

Terminal Evaluation Validation form, GEF Independent Evaluation Office

1. Project Data

Summary project data			
GEF project ID		5304	
GEF Agency project ID		GCP/RLA/201/GFF	
GEF Replenishment Phase		GEF-5	
Lead GEF Agency (include all for joint projects)		FAO	
Project name		Sustainable Management of Bycatch in Latin American and Caribbean Bottom Trawl Fisheries	
Country/Countries		Brazil, Costa Rica, Colombia, Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, México	
Region		Latin America & Caribbean	
Focal area		Multifocal Area	
Operational Program or Strategic Priorities/Objectives		International Waters IW-2	
Stand alone or under a programmatic framework		Standalone	
If applicable, parent program name and GEF ID			
Executing agencies involved		FAO executing, all other co-executing: Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission (WECAFC); Brazil, Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture; Colombia, Instituto de Investigaciones Marinas y Costeras (INVEMAR), Autoridad Nacional de Acuicultura y Pesca (AUNAP); Costa Rica, Instituto Costarricense de Pesca y Acuicultura (INCOPECA); Mexico, Instituto Nacional de Pesca (INAPESCA), Secretaría de Agricultura, Ganadería, Desarrollo Rural, Pesca y Alimentación (SAGARPA); Suriname, Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries; Trinidad & Tobago, Fisheries Division of the Ministry of Food Production, Land and Marine Affairs	
NGOs/CBOs involvement		CBOs as of the beneficiaries in multistakeholder approaches; through consultation, NGO as co-financers and subcontractors in some countries	
Private sector involvement (including micro, small and medium enterprises) ¹		[Camara de Pescadores de Puntarenas (CAMAPUN, Costa Rica), Union de Pescadores de Puntarenas (UNIPESCA, Costa Rica), Asociación Colombiana de Industriales y Amadores Pesqueros (ACODIARPE, Colombia), Empresa Colombiana Pesquera de Tolú S.A. (Pestolú, Colombia) one of the beneficiaries; through consultations	
CEO Endorsement (FSP) /Approval (MSP) date		3/3/2015	
Effectiveness date / project start date		7/22/2015	
Expected date of project completion (at start)		5/31/2021	
Actual date of project completion		2/22/2022	
Project Financing			
		At Endorsement (US \$M)	At Completion (US \$M)
Project Preparation Grant	GEF funding	0.219	0.219
	Co-financing	0	0
GEF Project Grant		5.800	5.800
Co-financing	IA own	0.400	0.385
	Government	13.688	13.887

¹ Defined as all micro, small, and medium-scale profit-oriented entities, including individuals and informal entities, that earn income through the sale of goods and services rather than a salary. ([GEF IEO 2022](#))

	Other multi- /bi-laterals	1.250	1.214
	Private sector	1.410	1.504
	NGOs/CBOs		0.351
	Other	0.450	0.604
Total GEF funding		6.019	6.019
Total Co-financing		17.198	17.945
Total project funding (GEF grant(s) + co-financing)		23.217	23.964
Terminal evaluation validation information			
TE completion date		8/31/2021	
Author of TE		Sherry Heileman, Alejandro Espinoza-Tenorio , Sergio Macedo Gomes de Mattos, and Vladimir Puentes Granada.	
TER completion date		11/18/2022	
TER prepared by		Ines Freier	
TER peer review by (if GEF IEO review)		Neeraj Negi	

Access the form to summarize key project features here: <https://www.research.net/r/APR2023>.

2. Summary of Project Ratings

Criteria	Final PIR	IA Terminal Evaluation	IA Evaluation Office Review ²	GEF IEO Review
Project Outcomes	S	HS	HS	MS
Sustainability of Outcomes		ML	ML	MU
M&E Design		S	S	S
M&E Implementation		HS	HS	S
Quality of Implementation		S	S	MS
Quality of Execution		S	S	MS
Quality of the Terminal Evaluation Report			—	S

3. Project Objectives and theory of change

3.1 Global Environmental Objectives of the project:

The Global Environment Objective of the project is to reduce the negative ecosystem impact and achieve more sustainable shrimp/bottom trawl fisheries in the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) region through the implementation of an ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF), including bycatch and habitat impact management. (CEO Endorsement Request, p. 2)

3.2 Development Objectives of the project:

The development objective of the project is to strengthen the resilience of coastal communities through the promotion of responsible fishing practices, livelihoods enhancement and diversification, thus contributing to food security and poverty eradication (CEO Endorsement Request p. 2)

3.3 Were there any **changes** in the Global Environmental Objectives, Development Objectives, or project activities during implementation? What are the reasons given for the change(s)?

No

3.4 Briefly summarize project's theory of change – describe the inputs and causal relationships through which the project will achieve its long-term impacts, key links, and key assumptions.

Component 1 aims to establish the enabling conditions including appropriate governance frameworks necessary for long-term solutions for trawl fisheries and bycatch management. Strengthening regional collaboration and achieving an agreement on the regional strategy for shrimp/bottom trawl fisheries and bycatch management will support policy, legal and institutional changes at the national level. The dissemination of best bycatch management practices and the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication to all countries in the region and their incorporation in the Regional Strategy for shrimp/bottom trawl fisheries and bycatch management as well as in national management plans will be crucial in ensuring their adoption by the shrimp trawling sub-sector.

² The terminal evaluation was commissioned by the FAO's Office of Evaluation, therefore the performance ratings provided in the terminal evaluation are repeated in the column.

