding of USD 0.9 million accounted for over one-third of total cash contributions in the Project.
107. The project document specifically highlights the importance of GEF funding for the Project having a cross-cutting and facilitating role to share the valuable lessons, experiences and results of the other three GEF ABNJ projects. Without this Project, the ABNJ Program would lack the additional benefits that come with collaboration, cross-sectoral dialogue, and sharing of lessons.⁷ However, as the previous sections show, weak programme coordination and the isolated pursuit of the Project deprived the programme of benefiting from GEF additionality.

2.7 Stakeholder engagement and partnerships

Finding 12. Stakeholder engagement was focused highly on negotiators and had scope for improvement in engagement with fisheries and other industrial actors key to the BBNJ processes.

108. The Project's primary stakeholders as enlisted in the project document are: national governments (both national ocean officials and members of country UN delegations); intergovernmental entities at the global level; regional bodies, including regional fishery bodies and regional fisheries management organizations (RFBs/RFMOs/RFMAs) and regional seas programs; Relevant industry representatives from the fishing sector, as well as other sectors such as oil and gas, shipping, submarine cables, aquaculture, and marine genetic resources industries; international NGOs and networks; and international public outreach organizations.
109. The Capacity project involved an impressive number of partners and collaborating organizations. According to the project synopsis sheet, these included:
- i. **Initial partners.** Governments: France (French Marine Protected Areas Agency), Korea (Korea Institute of Science and Technology); UN/International Organizations; FAO; UNESCO (Natural Sciences), UNESCO (Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission); International Ocean Institute; Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia. Civil Society: Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI), Nausicaá Centre National de la Mer; France/World Ocean Network; Vietnam National University; SeaOrbiter; Deep-Sea Conservation Coalition; Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association.
 - ii. **Additional collaborating organizations.** Ocean Policy Research Institute, Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Japan; Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Tonga to the United

⁷ Scenario without GEF resources – p. 8 project document.

Nations; Permanent Mission of Monaco to the United Nations; Permanent Mission of Barbados to the United Nations; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Grenada; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Seychelles; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of France; Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands; Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries, Republic of Korea; Oceano Azul Foundation, Portugal; the ATLAS Project; UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC); UN Nippon Foundation of Japan Fellowship Programme; PSIDS Fellowship on Oceans and Seas; Squire Patton Boggs; International Seabed Authority (ISA).

110. The specific details of engagement of each organization are not clear; however, given the overall scale of the Project, engagement has been in form of co-financing and participation and contributions to the numerous events in the Project. From the analysis of the policy dialogues and other network events in the Project, the evaluation notes that engagement has been mostly with members of country UN delegations, intergovernmental organizations, international NGOs and public outreach organizations. In terms of specific implementation responsibilities, the evaluation noted only the arrangements with the World Ocean Network for the public outreach network component. The evaluation observed high complementarity (with the potential for long-term results) between the World Ocean Network and GOF if structured and appropriately resourced into a strategic outreach partnership.
111. The Project's target beneficiaries are decision makers that participate more effectively in policy development processes that will lead to more productive and resilient fisheries and marine ecosystems. This has been ensured through the RLP and to an extent the sideline events held by the Project. In comparison, engagement with regional fishery bodies and industry stakeholders from other sectors that have increasing stakes in ABNJ activities has been far lower.

Table 11: Ratings on stakeholder engagements and partnerships

Aspect	Rating	Description
Stakeholder engagement in design and implementation	Satisfactory	There were moderate shortcomings in engaging with key stakeholders in the other projects and in key sectors
Partnerships	Satisfactory	There were no or minor shortcomings in managing partners

2.8 Gender and environmental safeguards

Finding 13. The Project ensured a good gender balance in its activities, tracked through systematic documentation.

