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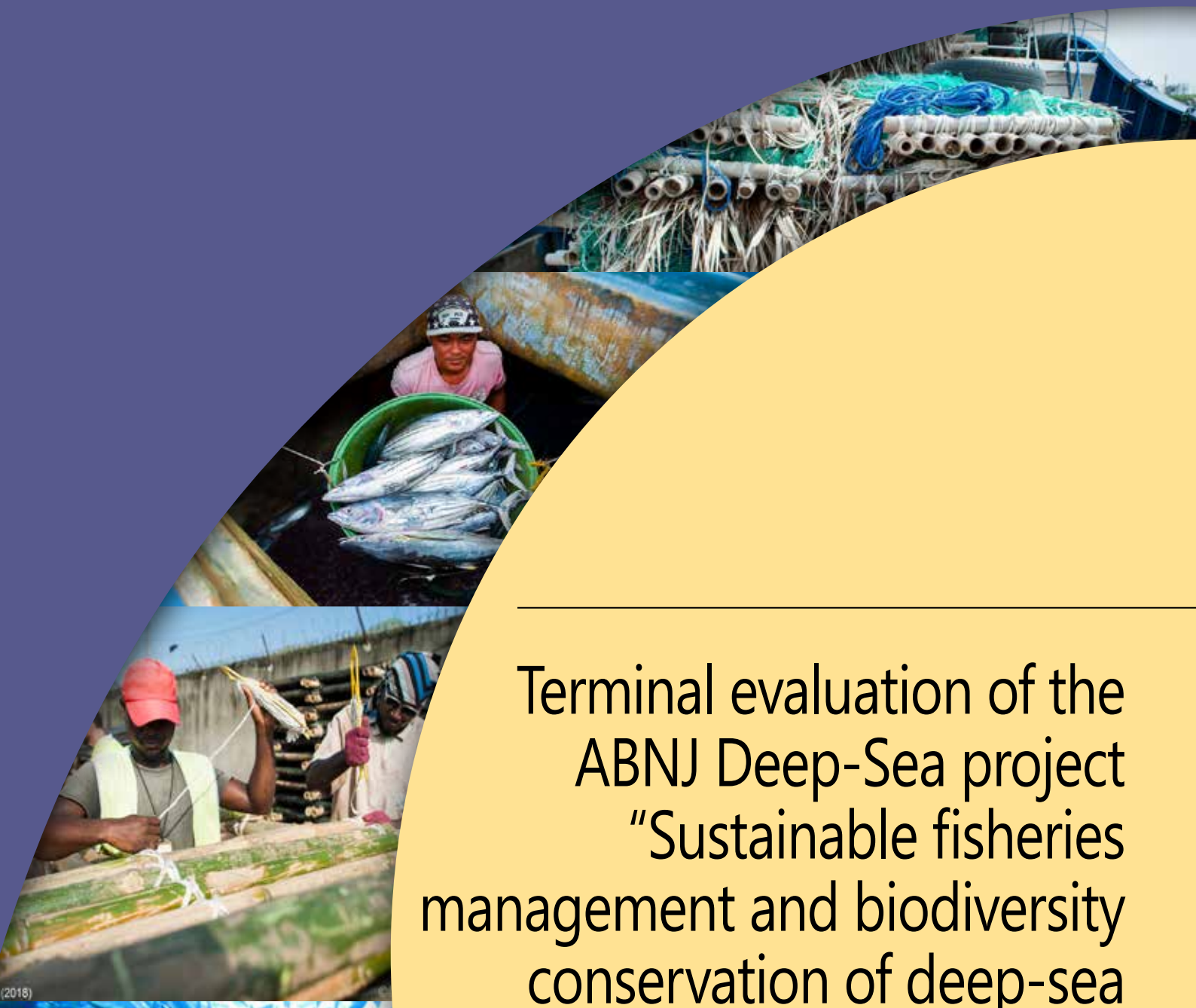

Terminal evaluation of the ABNJ Deep-Sea project "Sustainable fisheries management and biodiversity conservation of deep-sea living marine resources and ecosystems in the areas beyond national jurisdiction"

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Acronyms and abbreviations

ABNJ	Areas beyond national jurisdiction
BBNJ	Biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
EBSA	Ecologically or biologically significant area
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IUU	Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing
NEAFC	North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NPFC	North Pacific Fisheries Commission
RFMO	Regional fisheries management organization
RSP	Regional sea programme
SEAFO	South East Atlantic Fisheries Organization
SIOFA	Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement
SPRFMO	South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organization
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
WCMC	World Conservation Monitoring Center
VME	Vulnerable marine ecosystem

Executive summary

1. The Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ) Deep-Sea project (2014-2019) was implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) with a four-year implementation period. Besides the Global Environment Facility (GEF) funding amounting to USD 7.3 million, co-financing by various partners is estimated to be USD 79.6 million.

2. This terminal evaluation is a requirement of GEF. It is being conducted for both accountability and learning purposes of the implementing agencies (FAO, UNEP-WCMC), the project team, participating institutions, and national governments. The terminal evaluation will serve as an input to improve future project formulation and implementation.

3. The evaluation follows the latest GEF guidance on terminal evaluations (2019) in the selection of evaluation criteria, ratings and other key aspects. Given the nature of the intervention, the evaluation adopted a non-experimental design, i.e. focusing on the extent of change mainly for those affected by the intervention and not for a comparison group. Emphasis of analysis was on the transformative changes that have potential to engender the relevant longer term outcomes and impacts, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) targets.

Main findings

Relevance

4. The Deep-Sea project design and outcomes were entirely consistent with the GEF focal area strategies and international frameworks relating to ABNJ issues, as well as with FAO's global and regional priorities, and the international agreements and frameworks on the ABNJ. Most fisheries governance issues in the ABNJ have been resolved. New regional fisheries management organization (RFMO/As) have been established i) in the South East Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (SEAFO); ii) in the North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC); iii) in the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO); and iv) in the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA). All RFMO/As including the new ones have adopted and implemented management measures to regulate bottom fisheries. However, there remains scope for increasing their effectiveness in supporting their implementation.

Effectiveness

5. The Deep-Sea project was of great assistance to newly formed and in some cases long standing RFMO/As getting started on deep-sea fisheries issues. The Deep-Sea ABNJ project showed positive results in safeguarding of vulnerable marine ecosystem (VMEs), strengthening monitoring, control and surveillance to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, mitigating bycatch mortality trends, and building awareness of cross-sectoral aspects in effective governance of ABNJ. The major result areas of the project have been in institutional governance in the fisheries sector and reduction in adverse fishery sector impact on biodiversity. Through its cooperation with RFMOs, the project has probably contributed to minimize the negative impacts of by-catch.

6. The ABNJ Deep-Sea project made a major contribution to capacity building in the new RFMO/As and also in some regional sea programmes (RSPs). At present, there is a lack of a governance framework through which comprehensive, cross-sectoral area-based planning can be applied in ABNJ.

Efficiency

7. The project had a moderately satisfactory record of completion with challenges, including implementing agencies (FAO and UNEP-WCMC) internal financial and administrative issues. The problems related to the introduction of new financial and administrative systems are presumably mostly resolved by now, but there remains procurement policies and procedures that are impediments to the efficient implementation of projects in FAO.

Monitoring and evaluation

8. Monitoring and evaluation were too time consuming - there should be no need to report separately on different timescale to FAO and GEF. A single report should be sufficient.

Communications and knowledge management

9. Individual activities in the project provided some potentially very useful results, but these were not communicated in such a way as to provide a package with a higher potential for beneficial impact.

10. Communications and coordination have improved considerably after the mid-term review and with the recruitment of the new coordinator.

11. There were very limited interactions between the various projects in the programme, even between Deep-Sea and Tuna which were physically very close to one another and could have joined forces in several of their activities e.g. in monitoring, control and surveillance as well as in electronic monitoring systems and in several capacity building activities.

Co-financing

12. The basis for co-financing is not consistent among partners: some report their total expenditures on a topic even if only remotely related to the project, while others report only activities directly related to the project.

13. The expected co-financing materialized and contributed to the project's result.

Sustainability

14. The ABNJ Deep-Sea project has generated a mix of results, few of which are sustainable without further programme investments, and most would require continued funding for recurring costs and expansion of coverage before possibly becoming sustainable. Overall, project sustainability is Moderately Unlikely. The most sustainable results are those in institutional governance measures and adoption of standards and good practices mostly in habitat and VME protection.

15. The project catalyzed important transformational changes and practices in governance and operational aspects of fisheries and their impact on biodiversity. There is evidence that some of these are being mainstreamed by key institutional actors and irreversible and reflected in the early trends of positive impact of the project in terms of VME and habitat protection.

Factors of performance

16. This was a complex, multi-disciplinary, multi-year, multi-regional intervention with global and regional dimensions. The evaluation identified the following factors of performance that supported or debilitated delivery effectiveness:

    i. Enabling factors: domain leadership, comparative advantage and credibility of implementing agencies and executing partners; effective partnership management; and strong institutional commitment by fisheries sector institutions and private sector.

    ii. Debilitating factors: under-resourced project coordination and knowledge management; and cumbersome FAO operational procedures.

Conclusions

Conclusion 1. The project design was entirely consistent with GEF focal area strategies and international frameworks relating to ABNJ issues, although the emphasis was more on fisheries governance than cross-sectoral governance and biodiversity conservation of the ABNJ.

Conclusion 2. The project was relevant when approved and implemented, but the problems associated with deep-sea fisheries on the high seas are now considered of lesser concern than perceived at the time.

Conclusion 3. The project catalyzed important transformational changes and practices in governance and operational aspects of fisheries and their impact on biodiversity. There is encouraging evidence that these are being mainstreamed by the key institutional actors and irreversible and reflected in the early trends of positive impact starting with the quality and quantity of the information available.

Conclusion 4. Implementation was marked by several adjustments to adapt to unforeseen challenges and factors.

Conclusion 5. Sustainability - The ABNJ Deep-Sea project generated a mix of results, few of which are sustainable without continued funding for recurring costs and expansion of coverage.

Conclusion 6. GEF funding was instrumental to the achievement of several important project results in institutional governance.

Conclusion 7. Knowledge management - The project lacked a structured knowledge management mechanism for the effective harvesting and dissemination of the knowledge it produced. External communications focused on passive consumption but did not have segmented strategies for key stakeholder groups.

Recommendations

(Suggestions included in section 8.2)

Recommendation 1. The project document of the planned Phase 2 should recognize the progress/achievements (e.g. the protection of VMEs now mostly achieved) made in managing deep-sea fisheries in the ABNJ and build on existing mechanisms and instruments in cooperation with existing RFMO/As and other institutions to further improve the management of deep-sea fisheries on the high seas.