Component 2 aims to strengthen bycatch management and responsible trawling practices promoting investments by public and private partners in sustainable fishing gears, vessels and better management approaches. Pilot projects in selected sites in the six countries conduct trials of fishing gears together with small scale fishers and the fishing industry.

Component 3 promotes sustainable and equitable livelihoods through enhancement and diversification related to the shrimp/bottom trawl fisheries sub-sector. Therefore, the project aims to incentivize fishers and fish workers along the trawl fisheries value chain to adopt more sustainable trawl practices. It posits that creating alternative livelihood opportunities and strengthening local capacities will bring about the required change in stakeholder behaviour..

Component 4 deals with progress monitoring, evaluation and information dissemination and communication. Dissemination of lessons learned and good practices as well as sharing of data and information will be crucial for the uptake, replication and upscaling of project results, and improved awareness, in other areas and countries in the region, and hence promote a wider and sustained impact.

All four components produce changes in behavior, enhanced capacity of the private sector and co-management for sustainable livelihoods (intermediate outcomes). Those changes imply the implementation responsible fishery like of bycatch guidelines reducing the negative impact on the marine ecosystem.

The Project Development Objective (PDO) is linked to the Global Environmental Objective through the premise that the global environmental benefits generated by the project will form the basis for livelihoods enhancement and diversification and contribute to food security and poverty eradication. Further, by ensuring secure livelihoods, responsible trawling practices that have been introduced by the project are more likely to be maintained and hence contribute to environmental sustainability.

The key assumptions for achievement of the long-term impact are:

- i. Adequate and sustained political support and stakeholder capacity for establishing a regional bycatch policy/strategy to amend national institutional and regulatory frameworks, and to carry out participatory processes and implement EAF and co- management.
- ii. Effective, equitable and transparent participation of stakeholders in the implementation of project activities and in decision-making.
- iii. Private sector/fishers are willing to collaborate and adopt the management
- vi. Opportunities for viable alternative livelihoods are created in the trawl fishing communities and members are willing to change their mindset and behaviour and adopt management measures and alternative livelihoods. (TE p. 5-9)

4. GEF IEO assessment of Outcomes and Sustainability

Please refer to the GEF Terminal Evaluation Review Guidelines for detail on the criteria for ratings.

The outcome ratings (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and overall outcome rating) are on a six-point scale: Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory. The sustainability rating is on a four-point scale: Likely to Unlikely.

Please justify the ratings in the space below each box.

4.1 Relevance and Coherence	S
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Overall the project aligns sufficiently well with the GEF strategies, country priorities and the mandate of the implementing agency FAO. The Project objective and the project development objective is too ambitious given the weak external conditions in fishery industry in the LAC region and the limited funds of the project. The planned project outcomes could be more aligned with the needs of the private sector and communities as beneficiaries.

The Project was developed under the GEF-5 Programming Framework and contributes to its International Waters (IW) Focal Area Strategic Objective (SO2). Sustainable management of fishery resources is included in the Country Programming Frameworks (CPFs) agreed between the governments of the six participating countries and FAO. Addressing unsustainable fishing practices in order to make trawl fisheries more sustainable and productive, the project contributes to FAO's Strategic Objective (SO) 2 (Increase and improve provision of goods and services from agriculture, forestry, and fisheries in a sustainable manner).

Several participating countries have adopted relevant regional and global policy frameworks and guidelines. The need to reduce trawl bycatch has been recognized by the countries but the high dependence among local fishing communities on trawl bycatch for food and livelihoods creates a dilemma. Costa Rica has solved the dilemma in fully prohibiting the industrial shrimp trawl fishery. The US has imposed import bans on shrimps produced in two project countries due to unsustainable fishing practices / bycatch. So, the project is relevant to the countries to reach the global environmental objective and to implement national environmental and economic policies. (TE p. 11-12)

The project was not fully aligned with the needs of beneficiaries as the results of the livelihoods component show because the activities did not meet the needs of the beneficiaries and participation was low. (TE p.4)

The project's coherence with the GEF project CLME+ (Objective: Catalysing implementation of the Strategic Action Programme for the sustainable management of shared Living Marine Resources in the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems implemented in the same region by UNDP (2015-2020) could have been aligned better (TE p. 15). Here double work was undertaken in one region by two different GEF projects so that resources should have been allocated to a more productive use.

The project objective is too ambitious given the weak external conditions in the Caribbean and the limited funds of the project as the STAP review remarked (STAP review) however the project is designed in a way that it contributes to those objectives (TE p.13). The project design is not fully adequate to produce the aspired outcomes like Outcome 1 adoption of national policies which take more time than the project lifespan. However, in all countries, activities included stakeholder participation in Fishing Management Plans which could produce more tangible results beyond adoption of legislation.

4.2 Effectiveness	MS
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The effectiveness of the project is rated moderately satisfactory because not all planned outputs and outcomes were fully achieved, however some results exceeded expectations, and some unintended, positive results were realized. The enabling environment created by the project and its transformational character like stakeholder platforms for co-management will contribute towards achievement of the Global Environmental Objective and the Project Development Objective in the longer-term.

Outcome 1.1. The regional strategy on the management of bycatch and discards was drafted and endorsed by the respective Shrimp and Groundfish Working Group of WECAFC (Western Central Atlantic Fishery Commission). It was endorsed in 2022 in the 18th WECAFC Session. Regional technical workshops and other activities helped to strengthen regional collaboration.

Outcome 1.2. Improved legal and institutional frameworks: All the project countries have developed legislation and fisheries management plans that include trawl fisheries. Government endorsement has been received or is pending. Institutional frameworks have been established or strengthened in all the countries. Results have been better in larger countries like Brazil and Colombia or Costa Rica. However, the project has only in some cases contributed to implementing such plans like training of cost guards in Suriname to ensure compliance of fishing boats with the new legislation.

