



Strengthening and Enabling the Micronesia Challenge 2030

Part I: Project Information

GEF ID

10740

Project Type

MSP

Type of Trust Fund

GET

CBIT/NGI

CBIT No

NGI No

Project Title

Strengthening and Enabling the Micronesia Challenge 2030

Countries

Regional, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Palau

Agency(ies)

WWF-US

Other Executing Partner(s)

Stanford Center for Ocean Solutions, Micronesia Challenge Regional Office (MCRO), Stanford Center for Ocean Solutions (COS), Micronesia Conservation Trust (MCT), Marshall Islands Marine Resources Authority - MIMRA (RMI), Department of Resources and Development - R&D (FSM), and Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment & Tourism - MNRET (Palau)

Executing Partner Type

Others

GEF Focal Area

International Waters

Taxonomy

Beneficiaries, Partnership, Type of Engagement, Non-Governmental Organization, Civil Society, Stakeholders, Strategic Communications, Communications, Theory of change, Learning, Capacity, Knowledge and Research, Workshop, Knowledge Generation, Focal Areas, International Waters, SIDS : Small Island Dev States, Fisheries, Coastal, Marine Protected Area, Biomes, Seagrasses, Mangrove, Coral Reefs, Influencing models, Strengthen institutional capacity and decision-making, Convene multi-stakeholder alliances, Awareness Raising, Education, Community Based Organization, Academia, Participation, Gender Equality, Gender Mainstreaming, Sex-disaggregated indicators, Gender results areas, Participation and leadership, Adaptive management, Large Marine Ecosystems, Strategic Action Plan Implementation

Rio Markers**Climate Change Mitigation**

Climate Change Mitigation 1

Climate Change Adaptation

Climate Change Adaptation 0

Submission Date

8/17/2021

Expected Implementation Start

11/1/2021

Expected Completion Date

10/31/2024

Duration

36In Months

Agency Fee(\$)

180,000.00

A. FOCAL/NON-FOCAL AREA ELEMENTS

Objectives/Programs	Focal Area Outcomes	Trust Fund	GEF Amount(\$)	Co-Fin Amount(\$)
IW-1-1	IW 1.1: Sustaining Healthy Coastal and Marine Ecosystems	GET	1,600,000.00	2,922,793.00
IW-1-2	IW 1.2: Catalyzing Sustainable Fisheries Management	GET	400,000.00	730,698.00
Total Project Cost(\$)			2,000,000.00	3,653,491.00

B. Project description summary

Project Objective

Strengthening transboundary integrated marine resource management for healthy marine ecosystems and sustainable coastal fisheries in Micronesia through the 2030 Micronesia Challenge

Project Component	Financing Type	Expected Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing(\$)	Confirmed Co-Financing(\$)
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Project Component	Financing Type	Expected Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing(\$)	Confirmed Co-Financing(\$)
Component 1: Coordinated strengthening of national integrated marine resource management	Technical Assistance	<p>Outcome 1.1 National policies and plans under MC 2030 goals targeting marine ecosystem health and coastal fisheries management</p> <p><i>[GEF Core Indicator 7.3: Level of National/Local reforms and active participation of Inter-Ministerial Committees: 3]</i></p> <p><i>[GEF Core Indicator 8: Globally over-exploited marine fisheries moved to more sustainable levels: 281,947 metric tons]</i></p>	<p>Output 1.1.1 National policy gap analysis to identify priority pathways for achieving MC 2030 targets on marine protected area planning and coastal fisheries management approaches <i>[Policy gap analysis, one per country]</i></p> <p>Output 1.1.2 National working group meetings including key national and regional stakeholders, including the private sector to deliver Output 1.1.3 and 1.1.4 (leveraging inter-agency working groups: CMAC (RMI), PAN TC (FSM), DPF sector (Palau)) <i>[Six per country, at least 18 total]</i></p> <p>Output 1.1.3 National plans, strategies, and policy recommendations to integrate marine protected area planning and fisheries management approaches (linked with Outputs 1.1.1 and 1.1.2)</p>	GET	1,206,753.0 0	2,171,549.0 0

Project Component	Financing Type	Expected Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing(\$)	Confirmed Co-Financing(\$)
Component 2: Sustaining regional marine resources management in Micronesia	Technical Assistance	<p>Outcome 2.1 Strengthening MCRO for successful implementation of MC 2030</p> <p>Outcome 2.2 Government commitment for MC 2030 goals of marine resource management</p> <p><i>[GEF Core Indicator 7: Number of shared water ecosystems (fresh or marine) under new or improved cooperative management: 1 (Western Pacific Warm Pool Large Marine Ecosystem)]</i></p>	<p>Output 2.1.1 Updated Strategic Plan, monitoring protocols, and communication plan & products</p> <p>Output 2.1.2 Enhanced visibility of Micronesia Challenge</p> <p>Output 2.2.1 MC 2030 visioning document endorsed by three project nations</p>	GET	553,930.00	1,002,754.00

Project Component	Financing Type	Expected Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing(\$)	Confirmed Co-Financing(\$)
Component 3: Knowledge Management and Project Monitoring & Evaluation	Technical Assistance	<p>Outcome 3.1</p> <p>Project knowledge management</p> <p><i>[GEF Core Indicator 7.4: Level of engagement in IW:LEARN through participation and delivery of key products: 4]</i></p> <p>Outcome 3.2</p> <p>Project management and evaluation system</p> <p><i>[GEF Core Indicator 11: Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment: Women: 506; Men: 576; Total: 1082] (Relevant throughout project)</i></p>	<p>Output 3.1.1</p> <p>Project knowledge captured and disseminated including through IW:LEARN</p> <p>Output 3.2.1</p> <p>Monitoring and Evaluation reports (e.g. project progress reports, midterm review, terminal evaluation)</p>	GET	57,500.00	147,052.00

Project Component	Financing Type	Expected Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing(\$)	Confirmed Co-Financing(\$)
				Sub Total (\$)	1,818,183.00	3,321,355.00
Project Management Cost (PMC)						
		GET	181,817.00		332,136.00	
		Sub Total(\$)	181,817.00		332,136.00	
		Total Project Cost(\$)	2,000,000.00		3,653,491.00	

C. Sources of Co-financing for the Project by name and by type

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount(\$)
Recipient Country Government	Federated States of Micronesia, Department of Resources & Development	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	476,326.00
Recipient Country Government	Marshall Islands Marine Resources Authority (MIMRA)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	200,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Marshall Islands Environmental Protection Authority (EPA)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	150,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Republic of Palau, Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment & Tourism	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	500,000.00
Other	Government of CNMI, Office of the Governor - Bureau of Environment and Coastal Quality	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	321,670.00
Other	U.S. Territory of Guam	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	326,920.00
Civil Society Organization	Micronesia Challenge Regional Office (MCRO)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	340,692.00
Civil Society Organization	Micronesia Conservation Trust (MCT)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	470,850.00
Civil Society Organization	Stanford Center for Ocean Solutions	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	632,833.00
GEF Agency	WWF US	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	234,200.00
Total Co-Financing(\$)				3,653,491.00

Describe how any "Investment Mobilized" was identified

N/A

D. Trust Fund Resources Requested by Agency(ies), Country(ies), Focal Area and the Programming of Funds

Agency	Trust Fund	Country	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Amount(\$)	Fee(\$)
WWF-US	GET	Regional	International Waters	NA	2,000,000	180,000
Total Grant Resources(\$)					2,000,000.00	180,000.00

E. Non Grant Instrument

NON-GRANT INSTRUMENT at CEO Endorsement

Includes Non grant instruments? **No**

Includes reflow to GEF? **No**

F. Project Preparation Grant (PPG)

PPG Required **true**

PPG Amount (\$)

50,000

PPG Agency Fee (\$)

4,500

Agency	Trust Fund	Country	Focal Area	Programmin g of Funds	Amount(\$)	Fee(\$)
WWF- US	GET	Regional	International Waters	NA	50,000	4,500
Total Project Costs(\$)					50,000.00	4,500.00

Core Indicators

Indicator 7 Number of shared water ecosystems (fresh or marine) under new or improved cooperative management

	Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
Shared water Ecosystem		Western Pacific Warm Pool (WPWP)		
Count	0	1	0	0

Indicator 7.1 Level of Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis and Strategic Action Program (TDA/SAP) formulation and implementation (scale of 1 to 4; see Guidance)

Shared Water Ecosystem	Rating (Expected at PIF)	Rating (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Rating (Achieved at MTR)	Rating (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 7.2 Level of Regional Legal Agreements and Regional management institution(s) (RMI) to support its implementation (scale of 1 to 4; see Guidance)