Recommendation 2. In a sustainable use perspective, Phase 2 could evaluate the usefulness of surveys to identify where fishing could safely be allowed without risking negative impacts on VMEs.

Most deep-sea fisheries, except in the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) area, are now inside exclusive economic zone (EEZ) – only about 6 tonnes were caught in the ABNJ in the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) area in 2018.

Recommendation 3. Phase 2 should give equal importance to fishery management and conservation. There is no fundamental disconnect between fishery management and conservation; both are very closely connected, conservation is not a separate activity from fishery management. This would imply conserving not only the target species but also associated species and the habitat.

Recommendation 4. It is recommended for Phase 2 to find ways to improve the synergy between similar activities with compatible objectives in different projects.

Recommendation 5. A future deep-sea project could greatly benefit from having a partner similar to International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF) or having ISSF expanding its activity to deep-sea fisheries.

Recommendation 6. In Phase 2, market analysis (e.g. as done for bluefin tuna) should be used to estimate the magnitude of IUU fishing and evaluate if further action is required.

Recommendation 7. The design of Phase 2 should involve RFMOs, RSPs and their member countries at an early stage. Involving countries from the start increases ownership and will greatly facilitate implementation. The design should also include a partnership strategy from the beginning to make it easier for smaller organizations, including small RFMO/As to fully participate. Thoughts should also be given at the design phase on the projects/programme that will be implemented to have efficient, smooth and seamless implementation so that all pieces of the puzzle fall in place.

Recommendation 8. The next phase should consider having a web-based reporting system where progress is reported and can be verified in real time. At the very least, project management should not have to submit two different (albeit slightly) reports to the implementing agencies.

GEF rating table (see Appendix 2 for the definition of ratings)

FAO - GEF rating scheme	Rating	Summary comments
1) Relevance		
Overall relevance of the project	S	The project was aligned to GEF objectives and international priorities.
2) Effectiveness		
Overall assessment of project results	MS	The deep-sea projects demonstrated overall effectiveness and potential for impact.
3) Efficiency, project implementation and execution		
Overall quality of project implementation and adaptive management (implementing agency)	MS	Implementing agencies contributed to the problems of the project, particularly with cumbersome recruiting and procurements procedure.
Quality of execution (executing agencies)	MS	All executing agencies delivered their outputs within reasonable limits.
Efficiency (incl. cost effectiveness and timeliness)	MS	Activities were completed in time with some adjustments. GEF grant utilization was around 72%.
4) Sustainability		
Overall sustainability	MS	Measures to protect VMEs have been adopted and implemented in all RFMO/As. This is likely to continue. Upscaling and expanding of other activities, particularly training, depends on political initiative and continued funding by national stakeholders, which were not the focus of the project.
5) Communication, co-financing, monitoring and evaluation, gender, progress to impact, factors affecting performance		
Communication and knowledge management	MU	Communications improved with the recruitment of the second coordinator. Knowledge management was not formally used by the project.
Co-financing	S	Co-financing materialized and contributed to project results.
Overall quality of stakeholder engagement	MS	The project managed partners effectively with limited cross-sectoral exchanges.
Monitoring and evaluation	MU	Project monitoring and evaluation was impractical with too many different periodic reports to FAO and GEF. Information was gathered in a systematic manner, using cumbersome methodologies.
Gender and environmental safeguards	S	Environmental concerns key in the design of the project. Project implementation consistent with equitable participation and benefits.
Progress to impact	S	The project has contributed to impacts, but it is not possible to quantify its contribution.

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the evaluation

1. The marine areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ) comprises 40 percent of the earth's surface, it covers 64 percent of the ocean's surface and 95 percent of its volume. Management of human activities in the ABNJ is complex due to various ecosystems within the ABNJ and the actual depth and distance from the coast. The 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development and the Conference of Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in 2010, encouraged the reduction of (human) pressures and the application of an ecosystem approach in meeting goals to achieve sustainable use of the ABNJ.

2. The Common Oceans ABNJ Program, one of the first programmes under Global Environment Facility (GEF) V, 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. As child project, the Deep-Sea project aimed to achieve transformational changes in the management of fisheries and sustainability of resources in the high seas. It had a wide scope of coverage including 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.

3. The ABNJ Deep-Sea project (2014-2019) was implemented globally covering all four major oceans of the world - Atlantic Ocean, Indian Ocean, Pacific Ocean and Southern Ocean. The project is implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) with a four-year implementation period. Besides the GEF funding amounting to USD 7.3 million, co-financing by various partners is estimated to be USD 79.6 million. The project has four components: i) improved application of policy and legal frameworks; ii) reduced adverse impacts on vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs) and ecologically or biologically significant areas (EBSAs); iii) improved planning and adaptive management; iv) development and testing of area-based planning.

4. The ABNJ Deep-Sea project commenced in September 2014. Originally, it was planned to end in August 2019, but got a no-cost extension to December 2019.

5. This terminal evaluation is a requirement of the GEF. It is being conducted for both accountability and learning purposes of the implementing agencies (FAO, UNEP-WCMC), the project team, participating institutions and the national governments. The terminal evaluation will serve as an input to improve future project formulation and implementation. Currently, FAO and its partners are preparing a follow-up programme.

1.2 Intended users

6. The primary audience and intended users of the evaluation are:

   i. FAO and UNEP-WCMC; in FAO: the Project Management Team and members of Project Task Forces, FAO divisions such as the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department (FI), the Climate and Environment Division (CBC) which houses the FAO-GEF Coordination Unit, FAO regional, subregional and national offices 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, national government counterparts and executing partners (foundations, ocean research institutes, advocacy groups and private sector especially fisheries industry) who will use the evaluation findings and conclusions for future planning.

7. The secondary intended users include national governments and organizations interested in supporting sustainable fisheries management and biodiversity conservation.

1.3 Scope and objectives of the evaluation

8. This evaluation of the ABNJ Deep-Sea project is being undertaken simultaneously with the Common Ocean ABNJ Programme Evaluation. It is an assessment of project results linked to GEF IW and biodiversity focal area outcomes as formulated in the project document.

1.4 Evaluation criteria and questions

9. The evaluation follows the latest GEF guidance on terminal evaluations (2019) in the selection of evaluation criteria, ratings and other key aspects. The list of evaluation questions is presented in the table below. A detailed evaluation matrix can be found in Appendix 2.

Table 1: Evaluation questions by area of analysis

Relevance	Were the project outcomes congruent with the GEF focal areas/operational programme strategies, FAO's global and regional priorities, and the international agreements and frameworks on the ABNJ?
Effectiveness: Achievement of project results	To what extent have the project 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 the project 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?
Sustainability	What is the likelihood that the 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 projects?
Communication and knowledge management	To what extent was knowledge management used by the projects?
Co-financing	To what extent did the expected co-financing materialize, and what are their contributions to project result?
Stakeholder engagement	Were other actors, such as civil society, indigenous population, private sector or other important stakeholders involved in the project design or implementation, and what was the effect on project results?
Monitoring and evaluation	(M&E design) Was the project 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 project implementation?
Gender and environmental and social safeguards	To what extent where environmental and social concerns taken into consideration in designing and implementing programme and projects? To what extent were gender considerations taken into account in designing and implementing the project? Was the project implemented in a manner that ensures gender equitable participation and benefits?
Progress to impact	To what extent may the progress towards long-term impact be attributed to the projects?

1.5 Methodology

10. Given the nature of the intervention, which aims at strengthening institutional mechanisms and knowledge for promotion and governance of sustainable use and biodiversity conservation across a broad spectrum of economic and scientific research interests in the ABNJ, and the global, regional and national tiers at which such governance is to be promoted, the evaluation adopted a **non-experimental** design, i.e. focusing on the extent of change mainly for those affected by the intervention and not for a comparison group. Given the thrust or the project on establishing and propagating good practices and enabling stakeholders with knowledge to support better governance, and the longer time horizon for manifestation of biodiversity impacts, the emphasis of analysis was on the transformative changes that have potential to engender the relevant longer term outcomes and impacts, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and CBD targets.

11. To reach its findings and conclusions, the evaluation used **three 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); and iii) direct observation of a selection of events.

12. **Document reviews.** The evaluation had access to a sizeable set of documents for the project as part of a single comprehensive depository (the ANBJ evaluation library) for the ABNJ project. 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 the documents consulted can be found in the Bibliography section.

13. **Key informant interviews.** Given that the target direct beneficiaries of the projects are public servants in relevant institutions connected to different parts of the ABNJ, a purposive sampling approach was used to select relevant informants for face-to-face interviews during the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) meeting and the International Symposium on Fisheries Sustainability; other interviews were done through Skype interviews and five interviewees answered in writing. Specific questions were selected for each interview. A total of 44 people were interviewed (Appendix 1).

14. **Direct observation.** The evaluation also used the opportunity to attend the 38th meeting of the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (London, 12-15 November 2019) and the International Symposium on Fisheries Sustainability (Rome, 18-21 November 2019) to witness deliberations first-hand and interview delegates (including project beneficiaries) at the sidelines of the events.

15. **Analysis.** Consistent 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 who participated directly in the project. 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.

1.6 Limitations

16. The evaluation was able to attend only one RMFO meeting (NEAFC, London, 12-15 November 2019), because of timing, and the International Symposium on Fisheries Sustainability (Rome, 18-21 November 2019).

1.7 Structure of the report

17. Following this introduction, Chapter 2 presents the background and context of the project; Chapter 3 presents the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and cross-cutting issues. Lesson learned are presented in Chapter 4, follower by conclusions and recommendations in Chapter 5.

2. Background and context of the project

Figure 1: Basic project information

GEF Project ID Number:	4660
Recipient country:	Global
Implementing Agency:	FAO and UNEP
Executing Agency:	FAO and UNEP – WCMC
GEF Focal Area:	International Waters and Biodiversity
GEF Strategy/operational program:	BD Objectives 1 and 2 and IW-Objective 4
PIF approved:	April 3 2012
Date of CEO endorsement:	10 June 2014
Date of PPRC endorsement:	12 September 2014
Date of project start:	1 September 2014
Initial date of project completion (original NTE):	31 August 2019
Revised project implementation end date:	31 December 2019
Date of Mid-Term Evaluation:	June 2018

18. There are two types of fisheries management arrangements for the high seas: i) the so-called tuna regional fisheries management organization (RFMOs) for highly migratory species included in Annex I of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea; and ii) the general fisheries management organizations for other species, including deep-sea demersal species and small pelagic species.