Outcome 2.1. Co-management of shrimp fisheries through Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries: Trials with the modified trawl gear in all the countries except Costa Rica demonstrated substantial reduction in bycatch and other potential benefits. The results of the gear trials are undoubtedly one of the most significant project achievements. However, there is need for further research in addition to wide dissemination and extension work in the trawl communities as well as incentives to promote adoption of the gear by the fleets. In Colombia, the prototype fishing gears have been accepted by the trawl industry, and a successful pre-assessment for international trawl fishery certification completed, the latter being an unexpected positive result. In Brazil, the use of Bycatch Reduction devices is spreading to other communities along the coast. The terminal evaluation learned that Brazil has submitted a request to the United States of America to reinstate exports based on work done under the project; the request is being reviewed by the United States of America State Department. Such developments provide a strong incentive to the trawl sector to adopt the modified gear. (TE p. 20).

Multi-stakeholder platforms for co-management and Ecosystem Approach to Fishery have been established or strengthened and are operational in all the countries. The platforms may spur catalytic change in the region.

The project supported comprehensive data collection activities in all the countries including improved monitoring systems such as onboard observer programmes (Mexico, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago), fishing port enumerators, and bycatch and discards surveys. Biological data was also collected on major bycatch species and species guides/catalogues prepared (TE p. 19)

Outcome 2.2. Enabling environment including incentives and promoting responsible trawl practices: In some of the countries, potential incentives were identified for bycatch management (including higher profitability

of fishing operations using the Bycatch Reduction Devices) and new value-added products created from bycatch, with potential for commercialization. Considerable progress has been made in demonstrating that use of the modified gear may reduce operational costs of the trawl fisheries sector. The project developed different incentive packages for reducing or using bycatch like value added products. However, it is not clear if those incentives create positive effects on small producers like womens' groups currently selling bycatch.

Outcome 3.1. The project intended to create sustainable and diverse livelihoods and support gender equality through income generation activities in pilot sites. There was limited creation and diversification of livelihoods. (TE p. 55). The project created and/or strengthened fisheries focused community based organisations in countries covered by the project, with some of them legally established (e.g. in Costa Rica and Suriname). The number exceeded the expectation of at least 12 such organizations. Particular attention was paid to organizations that were focused on women. Through capacity strengthening efforts, their governance structures and overall management as well as their ability to participate in decision-making processes were improved. Progress on the livelihoods aspect was slow in most of the countries. This was attributed to limited funding, the complexity of the task, and the general state of local economies with limited options for alternative livelihoods. Only two pilot sites in Brazil and Colombia produced tangible results.

4.3 Efficiency	MS
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The efficiency of the project is rated as moderately efficient due to slow processes in project implementation. The efficiency was affected by factors such as the slow start of the project, time and effort taken to develop partnerships with six countries, multistakeholder approaches in six countries and work at the regional level, institutional and political changes in some of the countries, and slow administrative procedures within the countries and FAO. COVID-19 affected the last phase of the project – the presentation of results in conferences and meetings. This was only partly undertaken because the events could not be switched to online and contributed to the extension of the project. The delivery of nearly all its outputs and outcomes was within budget.

There was lack of adequate budget for backstopping missions of the Regional Project Coordinator to the countries which hampered some of the critical activities, especially activities to mitigate conflicts among stakeholders and build trust. (TE p 26). The limited budget for the regional co-ordination unit affected the timely delivery of activities (TE p. 26).

4.4 Outcome	MS
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The outcome of the project is moderately satisfactory due to the shortcomings in the delivery of outcomes mainly in outcome 3 livelihoods and the limited relevance and sustainability of project results.

Summarize key outcomes related to environment, human well-being, and enabling conditions (Policy, Legal & Institutional Development; Individual & Institutional Capacity-Building; Knowledge Exchange & Learning;

Multistakeholder Interactions), as applicable. Include any unintended outcomes (not originally targeted by the project), whether positive or negative, affecting either ecological or social aspects.

The relevant results include establishment of institutional structures for Ecosystem Adapted Fishery and co-management (Output 1.2.2). In some of the countries (e.g. Brazil, Trinidad and Tobago), these institutional arrangements represent the first ever functional decision-making bodies in which the government and the fisheries sector come together for open and transparent dialogue. In all the countries, multi-stakeholder platforms were established for co-management, which is a notable achievement considering the inherent challenges in getting all stakeholders ‘around the table’ for open dialogue. These include a wide cross-section of stakeholders from government ministries, fisheries sector (artisanal and large scale/industrial), technical, research and academic institutions, NGOs and community-based organizations (CBO), among others. Importantly, these platforms have been (or will be) formalized through legislation and government decrees, which contributes to their legitimacy and sustainability. (TE p. 17)

The Gear trials showed very positive effects of the newly developed gear on the environment (reduction in bycatch) and on profits of fishing enterprises (better quality of shrimp and higher prices and substantial reduction in costs for fuel and resulting emissions). In Colombia, the prototype fishing gears have been accepted by the trawl industry, and a successful pre-assessment for international trawl fishery certification completed, the latter being an unexpected positive result. In Brazil, the use of Bycatch Reduction Devices is spreading to other communities along the coast. (TE p. 19)

Where applicable, note how both intended and unintended outcomes have positively and/or negatively affected marginalized populations (e.g., women, indigenous groups, youth, persons with disabilities), and where some stakeholder groups have benefited more/ less than others.