Shared Water Ecosystem	Rating (Expected at PIF)	Rating (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Rating (Achieved at MTR)	Rating (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 7.3 Level of National/Local reforms and active participation of Inter-Ministerial Committees (IMC; scale 1 to 4; See Guidance)

Shared Water Ecosystem	Rating (Expected at PIF)	Rating (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Rating (Achieved at MTR)	Rating (Achieved at TE)
Select SWE				<input type="checkbox"/>
Western Pacific Warm Pool (WPWP)		1		<input type="checkbox"/>
Select SWE				

Indicator 7.4 Level of engagement in IWLEARN through participation and delivery of key products(scale 1 to 4; see Guidance)

Shared Water Ecosystem	Rating (Expected at PIF)	Rating (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Rating (Achieved at MTR)	Rating (Achieved at TE)

Shared Water Ecosystem	Rating (Expected at PIF)	Rating (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Rating (Achieved at MTR)	Rating (Achieved at TE)
Western Pacific Warm Pool (WPWP)		1		
Select SWE				

Indicator 8 Globally over-exploited fisheries moved to more sustainable levels

Metric Tons (Expected at PIF)	Metric Tons (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Metric Tons (Achieved at MTR)	Metric Tons (Achieved at TE)
	281,947.00		

Fishery Details

The project is supporting 281,947 mt through specific policy interventions aimed at improved management through integration with marine protected areas in alignment with MC 2030 Process Targets. The target amount represents 1% project attribution of a three-year total harvest of 28,194,689 mt of over-exploited nearshore fisheries based on selected nearshore functional groups from Sea Around Us Program reconstructed marine fisheries catch data from 2016. Additional detail on the data sources, methodology, specific over-exploited nearshore fisheries species, and justification for project attribution methodology are provided in Appendix L of the ProDoc.

Indicator 11 Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment

	Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
Female		506		
Male		576		
Total	0	1082	0	0

Provide additional explanation on targets, other methodologies used, and other focal area specifics (i.e., Aichi targets in BD) including justification where core indicator targets are not provided

Core Indicator 7 - Number of shared water ecosystems (fresh or marine) under new or improved cooperative management: The project is supporting improved cooperative management within the Western Pacific Warm Pool Large Marine Ecosystem (WPWP LME), for a total of 1 LME for this indicator target. Core Indicator 8 - Globally over-exploited marine fisheries moved to more sustainable levels (metric tons): The project is supporting 281,947 mt through specific policy interventions aimed at improved management through integration with marine protected areas in alignment with MC 2030 Process Targets. The target amount represents 1% project attribution of a three-year total harvest of 28,194,689 mt of over-exploited nearshore fisheries based on selected nearshore functional groups from Sea Around Us Program reconstructed marine fisheries catch data from 2016. Additional detail on the data sources, methodology, specific over-exploited nearshore fisheries species, and justification for project attribution methodology are provided in Appendix L of the ProDoc. Core Indicator 11 - Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment: A total of 1,082 direct beneficiaries are estimated by the project interventions, including 506 woman and 576 men. Additional detail on these estimates are provided in Appendix M of the ProDoc.

Part II. Project Justification

1a. Project Description

1) the global environmental and/or adaptation problems, root causes and barriers that need to be addressed (systems description);

Please refer to Sections 1.1 ? 1.4 of the WWF GEF Project Document for a full description of the environmental problems, root causes, and barriers.

The Micronesia large ocean states of the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), and the Republic of Palau (Palau) host high levels of biodiversity, including many endemic marine and terrestrial species. Collectively, their ocean and land area span over 3 million km² of the tropical north Pacific Ocean, or roughly similar to the area of the continental United States. Comprised of volcanic, rock, and coral atoll islands, the region is home to many species of flora and fauna found nowhere else in the world. Over 1,400 plant species, 1,300 fish species, 535 coral species, and hundreds of birds, amphibians, insects, reptiles, and mammals are found within the Micronesia region.[1]¹ Globally important fish stocks, such as several species of tuna and billfish, routinely migrate through the region and are a major source of economic wealth for Micronesian large ocean states.[2]² Over 500,000 people, speaking 12 languages, spread across 2,000 islands that include two World Heritage Sites, three Ramsar sites, and three biosphere reserves call Micronesia home.[3]³

The Micronesia region is situated within the Western Pacific Warm Pool Large Marine Ecosystem (WPWP LME). While occasionally not recognized as a Large Marine Ecosystem due to its extreme size, the Western Pacific Warm Pool Large Marine Ecosystem (WPWP LME) exhibits many of the key characteristics of Large Marine Ecosystems, especially the relatively consistent biophysical marine environment and the connectivity of coastal and marine ecosystems across the region. The WPWP LME includes 14 Pacific island countries over approximately 40 million km² or 8% of the entire Earth's surface.[4]⁴ Despite the exceptionally long distances separating individual countries, the coastal and marine ecosystems that these countries depend on are inextricably closely connected and require shared management for long-term ocean health. The WPWP LME is named after the warm equatorial waters of the western tropical Pacific Ocean that host the world's largest stocks of tuna and related pelagic species that provide approximately one third of the world's tuna and related species catches and over half of the world's supplies for canned tuna. The WPWP LME is also home to globally important stocks of sharks, turtle, billfish and other large pelagic species, and whales and other marine mammals.

While large in ocean area, these Micronesia islands are small in land area and disproportionately rely heavily on coastal and marine resources for food security, to sustain livelihoods, generate revenue, and achieve national development goals. For Micronesia, a sustainable blue economy is the foundation for achieving overall national development agendas and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), especially SDG 14: Life Below Water. Yet while the region shares similar blue economy aspirations, the economy of each Micronesia country is dominated by varying marine-based sectors. Where marine-based tourism is a key sector of Palau's economy, fisheries is a major part of the economy in the Marshall Islands. To promote a regional blue economy will rely on strong regional collaboration to collectively strengthen natural resource management across Micronesia.

The features that make these islands exceptional also make them especially vulnerable to environmental threats. Increasing pressure, from overfishing to marine debris, and seepage of terrestrial pollutants into coastal areas, coupled with the impacts of climate change, severely threaten the future of Micronesia large ocean states. To preserve the biodiversity of Micronesia and ensure a healthy future for their people, protect their unique island cultures, and sustain the livelihoods of their island communities, the Chief Executives of the RMI, FSM, Palau, the U.S. Territory of Guam and the U.S. Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) launched the Micronesia Challenge in 2006.

The **Micronesia Challenge**^[5] is a shared commitment to effectively conserve at least 30% of near-shore marine resources and 20% of terrestrial resources across Micronesia by 2020 – altogether covering 6.7 million km² of ocean, an area nearly equal to the continental United States, including 4% of the global total reef area and over 480 coral species (60% of all known coral species).^[6] This ambitious challenge exceeds current goals set by international conventions and treaties. For example, Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 called for countries to conserve 17% of terrestrial and 10% of marine resources by 2020. The challenge also emphasizes the need for Micronesian leaders to work together at the regional level to confront environmental and sustainable development issues, in a rapidly changing world (see Appendix J).

In the years since the launch of the Micronesia Challenge (MC), much progress has been made at national and regional levels to achieve the MC 2020 conservation goals (see Appendix K). Yet despite the MC successes to date, the Micronesia region continues to face critical environmental challenges. Some of these challenges, such as the impacts of climate change, were poorly understood over a decade ago. Others have been known to be destructive, such as unsustainable land-use practices, coastal pollution, overfishing and depletion of other marine living resources, and continue to threaten the prosperity of Micronesian large ocean states. From concerns of national food security and economic stability to preserving traditional ways of life, the future of Micronesia's ocean and land environment remains vulnerable. To address these continued threats, the governments of Micronesia issued a joint communique (Appendix J) at the 24th Micronesia Island Forum (MIF) in July 2019 proclaiming collective political ambitions for the region, including an updated ambitious plan: a 2030 Micronesia Challenge (MC 2030). The MC 2030 builds on the success and accomplishments of the MC—as noted

in the MC 2020 Evaluation^[7] to pursue a collective approach to address critical issues such as sustainable livelihoods, fisheries management, enforcement capacity and climate-related disaster risk reduction and management. The commitments outlined in the 2019 MIF Joint Communique include MC 2030 Conservation and Community Benefit Targets as well as MC 2030 Process Targets.