19. Governance of Deep-Sea fisheries on the High Seas was seen as a major issue in the mid-2000s when several major areas were without international fishery management agreement and there were concerns that fishing effort would increase. In 2006 and in 2009, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted key resolutions on deep-sea fisheries in the high seas. In the second half of the 2000s, FAO held a number of meetings which led to the adoption of the International Guidelines for the Management of Deep-sea Fisheries in the High Seas (FAO, 2009).

20. In 2010, FAO started developing the deep-sea project as a mechanism to support the implementation of the FAO International Guidelines for Deep-sea Fisheries in the High Seas. Several potential partners were approached to fund different elements of the project. The original plan was to involve the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), CBD, International Seabed Authority (ISA) but, apparently, at the time, CBD and ISA were not eligible to receive GEF funds in the partnership that was being considered although CBD does appear as a partner in the project progress reports (PPRs) and project implementation reports (PIRs). Also, the CBD is listed in the PPRs as the delivering agency for some project activities. GEF ended up being the major source of funds, the tuna (Sustainable Management of Tuna Fisheries and Biodiversity Conservation in the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction, GCP/GLO/365/GFF) and capacity projects (Strengthening Global Capacity to Effectively Manage Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction, GCP/GLO/367/GFF) were added to the deep-sea project to create the Common Oceans Program. GEF also brought in UNEP which had been working separately with the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) on a project to minimize marine mammal, reptile and seabird mortality in longline fisheries.

21. New regional fisheries management organizations have since been created. While there remains areas of the high seas with no RFMO/A i) in the central basin of the Arctic; ii) in the Bering Sea; iii) in the Sea of Okhotsk; iv) in the Pacific Ocean between the Convention

areas of the North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC) and the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO); and v) in the southwest Atlantic; these are not considered problematic at present from a fishery management point of view, including the effect of fisheries on biodiversity (FAO 2019b).

22. Deep-sea fishing expanded considerably between the late 1950s and about 1980 due to governments incentives to explore deep-sea areas. Large aggregations of deep-sea species were detected, initially leading to large catches. These fisheries were exploiting biomass that had been accumulating over decades. Large unregulated catches of what turned out to be low productivity deep-sea species resulted in several fisheries collapsing. Deep-sea fishing has generally been declining since 2000 with no extension towards greater depth since about 1990 (FAO 2019b) and there is currently limited activity in the ABNJ, possibly with the exception of the Western Atlantic.

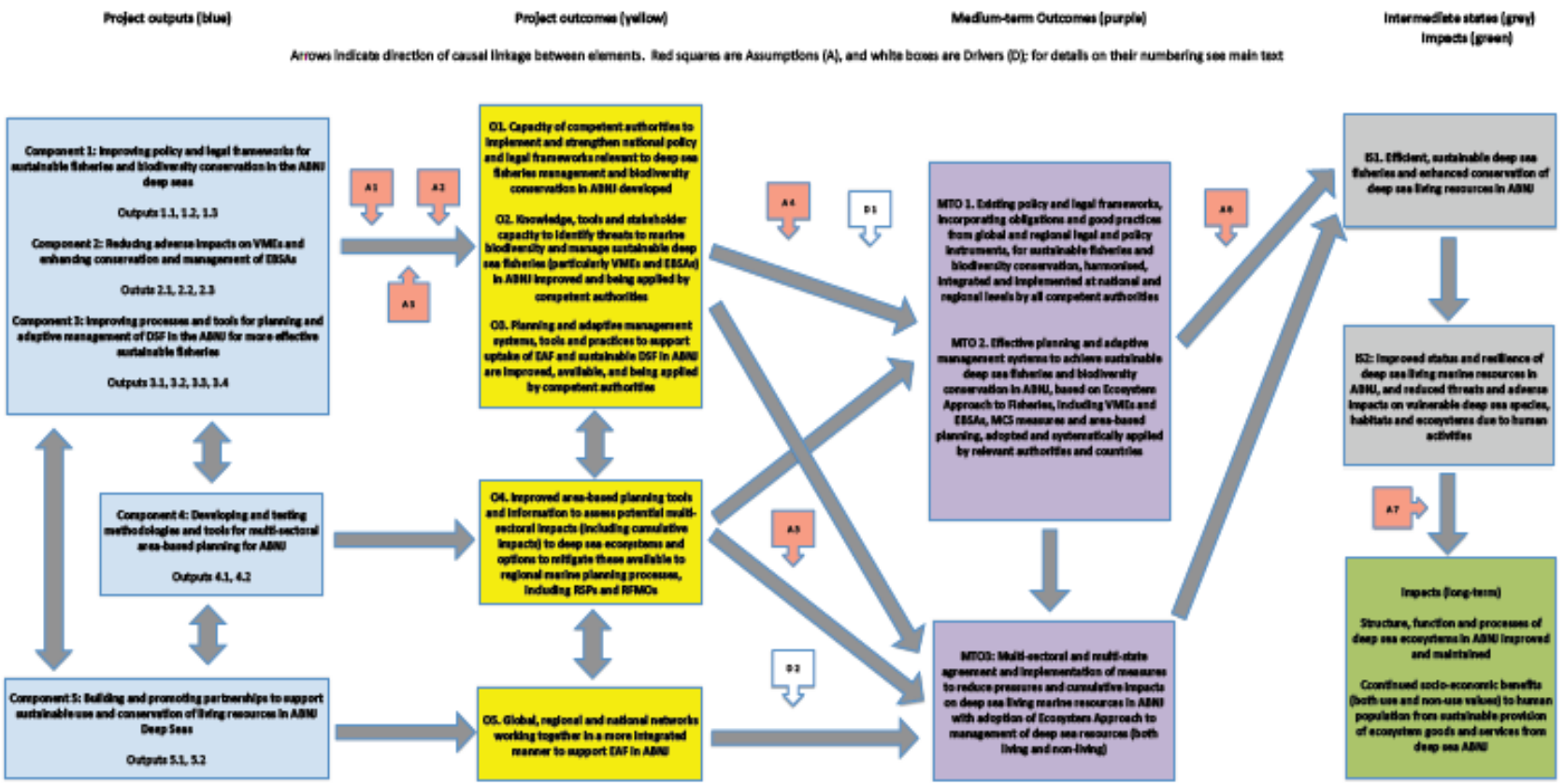
23. Except for illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, legitimate deep-sea fishing on the high seas is a highly sophisticated activity involving high-tech expensive technologies and experienced skippers: the evaluation was told that 90 percent of the success of deep-sea fishing depends on the knowledge and skills of the skipper. Those involved in fishing have no interest in loosing or damaging their expensive equipment. There is therefore a strong incentive to avoid VMEs, and bottom features that are likely to damage the equipment.

24. Except in the Western Atlantic, deep-sea fishing catches on the high seas are very small compared to the total catches in the regulatory areas of most RFMOs. By far, the largest portion of high seas RFMOs catches are small pelagic such as herring, mackerel, pilchard, sardine, horse mackerel, etc.

2.1 Theory of change

25. The project as approved in 2014 did not include a theory of change. The report of the second Project Steering Committee (February 2017) states that the "*The ABNJ Deep-Seas Project links and contributes to the theory of change developed for the ABNJ Programme (which comprises 4 projects)"*, the Theory of Change is mentioned as a bullet point in the planned Monitoring and Evaluation section, and the project participated in a meeting on the theory of change in April 2017. However, while a description of the theory of change for the Deep-Sea project was not formulated in the original proposal, the mid-term review (November 2017–March 2018) reconstructed one: *"The Project did not develop a specific Theory of Change (ToC) during its design phase (it was not required for FAO-GEF projects at the time), but the Project's causal strategy is largely set out in its results framework (…) and associated sections of the Project Document. According to these, the Project's approach to delivering 'efficient and sustainable DSF and enhanced conservation of deep-sea living resources' is through the systematic application of an ecosystem approach*". The reconstructed theory of change from Annex 5 of the mid-term review is presented below.

Figure 2: Reconstructed theory of change for the ABNJ Deep-Sea project



Source: Project team

26. The overall aim of the project was to achieve efficient and sustainable use of deep-sea living resources and improve biodiversity conservation in ABNJ through the systematic application of an ecosystem approach focussing on four areas corresponding to the four components of the project:

Component 1. Improved implementation of existing policy and legal frameworks.

Component 2. Reduced adverse impacts on vulnerable marine ecosystems and enhanced conservation and management of components of ecologically or biologically significant areas (EBSAs).

Component 3. Improved planning and adaptive management for deep-sea fisheries in ABNJ.

Component 4. Development and testing of methods for area-based planning.

3. Findings

3.1 Relevance

The evaluation rates project relevance as Satisfactory.

Finding 1. The Deep-Sea project design and outcomes were entirely consistent with the GEF focal area strategies and international frameworks relating to ABNJ issues as well as with FAO's global and regional priorities, and the international agreements and frameworks on the ABNJ.

27. The project is consistent with GEF Strategic Goals 1 (conservation, sustainable use and management) and Goal 4 (national and regional capacities and enabling conditions) in respect of areas beyond national jurisdiction, and more specifically to Outcomes 4.1 and 4.2 of the International Waters Focal Area, and Outcomes 1.1, 2.1 and 2.2 under the Biodiversity Focal Area.

28. The four components of the project were intended to address directly some aspects of the two United Nations General Assembly resolutions mentioned earlier.

29. Several respondents from industry and governments indicated they got involved in the ABNJ Deep-Sea project because they wanted to help implement the UNGA Assembly resolutions related to deep-sea fisheries.

30. The word "bycatch" appeared 24 times in the project document, but only once in the project progress report for the second semester of 2018, mentioning that the development of indicators for bycatch under Output 3.1.3 had been dropped after the mid-term review.

Finding 2. In the mid to late 2000s, deep-sea fisheries on the high seas were perceived in the United Nations system as a major problem and this was reflected in the project document. In retrospect, the project document for the ABNJ Deep-Sea project is now seen by interviewees from both the fishing and environmental non-governmental organization (NGO) sectors to have overstated the problems associated with deep-sea fisheries on the high seas.

31. This led to initial hesitancy of RFMO/As getting involved in the project: members of RMFOs reading the project leaflets could have easily had the impression that the project designers did not know that RFMO/As existed and were active. This initially created unnecessary tension, but once the project got running, such perception disappeared.

32. The ABNJ Deep-Sea project has shown that the impact of deep-sea fisheries on biodiversity is not as significant as had been thought at the onset of the project. Without this project, this insight would not have been gained.

Finding 3. Currently, deep-sea fisheries are very limited in the areas they operate, in the fishing effort they deploy, in the footprint where trawls impact the bottom and in how much fish they catch.