The project has contributed to elevating the visibility of women and improving the understanding of their role in the value chain and strengthening their capacity for enhanced livelihoods. However, further efforts are needed to empower women for participation in the value chain and the management of the trawl sector. (TE p. xi)

4.5 Sustainability	MU
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The sustainability of the results is moderately unlikely due to the political and financial risks in the participating countries. The newly developed co-management models might be sustainable even when political changes occur but some of the countries lack the financial resources to implement the legislation. Therefore, there are challenges in achieving the aspired environmental results. The multi-stakeholder processes as the main result of the project depend on external resources to be moderated and sustained. Not all countries have budgets to invest in such processes. The gear tests and the livelihoods options have remained in many cases at pilot level which means that additional resources like follow-up projects are needed to implement them and to achieve the global environmental benefits.

Note any progress made to sustain or expand environmental benefits beyond project closure, using stakeholder (rather than project) resources, e.g. through replication, mainstreaming or scaling-up of GEF-supported initiatives. Examples would be farmers adopting practices using own funds, follow-on replication projects, development of plans for scaling, inclusion in local or national legislation, and allocation of government budgets or private sector investments for institutional adoption.

These multi-stakeholder platforms have been (or will be) formalized through legislation and government decrees, which contributes to their legitimacy and sustainability. Multi-stakeholder committees and fisherfolk organizations now play a vital role in decision-making (negotiating management measures and updating fishery management plans and regulations, etc.), which is essential to promote uptake and compliance. (TE p. 17)

5. Processes and factors affecting attainment of project outcomes

Before describing the factors, you may choose to summarize reported outcomes and sustainability here: <https://www.research.net/r/APR2023>.

5.1 Co-financing. To what extent was the reported co-financing essential to the achievement of GEF objectives? If there was a difference in the level of expected co-financing and actual co-financing, what were the reasons for it? Did the extent of materialization of co-financing affect project's outcomes and/or sustainability? If so, in what ways and through what causal linkages?

Co-finance realized at the time of the terminal evaluation exceeded the amount pledged at CEO endorsement by nearly USD 750,000. This includes a high level of cash co-finance and unanticipated contributions from some institutional partners and the fisheries private sector. (TE p. xi) This co-financing was reported in the PIR 2021.

5.2 Project extensions and/or delays. If there were delays in project implementation and completion, then what were the reasons for it? Did the delay affect the project's outcomes and/or sustainability? If so, in what ways and through what causal linkages?

During 2020–2021, the COVID-19 pandemic severely curtailed the activities of these structures that required face-to-face meetings. While virtual meetings were held, in some cases members of the fishing communities had limited access to virtual meeting platforms. The pandemic struck at a critical stage before project closure when activities were to be completed and results consolidated and disseminated. Nevertheless, virtual events were convened in 2021 by Colombia, Mexico and the Regional Project Coordinating Unit to share project results with stakeholders. (TE p. 17)

Among the issues that delayed the gear trials there were problems in acquiring the raw material for manufacture of the gear and the slow FAO procurement process, in addition to the pandemic. As a result, some of the planned activities were severely delayed so that they could only be implemented in Suriname during the last project extension (TE p. 20)

5.3 Stakeholder ownership. Assess the extent to which stakeholder ownership has affected project outcomes and sustainability. Describe the ways in which it affected outcomes and sustainability, highlighting the causal links.

One of the project's most transformational accomplishments is the high level of engagement of a diverse range of stakeholders. This was instrumental in helping the project adapt to the challenges encountered and its successful delivery. The co-finance realized attests to the high level of stakeholder buy-in for the project. However, stakeholder engagement, building trust and nurturing partnerships can be lengthy and demanding processes. If a project is under-resourced, this can reduce the time available time for coordination and

technical backstopping, and to manage stakeholder engagement and partnerships. (TE p. xi) There is also limited time to build trust and resolve conflicts among stakeholders. (TE p. 17)

One of the main factors responsible for the success of adoption of the new gears for trawling was the involvement of the trawl fishers themselves in developing the alternative gear and tailoring them to the fishers' specific contexts. In addition, gear trials were conducted using local trawlers and crew. Promoting the concept and working together with the fishers (who will ultimately use the gear) to develop the gear using their own knowledge and experience fostered buy-in for the finished product and increased the likelihood for its adoption. (TE p. 20)

One of the challenges, however, was getting adequate participation from the fishing sector in general and from women in particular. Among the reasons given by fisheries stakeholders interviewed there was loss of income from sacrificing a day's work (e.g. fishing or fish processing), no compensation by the project for lost income, distance of the meeting venue from their place of residence or work, no previous notification of the event, and other commitments. Attempts were made by the co-executing agencies to convene some of the meetings close to the fish landing sites or fishing communities (as done in Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago, for example) (TE p. 17)

5.4 Other factors: In case the terminal evaluation discusses other key factors that affected project outcomes, discuss those factors and outline how they affected outcomes, whether positively or negatively. Include factors that may have led to unintended outcomes.

6. Assessment of project's Monitoring and Evaluation system

Ratings are assessed on a six point scale: Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory.

Please justify ratings in the space below each box.