MC 2030 Conservation and Community Benefit Targets:

- Effectively manage at least 50% of marine resources and 30% of terrestrial resources across Micronesia (linked with SDG 14.5; 15.1);
- Increase the number of community members within each jurisdiction who are deriving livelihoods, including any type of income or revenue, from sustainable managed natural resources (as determined by MC Measures Working Group) (linked to SDG 14.7);
- Reduce the risks from climate impacts for communities within flood zones and on low-lying islands (linked to SDG 13.1, 14.2);
- Reduce invasive species and increase restoration of habitats (linked to SDG 15.5).

MC 2030 Process Targets:

- Incorporate regional and jurisdictional fisheries management approaches, integrated with MPAs (linked to SDG 14.4);
- Increase local investment by MC governments in sustainable finance mechanisms, such as green fees and endowments, to leverage additional external investment to achieve new conservation and community benefit targets;
- Institutionalize and fully resource the MC Regional Office, including funding for at least three staff (Executive Director, Administrative position, and Communications support); Expand the MC Steering Committee to include two focal points from each jurisdiction, one cabinet-level political designate and one operational/technical designate.

These updated MC 2030 targets are aligned with jurisdictional priorities and the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Environmental Problems, Root Causes, and Barriers:

The 1997 Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for International Waters of Pacific Islands recognized several imminent threats to the region's health, including (i) pollution of marine and freshwater (including groundwater) from land-based activities; (ii) physical, ecological and hydrological modification of critical habitats, and; (iii) unsustainable exploitation of living and nonliving resources. The SAP provides the original regional framework within which actions are identified, developed and implemented. Past targeted investments have addressed Integrated Coastal and Watershed Management (ICWM) and Oceanic Fisheries Management (OFM) to set out a path for the transition from sectoral to integrated management of International Waters as a whole, which is considered essential for long-term protection for the whole LME. The WPWP LME assessment within the GEF Transboundary Watershed Assessment Program (TWAP) noted that the WPWP LME is continuing to experience

multiple threats to ocean health, including the increased impacts of climate change on ocean water temperatures, acidification, sea level rise, and increased storm activity. For example, the TWAP has estimated that by year 2030, 11.44% of coral cover in the WPWP is predicted to be under very high to critical level of threat from warming and acidification. More recently, the SPREP-led 2020 State of the Environment and Conservation in the Pacific Islands also further stressed these environmental problems across multiple relevant environmental indicators on governance, coastal and marine, conservation and protection, biodiversity, and climate. This includes regional recommendations for partnering for harmonized environmental monitoring and management, including transboundary coordination for the mitigation of transboundary hazards that threaten coastal fish populations, and the protection of coral reefs and other essential habitats for food security and economically important pelagic fish.

The MC resulted in meaningful progress towards addressing multiple environmental problems, yet key threats at both the national and transboundary Micronesia-wide level continue to persist. The key environmental problems identified by this project include: 1) degradation of marine habitats; 2) overfishing, and; (3) insufficient management of climate change impacts on natural resources. These problems are significantly impacting Micronesia's terrestrial and marine environments and biodiversity, reducing important provisioning of ecosystem services, which for some countries, support a significant portion of national economic production and social wellbeing. As a highly complex social-ecological systems, many of these environmental problems are intricately linked in each geography. Declining fish stocks, for example, impacts both the health of marine ecosystems and the wellness of the regional human population. Loss of biodiversity and keystone species can lead to trophic cascades and the accelerated degradation of entire ecosystems. This harms the food security and health of the island populations dependent on fisheries for adequate nutrition.[8]⁸

Degradation of marine habitats: Many of the inhabited atolls and islands of Micronesia are experiencing significant marine habitat degradation, especially in coastal areas that are predominately covered with coral reef, seagrass, and mangrove environments. These degraded marine habitats are typically the result of a myriad of threats, including local pollution and sedimentation issues due to poor land management practices, overfishing of important reef fish species such as parrotfish, and destructive fishing practices, to name a few. Increasing marine ecosystem tipping points have been passed, resulting in once thriving ecosystems to decrease in productivity or in some cases turn barren and unproductive. While often addressed at the local community and island-wide scale, the increasing degradation of land areas and linked coastal and marine habitats is leading to significant reductions of healthy habitats across Micronesia and is a major source of concern to human health and economic livelihoods.

For much of Micronesia, one of the main root causes of marine habitat degradation is population growth. In FSM, the population has almost doubled in less than 50 years and in RMI it has almost tripled in the same time frame. Palau's population has increased by over 50% since 1970, leading to an increased consumption of and fishing pressure on certain species of reef and pelagic fish. The impacts of local population growth have also been exacerbated with increases in tourism for some islands. This

has led to rapid and concentrated development, often on very limited land area with sensitive coastal habitats and delicate hydrological systems. Many large projects such as construction of airports and deep draft harbors have been a major driver in mangrove forest and coral reef ecosystem decline. Some poorly planned agricultural production and associated deforestation have further led to sediment and nutrient pollution, choking many coastal habitats.

Overfishing of commercially and environmentally important fish stocks: The Pacific provides roughly 64% of the global tuna harvest, and the waters within the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) of RMI, FSM, and Palau are all significant contributors.[9]⁹ These pelagic fisheries are vital to the Pacific island economies, when combined with aquaculture brought in an estimated \$3.2 billion in 2014.[10]¹⁰ While pelagic tuna stocks are not overfished nor undergoing overfishing,[11]¹¹ coastal reef fisheries are being overfished at alarming rates.[12]¹² Many of these coastal fish species serve important ecological roles. Unsustainable fishing can trigger declines in the overall health of coral reef and other coastal habitats, with potentially numerous cascading effects including jeopardizing food security and reducing resilience to impacts of climate change. Developing locally-based and well-managed fisheries offers an opportunity to alleviate pressure on culturally important reef fish stocks and support socioeconomic wellbeing.

Climate Change: Climate change is a major threat to Micronesian large ocean states and has already had major impacts on each country's environment, society, and economies. As highlighted in the 2019 IPCC Special Report on the Oceans and Cryosphere, the largest threats for Micronesian countries include sea level rise, ocean warming, ocean acidification, and deoxygenation, as well as changes to climate systems that are forecasted to cause increased floods and droughts, as well as more intense tropical cyclones. While the threats of climate change to Micronesian large ocean states are often existential and must be addressed far beyond their borders, there is much that can be done locally to better mitigate and adapt to climate change impact for managing natural resources. For Micronesia, one of the largest hurdles to managing climate change impacts on natural resources is insufficient data and knowledge at local and state levels for informed and adaptive decision making. Addressing the climate change impacts of issues of sea level rise, ocean warming, acidification, deoxygenation, and increased variability of weather, necessitates more rapid and informed decision-making processes that are coordinated across Micronesia.

While these environmental problems are most acute at the national level, the ecosystem connectivity among island, atolls, and archipelagos across the Micronesia region necessitates regional cooperation and a transboundary approach to developing solutions. Regional action is further necessitated given the highly migratory nature of many commercially important pelagic fish species that traverse the EEZs of all Micronesian large ocean states. The initial success of the Micronesia Challenge has established sound national terrestrial and coastal protected area network systems and a sustainable financing mechanism, yet substantially more work is needed for the five MC jurisdictions to collectively address

the above environmental problems through a coordinated, regional effort. The newly promoted MC 2030 represents an opportunity to reinvigorate interest in working together take action on the most challenging issues facing the region.

Barriers: Achieving stronger transboundary marine management to secure healthier marine ecosystems and sustainable nearshore fisheries across Micronesia requires fostering regional collaboration. With the endorsement of new MC 2030 goals at the 24th Micronesia Island Forum (MIF) in July 2019, the jurisdictions have an opportunity to strengthen current management national and regional management approaches but now face the immediate task of planning and implementing these new conservation goals and process targets. The previous phase of the Micronesia Challenge produced significant experiences and lessons learned, yet also faced barriers that must be addressed to achieve MC 2030 regional and national goals. These specific barriers have been identified by the independent evaluation of the MC[13]¹³ and the terminal evaluation of the 2015 GEF UNEP project that supported the Micronesia Challenge. The barriers were further confirmed through stakeholder consultations during the development of this project. To successfully achieve the MC 2030 goals this project aims to address the immediate barriers that are jeopardizing the Micronesia Challenge enabling environment, including regional and national barriers that are compromising integrated natural resource planning, coordination effectiveness, and level of awareness. More specifically, the main barriers addressed by the project include: a) *Limited national and regional capacity and insufficient management effectiveness*; b) *Limited coordination and harmonization of national management efforts through a regional lens*; c) *Limited communication of Micronesia Challenge goals to political and general audiences*, and at the national level; d) *Insufficient inter-institutional and multi-sectoral planning and management*.