33. Based on the Worldwide review of bottom fisheries in the high-seas in 2016 (FAO in press), global high seas catch from bottom fisheries are similar to those in the previous review (225 000 to 250 000t) which represents about 0.3 percent of the total global marine catch in 2016. Generally, for the high-sea, small and large pelagic fisheries provide a substantially

higher catch than the demersal species. The status of 49 demersal stocks (not only in the high seas) was evaluated in 2014-2016: 6 percent were overfished or at low abundance but status was unknown for 42 percent.

34. Except in the Western Atlantic, deep-sea fishing in the high seas involves only a very small number of fishing vessels and fishing companies.

35. In addition, substantial portions of the Convention Areas of RFMO/As are closed to bottom trawl fisheries to protect VMEs. RFMO/As strictly apply a precautionary approach, i.e. previously unfished areas are considered vulnerable and fishing would only be allowed under strict exploratory fishing protocol to minimize the impact on habitat, protect VMEs and prevent rapid stock depletion. This means that only a small portion of the areas is open to bottom fishing.

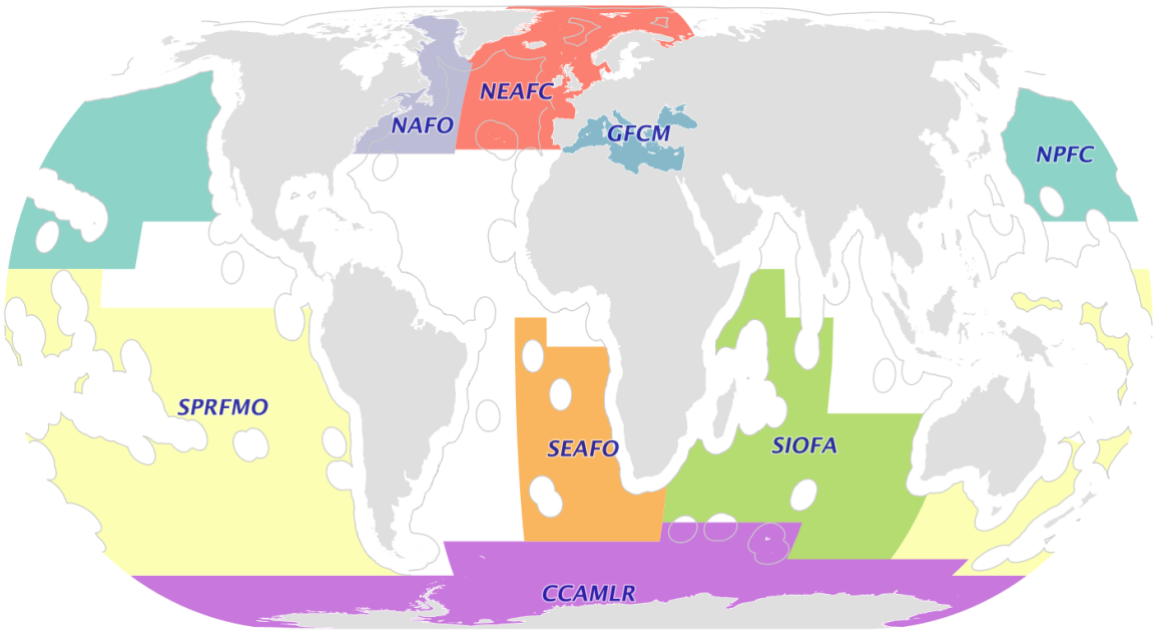
36. According to Kroodsma *et al.* (2019), the main fleets involved in high seas fishing are China and Taiwan Province of China, Japan, Republic of Korea and Spain. Those countries generally also have agreements to fish in the exclusive economic zones (EEZs) of foreign nations. These authors also provide more detailed review by FAO fishing areas.

37. Although activity in deep-sea fisheries may be limited, if they cause a negative environmental impact, the systems are expected to be slow to recover. Measures adopted recently by RFMO/As are intended to eliminate or greatly minimize the risk that those negative impacts will occur.

Finding 4. Most fisheries governance issues in the ABNJ have been resolved. New RFMO/As have been established i) in the South East Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (SEAFO); ii) in the North Pacific Fisheries Commission;(NPFC), iii) in the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organization (SPRFMO); and iv) in the Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA). All RFMO/As including the new ones have adopted and implemented management measures to regulate bottom fisheries. However, there remains scope for increasing their effectiveness in supporting their implementation.

38. All high seas regions with significant bottom fisheries are now managed by regional management organizations (RFMO/As) through their member parties, except for the southwest Atlantic where the responsibility remains directly with the flag states of those vessels fishing in the international waters. Most of the catches in deep-sea fisheries are from the more established RFMOs in the northwest Atlantic, northeast Atlantic, Mediterranean and Southern Ocean, although a very small proportion for some of them is from the areas beyond national jurisdiction.

Figure 3: Map of the regional fisheries management organizations or arrangements



Source: FAO. 2020. Fisheries and Aquaculture Department. Deep-sea regional fishery bodies.. Corresponds to the United Nations World Map, February 2020

39. As indicated in Open Oceans and UNEP-WCMC (2019) "*The expansion of existing uses and emergence of new ones – including offshore energy, ocean farming and ocean mining – will alter human impact on the ocean. Understanding the consequences of existing and novel activities in new locations requires knowledge of existing vulnerabilities of the relevant regions.*"

40. Although governance mechanisms are in place, climate change and changes in the distribution of species are likely to create problems because new areas may become available to fishing or species may move into new areas and leave others. There would generally be limited knowledge of VMEs in new areas that become available, but it can be expected that stocks will also move from one country to another (e.g. Alaska pollock moving from United States of America to Russian waters). This will pose a serious challenge to management organizations.

41. The project outcomes were congruent with the GEF focal areas/operational programme strategies, FAO's global and regional priorities, and the international agreements and frameworks on the ABNJ.

3.2 Effectiveness

Outcome 1.1. Improved implementation of existing policy and legal frameworks, incorporating obligations and good practices from global and regional legal and policy instruments for sustainable fisheries and biodiversity conservation, are tested and disseminated to all competent authorities.

Finding 5. The Deep-Sea project was of great assistance to newly formed and in some cases long standing RFMO/As getting started on deep-sea fisheries issues.

The evaluation finds that effectiveness for Outcome 1.1 is Satisfactory.

42. The project assisted in running the cost of working groups and training workshops, paid for the venue and funded participation of international experts who made great contribution to the meetings. The working groups could not have taken place without support from the ABNJ Deep-Sea project because of the financial constraints of the small RFMO/As.

43. The project published i) a review of catch documentation schemes; ii) a review and analysis of legal instruments; and iii) a step-wise implementation guide of the legal instruments.

Finding 6. The Deep-Sea ABNJ project showed positive results in safeguarding VMEs, strengthening monitoring, control and surveillance to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, mitigating bycatch mortality trends, and building awareness of cross-sectoral aspects in effective governance of ABNJ. The major result areas of the project have been in institutional governance in the fisheries sector and reduction in adverse fishery sector impact on biodiversity. The project, through its cooperation with RFMOs has probably contributed to minimize the negative impacts of by-catch.

44. Tools and protocols have been made available to deep-sea fisheries for the identification and mitigation of potential threats to biodiversity, in the two pilot regions.

45. Several interviewees mentioned that three very useful documents were produced on i) effect of climate change; ii) VME protection; and iii) economic value of ecosystem services. The VME database is also considered very useful.

46. Because there is no RFMO/A in the South West Atlantic, there was limited scope for the project to contribute to fishery management in that area. However, individual countries, notably Spain, have contributed to the protection of VMEs. Following the UNGA Resolutions on sustainable fisheries and the FAO Deepwater Guidelines, Spain initiated a series of research surveys in 2007 (ATLANTIS Project) to identify VMEs in the international waters of South West Atlantic mapping seafloor and VME in a 59 105 km^2 area. Spain closed nine areas to bottom fishing in 2011 for the protection of existing VMEs.

47. The project helped member countries of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) see the need for an increased understanding of deep-sea fisheries in the Mediterranean. Boundaries of exclusive economic zones are still not settled in the Mediterranean and GFCM collects data on a geographical sub-area basis that does not discriminate where catches are made by depth. By putting the focus on deep-sea fisheries, the project increased GFCM awareness of the main challenges it faces with the deep-sea fisheries it manages, and the main instruments it has to comply with. GFCM has adopted two recommendations related to deep-sea fisheries and its Scientific Advisory Committee

on Fisheries has adopted protocols to report encounters with VMEs with the objective of establishing protected areas and evaluating the footprint of deep-sea fisheries in the Mediterranean. In 2019, GFCM adopted a resolution to protect VMEs and extended measures for the management of deep-sea fisheries.

48. The global Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries baseline study which reviews East Atlantic Fisheries implementation by eight RFMOs has been completed and awaits publication. RFMO/As may have difficulty in agreeing quantified social and economic objectives for the implementation of an EAF as the social and economic status of their member countries can differ markedly.

49. Most RFMO/As initiated work on deep-sea fisheries before the project started, except, NPFC, SIOFA and SPRFMO who were not yet fully operational and whose agreement and convention came into force in 2012. The ABNJ project nevertheless made significant contribution to a better management of fisheries and sustainability in national, regional and international governance by helping move forward on the issue of deep-sea fisheries and their impact on vulnerable marine ecosystems. This provided incentive and help to each relevant RFMO/As and their Members to improve consistency with the FAO International Guidelines for the Management of Deep-sea Fisheries in the High Seas.

50. The activities of the tuna project seem to have been less limited by the GEF-eligible criterion, possibly because of their close partnership with the International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF) and greater involvement of coastal states in tuna fisheries.

51. A future deep-sea project could greatly benefit from having a partner similar to ISSF or having ISSF expanding its activity to deep-sea fisheries.

Outcome 1.2. Global and regional networks are strengthened and/or expanded.

Finding 7. The project contributed to the training of public servants in government and/or regional institutions/industry actors to provide them with knowledge and tools to implement transformational changes.

The evaluation finds that effectiveness for Outcome 1.2 is Moderately Satisfactory

52. The project trained six national organizations (Comoros, Cook Islands, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles and Thailand) and two regional organizations (SIOFA and SEAFO) in implementing international policy and legal instruments relevant to deep-sea fisheries and biodiversity conservation.

53. The Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plan Secretariats Network, a long-standing network of UNEP, was strengthened through four area-based planning meetings.

54. Collaboration between established RFMOs, particularly NEAFC and Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO), and new RFMOs was supported by the project and strengthened global and regional networks, but more needs to be done to improve coordination and cooperation between RFMOs, similar to what tuna RFMOs have done with their own network (Bell *et al.,* 2019).