6.1 M&E Design at entry	S
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The project results framework was comprehensive, with definition of baselines, mid-term and end- of-project targets, outputs, outcomes and outcome indicators that facilitated methodological progress monitoring. Indicators were defined for the planned outcomes, but not all of them were Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound (SMART), and some were identical to the outputs and do not articulate the higher-level results, such as a required change. (TE p. 35)

Indicators for the Global Environmental Objective and Project Development Objective were not defined in the project results framework. Therefore, for the purposes of the terminal evaluation, an assessment of achievement of these objectives can only be based on the achievement of the outputs and outcomes and associated indicators. (TE p. 13)

The evaluation matrix developed for monitoring of country targets using a color-coded 'traffic light' system (dashboard) was an innovative and effective approach for monitoring of performance at the country level. The monitoring matrices showed country targets associated with the project outputs as relevant. Some of the targets were country-specific and adapted to the country's context. Country target units were specified and

used as indicators. The Project Document stipulated the tools for monitoring of project performance, which are in line with the FAO and GEF monitoring and evaluation policies and guidelines. (TE p. 35)

6.2 M&E Implementation	S
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The monitoring and evaluation implementation meets expectations and is therefore rated as satisfactory. The M&E plan was satisfactorily implemented in a timely and systematic manner and in accordance with FAO and GEF requirements. The Regional Project Coordination Unit and National Project Coordinators were in-charge of the day-to-day monitoring. The M&E process was highly participatory, with the involvement of all the co-executing agencies, and coordinated by the Regional Project Coordination Unit and National Project Coordinators and facilitated through project progress review and planning meetings of the National Working Groups (national activities) and the PSC (regional activities). The country monitoring matrices fed into the annual project implementation reports. Work planning meetings were held each year prior to the PSC meetings and the resulting work plan and budget presented to the PSC for review and approval. The PSC met annually and at times, meetings were held virtually; meetings were well-attended, productive and members very engaged (as verified from the PSC meeting reports and stakeholder interviews). PSC meeting reports were published in English and Spanish. Several backstopping and supervision missions were undertaken by the Regional Project Coordinator to the participating countries, and mission reports prepared. (TE p. 36)

7. Assessment of project implementation and execution

Quality of Implementation rating is based on the assessment of the performance of GEF Agency(s). Quality of Execution rating is based on performance of the executing agency(s). In both instances, the focus is upon factors that are largely within the control of the respective implementing and executing agency(s). A six-point rating scale is used (Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory), or Unable to Assess.

Please justify ratings in the space below each box.

7.1 Quality of Project Implementation	MS
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The quality of project implementation is rated as overall satisfactory because it met expectations however the slow procurement processes and the understaffing of the regional co-ordination unit hampered the implementation of the project.

The project management structure constituted a strong and cohesive institutional framework that provided both technical and administrative support and technical and financial oversight to the project. There was no apparent conflict of interest with FAO being both the implementing and executing agency since different FAO

entities were responsible for each function. (TE p. 25). The TE lists as the main sources for delays the FAO's convoluted administrative processes and institutional rules and requirements (e.g. various checks and balances across multiple FAO offices) which especially hampered procurement processes and the limited budget for the Regional Project Coordination Unit. (TE p. 26)

7.2 Quality of Project Execution	MS
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The project execution met expectations however delays in project execution took part mainly in the first half of the project when the project was set up.

Although this is a direct implementation modality (DIM) project, FAO worked extensively with national counterparts for project execution in the countries, through Letter of Agreement (LOA). This extensive use of LOAs makes the project modality similar to an Operational Partners Implementation Modality (OPIM). At the national level, the national co-executing partners were directly responsible for technical implementation of national project activities, day-to-day monitoring and financial management (in accordance with FAO rules and procedures) of the GEF resources. A National Project Coordinator was appointed by each national co-executing partner to lead the project execution and support the national co-executing partner in all tasks. Each project country set up a multi-stakeholder National Working Group to support the National Project Coordinator and oversee the technical implementation of national project activities and work plans.

133. Execution arrangements varied among the countries and contributed to the differences in efficiency and performance among the countries, as noted by the mid-term evaluation. (TE p. 28)

8. Lessons and recommendations

8.1 Briefly describe the key lessons, good practices, or approaches mentioned in the terminal evaluation report, including how they could have application for other GEF projects. Lessons must be based on project experience.

One of the project's biggest and most transformational accomplishments is the high level of engagement of a diverse range of stakeholders, which has exceeded expectations. This has contributed significantly to the achievement of the planned outputs and outcomes and will help promote sustainability. (TE p. 36)

Lesson learned 1. A bottom-up approach to the identification of the needs to be addressed by a project, whereby stakeholders are engaged in the process from the beginning, promotes greater stakeholder buy-in, ownership and participation, and increases the prospects for project success and sustainability of its results.

Lesson learned 2. Delegating a strong technical or academic institution to work alongside the government agency for project execution in the participating countries is an effective and efficient strategy. Not only does the partner institution provide support in specific areas according to its mandate and area of competence, but it can help to cushion the project against adverse impacts of political instability and other changes in the government, thereby minimizing the potential disruptions to implementation (e.g. as seen in Brazil). In addition, such an arrangement can be particularly effective in increasing stakeholder involvement where there is distrust of the government within the fisheries sector.

Lesson learned 3. Embedding an FAO administrative/operational consultant within the national Fisheries Authority provides much needed support to the government officers involved in the project, allowing them more time to focus on technical and other aspects of project execution, and facilitates smoother implementation (Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago).

Lesson learned 4. Where the participating countries are diverse, with different operating contexts, level of capacity, etc., it is important that the project design be flexible so that targets and objectives are realistic and appropriate for the local context while at the same time can contribute collectively to overall project outcomes and objectives.

Lesson learned 5. The absence of a knowledge management/communication strategy and associated expert and budget provisions from the start of the project can negatively affect stakeholder engagement, sharing of lessons and experiences, and efficiency. This can also reduce the time of the regional and national coordinators available for coordination and execution of activities.