Limited integrated ecosystem-based marine and nearshore fisheries management capacity and effectiveness: National and regional capacity limitations are a persistent issue in Micronesia. Limited funding and other resources, as well as overworked current government staff, and limited labor pools make finding and retaining staff difficult. Furthermore, access to professional and business resources are expensive and often unreliable. These staffing and capacity limitations have been a significant barrier towards implementation of existing marine ecosystem conservation planning management efforts, that overtime, have also led to a lack of integration of ecosystem-based management approaches to mutually address healthy marine ecosystems and sustainable management of coastal and nearshore fisheries. This has resulted in very limited effectiveness at integrating the management of these key marine natural resources at both national and regional levels. Recommendations from recent MC evaluations have determined that long-term success of the MC will require a robust and fully functioning MCRO to facilitate regional coordination across the five participating Micronesia jurisdictions. Further, due to limited capacity and funding, some MC responsibilities have been absorbed by the Micronesia Conservation Trust (MCT), including fundraising efforts, administrative and financial tasks, and coordination of MC measures groups asked with monitoring MC goal progress (social, terrestrial, marine). The compilation of the MC Steering Committee has further been recognized as a structural barrier for long-term MC success. This includes often overtaxed national focal points, serving on the MC voluntarily on top of existing full-time national responsibilities. A lack

of national staff to support national MC focal points on the steering committee has led to difficulty with follow up and implementation of MCSC decisions. All of this is further compounded by a lack of current long-term planning, including fundraising efforts. Current MCRO planning occurs on an annual basis without guidance from a strategic vision. There is a critical need to overcome these capacity and management barriers to guide regional and national activities towards a common goal.

Limited coordination and harmonization of national marine ecosystem and nearshore fisheries management efforts through a regional lens: Micronesia Challenge regional coordination responsibilities are led by the Micronesia Challenge Regional Office (MCRO) and governed by the Micronesia Challenge Steering Committee (MCSC). Since its inception, MCRO has often been understaffed and occasionally lacked any staff at all. On top of MCRO staffing, the MC evaluations flagged the limited national-level capacity to support the MCRO as a barrier to harmonized engagement towards regional goals and addressing transboundary priority concerns. The 2019 MIF Joint Communique requested that two national focal points per jurisdiction support the MCRO as members of the MC Steering Committee ? one technical member and one senior member. A persistent imbalance in capacity and agency within the MC Steering Committee representation, and insufficient capacity to attend with enough frequency have resulted in limited agency to enact change at a high enough level within respective national governments. In addition, the informal nature of MC structures and management of shared data resources were noted by the evaluations to further strain the coordination and harmonization of approaches between national management efforts. The sum of these inhibiting factors strains the ability for effective regional coordination of national resource management efforts and missing critical opportunities to link teleconnected marine ecosystems and fisheries, as well as data and knowledge. In order to strengthen regional and national marine resource planning and securing healthy marine ecosystems and sustainable fisheries, it will be essential that regional collaboration is strengthened through the MC framework.

Limited communication of Micronesia Challenge goals and transboundary importance to key political and general audiences, including public and private sector leaders: While the MC may be well known within the environmental community, in recent years there has been declining awareness of the objectives and direct benefits of the MC to local communities both within higher-level political spheres, private sector actors, and across the general public of Micronesia. This declining awareness has led to difficulties communicating the importance of regional collaboration to address transboundary marine resources issues, implementing integrated management approaches nationally, and difficulty with securing financing (both pursuing and securing grants as well as mainstreaming into existing national budgeting processes) to support healthier marine ecosystems and more sustainably managed nearshore fisheries. With the absence of a communications staff member in MCRO and the decreased engagement of a communications working group, the level of political and public awareness and engagement in MC efforts has decreased significantly. The decline in communications capacity has also led to decreased consistency in branding and messaging, resulting in often counterproductive and mixed messaging among jurisdictions and with regional and international efforts. The lack of coordination amongst communications staff from each jurisdiction decreases the ability for officials to convey locally relevant opportunities and successes to broader audiences. Furthermore, this lack of targeted capacity impairs the ability for communication of MC achievements to global audiences which could aid in additional private sector investment and fundraising to further support the MC towards achieving healthier coastal and marine ecosystems. The communication limitations were highlighted as

one of the most important barriers that need to be addressed by the MC evaluation. Overcoming this barrier with increased awareness of the MC and its goals will be a critical step towards true integrated management at the national and regional levels.

Insufficient inter-institutional and multi-sectoral planning and management: At the national level, RMI, FSM, and Palau are at different stages of planning and implementation of marine resource management. However with the expansion of the 2030 MC conservation goals and process targets, all three countries now must take stock of their current approach and assess gaps needed to advance national plans that support meeting objectives of the MC 2030 to secure healthier coastal and marine ecosystems and more sustainably managed nearshore fisheries. . Healthy marine habitats across all of Micronesia are recognized as important mechanisms to improve nearshore fish stocks, attract more tourism, and link other economies that are critical to the development of these island nations? sustainable blue economies. Efforts to strengthen management of marine resources in Micronesia have been pursued in recent years, including GEF support to the first phase of the Micronesia Challenge. While these efforts have made considerable progress, key barriers continue to remain. Recent independent evaluations of the Micronesia Challenge have identified key barriers that must be addressed for long-term success of the Micronesia Challenge. Meeting the goals of the Micronesia Challenge will require strengthened efforts integrating management of marine ecosystems and nearshore fisheries through inter-institutional approaches and informed by multi-sectoral perspectives, including key non-government and private sector stakeholders. At the regional and national level across Micronesia, initial efforts are making progress towards this objective but are not yet mainstreamed into practices. For example, in FSM a newly established PAN technical committee was established by 2019 legislation, but membership has yet to be confirmed nor has the committee met. In RMI, an ad hoc committee on coastal management has recently become formalized due to updates of PAN legislation, yet not all members are fully active and committed to CMAC and PAN due to limited capacity and resources. In Palau, the implementation of the PNMS presents challenges with long-term sustainability that hinge of development of an economically viable and sustainably managed domestic fishery. Through national-level efforts, significant emphasis has been focused on protected area networks through area-based conservation to meet spatial targets under the MC 2020 and Aichi Targets. However, to successfully meet MC 2030 goals and achieve long-term marine ecosystem health and sustainably managed nearshore fisheries within national EEZs and across national boundaries, an enabling environment is needed that fosters collaboration and promotes integrated marine management and coordination across national sectors and among nations is needed. There are burgeoning efforts in the region for a more holistic effort but much work is needed to support the jurisdictions meet their MC 2030 goals and achieve long-term integrated marine resource management of the Micronesian waters within the WPWP LME.

2) the baseline scenario and any associated baseline projects

Please refer to Sections 1.5 and 1.6 of the WWF GEF Project Document for a full description of the baseline scenario and associated baseline projects.

Achieving stronger transboundary marine management to secure healthier marine ecosystems and sustainable nearshore fisheries across Micronesia requires addressing the above regional and national barriers that are preventing progress towards the primary transboundary concerns from the WPWP

LME SAP and alignment with the recommendations from the 2020 SPREP State of the Environment report. The recently endorsed MC 2030 goals provide a very timely and critical opportunity to address these barriers through a fostering collaboration within the WPWP LME and overseeing coordination of national efforts of strengthen current marine ecosystem and coastal fisheries management. The expanded scope of the MC 2030 includes the overreaching goal to effectively manage at least 50% of marine resources, restore key habits, and Incorporate regional and jurisdictional fisheries management approaches, integrated with MPAs (see ProDoc Appendix J for full list of MC 2030 goals). The MC 2030 is also focused on expanding regional management and coordination, by aiming to improve institutional structure and capacity, increasing staffing and communications, and jurisdictional governance of the Micronesia Challenge and the Micronesia Challenge Regional Office.

The following baseline initiatives represent the key project baseline and present a very timely opportunity for leverage to foster stronger collaboration within the WPWP LME to address key transboundary marine resource concerns that help implement national sustainable ?blue economy? development strategies, including strengthened nearshore fisheries policy.

