

Results of the MTR

Agenda 6: PSC8 – Fisheries *Refugia* Project

Revised Annex 9 of the MTR Report

Revision of Annex 9 was made in according to the record of the PSC7 Meeting in May 2022 (virtual meeting): *page #11-15 of the PSC7 full report*

- (1) Response to the conclusion of the draft MTR, page#9, para.4
- (2) Response to recommendations in the draft MTR
- (3) Other views from SEAFDEC

Response to the conclusion of the draft MTR

“There have been significant changes (ca. 50% variation from the approved figures) to components 1 and 4 that clearly represent change of ambition to the expected component activities...”

PSC7: it was noted that the evaluator misinterpreted the budget at design and therefore concluded this wrongly in the report. The UNEP Task Manager also mentioned that the MTR assessment was actually not adequate. This is because the evaluator analyzed the budget with today's GEF rules although this project has been designed many months ago and does not follow the same budget presentation.

Response to recommendations in the draft MTR

#1 to: Project Co-ordination Unit/Executing Agency:

- *should seek an additional project extension to complete the remaining work and utilise the budget to deliver expected activities, especially for the countries that have achieved 50% or less of expected outputs.*

The project had been extended until June 2023. Achievements to date indicate the prospect of the project coming up with more achievements. There has been no request by the project participating countries to further extend the project beyond 2022.

- *should explore what resources could be available from the South China Sea Strategic Action Programme implementation project to enable the finalisation of the fisheries refugia project.*

PCU of the FR project communicates with the PCU of the South China Sea (SCS) project in order to explore the possibility of mobilizing available resources of the SCS project to support FR project participating countries that could not complete their activities

Response to recommendations in the draft MTR

#2 to: Project Co-ordination Unit

- *Irrespective of Recommendation 1 being accepted, the PCU should revise workplan and Results Framework to ensure that these reflect the current situation and budgets to deliver all remaining expected activities and outputs to be achieved.*

As mentioned in Response #1, the budget allocated for component 1 and component 4 has been spent according to the approved budget by GEF's CEO. There is no change in budget allocation, therefore, there should be no requirement for the PCU to revise the workplan and Project Results Framework as recommended by the MTR.

- *There is an opportunity at the Mid-Term Review to present realistic deliverables that reflect the 10% reduction of unspent budgets that might have an impact on what can be achieved by the pilots at the national/local level*

The 10% reduction from the six countries' balanced budget as of 31 December 2019 to support the management cost for a two-year extension from 2021 to 2022 was therefore endorsed at 3rd PSC Ad-hoc Meeting in June 2020. The national workplan of the respective countries were also adjusted based on the revised budget while ensuring that the expected outputs from the project could be achieved.

Response to recommendations in the draft MTR

#2 to: Project Co-ordination Unit (continued)

- *should also prepare a clear statement of the significant project component changes (from the Endorsed CEO Document) with justifications and an assessment of the impacts on the intended ambition of the project.*

The budget allocated for component 1 and component 4 has been spent according to the approved budget by GEF's CEO. Therefore, there should be no requirement for the PCU to prepare a statement of the significant project component changes.

Response to recommendations in the draft MTR

#3 to: Project Co-ordination Unit

- *Collate and analyse disaggregated sex data of participants involved in project activities. The project has collected sex disaggregate information from workshops and meetings which is commendable. It would be beneficial to present this information in the next Project Implementation Review report and have the data analysed prior to the Terminal Evaluation*

The PCU presented the results of sex-disaggregated information at the RSTC6 meeting held in July 2022. The PCU also reported the preliminary results of the sex-disaggregated analysis in the Quarterly Report for 2021-2022 submitted to the UNEP in August 2022. In addition, an article on "Balancing Rights through Gender Equality in the GEF Fisheries Refugia Project" was drafted and uploaded to the Refugia Website in September 2022 (<https://fisheries-refugia.org/270-balancing-rights-through-gender-equality-in-the-gef-fisheries-refugia-project>).

Response to recommendations in the draft MTR

#4 to: Project Co-ordination Unit *to develop a clear exist strategy for the regional and national sustainability and replication of the activities*

Activities that are complementary to the SCS SAP Project include:

- Sharing of good practices from the FR project, especially on the " Integrated Management between Fisheries and Habitats," to the SCS SAP implementation project. The FR-PCU and FR-regional scientific and technical committee joined the SCS-SAP RTSC1 in October 2022 and committed to sharing good practices with the SCS-SAP Implementation Project by the end of November 2022.
- Sharing of existing data/information and the established site-based management boards considering the same stakeholders at community levels for establishing fisheries refugia or marine protected areas.
- Conduct the Joint meeting between Fisheries Refugia and SCS-SAP Implementation Project, particularly the RSTC and PSC meetings, at least once before the refugia project end to ensure the national focal point from fisheries refugia can continue their support to the SCS SAP Implementation project after the FR-project ended in 2022.
- Ensuring the fisheries refugia website, as one of the three SCS project websites, is continually maintained and served at the permanent hosting server such as GEF IW-Learn networking.

Response to recommendations in the draft MTR

#5 to: Project Co-ordination Unit: Preparation of GEW IW LEARN Experience

The PCU has discussed the development of GEF-IW LEARN Experience Notes at the RSTC6 Meeting held in July 2022, and revisited the subject at RSTC7 Meeting in November 2022. As a result, six (6) Experience Notes from respective countries are in finalizing process which is expected to be completed by November 2022. In addition, the PCU plans to develop special Experience Notes to showcase the overall project achievement after the project ends in 2022. The PCU plans to disseminate this special Experience Note by the 1st quarter of 2023.

Response to recommendations in the draft MTR

#6 to: UNEP and SEAFDEC

Ensure regional and national staff (and any replacement staff) engaged in financial management are briefed on the requirements of IA and EA at the start of the project. Stakeholders and the UNEP Fund Management Officer identified that staff and consultants were not sufficiently familiar with the requirements of financial reporting.

SEAFDEC/PCU agrees with the recommendations to provide training sessions on financial management to all relevant countries and consultants. It should also be recalled that there were changes in financial reporting template of the UNEP during the course of implementation (to use (UMOJA) without notification or clear instruction to SEAFDEC. If training sessions could be provided to SEAFDEC and participating countries during the inception phase (or when changing reporting template), the preparation and submission of financial reports could be more compliant to the requirement of UNEP and GEF

Other Views from SEAFDEC

the MTR should also gather views from SEAFDEC (not only the PCU) at both technical and management levels during the evaluation process including inception and debriefing of the MTR findings in order to ensure that the views from all concerned partners be properly reflected and accommodated in the Report.

Status and Follow-up Actions

- Revised Annex 9 submitted to MTR evaluator
- SEAFDEC to send the MTR report to UNEP