Lesson learned 6. Engaging fishers from the start in the design and testing of the fishing gear, using their knowledge and experience, builds buy-in and ownership, which is crucial for future adoption of the gear in their fishing operations and for encouraging other fishers to do the same. The only way a significant and lasting change can happen in the fishery is by being driven by the fishers themselves.

Lesson learned 7. Fishing has an important social dimension, in addition to technological and environmental, consideration of which must be at the forefront when trying to get the buy-in of fishing communities, especially where they feel aggrieved and dissatisfied by how their concerns are addressed by the government. Fishing is a way of life for fishing communities in some countries, which makes change particularly challenging. It is important for them to understand how the project will benefit them including how the expected improvement in the environmental state will also positively affect them.

Lesson learned 8. The process adopted in producing an output or outcome is just as important as the deliverable itself and yields additional benefits. For example, promoting a high level of stakeholder engagement, as demonstrated in the strategic partnerships for project execution and the establishment of operational multi-stakeholder platforms in the participating countries, can be transformational and can contribute to sustainability. Similarly, developing a fisheries management plan in consultation with stakeholders and using a bottom-up approach builds buy-in and ownership, which increases acceptance and likelihood of compliance with the plan when it is implemented.

Lesson learned 9. Developing partnerships and executing arrangements as well as building trust among stakeholders is time-consuming and inadequate time at the beginning of the project for these processes, before start of on the ground activities, can delay implementation and reduce efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

Lesson learned 10. South-South cooperation, where some participating countries have certain strengths and expertise that are required but lacking in the other countries (is an effective strategy to support technology transfer and capacity building and strengthen the regional component and the programmatic approach of the project. (TE p. 45)

8.2 Briefly describe the recommendations given in the terminal evaluation.

Recommendation 1. To FAO, project countries and co-executing partners of the project. Within one to two years after project closure, implement actions to promote sustainability and the achievement of the long-term impact, including sharing results with stakeholders; upscaling and mainstreaming results; maintaining partnerships; accelerating the endorsement and implementation of pending legislation and management plans; continuing to build capacity for implementation of Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries; commercialization of the new value added products; and continuing to build trust among stakeholders.

Recommendation 2. To FAO GEF Coordination Unit, FAO Technical Divisions, and GEF. To improve the design and implementation of future projects, the following are recommended:

Project design/follow on projects

- i. Set more realistic Global Environmental Objective and Project Development Objective.
- ii. Incorporate other measures and gear modifications for minimizing trawling impacts on benthic habitats and marine organisms.
- iii. Place more focus on gender and livelihoods, private sector engagement/co-management, incentives for adoption of alternative fishing gear, and differences between small-scale and large-scale trawl fisheries in the design of bycatch reduction strategies and other management measures.
- iv. Align the follow-up project (REBYC-III CLME+) with other planned regional projects to avoid duplication and build synergies; and minimize the time lag in the start of new projects.

Institutional arrangements and administration

- i. Consider institutional arrangements for execution in which a technical or academic institute with the required competence is designated to work alongside the government co-executing agency.
- ii. Promote South-South cooperation between the appropriate countries such as those with high capacity and those with low capacity in specific thematic areas.
- iii. Continue to streamline and harmonize administrative and operational mechanisms at the various levels at which the project operates.

Stakeholder engagement and partnerships

- i. Develop and implement a stakeholder engagement plan and allow adequate time at project start for stakeholder engagement, establishment of partnerships, institutional strengthening, and fostering trust among stakeholders.
- ii. Adopt operational modalities that may be more efficient, such as Operational Partners Agreements (OPA) instead of Letters of Agreement (LOAs).

- iii. Appoint a dedicated consultant to manage stakeholder engagement and partnerships.
- iv. Make provisions in the project budget for incentives to increase participation by local communities, especially women.

Recommendation 3. To Participating countries, FAO GEF Coordination Unit, and GEF. Continue initiatives for enhanced livelihoods and empowerment of women fish workers under follow-up projects and programmes; and involve the appropriate government agencies and institutions with the relevant expertise related to gender and livelihoods in the design and implementation of these initiatives.

Recommendation 4. To FAO GEF Coordination Unit. Develop an appropriate risk management plan with an adequate budget and incorporate flexibility in the design of new projects to mitigate the potential impacts of any delays in project start up, or unexpected political and institutional changes in the participating countries or co-executing agencies.

Recommendation 5. To FAO GEF Coordination Unit and GEF. Make adequate provisions in the project budget for communication and knowledge management throughout project implementation, including:

- i. Hiring of a dedicated project communication/knowledge management expert from the start and engaging local communication/knowledge management experts and local 'champions' for communication with local communities.

- ii. Preparation of a communication/knowledge management strategy at the start.

- iii. Production and dissemination of knowledge management products that are targeted for key stakeholder groups. (TE p. xii)

9. Quality of the Terminal Evaluation Report

Before rating the quality of the terminal evaluation, click here to summarize your observations on the sub-criteria: <https://www.research.net/r/APR2023>.