Micronesia Challenge Regional Office (MCRO): As the main organization tasked with coordination of the Micronesia Challenge, the MCRO is actively coordinating efforts among all five MC jurisdictions to promote the MC as well as strengthen MC capacities in line with the 2019 MIF Joint Communiqué. The MCRO is advised by the MC Steering Committee (MCSC), which jointly oversee the overall long-term success of the Micronesia Challenge. The MCSC meets virtually monthly and has at least one face to face meeting at the MIF each year. The MCRO has multiple initiatives underway over the next three years that support promotion of the MC 2030 goals. These include:

- ? Annual workshops in 2021, 2022, and 2023 planned for each of the three measures groups (marine, terrestrial, and socio-economic)
- ? MC Young Champions event at Our Oceans Conference in 2020, with additional events showcased at future events in 2021 and 2022 (funding permitting)
- ? Jurisdictional coordination, logistical support and representation for MCSC at annual Micronesia Island Forums events in 2021, 2022, and 2023
- ? Communications and outreach efforts including hosting and maintaining the MC website (<http://www.micronesiachallenge.org>)

The July 2019 MIF Joint Communiqué has set the stage for all five Micronesia jurisdictions to begin planning national-level activities to achieve the expanded Micronesia Challenge conservation and community benefit targets. Regionally, there are also several key initiatives planned to help achieve the new 2030 Micronesia Challenge goals.

Micronesia Conservation Trust (MCT): MCT currently provides administrative and financial services for MCRO, including playing a critical role as MCRO grants manager. MCT has also taken on coordination roles of the MC Measures Groups (Social, Terrestrial, and Marine), which will continue over the upcoming 2021-2023 period. For the next three years, MCT is committed to strengthening

MCRO capacities in accordance with the MC 2030 Process Targets so that MCRO can more effectively manage itself in the future. This likely will include high-level MCT representation at international events on behalf of the MC, such as at annual Micronesia Island Forum (MIF) events in 2021, 2022, and 2023. MCT is also an accredited Green Climate Fund (GCF) entity and is actively supporting raising funding to address climate change adaptation efforts linked to coastal fisheries and habitat restoration in Micronesia.

Micronesia Challenge Measures Groups: Since the inception of the MC, three MC Measures Groups—Marine, Terrestrial, Socioeconomic—were established to define ways to measure the progress of the Micronesia Challenge goals. Each Measures Group includes a lead that works with the MCRO Coordinator to relay information to the MC Steering Committee. The marine measures lead has been housed at the University of Guam (UoG) marine lab since 2006, providing most of the technical support, capacity development, and coordination for marine monitoring with additional support provided by PICRC. However, the data coming into the marine measures database^[14]¹⁴ has increased beyond the capacity for students at UoG to manage without a full-time database manager. The Terrestrial Measures Group has developed and posted results of monitoring on an online terrestrial “web viewer” database,^[15]¹⁵ which visually displays plot locations in each jurisdiction and provide summaries of data collected and results. The terrestrial measures group has been able to design an online database platform and hire a consultant to do data analysis beginning in 2018 but will need more on-going support in the future to enable analysis by jurisdictional partners. For the most part, Socioeconomic Measures (SEM) activities to monitor effectiveness of MC sites throughout the region have been carried out through SEM-Pasifika training workshops since 2008 with support from the learning network PIMPAC. Since 2018, the position has been fully supported by NOAA and DOI with the Lead based at MCT. A database has been completed since March 2020, with intentionally limited access to select SEM core team members. Data analysis for the measures groups—broadly speaking—continues to be a challenge for jurisdictional partners/core team members and has been made more challenging by the fact that most members only do analysis during trainings and lose the skill set between training.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC): TNC has been one of the largest and most long-term proponents of the Micronesia Challenge. Over the coming three years of the project, TNC will continue to support the MC through several channels. TNC is a member of the MCSC and will continue to play an important role in coordinating donor interests, and providing technical resources to the MCSC. TNC is also working closely with the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) on updates to State of Environment reports for each Pacific island nation which will provide valuable information to inform future national planning processes. In addition, TNC is preparing a 10-year initiative to support implementation of conservation efforts at community levels—which can be a complementary effort to this project’s national and regional approach.^[16]

Stanford Center for Ocean Solutions (COS): Starting with a \$285,680 grant from Future Earth and the National Center for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis (NCEAS), Stanford COS has been actively

supporting a dialogue over the past 18 months with national, regional, and international experts and the government of Palau for the development of policy and technical considerations to inform implementation of the Palau National Marine Sanctuary (PNMS). The highlighted role of a domestic pelagic fishery is a direct result of the PNMS recommendations. Stanford University has also had an active education role in Micronesia, through summer coursework in partnership with the Palau International Coral Reef Center (PICRC) and Stanford at Sea. A number of Stanford University research faculty also have current and planned research in Micronesia and the broader Pacific Ocean region that will inform and directly contribute to the project.

National-level Baselines

The Marshall Islands Government, in partnership with SPREP and under the coordination of the CCD, conducted an assessment of their environment in 2015. This led to the 2017-2022 State of Environment (SoE) report, which highlights that environmental quality is rapidly deteriorating across RMI due to increases in development and population in the low-lying and limited land area. Guiding RMI's response to issues identified in the SoE through 2022 also includes the 2017-2022 National Environment Management Strategy (NEMS) which promotes sustainable development and integrates environment conservation and the proper governance of development efforts. The existing Reimaanlok process is a key baseline for implementation of the Guiding Principles under the Marshall Islands 2017 National Ocean Policy. MIMRA is the lead agency tasked with coordinating the implementation of the 2017 National Ocean Policy and overseeing the continued expansion of Reimaanlok and Protected Areas Network (PAN) implementation. CMAC has also been tasked with multiple roles on ongoing projects, including roles with implementation of the national GEF UNDP Ridge to Reef (R2R) Program and World Bank Pacific Regional Oceanscape Program (PROP). CMAC, as the technical advisory body for the PAN, is also currently working closely with the PAN Office, which has specified powers and duties as outlined in the amended PAN Act (2018). Currently, approximately 28 atolls and community sites are engaged with CMAC in the Reimaanlok process. The addition of new MC 2030 targets represented additional responsibilities and planning for RMI above this current system supporting the RMI PAN. With the amended PAN Act in 2018, CMAC is now in the process of re-aligning itself in its new role with the newly established PAN Office within MIMRA. The new PAN Office within MIMRA has been established, including the recruitment of at least one PAN Coordinator and other additional staff. The updated PAN regulations from 2020 also note the need for sustainable finance sources to support conservation and management of critical biodiversity and ecosystems in the RMI. At present, seven atoll communities are pending recognition by the local atoll government for a community-based resource management plan guided by Reimaanlok. An additional seven atoll communities are still in initial local government discussions (Steps 1 and 2) prior to an initial community consultation by members of CMAC. A further 13 atoll Local Resource Committees (LRCs) are currently in the process of developing community-based resource management plans. Eight atoll communities (Majuro, Rongelap, Namdrik, Bikini, Likiep, Ailuk, Jaluit, and Arno) with 12 managed areas currently have approved management plans in place and need updated surveys to monitor resource health. Over the next three years, it is expected that between one and three local atoll governments per year will request initial support from CMAC.

In FSM, both terrestrial and marine protected areas are seen as an integral part of an ecosystem-based approach towards sustainable fisheries management. Successful implementation of the updated FSM PAN Policy Framework must be integrated with future coastal fisheries management plans, to ensure that critical commercial fisheries habitats are conserved. Therefore, the existence of the updated PAN framework and the upcoming development of a nationwide coastal fisheries policy creates an opportunity to align PAN management and fisheries management at the local, state, and federal levels. Fortunately, the PAN Technical Committee members will likely include some of the same positions or potentially even the same people involved in development of the coastal fisheries policy in the coming years. In addition, as part of a FSM National Government Initiative, the Blue Prosperity Micronesian Marine Spatial Planning process is an effort to determine existing and potential MPA sites as well as sustainable finance mechanisms for the PAN system. These nation-wide planning efforts should facilitate coordination and consistency of protected area management and coastal fisheries management plans, including the key role of the PAN, while most importantly empowering state-specific implementation and management. The FSM seeks to fill in large geographic data gaps of its marine environments through nation-wide surveys assessing marine communities, relationships, and dynamics to further hone its marine management strategy. This includes operationalizing the Protected Area Network (PAN) Technical Committee (TC) and formulating a governance structure that ties both national and state level initiatives. There is also plans to catalogue existing related projects (e.g., SPC, TNC projects) in the country as a way to leverage existing work and building upon these initiatives.