112. Environmental safeguards are not covered in this section, as they are a key part of the programme substance more than a cross-cutting issue. There were no gender specific targets in the results framework of the programme document, and women are covered as part of the private sector in the socio-economic benefits articulation⁸ and the full-sized projects.
113. The Project had a strong emphasis on gender balance, which was evident across the activities. The Capacity project also had a systematic documentation of the gender balance in activities, and ensured a good gender balance among participants, as can be seen in Table 12. The most significant gender result noted by the evaluation is that 19 of the 44 Regional Leaders Program graduates (43 percent) were women.

Table 12: Gender balance in capacity project events

Activity/event under Capacity project	Women	Men	Women %
First ABNJ workshop	39	59	40%
Second ABNJ workshop	27	28	49%
2016 Regional Leader Program	19	25	43%
High-level policy dialogue BBNJ Prep Com 1	32	40	44%
High-level policy dialogue BBNJ Prep Com 2	21	19	53%
High-level policy dialogue BBNJ Prep Com 4	31	25	55%
High-level policy dialogue BBNJ IGC Org Meeting	43	39	52%
High-level policy dialogue BBNJ IGC Session 1	22	33	36%*
High-level policy dialogue BBNJ IGC Session 2	22	33	50%*
Nausicaa Global Media Forum	41	44	48%
First policy brief on capacity development	19	24	44%
Second policy brief on capacity development	8	4	67%
*7 and ** 5 participants did not specify gender at these events			

2.9 Factors affecting performance

114. The following factors of performance supported or debilitated delivery effectiveness of the ABNJ Capacity project.

⁸ Section G of Program Framework Document.

Enabling factors

115. **GOF credibility and convening power.** GOF's long-standing engagement and reputation on ocean policies and governance, and its networks with negotiators, conservationists and outreach/advocacy groups was key to the quality of participation in the Project's policy dialogue events. The RLP's inclusion as a primer to UNDOALOS' training programme is also a sign of credibility of the curriculum and GOF's expertise on the subject.
116. **Opportunistic engagement with the BBNJ processes.** The BBNJ processes provided more specific context for the Project's outputs, and aided the Project in convening its events around the BBNJ calendar to take advantage of the presence of key participants.
117. **'Informal consultations' approach around ABNJ issues.** Despite the somewhat contentious subject of BBNJ and divergent institutional perceptions, the association of diverse stakeholders and persons from key institutions in the Project was mainly due to the Project's approach of 'informal consultations' and the emphasis on capacity development, which generated comfort and trust of the participants.

Debilitating factors

118. **Under-resourcing.** The Capacity project had very small budgets for its vast scope and could not create a sustained pace of capacity development activities. Also, the Project was under-resourced for its role of coordinating and synthesizing the lessons at programme level, drawing from the results and lessons from the other (much larger) projects. As a result, the Project remained somewhat peripheral in its coverage and influence. This is borne by the missed opportunities in the use of communities of practice and public outreach network.
119. **Lack of synchronization with other projects.** The different pace of implementation of projects and the lack of coordination and synchronization of activities limited the participation of key stakeholders of the Tuna and Deep-sea projects in the key activities of the Capacity project.
120. **Fisheries sector perceptions.** The opportunistic alignment to the BBNJ processes, while being positive and relevant for the Project, distanced it from the fisheries stakeholders who were still grappling with the relevance and significance of a new agreement and its implications for the existing governance mechanisms in the fisheries sector given the several agreements already in place to minimize fisheries sector impact on the ocean ecosystem.

3. Lessons learned

121. The evaluation reveals the following lessons in respect of design and implementation of a possible second phase of the programme.

Lesson learned 1. For projects with a cross-sectoral thrust and engagement with diverse stakeholders, an understanding of and adaptation to diverse perspectives and priorities of key stakeholders is crucial and calls for robust stakeholder mapping and analysis. The project's challenges with engaging the fisheries sector stakeholders are rooted in rigid positions of various sectors on the BBNJ negotiations and should have emerged in the stakeholder analysis and during design of activities.

Lesson learned 2. Projects that have capacity development and knowledge management as their core intervention logic should be designed and appropriately resourced to ensure an adequate threshold of investment in knowledge assets, expert networks and outreach channels to sustain the absorption and percolation of knowledge and capacities.