Outcome 2.1. Improved application of management tools for mitigation of threats to sustainable Deep-Sea Fisheries and biodiversity is demonstrated.

Finding 8. The project served as a catalyst for stakeholders to recognize the importance of biodiversity conservation, the protection of VMEs and EBSAs, including at national and regional level, not only in the ABNJ.

The evaluation finds that effectiveness for Outcome 2.1 is Satisfactory.

55. Considerable progress has been made in protecting vulnerable marine ecosystems. The project contributed to this progress, particularly with the new RFMO/As by sharing knowledge and experience from other areas and providing regional overviews. Most RFMO/As initiated work on deep-sea fisheries before the project started, except SIOFA, NPFC and SPRFMO which were not yet fully operational and whose agreement and convention came into force in 2012. The ABNJ Deep-Sea project nevertheless made significant contribution to a better management of fisheries and sustainability in national, regional and international governance by helping move forward on the issue of deep-sea fisheries and their impact on vulnerable marine ecosystems. The project provided incentive and help to each relevant RFMO/A and their Members to improve consistency with the FAO International Guidelines for the Management of Deep-sea Fisheries in the High Seas.

56. The participation of external scientists, funded by the Deep-Sea project, in the North Pacific Fisheries Commission was key in unlocking a stalemate in the process of adoption of measures to protect VMEs.

57. The project was of considerable help dealing with issues that are important to RFMOs but are unlikely to be usefully discussed/resolved at regular meetings of the RFMOs where the agendas are already full with regular items. On specific issues, such as Rights Based Fisheries Management or Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems, the project organized workshops with a good balance of points of view which allowed for in-depth discussion in a neutral and depoliticized forum. Without the pressure of having to agree on management decisions with immediate socio-economic effects, minds could open up and be receptive to ideas that were hitherto seen as not even up for discussion.

Outcome 2.2. The capacity of stakeholders is developed to use improved management tools for mitigation of threats to sustainable Deep-Sea Fisheries and biodiversity.

Finding 9. The ABNJ Deep-Sea project made a major contribution to capacity building in the new RFMO/As and also in some regional sea programmes (RSPs).

The evaluation finds that effectiveness for Outcome 2.2 is Satisfactory.

58. The Deep-Sea project helped provide approximately 26 capacity building trainings. Training on chairing meetings was also planned, but could not be organized because nobody from GEF-eligible countries expressed interest and potential trainees were only from non-GEF eligible countries.

59. On the ground, training for rapporteurs was provided through lending of an experienced rapporteur from another RFMO to participate in one annual meeting.

60. Capacity in chairing and being rapporteur is crucial in the current functioning of RFMO/As, but it is particularly challenging for new RFMOs where human resources are limited and there is little or no history of working in chaired groups. There may also be a cultural aspect preventing people to want to become chair. In addition, chairing a subsidiary body of an RFMO/As is not a small job that requires attention only during the actual meeting of the body, it means being available throughout the year.

61. Six regional VME training workshops have been convened (in the Western Central Atlantic, the Mediterranean, Eastern Central Atlantic, Southern Indian Ocean, and two in the North Pacific) and EBSA training has been provided at four regional workshops (North East Indian Ocean, North West Indian Ocean, Seas of South East Asia, Black Sea, Baltic Sea and the Caspian Sea). The countries that participated in the workshops have been trained to apply improved management tools for mitigation of threats to sustainable deep-sea fisheries and biodiversity in national processes.

Outcome 3. Planning and management processes for achieving sustainable Deep-Sea Fisheries and biodiversity conservation are improved, tested and disseminated to all competent authorities.

The evaluation finds that effectiveness for Outcome 3 is Moderately Unsatisfactory.

62. Six countries (Angola, Comoros, Cook Islands Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, and Thailand) and two regional organizations (SIOFA and SEAFO) have received training on the implementation of monitoring, control and surveillancerequirements.

Outcome 4.1. Efficient area-based planning tools and good practices based on ecosystem-based management practices are made available to competent authorities.

The evaluation finds that effectiveness for Outcome 4.1 is Satisfactory.

63. The production of a review of the legal and institutional instruments for ABNJ and the identification of data sources for management in the ABNJ in direct interaction with the regional seas was very helpful in preparing at least some RSPs for the biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ) discussions in New York. Some of the training material on the principles to be considered in Marine Spatial Planning in the ABNJ was very practically oriented on how negotiations could be handled. FAO, UNEP and the project in particular provided a neutral environment on how to approach the BBNJ discussions. The institutional review document was also aimed at helping Regional Seas Programmes to engage in ABNJ discussions beyond those relating to BBNJ.

64. The project helped members of Regional Sea Programmes understand the connectivity between the exclusive economic zones and the High Seas. This was instrumental in helping members of at least two RSPs understand the desirability of the RSP getting involved in the ABNJ.

65. Marine Spatial Planning is an obvious tool for areas where several potentially competing sectors are active. VMEs designated by RFMO/As apply only to fisheries and are therefore not protected from cable laying or mining operations (Bell *et. al.*, 2019). In the deep-sea project, Component 4 interacted primarily with regional sea programmes that do not have a mandate for high seas.

66. The project made efforts to engage with RFMO/As in the pilot regions during dedicated ABNJ workshops with key stakeholders in each region. A document exploring and highlighting key opportunities for cross-sectoral engagement and area-based planning in ABNJ was also produced to highlight the role and relevance of RFMO/As in ABNJ management. This document was produced with input from the RFMO/As.

Finding 10. The project was helpful in reconciling the views of RSPs/NGOs and RFMO/As on the usefulness of area0based management measures. All interested parties now better understand the tools available for spatio-temporal fishery management measures: marine protected areas are only one tool among many in the fisheries management toolbox.

67. Capacity needs assessments have been undertaken at the start and at the end of the project in the Western Indian Ocean and the South East Pacific, to determine the capacity of each pilot region to undertake area-based planning as a network in ABNJ.

68. Eight reviews of area-based planning tools and good practices intended to inform area-based planning activities in the South East Pacific Ocean and Western Indian Ocean areas have advanced well and are available in multiple languages. These have been disseminated widely, including through the Common Oceans website, promotional materials at regional and international events, to reach as wide a range of audiences as possible.

69. Several publications on marine spatial planning have been produced. Various processes under different governance scenarios have been developed but they have not been tested nor disseminated, possibly because of compressed delivery of the project due to delays in recruitment of coordinators.

70. Considerable information material has been produced and training provided through webinars. Material has been disseminated directly to competent authorities via the regional organizations. Additionally, material was made available through side events at BBNJ, and through direct communication with governments attending BBNJ. Materials were also distributed to relevant NGOs and intergovernmental organizations undertaking related ABNJ work, including the IKI STRONG High Seas Project, Pew Charitable Trust, the High Seas Alliance and GOBI.

Outcome 4.2. Area-based planning in ABNJ is incorporated into the regional marine planning processes in selected regions through partnerships between competent authorities.

Finding 11. At present, there is a lack of a governance framework through which comprehensive, cross-sectoral area-based planning can be applied in ABNJ.

The evaluation finds that effectiveness for Outcome 4.2 is Moderately Satisfactory.

71. Negotiations relating to BBNJ are ongoing and may shape the way in which area-based planning can occur in ABNJ in future. As such, a series of area-based planning workshops were held in the two pilot regions, in which participants were asked to test the application of a marine spatial planning framework for ABNJ. The aim was to encourage regional stakeholders to consider what marine spatial planning could look like in ABNJ in the future under different governance frameworks that may arise under a new legally binding agreement for marine BBNJ.

72. The project objectives have been satisfactorily achieved for five of the seven outcomes, moderately satisfactory for one and moderately unsatisfactory for one. Unintended results include two regional workshops hosted in collaboration with the IKI-Funded Strengthening Regional Ocean Governance (STRONG) High Seas Project. These joint workshops have provided opportunity for synergies between the two projects to be realized by regional stakeholders. Side events throughout the BBNJ process have provided opportunities to share project results and outputs with the wider global policy community. These events have allowed the ABNJ Deep-Sea project to support Member Countries of the pilot regions to engage with the BBNJ discussions and negotiations. It is not possible to quantify to what extent the attainment of results can be attributed to the GEF-funded component.

3.3 Efficiency

The evaluation finds that efficiency was Moderately Satisfactory.

Finding 12. The project had a moderately satisfactory record of completion with challenges, including implementing agencies (FAO and UNEP-WCMC) internal financial and administrative issues. The problems related to the introduction of new financial and administrative systems are presumably mostly resolved by now, but there remains procurement policies and procedures that are impediments to the efficient implementation of projects in FAO.

73. The midterm review described vividly all the administrative hurdles the project had to go through both in FAO and in UNEP-WCMC. New administrative and financial systems were adopted in both FAO and UNEP-WCMC at about the time when the project started. Combined with very limited administrative and financial support for the project, this slowed the project considerably: contracts could not be issued or had severe restrictions, e.g. contractors could not be sent in the field.

74. Industry and small NGOs interviewees refrained from getting involved in the project because of the red tape and transaction costs. Their estimate was that engaging fully with the project would require almost the equivalent of one person per year. Large NGOs or academia from large institutions can deal with such administrative burden, but most industry organizations and small NGOs can't. At least one partner (Sealord Group) could not deliver their part of the project because of administrative hurdles.

75. Deep-sea stocks are less important commercially compared to the big pelagic stocks (e.g. mackerel and tuna). This implies that the administrative barrier to cooperation is proportionally more significant and the benefit of engagement may be small. This argues for more integration with the tuna project so a fish supplier can see synergies in its engagement on sustainability for both its tuna and non-tuna fish interests.

76. Increased cooperation between RSP and RFMO/As including tuna RFMOs would increase efficiency (Bell *et al.,* 2019).

Finding 13. FAO's corporate administrative environment delayed issue of procurement contracts, which led to delays in recruitment of key personnel. Improvements to FAO's modalities such as Operational Partners Implementation Modality (OPIM) to implement GEF programmes came into place when the project was already under implementation.

77. There is a perception that FAO staff associated with the project are involved in too many programmes/projects and are not able to devote sufficient attention to individual projects. Institutional arrangements at FAO (e.g. project task force) is not always helpful with possibly too many people involved: the project coordinator feels responsible, but does not have control, not all parties are available at the same time. There appears to be serious institutional problems at FAO.

78. It is not clear what caused the long delay recruiting the first project coordinator or in replacing him despite management being notified well in advance. Funding was there, but for some reason, the process started late. If the FAO procurement policies and procedures, including recruitment, are not modified to increase effectiveness and efficiency, there may be a need to seek a different executing agency for any future project.