In Palau, a major goal of the PNMS is to support the development of a domestic pelagic fishery to secure a consistent supply of pelagic fish in Palau's market while supporting Palauan livelihoods. Currently three main efforts are underway to enable the development of a domestic pelagic fishery: 1.) Programs intended to increase the demand of pelagics; 2.) Initiatives to bolster the presence and utilization of Palau's FADs network; and 3.) Legislation that encourages offshore fishing move towards a low-cost, effective technique: pole-and-line fishing. Government, non-profit organizations and private sector entities are organizing efforts to promote domestic pelagic consumption (i.e., the Choose Pelagics program) one result being an Executive Branch Directive requiring all government events to serve only pelagics. The entities involved include: a) Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment and Tourism; b) Palau Conservation Society; c) The Nature Conservancy; d) Palau Sport Fishing Association; e) Palau International Coral Reef Center, and; f) Ebiil Society. Additionally, two microcanning workshops were recently held in Palau to introduce canning of pelagics as value-added products for tourists' souvenirs. To encourage Palauan fishers to catch pelagics, Palau's Bureau of Marine Resources (BMR) redeployed several FADs and held two trainings for fishers to find and utilize the FAD network. BMR continues to hold trainings and FAD maintenance as priorities, yet the future plans are contingent on continued funding. The PNMS legislation created a 'pole-and-line fishing only' zone in its Contiguous Zone (12-24nm) to encourage the revival of this specific type of fishing that was once common in Palau several decades ago. Despite these efforts, little attention has been given to the policies and programs needed to support the supply chain dynamics and human and fishing capacity needs in order for Palau's fishers to become full-time pelagic fishers. Connecting social, ecologic, and economic considerations are highly influential in the development of a domestic pelagic market fisheries sector that will be a crucial leverage point for the success of integrated marine resource management in Palau with the Palau National Marine Sanctuary now fully implemented.

Guam and Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI)

In addition to meeting the 2020 goals of the Micronesia Challenge, Guam is currently negotiating to enter into a Pacific Insular Area Fishery Agreement (PIAFA), which would allow foreign fishing within the 200-mile U.S. EEZ adjacent to Guam with the consultation of the Governor of Guam. To enter into a PIAFA, Guam plans to develop a 3-year Marine Conservation Plan (MCP) highlighting the use of any funds collected by the U.S. Secretary of Commerce under the PIAFA. In CNMI, conservation efforts are supported through a mixture of U.S. and CNMI government regulations, community-led activities, and private-public partnerships. Through the 1985 constitutional amendment of CNMI, a number of sanctuaries have been set aside on uninhabited northern islands and marine habitats, including islands in the Marianas Trench Marine National Monument. The U.S. Government also protects marine habitat on a few islands through its National Historical Monument and National Park. CNMI's Marine Sanctuary Program protects a number of no-take marine reserves around inhabited islands, and several of the local government divisions work together to manage these parks and reserves. Conservation efforts by local organizations and government agencies largely focus on controlling invasive species, minimizing nonpoint source pollution, and regulating marine resource use. Private-public partnerships focus on restoration and education efforts combined with tourism.

3) the proposed alternative scenario with a description of outcomes and components of the project;

Please refer to Sections 2.1 and 2.2 of the WWF GEF Project Document for the proposed alternative scenario including a full description of project components, outcomes, outputs, and activities and Theory of Change.

The overall project objective is to strengthen transboundary integrated marine resource management for healthy marine ecosystems and sustainable coastal fisheries in Micronesia through the 2030 Micronesia Challenge ?including support towards national and regional integrated resource planning, coordination, and awareness?with direct support to the GEF-recipient countries of RMI, FSM, and Palau and indirect benefits to Guam and CNMI. The project is addressing priorities raised in the WPWP LME TDA-SAP and is aligned with key ocean goals, including important milestones of the Micronesia Challenge, Aichi Target 11, and Sustainable Development Goal 14. The project builds on the opportunities provided by the endorsement of the 2030 Micronesia Challenge goals outlined in the 2019 MIF Joint Communique (Appendix J) with development of MC 2030 national and regional strategic plans.

The project theory of change is framed within the three priority transboundary concerns identified by the WPWP LME TDA-SAP: (i) pollution of marine and freshwater (including groundwater) from land-based activities; (ii) physical, ecological and hydrological modification of critical habitats, and; (iii) unsustainable exploitation of living and nonliving resources. To address these priority transboundary concerns the project has targeted key barriers through a pair of coordinated interventions at the national and regional levels. At the national level, the project strategy facilitates inter-agency dialogue through a working group framework approach that is focused on establishing, updating, and integrating national marine management priorities in alignment with MC 2030 conservation and community benefit targets. This includes a specific focus on strengthening national policies to meet the MC 2030 Process Target that aims to, *?incorporate regional and jurisdictional fisheries management approaches, integrated with MPAs.?* Complementing this at the regional level, the project strategy aims to strengthen the

Micronesia Challenge through direct support to MCRO and build momentum for the future of the 2030 Micronesia Challenge. The targeted interventions are supported by knowledge management and monitoring and evaluation systems that ensure building of efficient adaptive management and overall capacity building efforts across Micronesia that improve long-term success of the Micronesia Challenge. Collectively, the project has been designed to coordinate and harmonize project activities to ultimately ensure that long-term provision of resources for ocean livelihoods are enhanced and sustained across Micronesia. The following text frames the project's theory of change succinctly and Figure 2 presents the project theory of change graphically.

The project theory of change aims to (1) strengthen national contributions to MC 2030 conservation and community benefit targets and process targets that address WPWP LME SAP priority transboundary concerns, especially management of nearshore, particularly around MPAs and marine systems and sustainable fisheries, as well as (2) ensure the governance and institutional capacities and systems are in place to harmonize national contributions to MC 2030 and strengthen regional coordination through the Micronesia Coordination Regional Office (MCRO).

The project theory of change is that:

- ? If inter-governmental working groups are convened in each country with key participants from different government (note: working groups already exist in RMI and FSM and there is government commitment for a new working group in Palau) and non-government sectors (including relevant national private sector actors);
- ? If these inter-governmental working groups identify and develop national plans, policies, and tools that fill gaps in transboundary resource management and contribute to MC 2030 targets for healthy marine ecosystems and sustainable fisheries;
 - ? Then plans and policies that contribute to MC 2030 will be endorsed/put in place by these key government sectors, advancing MC 2030 conservation and community benefit targets;
 - ? Then progress is made towards addressing WPWP LME SAP priority transboundary concerns for healthier marine ecosystems;
 - ? Then national policies integrated with MPAs will move nearshore fish stocks towards more sustainable levels.
- ? If MCRO has structures and plans in place ? including a governance structure, fundraising strategy, communications plan and products, and a regional system to measure MC 2030 targets;
 - ? Then MCRO will be able to coordinate, monitor, and communicate progress against the MC 2030 targets, and ensure a successful regional approach.
- ? If there is national progress towards MC 2030 under regional leadership,

- ? Then the long-term provision of resources for ocean livelihoods will be enhanced and sustained across Micronesia;
- ? Then regional coordination is strengthened, and management of transboundary marine resource management is significantly improved.

This one-step GEF medium-sized project is designed for GEF funding to leverage timely baseline opportunities and employing a framework approach that allows parallel efforts at the national level that facilitate interdisciplinary and multi-sector stakeholder working groups, providing more opportunities to foster collaboration, exchange knowledge, and ensure common progress for strengthening transboundary integrated marine resource management across Micronesia. The project objective is to strengthen transboundary integrated marine resource management for healthy marine ecosystems and sustainable coastal fisheries in Micronesia through the 2030 Micronesia Challenge.

At the regional level, the project is directly designed to support the recently expanded Micronesia Challenge 2030 conservation and community benefit targets and process targets, as an avenue to delivering progress on healthy marine ecosystems and sustainable fisheries. At the national level, the project leverages important national baselines that support national priorities linked with marine resource primary transboundary concerns whilst developing strategic plans for making national progress towards Micronesia Challenge 2030. In RMI, the project is supporting the Coastal Management Advisory Council (CMAC), which has recently been formalized and is in charge of the implementation of the country's Reimaanlok community engagement process to inform strengthening of RMI's PAN and National Ocean Policy. In FSM, the project is supporting a recently created PAN Technical Committee aimed at developing a nation-wide integrated coastal and marine management plan, that is to include the role of FSM's PAN in coastal fisheries management. In Palau, the project is supporting the establishment of a new national inter-agency working group that will provide technical and policy recommendations for developing a new domestic pelagic fishery that aims to relieve fishing pressure from coastal reef environments as part of implementation of the Palau National Marine Sanctuary (PNMS).