Lesson learned 3. In projects that aim to implement behavioural changes among a diversity of stakeholders, communication strategies need to be key elements of project design and should have targeted and segmented approaches to connect to different stakeholders. Tailored communications campaigns are likely to be more effective than generalized ones.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

Conclusion 1. Project design was appropriate, focusing on addressing the cross-sectoral coordination and dialogue among the separate ongoing processes - a key gap that limited effective ecosystem-based management of ABNJ.

122. The project identified the inadequacy of sectoral management in ABNJ - fisheries, deep-sea mining, renewable energy, etc. - and the need to improve linkages among sectoral management approaches to address cumulative impacts on the marine environment. The complexity of ecosystems and the large number and diversity of the stakeholders involved necessitate more effective coordination and a unified legal/regulatory framework for the ABNJ to ensure sustainable resource use and biodiversity conservation.
123. Generally, there is little coordination and dialogue among ongoing ABNJ discussions at the global and regional levels. The absence of a legal framework for ABNJ, the limited knowledge, expertise, resources and means to share information, expertise and best practices has inhibited the capacity of especially developing countries to effectively manage ABNJ. Also, there is a limited knowledge, awareness and appreciation among key outreach channels especially media, of the issues and threats in the ABNJ.

Conclusion 2. The Project supported the development of capacities of anchor individuals in key relevant institutions to enhance their understanding of cross-sectoral governance of ABNJ; with an opportunistic emphasis on the BBNJ negotiations calendar using its policy knowledge products.

124. The Project's outputs contributed to the individual knowledge, awareness and capacities of negotiators, government functionaries and experts on multi-sectoral management of the ABNJ. The emphasis was on building capacities of emerging leaders and negotiators on cross-sectoral governance issues in the ABNJ, and also to support informal discussions among delegates around the BBNJ negotiations calendars, with policy briefs and policy dialogue events.

Conclusion 3. Due to limitations in design, low budgets and unclear accountability, the Project could not play its foreseen role in cohesion and coordination and synthesize the lessons from the other ABNJ projects to inform and influence important global and regional processes.

125. The Project was the only cross-sectoral element of the ABNJ Program, and was intended to harness synergies among the projects, synthesize and disseminate lessons learned, experiences and best practices to relevant stakeholders, including governments, organizations with competence in ABNJ, and global and regional ABNJ processes. This could not happen partly due to the lack of coordination arrangements in the programme and also the fact that the Capacity project as set-up was not appropriate for the synthesis and coordination requirements. Also, with the meagre budgets compared to the other projects in the programme, from the outset, the Capacity project was not set-up to play the strong cohesion and synthesis role that was intended in the programme design.

126. **Conclusion 4. Notwithstanding its overall usefulness, the Project's scale was too small and limited to influence intended impacts. No structures or mechanisms were created to ensure sustainability of cross-sectoral dialogue beyond the Project.**
127. The scale and scope of the Capacity project were too small and limited in relation to the objective and even in comparison to the other projects in the programme. Project resources were insufficient for sustained engagement to raise the cross-sectoral policy dialogues to a threshold level of influence on the sector stakeholders and negotiators in the BBNJ processes and for systematic outreach and knowledge dissemination to key influencers, especially media and government functionaries across sectors. Structures such as the communities of practice and public outreach network were not institutionalized to attract complementing resources to serve their intended purposes beyond the Project's lifespan.

4.2 Recommendations

128. The evaluation took note of the preparations for a possible follow-on programme and several project/activity proposals that have been made by implementing agencies and executing partners. The following recommendations are being made to strengthen the role and status of cross-sectoral policy dialogue and multi-sectoral management elements in the programme, these being the key gaps the Capacity project tried to address.

Recommendation 1. (To GEF SEC) Provide clear guidance as to the importance and appropriateness of a specific outcomes linked to BBNJ negotiations for a follow-on programme.