79. There is ongoing work on streamlining procurement and recruitment procedures in FAO,[1] but it is too early to evaluate their effectiveness.

80. Although the project was designed and its implementation began before the BBNJ process started, the project had sufficient flexibility to allow UNEP-WCMC to be involved and make substantive contributions to the BBNJ process.

81. While it is not normally recommended to have the same agency being both the implementing and the executing agency, because FAO was both for the deep-sea project, the project was able to continue progressing, albeit at a considerably slower pace, during the periods without a project coordinator. These long periods were due to extremely slow administrative procedures within FAO and had negative impacts on the delivery of the project.

82. Several interviewees noted that FAO can play the role of the honest broker, creating partnerships and synergies between stakeholders involved in deep-sea fisheries and in the ABNJ. But in some cases, particularly with new RFMO/As, FAO must first build the trust that it can be such a neutral honest broker.

83. FAO delivered satisfactorily on project identification, concept preparation, appraisal, preparation and approval, and moderately satisfactorily on start-up, oversight and supervision. Risks were identified but those related to implementation by the implementing agencies were not readily recognized. The execution agencies, particularly FAO, did not effectively discharge its role and responsibilities related to the management and administration of the project.

3.3.1 Monitoring and evaluation

Finding 14. Monitoring and evaluation were too time consuming - there should be no need to report separately on different timescale to FAO and to GEF. A single report should be sufficient.

84. The project website was operational relatively early in the life of the project and has been populated with project documents as they have become available. Project implementation reports, project progress reports and the mid-term review have generally been produced on time. Materials promoting results from project activities have been distributed at various major events including RFMO/As meetings and BBNJ activities.

85. The project and programme Steering Committee meetings seem to have been a forum for exchanging views rather than a system to regularly check what was going on, if progress was on target and if results were achieved and make adjustments as necessary. This did happen after the mid-term review.

86. Project monitoring and evaluation was impractical with too many different periodic reports to FAO and GEF. Information was gathered in a systematic manner, using cumbersome methodologies. The information from the M&E system was not appropriately used to make timely decisions and foster learning during programme and projects' implementation. The

[1] For example the Human Resources Management report at the 178th Session of the Finance Committee, Rome, 4-8 November 2019 (http://www.fao.org/3/na647en/na647en.pdf).

evaluation finds that monitoring was moderately unsatisfactory while the mid-term evaluation was satisfactory.

3.3.2 Communication and knowledge management

The evaluation finds that communication and knowledge management was Moderately Unsatisfactory.

Finding 15. Individual activities in the project provided some potentially very useful results, but these were not communicated in such a way as to provide a package with a higher potential for beneficial impact.

87. Coordination and communication are closely linked – insufficient communication within the various components of a given project or between projects of a given programme are an impediment to good coordination. It has to be recognized from the start that coordination and communication do not happen spontaneously, they have to be planned and sufficient resources (human, financial and technical) have to be devoted to these activities.

88. Communications also have to be focused on those that are most likely to benefit and help in achieving project objectives, i.e. RFMO/As and RSPs and their members. The general public is not necessarily the main target of communications. Issues such as rights-based management may not get interest from the general public, but can be very useful to RFMO/As members, looking at new context to manage fisheries and protect biodiversity. Writing reports and convening workshops is not sufficient, useful results have to be actively "sold" to those who could benefit. Several scientific initiatives suffer from such lack of communication/distribution. In particular, potentially useful results have to be actively communicated and explained to RFMO/As.

89. Communications should also be in the language of the potential users. This is particularly important for training and capacity building activities which should be provided in the language of the trainees preferably by a local consultant if one can be found. This is very important for the training to be useful.

90. Communications are important at every stage of the project, including during its development. Because few or no RFMO/As were involved in the development of the project, several months were wasted explaining and selling the project, which delayed implementation.

Finding 16. Communications and coordination have improved considerably after the mid-term review and with the recruitment of the new coordinator.

91. Up until the mid-term review, UNEP-WCMC had very limited engagement/exchanges with the other three components of the ABNJ Deep-Sea project. Some activities in the other components, such as the legal review of fishery management would have benefited Component 4. However, those involved in Component 4 did not know about the activity until the final report was published.

Finding 17. There were very limited interactions between the various projects in the programme, even between Deep-Sea and Tuna which were physically very close to one another and could have joined forces in several of their activities, e.g. in monitoring, control and surveillance as well as in electronic monitoring systems and in several capacity building activities.

92. There were some exchanges with the Convention on Biological Diversity (originally part of the Steering Committee for the project and attended a number of meetings), the International Seabed Authority (represented at a number of regional workshops under Component 4 of the project) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO - engaged as part of a side event hosted by UNEP, CBD and FAO at a the Intergovernmental Conference I held in September 2018); IMO and ISA were reviewers of a number of reports under Component 4, but formal exchanges with these organizations involved in the ABNJ were very limited.

93. Several United Nations agencies, universities, intergovernmental organizations and NGOs are involved in management of activities in the oceans and in biodiversity conservation. Improving interagency cooperation could greatly improve effectiveness and efficiency of the various initiatives.

94. Multisector cooperation is made difficult by institutions wanting to protect their area of competence (patch or turf protection) and with their own vocabulary: RFMOs VMEs vs regional seas EBSAs, FAO vs UNEP, etc. This prevented road testing the possible approaches to marine spatial planning developed in Component 4.

95. Bell, Guijarro-Garcia and Kenny (2019) note that *"RFMO cooperation (e.g., through ensuring that closed area networks are complementary between adjacent organizations) is apparently relatively limited, and likely worse between RFMOs and other competent authorities, such as the International Seabed Authority (Gjerde et al., 2018). Currently, there is no clear resolution in terms of which organization would take primacy in events such as the ISA wishing to license mining activities in areas of the Mid-Atlantic Ridge already designated as fisheries closed areas by NEAFC, and further covered by the mandate of the Oslo-Paris Convention"*.

96. Bell et al. (2019) also note that "*Younger RFMOs, and RFBs, are naturally those in most need of targeted support, but there is also much room for improvement in cooperation between competent organizations and the development of standardized approaches for assessing and mitigating adverse impacts upon vulnerable marine ecosystems*".

97. The evaluation was not able to identify a consensus on whether ABNJ fisheries issues should be dealt with a single project, including both tuna and generalist RFMO/As, but there was a clear consensus that more coordinated work would be considerably more effective for both sectors.

98. Knowledge management was not in the project design.

3.3.3 Co-financing

The evaluation rates co-financing as Satisfactory.

99. The project mobilized more than the targeted magnitude of co-financing, from a diversity of contributors. Regional governance bodies and private sector brought in important contributions. In-kind contributions represented a significant share of co-financing, but details of specific utilization in the programme remained unclear raising the prospect of inflated estimates.

100. The project did not identify and secure commitments towards recurrent expenditures (related to equipment and hard assets), which are an important form of co-financing with significant implications for sustainability.

101. The basis for co-financing is not consistent among partners: some report their total expenditures on a topic even if only remotely related to the project, while others report only activities directly related to the project.

102. The expected co-financing materialized and contributed to the project's result.

3.3.4 Factors affecting performance

The evaluation finds that performance was Moderately Unsatisfactory.

103. This was a complex, multi-disciplinary, multi-year, multi-regional intervention with global and regional dimensions. The evaluation identified the following factors of performance that supported or debilitated delivery effectiveness.

i. Enabling factors: domain leadership, comparative advantage and credibility of implementing agencies and executing partners; effective partnership management; and strong institutional commitment by fisheries sector institutions and private sector.

ii. Debilitating factors: under-resourced project coordination and knowledge management; and cumbersome FAO operational procedures.

Enabling factors

104. **Domain leadership, comparative advantage and credibility of implementing agencies and executing partners.** FAO's global mandate, domain leadership and institutional networks in the fisheries sector make it the best placed intergovernmental agency to implement the project with its strong fisheries governance orientation. UNEP-WCMC also brought similar comparative advantages. The implementing agencies have long experience of managing large global programmes and were able to effectively troubleshoot and steer their components of the project to satisfactory execution.

105. **Strong institutional commitment by fisheries sector institutions and private sector.** The fisheries sector institutions – RFMO/As as well as industry – made stellar co-finance contributions and engaged actively to implement transformational changes. Without the commitment and ownership of private sector industry and the RFMO/A secretariats, emerging impacts would have been less.

Debilitating factors

106. FAO operational procedures. FAO's institutional administrative environment has been a subject of concern to several partners and has featured in several thematic and corporate evaluations. Administrative procedures slowed execution of letters of agreement and issue of tenders for procurement of goods and services. Lack of corporate operational mechanisms and tools for transfer of resources to execution agencies also affected FAO's role as GEF implementing agency. FAO's OPIM facility became available when the project was already under implementation. These causes were beyond project influence.

3.4 Sustainability

Finding 18. The ABNJ Deep-Sea project has generated a mix of results, few of which are sustainable without further programme investments, and most would require continued funding for recurring costs and expansion of coverage before possibly becoming sustainable. Overall, project sustainability is Moderately Unlikely. The most sustainable results are those in institutional governance measures and adoption of standards and good practices mostly in habitat and VME protection.

107. For assessment of sustainability, the evaluation used the GEF interpretation:

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.

108. The three main contributors to sustainability assessed by the evaluation are:

i. legal instruments and regulatory frameworks representing global minimum standards on ABNJ governance;

ii. institutional capacities and mechanisms towards adoption of standards and good practices;

iii. resource mobilization for upscaling and expanding the initiatives introduced.

109. In terms of sustainability, the ABNJ project has been instrumental in sharing knowledge and information with the regional seas organizations and their member states, in particular the Western Indian Ocean and the South East Pacific. The results of this transcend beyond the project's lifespan as the regions now have established their own ABNJ/BBNJ working group (in the case of the South East Pacific) and a Nairobi Convention COP Decision that was adopted by Member States to consider issues in ABNJ as well as work towards UNEA Res 2/10. These are institutional decisions that extend beyond the life of the project.

Finding 19. The project catalysed important transformational changes and practices in governance and operational aspects of fisheries and their impact on biodiversity. There is evidence that some of these are being mainstreamed by the key institutional actors and irreversible and reflected in the early trends of positive impact of the project in terms of VME and habitat protection.

110. The major results of the deep-sea project, particularly the protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems, are largely sustainable, as protocols have been put in place to avoid any future impact from fishing. Also, the possibility of IUU fishing in the deep-sea has been practically eliminated in the developed regions.

111. While the illegal portion of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing is considered to no longer be an issue, the unregulated and unreported portions may still be a problem. Market analysis, as done for e.g. Atlantic bluefin tuna where catches reported to the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) were compared to what was sold in the various markets, could be used to estimate the magnitude of IUU fishing and evaluate if further action is required.