A six-point rating scale is used for each sub-criteria and overall rating of the terminal evaluation report (Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory)

Criteria/indicators of terminal evaluation quality	GEF IEO COMMENTS	Rating
1. Timeliness: terminal evaluation report was carried out and submitted on time?	Yes	HS
2. General information: Provides general information on the project and evaluation as per the requirement?	Yes	HS
3. Stakeholder involvement: the report was prepared in consultation with – and with feedback from - key stakeholders?	Stakeholder feedback was incorporated into drafting the ToC	S
4. Theory of change: provides solid account of the project's theory of change?	The ToC provides full account of the project's theory of change including assumptions.	HS
5. Methodology: Provides an informative and transparent account of the methodology?	Provides account of methodology including limits of evaluation	HS
6. Outcome: Provides a clear and candid account of the achievement of project outcomes?	Presents a clear account of the project results, describes aspired changes in outcome section Puts emphasis on attitudes, processes and stakeholder engagement as success factors, an assessment criteria which is not in GEF evaluation guidelines	S
7. Sustainability: Presents realistic assessment of sustainability?	Presents assessment of sustainability taking into account all risks	MS
8. M&E: Presents sound assessment of the quality of the M&E system?	Yes	S

9. Finance: Reports on utilization of GEF funding and materialization of co-financing?	Provides all required data	HS
10. Implementation: Presents a candid account of project implementation and Agency performance?	Provides sufficient detail about the project implementation and agency performance	S
11. Safeguards: Provides information on application of environmental and social safeguards, and conduct and use of gender analysis?	Detailed information about environmental and social safeguards and gender, exceeding expectations	HS
12. Lessons and recommendations are supported by the project experience and are relevant to future programming?	All lessons and recommendations are supported by project evidence	S
13. Ratings: Ratings are well-substantiated by evidence, realistic and convincing?	Ratings are substantiated by evidence, realistic and convincing, the overall rating is influenced by an implicit rating of processes which are not part of the rating scheme of GEF projects	S
14. Report presentation: The report was well-written, logically organized, and consistent?	Yes	S
Overall quality of the report		S

10. Note any additional sources of information used in the preparation of the terminal evaluation report (excluding PIRs, TEs, and PADs).

By Catch Guidelines Document for Endorsement <https://www.fao.org/3/cc0660en/cc0660en.pdf> (17th November 2022)

<https://www.clmeproject.org/project-overview/>

ANNEX 1. GEF IEO THEORY OF CHANGE FRAMEWORK

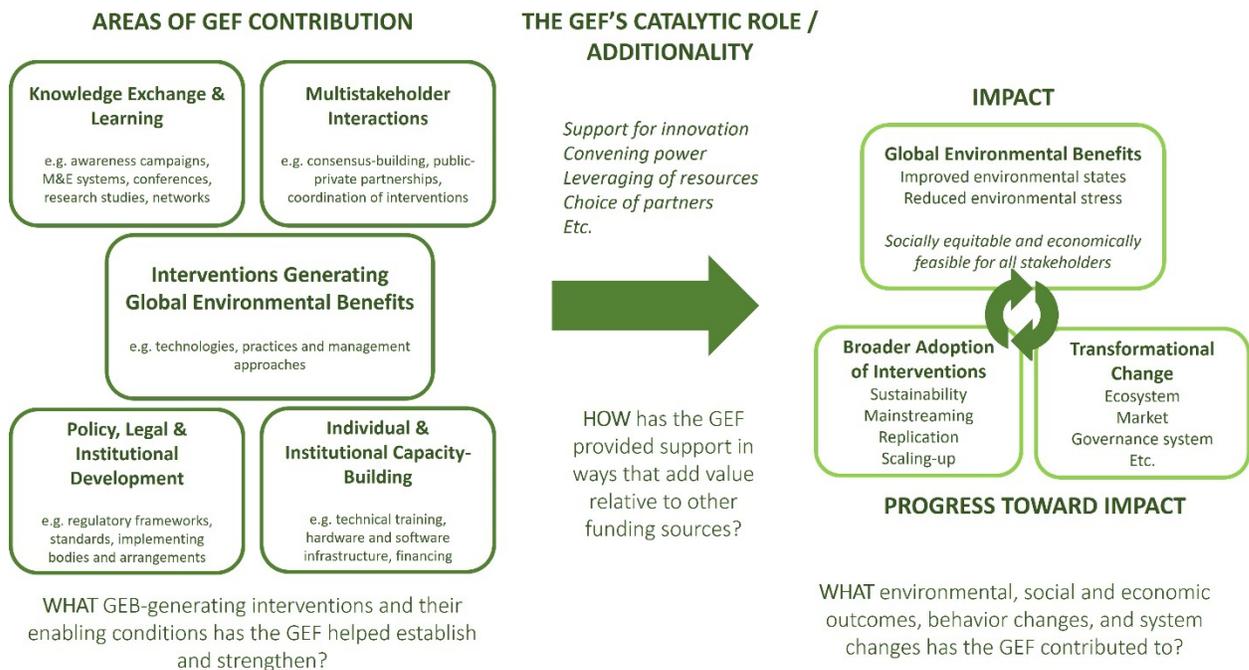


Figure 1. The GEF IEO's updated Theory of Change Framework on how the GEF achieves impact

The general framework for the GEF's theory of change (figure 1) draws on the large amount of evaluative evidence on outcomes and impact gathered over the years by the GEF Independent Evaluation Office. The framework diagram has been updated to reflect the IEO's learning since OPSS (GEF IEO 2014, p. 47-50) about how the GEF achieves impact, as well as the evolution of the GEF's programming toward more integrated systems-focused and scaled-up initiatives.

The framework outlines the three main areas that the IEO assesses in its evaluations: a) the GEF's contributions in establishing and strengthening both the interventions that directly generate global environmental benefits, and the enabling conditions that allow these interventions to be implemented and adopted by stakeholders, b) the GEF's catalytic role or additionality in the way that the GEF provides support within the context of other funding sources and partners, and c) the environmental, social and economic outcomes that the GEF has contributed to, and the behavior and system changes that generate these outcomes during and beyond the period of GEF support.