This recommendation is based on findings in paragraphs 23, 33, 67-69 and Conclusion 2.

129. A binding international instrument to operationalize UNCLOS is a key milestone for ABNJ governance. In this direction, cross-sectoral dialogues and communities of practice can contribute to the momentum in BBNJ negotiations if structured as means to systematically engage with the various stakeholders. Thus, there is merit in having a suitable component in the next programme with work plans to engage fisheries and other sector stakeholders to evolve a better understanding of the operational implications of the BBNJ agreement. There is a need to clarify if this is a priority for GEF in order to have an appropriate scope for the next version of the Capacity project.

Recommendation 2. (To FAO) clearly articulate and distinguish accountabilities for project output delivery and program coordination aspects and resource them accordingly.

This recommendation is based on findings in paragraphs 89, 92 and 93 and Conclusion 3.

130. The lack of clarity and accountability between implementing agency and executing agency was the chief reason for the isolated implementation of the Capacity project. The overlapping areas and responsibilities of GOF and FAO in the Capacity project and Coordination project created a gap in accountability. Responsibilities for producing synthesis of programme-wide lessons were not clearly established; these were assigned inappropriately and without due mechanisms for capture and translation of knowledge from all projects.

Recommendation 3. (To GOF) Use FAO and other relevant capacity development frameworks to inform scoping of capacity development interventions, and sufficiently allocate resources for project components that represent investment in capacity building, especially knowledge assets and expert networks, to derive intended benefits from knowledge and awareness-based interventions.

This recommendation is based on findings in Conclusion 4.

131. Capacity development, knowledge management and outreach communications were at the heart of the Project. However, among the key mechanisms for these – the communities of practice and public outreach network – were not tasked and resourced sufficiently to perform their intended role. The Regional Leaders Program, multi-stakeholder workshops, high-level policy dialogues and the preparation of the policy briefs are also key project mechanisms for capacity development, knowledge management and outreach that worked quite effectively. Also, the effectiveness of capacity development initiatives requires addressing individual and institutional dimensions; while the individual dimensions were emphasized, the institutional dimension was missing. Using a capacity development framework (such as the FAO framework and others) can assist in improved design of capacity development components.

Recommendation 4. (To GOF, FAO and GEF SEC) GEF SEC should issue clear and unambiguous guidelines on reporting application of co-finance towards project results. Details of application of cash co-financing should be mentioned in project reports. Input-based budget sheets should also be prepared for co-financing contributions.

This recommendation is based on findings in Paras 100-102.

132. The cash co-financing reported by GOF and FAO were substantial and considerably higher than GEF grants. However, to what extent these were expended in the project's work plans especially for outreach and knowledge management remained indeterminate. To have a realistic picture of the effect of co-financing, the project document should include input-based budget sheets to show breakdowns of cash contributions allocated to support project activities besides the notional values of staff time and expert resources contributing to project results. Progress reports should report be drawn against these budgets.

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Appendix 1. People contacted for case studies, surveys and interviews