The project consists of three linked project components. The first component deploys a framework approach to facilitate three parallel national inter-agency working groups filling targeted policy gaps to assist countries with national progress on respective national priorities and achieve regional Micronesia Challenge 2030 goals and aligned with WPWP LME SAP priority transboundary concerns. Project activities under the first project component are focused on supporting national-level efforts in the three GEF-eligible countries, including RMI, FSM, and Palau. While the US territories of Guam and CNMI are not directly eligible for GEF funding, they will receive indirect project benefits, especially linked to regional project activities under components 2 and 3 aimed at strengthening the MC. The second project component is focused on facilitating regional natural resources management in Micronesia, with a specific emphasis on assisting the Micronesia Challenge Regional Office (MCRO) with its increasing coordination responsibilities across the five Micronesia jurisdictions. Lastly, the project is supported by a third project component aimed at capturing project knowledge for dissemination within Micronesia and globally via IW:LEARN, as well as sound project monitoring and evaluation to inform long-term success of natural resources management across Micronesia.

Component 1: Coordinated strengthening of national integrated marine resource management

Outcome 1.1: National policies and plans under MC 2030 goals targeting marine ecosystem health and coastal fisheries management

The focus of the first project component is employing a framework approached for a targeted series of national working dialogues over the three-year life of the project that promote national inter-agency collaborative interests towards achieving MC 2030 goals to address transboundary concerns identified in the WPWP TDA-SAP, complemented with input from key stakeholders to include private sector actors, civil society, local communities, and regional and international experts, where appropriate and at the request of government. The advantage of the framework approach is that it will foster collaboration and coordination by ensuring the three national level interdisciplinary and multi-sector stakeholder working groups are occurring in parallel, providing opportunities to foster collaboration, exchange knowledge, and advancing progress on a shared timeline. The focus of the national working groups will be to develop (1) national MC 2030 policy gap analyses to identify areas of interest for achieving MC 2030 Targets aligned with sustaining healthy coastal and marine ecosystems and promoting sustainable nearshore fisheries management, (2) national policy recommendations and plans for national strategy development for improved management of marine systems, MPAs, and fisheries, directly aligned with the 2030 Micronesia Challenge conservation and community benefit targets, with a focus on key coastal and marine economic sectors of Micronesia large ocean states facing environmental threats, and (3) MC 2030 Strategic Plans for FSM, RMI and Palau. The outcome from this project component will be improved national integrated marine resource management to make progress towards MC 2030 targets. This outcome will be achieved through four project outputs linked to four main project activities. Note that the working group details for each partner nation are included at the end of this subsection for Outcome 1.1.

Output 1.1.1: National policy gap analysis to identify priority pathways for achieving MC 2030 targets on marine protected area planning and coastal fisheries management approaches

Output 1.1.1 includes completion of a national policy gap analysis for each partner nation that reviews existing national policies for achieving MC 2020 milestones to identify gaps that must be addressed in order to achieve each country's MC 2030 goals that promote healthy coastal and marine ecosystems and sustainable nearshore fisheries management. The "National MC 2030 Policy Gap Analysis" from each country will identify the national MC priorities as informed by the existing initiatives at the local, state, and national levels supporting each country's progress towards the most recent phase of the MC that concluded in 2020. In addition, the MC 2020 Evaluation (completed in May 2020) will also inform the initial structure and topics of interest for the new analysis. This first project output will occur immediately upon project start as it will serve as the central focus of discussion within the national inter-agency working group dialogues (Output 1.1.2) and direct the policy and planning deliverables (Output 1.1.3), and ultimately serve as the framework for the National MC 2030 Strategic Plans (Output 1.1.4).

Activity 1.1.1.1: Develop one National MC 2030 Policy Gap Analysis per country (total of three Policy Gap Analyses)

To support the development of these National MC 2030 Policy Gap Analysis efforts, Activity 1.1.1.1 will provide funds to the national subgrant recipients to develop and/or commission the development of the gap analyses. This activity will have a short duration (six to nine months) and be initiated early in the project with the intent of informing the working group dialogues as well as the final development of the National MC 2030 Strategic Plan. Specific details for the approach of these analyses efforts will ensure that there is some level of parallel structure amongst the three nations in the final outputs.

Output 1.1.2: National working group meetings including key national and regional stakeholders, including the private sector, to deliver Output 1.1.3 and 1.1.4 (leveraging inter-agency working groups: CMAC (RMI), PAN TC (FSM), DPF sector (Palau))

Output 1.1.2 will facilitate a series of national-level working group dialogues that are discrete to the project duration and build on existing inter-agency committees and marine management mechanisms in each country. As such, Output 1.1.2 will function as the main mechanism for the project's national level framework approach aimed at fostering stronger collaboration and coordination among the three participating nations by working in parallel towards the national policy strengthening efforts under Component 1. This creates specific opportunities for participating nations to collaborate on development of policy recommendations, exchange expertise, information, and other knowledge resources, and advancing planning progress on a shared timeline. More specifically in RMI, Output 1.1.2 is building on the existing Coastal Management Advisory Council (CMAC), which was recently formalized through the amended PAN Act in 2018, with an advisory role to the PAN Office and technical assistance in the implementation of the country's *Reimaanlok* community engagement process in support of the RMI PAN and National Ocean Policy. In FSM, Output 1.1.2 is supporting the PAN Technical Committee that was formalized in legislation in late 2019 and with a need to develop a nation-wide integrated coastal and marine management plan, including the critical role of FSM State-level development and management of the PAN for ecosystem-based coastal fisheries management. In Palau, Output 1.1.2 is supporting the newly established national inter-agency domestic pelagic fishery sector working group as part of long-term implementation of the Palau National Marine Sanctuary (PNMS).

The national-level working group dialogues will include participation of private sector actors, the other relevant GEF projects, and regional organizations, including MCRO and MCT in national working group dialogues, when deemed acceptable and appropriate by the national government and at the request of working group members. While not receiving direct funding from GEF funds, participants from the US Territory of Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands may also be invited to participate and contribute to national dialogues at their expense. By having some continuity of regional organizations supporting each of the national-level working groups, each country can help its neighbors with experience sharing on marine management challenges and solutions (linked with regional activities in Component 2 and knowledge management and IW:LEARN in Component 3). More importantly, shared participation will ensure there is enhanced coordination of marine management strategy implementation, harmonization of marine management approaches such as monitoring and consistent data collection, and complementary ecosystem-based spatial management approaches. Collectively, this output will ensure that the impact across Micronesia will be more than the individual national-level results.

Activity 1.1.2.1 Strengthen existing inter-agency bodies through targeted series of meetings focused on project-specific deliverables and priorities: (RMI: CMAC; FSM: PAN TC; Palau: DPF WG)

The core activity under Output 1.1.2 will support parallel inter-agency working group dialogues over the three-year project duration by holding at least two in-person meetings per year per country for a total of at least six per country. More frequent virtual meetings will also be held, recommended to be held at least monthly, so that working group members can review, distill, and refine the policy and technical recommendations, tools, and other working group outputs agreed at the first working group meeting. The inter-agency working group dialogues are the main mechanism for the other project Component 1 outputs, including the policy gap analysis (Output 1.1.1), National policy recommendations and planning tools (Output 1.1.3), and the development of national Micronesia Challenge 2030 Strategic Plans (Output 1.1.4).

Activity 1.1.2.1 will support and strengthen national inter-agency working groups in each respective nation. The specific actions include hosting in-person meetings in each country, including all the technical document preparatory and logistical tasks. The working group meetings will:

- ? Develop project specific inter-agency working group TORs
- ? Commission and oversee development of Project Component 1 deliverables ? Policy Gap Analysis (Output 1.1.1), National Policy and Planning Recommendations (Output 1.1.3), and National MC 2030 Strategic Plan (Output 1.1.4);
- ? Facilitate targeted dialogues on coastal-marine management priority issues based on existing national plans, MC 2030 targets, and identified WPWP LME SAP transboundary concerns;
- ? Invite national private sector actors, as appropriate
- ? At the request of national governments, identify potential regional and international experts that can advise working group(s) on national priority issues;
- ? Include representation from the MCRO and Stanford COS to guide alignment of national priority setting with alignment of MC 2030 goals;
- ? At the request of national governments, identify a working group facilitator to ensure meeting organization, and follow-up and continued momentum between in-person meetings.