The circular arrow between impact and progress toward impact, as before, indicates how bringing about positive environmental change is an iterative process that involves behavior change (in the form of a broader group of stakeholders adopting interventions) and/or systems change (which is a key characteristic of transformational change). These three areas of change can take place in any sequence or simultaneously in a positively reinforcing cycle, and are therefore assessed by the GEF IEO as indicators of impact.

Assessing the GEF’s progress toward achieving impact allows the IEO to determine the extent to which GEF support contributes to a trajectory of large-scale, systemic change, especially in areas where changes in the environment can only be measured over longer time horizons. The updated diagram in particular expands the assessment of progress towards impact to include transformational change, which specifically takes place at the system level, and not necessarily over a long time period.

The updated diagram also more explicitly identifies the link between the GEF’s mandate of generating global environmental benefits, and the GEF’s safeguards to ensure that positive environmental outcomes also enhance or at the very least do not take away from the social and economic well-being of the people who depend on the environment. Thus the IEO assesses impact not only in terms of environmental outcomes, but also in terms of the synergies and trade-offs with the social and economic contexts in which these outcomes are achieved.

ANNEX 2. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Intervention	Any programmatic approach, full-sized project, medium-sized project, or enabling activity financed from any GEF-managed trust fund, as well as regional and national outreach activities. In the context of post-completion evaluation, an intervention may consist of a single project, or multiple projects (i.e. phased or parallel) with explicitly linked objectives contributing to the same specific impacts within the same specific geographical area and sector. https://www.gefio.org/evaluations/gef-evaluation-policy-2019
Activity (of an intervention)	An action undertaken over the duration of an intervention that contributes to the achievement of the intervention’s objectives, i.e. an intervention is implemented through a set of activities. E.g. training, (support to) policy development, (implementation of) management approach.
Outcome	An intended or achieved short- or medium-term effect of a project or program’s outputs. https://www.gefio.org/evaluations/gef-evaluation-policy-2019
Impact	The positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a project or program, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. https://www.gefio.org/evaluations/gef-evaluation-policy-2019
Environmental outcomes	Changes in environmental indicators that could take the following forms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stress reduction: reduction or prevention of threats to the environment, especially those caused by human behavior (local communities, societies, economies) • Environmental state: biological, physical changes in the state of the environment http://www.gefio.org/sites/default/files/ieo/evaluations/ops5-final-report-eng.pdf
Social and economic outcomes	Changes in indicators affecting human well-being at the individual or higher scales, e.g. income or access to capital, food security, health, safety, education, cooperation/ conflict resolution, and equity in distribution/ access to benefits, especially among marginalized groups.
Synergies	Multiple benefits achieved in more than one focal area as a result of a <i>single intervention</i> , or benefits achieved from the interaction of outcomes from at least two separate interventions in addition to those achieved, had the interventions been done independently.

	http://www.gefio.org/evaluations/evaluation-multiple-benefits-gef-support-through-its-multifocal-area-portfolio-map-2016
Trade-offs	A reduction in one benefit in the process of maximizing or increasing another benefit. http://www.gefio.org/evaluations/evaluation-multiple-benefits-gef-support-through-its-multifocal-area-portfolio-map-2016
Broader adoption	The adoption of GEF-supported interventions by governments and other stakeholders beyond the original scope and funding of a GEF-supported intervention. This may take place through sustaining, replication, mainstreaming, and scaling-up of an intervention and/or its enabling conditions (see definitions below). http://www.gefio.org/sites/default/files/ieo/evaluations/ops5-final-report-eng.pdf
Sustainability	The continuation/ likely continuation of positive effects from the intervention after it has come to an end, and its potential for scale-up and/or replication; interventions need to be environmentally as well as institutionally, financially, politically, culturally and socially sustainable. https://www.gefio.org/evaluations/gef-evaluation-policy-2019
Replication	When a GEF intervention is reproduced at a comparable administrative or ecological scale, often in different geographical areas or regions. http://www.gefio.org/sites/default/files/ieo/evaluations/ops5-final-report-eng.pdf
Mainstreaming	When information, lessons, or specific aspects of a GEF initiative are incorporated into a broader stakeholder initiative. This may occur not only through governments but also in development organizations and other sectors. http://www.gefio.org/sites/default/files/ieo/evaluations/ops5-final-report-eng.pdf
Scaling-up	Increasing the magnitude of global environment benefits (GEBs), and/or expanding the geographical and sectoral areas where they are generated to cover a defined ecological, economic, or governance unit. May occur through replication, mainstreaming, and linking. http://www.gefio.org/evaluations/evaluation-gef-support-scaling-impact-2019
Transformational change	Deep, systemic, and sustainable change with large-scale impact in an area of major environmental concern. Defined by four criteria: relevance, depth of change, scale of change, and sustainability. http://www.gefio.org/evaluations/evaluation-gef-support-transformational-change-2017
Additionality	a) Changes in the attainment of direct project outcomes at project completion that can be attributed to GEF's interventions; these can be reflected in an acceleration of the adoption of reforms, the enhancement of outcomes, or the reduction of risks and greater viability of project interventions. b) Spill-over effects beyond project outcomes that may result from systemic reforms, capacity development, and socio-economic changes. c) Clearly articulated pathways to achieve broadening of the impact beyond project completion that can be associated with GEF interventions. https://www.gefio.org/sites/default/files/ieo/council-documents/files/c-55-me-inf-01.pdf