Surname	First Name	Position	Organization/Location
Appeltans	Mr. Ward	Project Manager OBIS	GOOS Biology & Ecosystems, IOC Capacity Development, UNESCO
Appiott	Dr. Joseph	Programme Officer	Convention on Biological Diversity
Babb-Riley	H.E. Ambassador Juliette	Deputy Permanent Representative	Permanent Mission of Barbados to the United Nations, CARICOM Coordinator
Barbière	Mr. Julian	Head	Marine Policy and Regional Coordination Section, Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO
Boccia	Mr. Marco	Programme Management Officer, former Fishery Liaison Officer, FAO	UN DOALOS
Botto	Mr. Florian	Second Secretary	Permanent Mission of the Principality of Monaco to the United Nations
Brincat	Mr. John		European Union
Farmer	Ms. Tina	Capacity Project Lead Technical Officer, Communication Adviser	Office of the Deputy Director-General, Climate & Natural Resources, FAO
Germani	Ms. Valentina	Legal Officer (Programme Advisor)	UNDOALOS
Goettsche-Wanli	Ms. Gabriele	Director	UN Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (IGC3)
Hernández Castillo	Mr. Cristóbal	Advisor	Oceanic Affairs Department, Directorate of Environment and Oceanic Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile
Hoglund	Ms. Lisa Euren	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Sweden
Johnson	Prof. David	Program Coordinator	Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative formerly head of OSPAR Commission
Joyini	Mr. Thembile	Counsellor former Legal Advisor/Sixth Committee	Permanent Mission of South Africa to the United Nations, New York
Kautoke	Ms. Rose	Assistant Crown Counsel and former Legal Advisor to the Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Tonga to the United Nations	Attorney General's Office, Government of the Kingdom of Tonga
Kemble	Mr. Sidney	Oceans and Law of the Sea Policy Advisor	Mission of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the UN
Kotaro	Ms. Landisang	Palau Legislature	Palau Mission to the United Nations

Appendix 1. People contacted for case studies, surveys and interviews

Surname	First Name	Position	Organization/Location
Kuemplangan	Mr. Blaise	Chief, Development Law Service	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Long	Prof. Ronan	Nippon Foundation Professorial Chair of Ocean Governance & the Law of the Sea	World Maritime University (WMU)
Maekawa	Dr. Miko	Manager and Senior Research Fellow	Ocean Policy Research Institute of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Japan
Mangisi	H.E. Dr. T. Suka	Deputy Permanent Representative	Kingdom of Tonga to the United Nations
Masrinuan	Ms. Prim		Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Thailand to the United Nations
Miaozhuang	Dr. Zheng	Associate Researcher	China Institute for Marine Affairs, State Oceanic Administration (SOA)
Remaoun	Mr. Mehdi	First Secretary	Permanent Mission of Algeria to the United Nations
Revell	Ms. Alice	facilitator of the informal working group on area-based management tools, including marine protected areas in the BBNJ IGC	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, New Zealand
Richir	Mr. Marc		European Union
Roberts	Dr. Murray		ATLAS
Sawney	Ms. Safiya	Advisor to Palau Mission, formerly Director of Blue Institute, Grenada,	United Nations
Segura	H.E. Mr. Serge	Ambassadeur Chargé des Océans	Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires Etrangères, Government of France
Troisi	Dr. Ariel	Vice-President	IOC
Vallette	Mr. Philippe	General Manager	Nausicaá Centre National de la Mer, France/World Ocean Network
Vierros	Dr. Marjo	Independent Consultant and Senior Policy Associate	Global Ocean Forum (formerly with the United Nations University and with the Convention on Biological Diversity Secretariat)
Warner	Prof. Robin	Deputy Director	Australian National Centre for Ocean Resources and Security, University of Wollongong
Zhang	Ms. Haiwen	Director	China Institute for Marine Affairs, State Oceanic Administration

Appendix 2. GEF evaluation criteria rating table

FAO-GEF rating scheme	Rating	Summary comments
1) Relevance		
Overall relevance of the project	S	There were no or minor shortcomings in terms of relevance and design.
2) Effectiveness		
Policy dialogues	MS	There were moderate shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of effectiveness.
Capacity development	S	There were no or minor shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of effectiveness.
Outreach and knowledge synthesis	MS	There were moderate shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of effectiveness.
Overall assessment of project results	MS	There were moderate shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of effectiveness.
3) Efficiency, project implementation and execution		
Timely completion and financial utilization)	S	There were some shortcomings and quality of execution more or less meets expectations.
Quality of execution	S	There were some shortcomings and quality of execution more or less meets expectations.
Efficiency (including cost effectiveness and timeliness)	S	There were some shortcomings and quality of execution more or less meets expectations.
4) Sustainability		
Legal/Regulatory	L	There is little or no risk to sustainability.
Institutional	ML	There are moderate risks to sustainability.
Political	ML	There are moderate risks to sustainability.
Financial	ML	There are moderate risks to sustainability.
Overall sustainability	ML	There are moderate risks to sustainability.
5) Factors affecting performance (M&E and stakeholder engagement)		
Overall quality of stakeholder engagement	S	There were moderate shortcomings in engaging with key stakeholders in the other projects and in key sectors.