112. However, the impact on deep-sea ecosystems from other sectors (mining, renewable alternative energy, etc) remain unchanged by the project. The project could not produce changes in terms of improved multi-sector marine spatial planning, as there was little engagement with the actors representing these sectors because the project was not designed to engage with sectors other than fishing.

113. However, other sector engagement did occur at a small scale through the work on various reports outlining the tools that the various sectors use (tools review) and at a number of workshops, including joint workshops with the IKI STRONG High Seas project. This provided a basis for further engagement.

114. The UNEP-WCMC in Cambridge does fantastic work, but the absence of sustained secure funding means that several of the databases that were created over the years under various projects, cover a specific time period and are not necessarily updated, or expanded to cover all relevant geographic areas. These databases would be more useful if they were all regularly updated.

115. Some of the project results are likely to remain after the end of the project and others are unlikely. The key risk affecting the sustainability benefits brought about by the project are related to continued funding. The evaluation finds that sustainability is highly likely for some outcomes (VME protection) and moderately likely for others (e.g. training).

3.4.1 Progress to impact

The evaluation rates progress to impact as Satisfactory.

116. Compared to the situation before the Deep-Sea ABNJ project started, VMEs are now protected while monitoring, control and surveillance to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing is strengthened. Institutional governance in the fisheries sector has been improved and adverse fishery sector impact on biodiversity has been reduced. The ABNJ project made significant contribution to a better management of fisheries and sustainability in national, regional and international governance by helping move forward on the issue of deep-sea fisheries and their impact on vulnerable marine ecosystems. This provided incentive and help to each relevant RFMO/As and their Members to improve consistency with the FAO International Guidelines for the Management of Deep-Sea Fisheries in the High Seas. The project has undoubtedly contributed to impact, but it is one of the many contributors. It is not possible to quantify its contribution to overall impact.

3.5 Cross-cutting issues

3.5.1 Stakeholder engagement

The evaluation rates stakeholder engagement as Moderately Satisfactory.

Finding 20. For small RFMO/As and most stakeholders, including industry and NGOs, one of the main impediments preventing the project to fully meet all its objectives was that the transactions costs to get involved were too high.

117. For a newly created RFMO/A, the time requirement to engage with the project is only one activity among all the responsibilities and needs of a newly created RFMO/A. Ironically, small RFMO/As would greatly benefit from the help of the Deep-Sea project but because of the lack of human resource it was not possible to fully engage for several of them. This is also linked to the internal functioning of new RFMO/As where trust has to be established between members and the staff of the Secretariat. In some cases, even if the Deep-Sea project was offering to pay for attendance at a meeting or taking part in an activity, the RFMO staff still needed to get approval to attend. In some cases, permission would only be granted if the benefits to the RFMO were clear in the immediate/short-term. Greater presence of FAO staff at RFMO/A meetings would be helpful to highlight the potential benefits to the organization in being involved in various activities.

118. Distant Water Fishing by China has increased considerably since the mid-1980s (Chinadialogue Ocean, 2019), making it one the major distant water fleet (DWF) in the world. China also appears to be fighting IUU fishing. While China is unlikely to be fishing for deep-sea species, with most of its fishing effort exerted through agreements to fish in the exclusive economic zones of developing countries, it might be useful to seek a Chinese partner for a possible future phase.

119. Recent publications[2] argue that improved assessments and management can help achieve sustainability. A future phase could evaluate the possibility of funding stock assessments, training in stock assessments, and the development of simpler methods to make management decisions.

120. Few other actors, such as civil society, indigenous population, private sector or other important stakeholders were involved in the project design, but some (private sector) were involved in its implementation, which contributed to project results.

3.5.2 Gender and environmental safeguards

The evaluation finds that gender and environmental safeguards was Satisfactory.

121. A gender analysis was undertaken on the deep-sea fishing industry (2016) – and a further gender assessment was planned as part of Activity 2.1.1.2 (PPR July-December 2016). However, the reach of the analysis was limited given the poor response from survey participants.

122. Women often play a large role in the landing, processing and marketing of fish in developing countries. However, for deep-sea fisheries in the ABNJ, a preliminary survey of

[2] For example Catalyzing fisheries conservation investment (Fitzgerald, T.P et al., 2020) and Effective fisheries management instrumental in improving fish stock status (Hilborn et al., 2020).

the role of women in deep-sea fishing in the ABNJ confirmed that it is a male dominated industry (FAO, 2016a).

123. Environmental concerns were key consideration in the design and implementation of the project. Social concerns were not directly addressed, nor were gender considerations. The project was implemented in a manner that ensures gender equitable participation and benefits.

4. Lessons learned

Lesson learned 1. UNEP and CBD have ownership of SDG and Aichi targets; they should be more involved in the design and implementation of the next phase.

Lesson learned 2. Although governance mechanisms are in place, climate change and changes in the distribution of species are likely to create problems because new areas may become available to fishing, or species may move into new areas and leave others. There would generally be limited knowledge of VMEs in new areas that become available, but it can be expected that stocks will also move from one country to another (e.g. Alaska pollock moving from United States of America to Russian waters). This will pose a serious challenge to management organizations.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

Conclusion 1. The project design was entirely consistent with GEF focal area strategies and international frameworks relating to ABNJ issues, although emphasis was more on fisheries governance than cross-sectoral governance and biodiversity conservation of the ABNJ.

124. The ABNJ Deep-Sea project was consistent with outcomes under the International Waters and Biodiversity Focal areas. However, the emphasis of design and resource allocations was more on outcomes relating to sustainable fisheries sector governance - including biodiversity impacts linked to fisheries operation - and less on biodiversity conservation from a cross-sectoral perspective.

Conclusion 2. The project was relevant when approved and implemented, but the problems associated with deep-sea fisheries on the high seas are now considered of lesser concern than perceived at the time.

Conclusion 3. The project catalyzed important transformational changes and practices in governance and operational aspects of fisheries and their impact on biodiversity. There is encouraging evidence that these are being mainstreamed by the key institutional actors and irreversible and reflected in the early trends of positive impact starting with the quality and quantity of the information available.

125. The project made contributions towards safeguarding of VMEs, strengthening monitoring, control and surveillance to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, mitigating bycatch mortality trends, and building awareness of cross-sectoral aspects in effective governance of ABNJ. The major result areas have been in institutional governance in the fisheries sector and reduction in adverse fishery sector impact on biodiversity.

126. The project also enabled improved understanding of cross-sectoral issues in the context of international legally binding instruments for conservation and protection of biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

Conclusion 4. Implementation was marked by several adjustments to adapt to unforeseen challenges and factors.

127. Implementation witnessed several issues and developments associated with delivering a large, complex project over a five-year implementation and across multiple regions, with a diversity of partners. Adjustments were made to project components as necessary. Financial and administrative procedures at FAO hampered efficient implementation.

Conclusion 5. Sustainability - The ABNJ Deep-Sea project generated a mix of results, few of which are sustainable without continued funding for recurring costs and expansion of coverage.

128. In terms of sustainable results, the project has made strides towards supporting the intergovernmental bodies and their member states such as the regional sea programmes and the RFMOs to strengthen their institutional capacity in terms of adopting good standards and practices, but also in terms of assessing the capacity needs to engage in international policy processes. To this extent the South-East Pacific region via the Permanent Commission for the South Pacific (CPPS) have established a self-regulated BBNJ working group and in the Western Indian Ocean via the Nairobi Convention have adopted a COP decision to engage in discussions related to issues in ABNJ.

129. Several knowledge products and capacity development trainings were one-off and not expected to continue. However, upscaling and sustaining the results would require new forms of financing, especially investment mobilization to implement innovative technologies for monitoring and surveillance.

130. To ensure the results reach as wide a range as possible, the reports and knowledge products have been made available via various platforms including the Common Oceans, UNEP-WCMC website and via a dedicated website on the ABNJ Deep-Sea project. These links have been widely disseminated to project partners. The regional workshops have focused on knowledge exchange and capacity building. Workshops sought to bring together a range of stakeholders from governments, NGOs, intergovernmental organizations, sectoral organizations, private sector and academia.

Conclusion 6. GEF funding was instrumental to the achievement of several important project results in institutional/governance.

131. The institutional/governance additionality was the highest, given the common emphasis in all the projects on strengthening institutions of governance, especially RFMOs. The positive measures adopted by institutions to address sustainable management of fisheries and biodiversity conservation could not have been delivered without the ABNJ programme resources, which enabled a sustained four-year engagement with the governance institutions.

Conclusion 7. Knowledge management - The project lacked a structured knowledge management mechanism for the effective harvesting and dissemination of the knowledge it produced. External communications focused on passive consumption but did not have segmented strategies for key stakeholder groups.

132. Useful knowledge and experience have been generated; however, the project did not have mechanisms for systematically integrating the knowledge; both the content and the expert networks in projects remained fragmented.

133. The project's external communications did not have targeted actions for specific stakeholder groups, and focussed more on generic, passive outreach formats (newsletters, website and social media tools) although direct demonstration of outputs was undertaken in six regional workshops within the South-East Pacific and the Western Indian Ocean Pilot regions targeting specific stakeholders, including representatives from various ministries. Side events have also been organized at various BBNJ meetings.

5.2 Recommendations

Recommendation 1. The project document of the planned Phase 2 should recognize the progress/achievements (e.g. the protection of VMEs now mostly achieved) made in managing deep-sea fisheries in the ABNJ and build on existing mechanisms and instruments in cooperation with existing RFMO/As and other institutions to further improve the management of deep-sea fisheries on the high seas.

This recommendation is based on paragraph 32 under Finding 2 and paragraphs 36 and 37 under finding 3.

134. While deep-sea fisheries on the high seas were seen as a major problem when the project was implemented, and there was indeed governance and monitoring control and enforcement issues, these are now largely resolved.

Recommendation 2. In a sustainable use perspective, Phase 2 could evaluate the usefulness of surveys to identify where fishing could safely be allowed without risking negative impacts on VMEs. Most deep-sea fisheries, except in the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) area, are now inside exclusive economic zone – only about 6 tonnes were caught in the ABNJ in the NEAFC area in 2018.

135. Currently, previously unfished areas of the regulatory areas of RFMO/As, which in some cases represent very large portions of the regulatory area, are closed to fishing except under exploratory protocols which may be too expensive for existing fishing enterprises. Coordinated surveys in those previously unfished areas could identify areas without VMEs where fishing could be undertaken, increasing food production without jeopardizing the environment.