Appendix 3. Rating schemes⁹

Project results and outcomes

Project outcomes are rated based on the extent to which project objectives were achieved. A six-point rating scale is used to assess overall outcomes:

Rating	Description
Highly Satisfactory (HS)	<i>"Level of outcomes achieved clearly exceeds expectations and/or there were no short comings."</i>
Satisfactory (S)	<i>"Level of outcomes achieved was as expected and/or there were no or minor short comings."</i>
Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	<i>"Level of outcomes achieved more or less as expected and/or there were moderate short comings."</i>
Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	<i>"Level of outcomes achieved somewhat lower than expected and/or there were significant shortcomings."</i>
Unsatisfactory (U)	<i>"Level of outcomes achieved substantially lower than expected and/or there were major short comings."</i>
Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	<i>"Only a negligible level of outcomes achieved and/or there were severe short comings."</i>
Unable to Assess (UA)	<i>The available information does not allow an assessment of the level of outcome achievements.</i>

During project implementation, the results framework of some projects may have been modified. In cases where modifications in the project impact, outcomes and outputs have not scaled down their overall scope, the evaluator should assess outcome achievements based on the revised results framework. In instances where the scope of the project objectives and outcomes has been scaled down, the magnitude of and necessity for downscaling is taken into account and despite achievement of results as per the revised results framework, where appropriate, a lower outcome effectiveness rating may be given.

Project implementation and execution

Quality of implementation and of execution will be rated separately. Quality of implementation pertains to the role and responsibilities discharged by the GEF Agencies that have direct access to GEF resources. Quality of Execution pertains to the roles and responsibilities discharged by the country or regional counterparts that received GEF funds from the GEF Agencies and executed the funded activities on ground. The performance will be rated on a six-point scale:

⁹ See instructions provided in Annex 2: Rating Scales in the "Guidelines for GEF Agencies in Conducting Terminal Evaluations for Full-sized Project", April 2017.

Rating	Description
Highly Satisfactory (HS)	<i>There were no shortcomings and quality of implementation or execution exceeded expectations.</i>
Satisfactory (S)	<i>There were no or minor shortcomings and quality of implementation or execution meets expectations.</i>
Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	<i>There were some shortcomings and quality of implementation or execution more or less meets expectations.</i>
Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	<i>There were significant shortcomings and quality of implementation or execution somewhat lower than expected.</i>
Unsatisfactory (U)	<i>There were major shortcomings and quality of implementation substantially lower than expected.</i>
Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	<i>There were severe shortcomings in quality of implementation or execution.</i>
Unable to Assess (UA)	<i>The available information does not allow an assessment of the quality of implementation or execution.</i>

Monitoring and evaluation

Quality of project M&E will be assessed in terms of:

- i. Design
- ii. Implementation

Sustainability

The sustainability will be assessed taking into account the risks related to financial, socio-political, institutional, and environmental sustainability of project outcomes. The evaluator may also take other risks into account that may affect sustainability. The overall sustainability will be assessed using a four-point scale:

Rating	Description
Likely (L)	<i>There is little or no risk to sustainability.</i>
Moderately Likely (ML)	<i>There are moderate risks to sustainability.</i>
Moderately Unlikely (MU)	<i>There are significant risks to sustainability.</i>
Unlikely (U)	<i>There are severe risks to sustainability.</i>
Unable to Assess (UA)	<i>Unable to assess the expected incidence and magnitude of risks to sustainability.</i>

Rating of project objectives and results

Highly Satisfactory (HS): The project had no shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of relevance, effectiveness or efficiency.

Satisfactory (S): The project had minor shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of relevance, effectiveness or efficiency.