Recommendation 3. Phase 2 should give equal importance to fishery management and conservation. There is no fundamental disconnect between fishery management and conservation - both are very closely connected, conservation is not a separate activity from fishery management. This would imply conserving not only the target species but also associated species and the habitat.

Recommendation 4. It is recommended for Phase 2 to find ways to improve the synergy between similar activities with compatible objectives in different projects.

This recommendation is based on paragraph 107 under Finding 18.

Recommendation 5. A future deep-sea project could greatly benefit from having a partner similar to the International Seafood Sustainability Foundation or having ISSF expanding its activity to deep-sea fisheries.

This recommendation is based on paragraph 47 under Finding 6.

Suggestion:

i. The International Seafood Sustainability Foundation was of considerable help in increasing the impact of the tuna project. ISSF itself or some other organization should be approached to see if they could help with implementing Phase 2 of the deep-sea project.

Recommendation 6. In Phase 2, market analysis, as done for e.g. bluefin tuna, should be used to estimate the magnitude of IUU fishing and evaluate if further action is required.

Suggestion:

i. While IUU fishing is believed to be largely under control, particularly the illegal part, there may still be underreporting in legal fisheries. Market analysis provides a relatively simple and inexpensive way of verifying the possible extend of underreporting of valuable species.

Recommendation 7. The design of Phase 2 should involve the RFMOs, RSPs and their Member Countries at an early stage. Involving countries from the start increases ownership and will greatly facilitate implementation. The design should also include a partnership strategy from the beginning to make it easier for smaller organizations, including small RFMO/As to fully participate. Thoughts should also be given at the design phase on the projects/programmes that will be implemented to have efficient, smooth and seamless implementation so that all pieces of the puzzle fall in place.

Recommendation 8. The next phase should consider having a web-based reporting system where progress is reported and can be verified in real time. At the very least, project management should not have to submit two different (albeit slightly) reports to the implementing agencies.

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Appendix 1. People interviewed

Surname	First name	Position	Organization/Location
Agnew	David	Executive Secretary	Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources
Almon Pazos	Bruno	Scientist	Instituto Español de Oceanografiá
Ash	Neville	Director	UNEP – WCMC
Ásmundsson	Stefán	Fishery manager	Icelandic Ministry of Industries and Innovation
Barratt and Clement	Eric and George	Industry	The Groundfish Forum
Bergstad	Odd Aksel	Scientist	Norwegian IMR
Bernal	Miguel	Scientist	General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean
Bhola	Nina	Component 4 manager	UNEP – WCMC
Brooks	Holly	Scientist	UNEP - WCMC[3]
Campbell	Darius	Executive Secretary	North East Atlantic Fisheries Commision
Chapman	Bruce	Industry	Atlantic Groundfish Council (Canada)
Connelly	John	Industry	International Coalition of Fisheries Associations
Currey	Rohan	Chief Officer, Science and Standards	Marine Stewardship Council
Del Rio	José Luis	Scientist	Instituto Español de Oceanografiá
Fletcher	Steve	Former component 4 leader in UNEP-WCMC	Portsmouth University, UK
Fuller	Jessica	Project	FAO Consultant
Garat	Javier	Industry	International Coalition of Fisheries Associations
Garcia	Serge	Scientist	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
Gianni	Matt	NGO	Deep-Sea Conservation Coalition
González	Fernando	Scientist	Instituto Español de Oceanografiá
Itano	David	Scientist	University of Hawaii, suggested by Chris McGuire from The Nature Conservancy
Kingston	Naomi	Head of Program	UNEP – WCMC
Kritzer	Jake	Scientist	Environmental Defence Fund, USA
Lansley	John	Former Executive Secretary SIOFA	FAO

[3] Rachael Scrimgeour and Holly Brooks were interviewed together.

Surname	First name	Position	Organization/Location
Løbach	Terje	Lawyer	Norwegian IMR
MacFarlane	Alastair	Scientist	Department of Primary Industries, New Zealand
Mencher	Elisabeth Ann	Scientist	NOAA, USA
Moon	Dae-Yeon	Executive Secretary	North Pacific Fisheries Commission
Morebotsane	Kuena	Project	FAO
Nakamura	Takehiro	Coordinator Marine and Coastal Ecosystems	UNEP
O'Brien	Chris	First project coordinator	Indian Ocean Tuna Commission
Rice	Jake	Scientist	Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Canada
Rodriguez	Alexandre	Executive Secretary	Long Distance Advisory Council of the EU
Rodriguez	Sebastian	Executive Secretary	South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation
Sarralde Vizuete	Roberto	Scientist	Instituto Español de Oceanografiá
Scrimgeour	Rachael	Scientist	UNEP – WCMC
Shotton	Ross	Scientist	Southern Indian Ocean Deep-Sea Fishers Association
Tandstad	Merete	Scientist	FAO
Thompson	Anthony	Scientist	FAO Consultant
Trott	Peter	NGO	Fishlistic consultancy, previously with WWF Australian and former co-chair of the MSC Stakeholder Advisory Council.
Varty	Nigel	Mid Term Evaluator, involved in drafting proposal for phase 2	FAO
Villagómez and Félix	Méntor and Fernando		Comision Permanente del Pacifico Sur
Vosges	Lizette	Executive Secretary	South East Atlantic Fisheries Organization
Waruinge	Dixon	Executive Secretary	The Nairobi Convention

Appendix 2. GEF evaluation criteria rating table

FAO-GEF rating scheme	Rating	Summary comments
1) Relevance		
Overall relevance of the project	S	The project was aligned to GEF objectives and international priorities.
2) Effectiveness		
Overall assessment of project results	MS	The deep-sea projects demonstrated overall effectiveness and potential for impact. Five of the outcomes had satisfactory ratings, one rated moderately satisfactory and one rated moderately unsatisfactory.
3) Efficiency, project implementation and execution		
Overall quality of project implementation and adaptive management (implementing agency)	MS	Implementing agencies contributed to the problems of the project, particularly with cumbersome recruiting and procurements procedure. Efficiency was rated moderately satisfactory.
Quality of execution (executing agencies)	MS	All executing agencies delivered their outputs within reasonable limits. Performance rated moderately unsatisfactory.
Efficiency (incl. cost effectiveness and timeliness)	MS	Activities were completed in time with some adjustments. GEF grant utilization was around 72%.
4) Sustainability		
Overall sustainability	MS	Measures to protect VMEs have been adopted and implemented in all RFMO/As. This is likely to continue. Upscaling and expanding of other activities, particularly training, depends on political initiative and continued funding by national stakeholders, which were not the focus of the project. Progress to impact was rated as satisfactory.
5) Communication, co-financing, monitoring and evaluation, gender, progress to impact, factors affecting performance		
Communication and knowledge management	MU	Communications improved with the recruitment of the second coordinator. Knowledge management was not formally used by the project. Overall, communication and knowledge management rated as moderately unsatisfactory.
Co-financing	S	Co-financing materialized and contributed to project results. It rated as satisfactory.
Overall quality of stakeholder engagement	MS	The project managed partners effectively with limited cross-sectoral exchanges.
Monitoring and evaluation	MU	Project monitoring and evaluation was impractical with too many different periodic reports to FAO and GEF. Information was gathered in a systematic manner, using cumbersome methodologies. The information from the M&E system was not appropriately used to make timely decisions and foster learning during programme and project implementation. The evaluation finds that monitoring was moderately unsatisfactory while the mid-term evaluation was satisfactory.
Gender and environmental safeguards	S	Environmental concerns key in the design of the project. Project implementation consistent with equitable participation and benefits.
Progress to impact	S	The project has contributed to impacts, but it is not possible to quantify its contribution.

Appendix 3. Rating Scheme[4]

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

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:

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

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

Appendix 4. GEF Co-financing table

Name of the co-financer	Co-financer type	Type of co-financing	Co-financing at project start (Amount confirmed at GEF CEO endorsement/approval) (in USD)			Materialized co-financing at project terminal evaluation* (in USD)		
			In-kind	Cash	Total	In-kind	Cash	Total
FAO	UN agency	Grant/in-kind	7 000 000	5 500 000	12 500 000	7 000 000	5 500 000	12 500 000
UNEP	UN agency	In-kind	380 000		380 000	400 000		400 000
Nairobi Convention	Convention	In-kind	870 000		870 000	870 000		870 000
CBD	Convention	In-kind	0		0	0		0
NEAFC	RFMO/A	In-kind	1 950 000		1 950 000	1 950 000		1 950 000
NAFO	RFMO/A	In-kind	2 100 000		2 100 000	2 100 000		2 100 000
SEAFO	RFMO/A	In-kind	1 700 000		1 700 000	1 700 000		1 700 000
CCAMLR	Convention	In-kind	100 000		100 000	100 000		100 000
GFCM	RFMO/A	In-kind	350 000		350 000	350 000		350 000
NPFC	RFMO/A	In-kind	300 000		300 000	300 000		300 000
SPRFMO	RFMO/A	In-kind	200 000		200 000	200 000		200 000
SIODFA	RFMO/A	In-kind	20 000 000		20 000 000	20 000 000		20 000 000
Sealord Group	Private sector	In-kind	14 000 000		14 000 000	14 000 000		14 000 000
ICFA	Private sector	In-kind	5 000 000		5 000 000	5 000 000		5 000 000
Seascapes/GOBI	International NGO	In-kind	300 000		300 000	300 000		300 000
Grid	Foundation	Cash/In-kind	800 000	50 000	850 000	800 000	50 000	850 000

Name of the co-financer	Co-financer type	Type of co-financing	Co-financing at project start (Amount confirmed at GEF CEO endorsement/approval) (in USD)			Materialized co-financing at project terminal evaluation* (in USD)		
			In-kind	Cash	Total	In-kind	Cash	Total
Duke	University	In-kind	5 136 000		5 136 000	5 136 000		5 136 000
IUCN	International NGO	In-kind	2 110 000		2 110 000	2 110 000		2 110 000
UNEP-WCMC	UN executing agency	In-kind	4 000 000		4 000 000	4 000 000		4 000 000
CPPS	Maritime organization	Cash/In-kind	975 000	237 500	1 212 500	975 000	237 500	1 212 500
NOAA	Government agency	In-kind	6 500 000		6 500 000	6 500 000		6 500 000
SIOFA	RFMO/A	In-kind	-	-	0	14 974		
Grand Total (in USD)					**79 558 500**	**73 805 974**	**5 787 500**	**79 578 500**

* Some co-financing totals are estimates.

Annexes

Annex 1. Terms of Reference
http://www.fao.org/3/cb0505en/cb0505en.pdf

Annex 2. Management measures adopted by RFMO/As to protect VMEs and biodiversity
http://www.fao.org/3/cb0511en/cb0511en.pdf

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