Moderately Satisfactory (MS): The project had moderate shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of relevance, effectiveness or efficiency.

Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): The project had significant shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of relevance, effectiveness or efficiency.

Unsatisfactory (U) The project had major shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of relevance, effectiveness or efficiency.

Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): The project had severe shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of relevance, effectiveness or efficiency.

Please note: Relevance and effectiveness will be considered as critical criteria. The overall rating of the project for achievement of objectives and results **may not be higher** than the lowest rating on either of these two criteria. **Thus, to have an overall satisfactory rating for outcomes a project must have at least satisfactory ratings on both relevance and effectiveness.**

Ratings on sustainability

Sustainability will be understood as the probability of continued long-term outcomes and impacts after the GEF project funding ends. The Mid-term evaluation will identify and assess the key conditions or factors that are likely to contribute or undermine the persistence of benefits after the project ends. Some of these factors might be outcomes of the project, i.e. stronger institutional capacities, legal frameworks, socio-economic incentives /or public awareness. Other factors will include contextual circumstances or developments that are not outcomes of the project but that are relevant to the sustainability of outcomes.

Rating system for sustainability sub-criteria

On each of the dimensions of sustainability of the project outcomes will be rated as follows.

Likely (L): There are no risks affecting this dimension of sustainability.

Moderately Likely (ML). There are moderate risks that affect this dimension of sustainability.

Moderately Unlikely (MU): There are significant risks that affect this dimension of sustainability

Unlikely (U): There are severe risks that affect this dimension of sustainability.

All the risk dimensions of sustainability are critical. Therefore, overall rating for sustainability will not be higher than the rating of the dimension with lowest ratings. For example, if a project has an Unlikely rating in either of the dimensions then its overall rating cannot be higher than Unlikely, regardless of whether higher ratings in other dimensions of sustainability produce a higher average.

Ratings of project M&E

Monitoring is a continuing function that uses systematic collection of data on specified indicators to provide management and the main stakeholders of an ongoing project with indications of the extent of progress and achievement of objectives and progress in the use of allocated funds. Evaluation is the systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed project, its design, implementation and results. Project evaluation may involve the definition of appropriate standards, the examination of performance against those standards, and an assessment of actual and expected results.

The Project monitoring and evaluation system will be rated on 'M&E Design', 'M&E Plan Implementation' and 'Budgeting and Funding for M&E activities' as follows:

Highly Satisfactory (HS): There were no shortcomings in the project M&E system.

Satisfactory(S): There were minor shortcomings in the project M&E system.

Moderately Satisfactory (MS): There were moderate shortcomings in the project M&E system.

Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): There were significant shortcomings in the project M&E system.

Unsatisfactory (U): There were major shortcomings in the project M&E system.

Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): The Project had no M&E system.

"M&E plan implementation" will be considered a critical parameter for the overall assessment of the M&E system. The overall rating for the M&E systems will not be higher than the rating on "M&E plan implementation."

All other ratings will be on the GEF six-point scale.

GEF Performance Description	Alternative description on the same scale
HS = Highly Satisfactory	Excellent
S = Satisfactory	Well above average
MS = Moderately Satisfactory	Average
MU = Moderately Unsatisfactory	Below Average
U = Unsatisfactory	Poor
HU = Highly Unsatisfactory	Very poor (Appalling)

M&E system rating descriptions

GEF Performance Description	Alternative description on the same scale
HS = Highly Satisfactory	There were no shortcomings in the project M&E system.
S = Satisfactory	There were minor shortcomings in the project M&E system.
MS = Moderately Satisfactory	There were moderate shortcomings in the project M&E system.
MU = Moderately Unsatisfactory	There were significant shortcomings in the project M&E
U = Unsatisfactory	There were major shortcomings in the project M&E system.
HU = Highly Unsatisfactory	The Project had no M&E system.

Annexes

Annex 1. Terms of Reference

<http://www.fao.org/3/cb0505en/cb0505en.pdf>

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