Output 1.1.3 National plans, strategies, and policy recommendations to integrate protected area planning and fisheries management approaches (linked with Outputs 1.1.1 and 1.1.2)

Output 1.1.3 is focused on additional direct support to the three national-level working groups for national-level policy recommendations and planning tools to advise integrated marine resource management, including direct alignment with MC 2030 targets. More specifically in RMI, Output 1.1.3 will focus on an update to the CMAC Strategic Plan that aligns with coastal fisheries management objectives as well as MC 2030 Targets. In FSM, Output 1.1.3 is supporting the PAN Technical Committee as they refine PAN management documents such that they align with an updated

nationwide coastal fisheries policy as well as MC 2030 Targets. In Palau, Output 1.1.3 is supporting a new assessment of the Palauan domestic pelagic fishery sector that aligns with management and monitoring objectives from the Palau National Marine Sanctuary (PNMS) as well as MC 2030 Targets. Anticipated examples of policy recommendations and planning tools that will be developed under this output likely could include *inter alia*:

- ? ecosystem-based management recommendations for commercially important coastal fisheries by specific species;
- ? marine resource data layers and analysis informing marine spatial planning (MSP);
- ? policy and ecosystem-based local source-to-sea connectivity spatial analysis and management recommendations for commercially important local habitats;
- ? strengthening of protected area networks for targeted marine resource management goals aligned with MC 2030;
- ? analysis of private sector engagement investment opportunities for sustainable management of key marine natural resources, or;
- ? improved management mechanisms and/or frameworks for strengthened inter-agency coordination.

Activity 1.1.3.1 National working groups develop policy recommendations and planning tools between working group meetings

In conjunction with the ongoing project Activity 1.1.2.1, Activity 1.1.3.1 will provide ongoing support to each national working group to develop the specific policy recommendations and planning tools that were indicatively identified at each national first working-group meeting. More specifically, Activity 1.1.3.1 resources will allow working groups to synthesize and analyze existing data or conduct targeted data collection to fill specific information gaps to support science-based recommendations for improved marine management that is directly linked to identified working group deliverables. This Activity may also include working group commissioning specific studies, assessments, reports, or surveys that directly inform the project deliverables. Funding from Activity 1.1.3.1 will be available for working group member organizations or consultants to perform these tasks. All decisions on funding will adhere to proper procurement policies outlined in project agreements and subgrants and be detailed in advance through project annual work plans that are approved by the project steering committee. Activity 1.1.3.1 will provide the means for one updated resource management strategy document per country.

Output 1.1.4 Micronesia Challenge 2030 Strategic Plan (RMI, FSM, Palau)

Output 1.1.4 provides for the commissioning and development of an MC 2030 National Strategic Plan that outlines the intended approach to achieve MC 2030 objectives for each nation. The national MC Strategic Plans serve as the cumulative result of the other project specific content, actions, and findings from the working groups relevant to accomplishing the nationally identified MC 2030 goals. Each

national MC 2030 Strategic Plan will either be developed as a stand-alone document or be a dedicated part of a larger national-relevant planning document effort for mainstreaming MC 2030 national goal planning with national-level integrated marine management goals, national ocean policies, blue economy strategies, and/or broader sustainable development objectives.

Activity 1.1.4.1 Develop one national MC 2030 Strategic Plan per country (total of three MC 2030 National Strategic Plans)

Activity 1.1.4.1 ensures dedicated funding is available to each national working group to develop one national MC 2030 Strategic Plan per country. This activity is linked to the other project activities under this output, but with specific funds to support associated document finalization and publication costs. This activity ensures that national planning efforts supported by Component 1 are directly linked to the Micronesia Challenge regional efforts under Component 2. By the end of the project, the development of three national MC 2030 Strategic Plans (to be supported by an MCRO Strategic Plan developed in Component 2) will ensure MC 2030 conservation and community benefit targets are met by all participating countries.

Anticipated outputs for Component 1 from each nation were determined to address comments from the draft Micronesia Challenge evaluation and to achieve proposed targets of the Micronesia Challenge 2030. Specifically, the national-level outputs listed below are steps towards effective management of marine resources, integration of protected areas into regional and jurisdictional fisheries management approaches, and greater investment by MC governments in sustainable finance mechanisms. The outputs from each nation include the following:

1. National policy gap analysis to identify priority pathways for achieving MC 2030 Targets [one policy gap analysis per country]
2. National working group meetings (working group TOR, meeting minutes, participation lists, and other relevant meeting outputs) including key national and regional stakeholders, including the private sector (leveraging inter-agency working groups: CMAC (RMI), PAN TC (FSM), DPF Sector (Palau) [at least six meetings per country]
3. National plans, strategies, and policy recommendations to updated existing national strategy documents. Within each country, at least two deliverables will be produced directly linked with Outputs 1.1.1 and 1.1.2 and informing Output 1.1.4. These include: (1) nationally relevant MC recommendations as highlighted by the policy gap analysis; (2) nationally relevant recommendations for integrating protected area planning and fisheries management approaches. The specific national strategies that will be the recipient of the recommendations are as follows:
 - a. RMI: Update CMAC Strategic Plan to align with coastal fisheries management and MC 2030 objectives
 - b. FSM: Update PAN management documents to align with nationwide coastal fisheries management and MC 2030 objectives

- c. Palau: Assessment of domestic pelagic fishery sector to align with PNMS and MC 2030 objectives

4. A national Micronesia Challenge 2030 Strategic Plan [one Plan per country]

Specific national-level working group project support under Outcome 1.1:

Marshall Islands Working Group ? Coastal Management Advisory Council (CMAC):

RMI will be supported through MIMRA to address the specific CMAC barriers, including updating outdated strategic planning needs and filling data and data management goals to meet CMAC's newly formalized objective under the 2018 amended PAN Act. Under Project Component 1, the GEF funding will follow a framework approach in each nation. GEF funding will be used to support CMAC, as a technical working group, through supporting a series of working group meetings that are dedicated to producing policy recommendations and planning tools. For CMAC, the specific deliverables will include an updated CMAC Strategic Plan and Terms of Reference with integration of the latest guidance from the RMI PAN regulations and policies, National Ocean Policy, 2017-2022 National Environment Management Strategy (NEMS), and amended PAN Act—all aligned to achieve proposed Micronesia Challenge 2030 targets. In doing so, CMAC will provide the Marshall Islands government with a nationally relevant Micronesia Challenge 2030 Strategic Plan by the end of the project.

To accomplish this goal, GEF funding will also be made available to CMAC under Component 1 to commission targeted activities to fill data and information gaps, as necessary, that inform the development of a science-based updated and integrated CMAC Strategic Plan. These activities may include working with CMAC member organizations and/or outside experts as requested by CMAC, to commission reports and other documents to fill data and information gaps that directly inform strategic planning and adaptive management goals aligned under the project. The specific activities will be decided by CMAC members as part of the annual project work plan during project implementation, which is approved annually by the Project Steering Committee. Activities will be limited to assimilation and synthesis of existing data, modest data collection and other targeted research to fill specific information gaps, spatial analysis and other modeling products, that inform policy and technical recommendations and planning tools as part of the overall planning for a science-based updated and integrated CMAC Strategic Plan.

More specifically for RMI, the GEF funding will be granted to the PAN Office within MIMRA, which serves as the secretariat for CMAC. Funding will be made available to MIMRA for the following identified indicative activities:

- a) MIMRA to commission the development of a national policy gap analysis that identifies priority pathways for RMI to achieve MC 2030 goals;
- b) CMAC to host an initial national priority setting workshop to identify the top national priority(ies) that will be the specific national focus and deliverable(s) of the project aligned under the above stated priorities and Micronesia Challenge 2030 goals;

- c) CMAC to host meetings, including travel costs for outer atoll members, and regional and international experts, as requested by CMAC members, to facilitate an on-going review, refinement, and finalization of a science-based updated and integrated CMAC Strategic Plan;
- d) Funding for CMAC to commission specific reports, technical assessments, planning tools, and other documents, that directly support development of at least two policy recommendations or planning tools relevant to the strategic planning goals of CMAC and PAN priorities aligned with regional Micronesia Challenge 2020 and 2030 goals;
- e) MIMRA to commission the development of a National Micronesia Challenge 2030 Strategic Plan for RMI;
- f) CMAC Funding for modest publication costs, including copy editing, graphic design, and printing for intermediate and final deliverables from the Working Group.

Current Coastal Management Advisory Council (CMAC) Membership:

- ? Marshall Islands Marine Resources Authority (MIMRA) (CMAC Secretary)
- ? RMI Environmental Protection Authority (RMIEPA) (current CMAC Chair)
- ? Marshall Islands Conservation Society (MICS) (current CMAC Vice-Chair)
- ? Climate Change Directorate (CCD)
- ? College of the Marshall Islands (CMI)
- ? RMI Historic Preservation Office (RMI HPO)
- ? International Office of Migration (IOM)
- ? Ministry of Culture and Internal Affairs (MoCIA)
- ? RMI Ministry of Natural Resources and Commerce (MoNRC)
- ? Office of Commerce, Investment and Tourism (OCIT)
- ? University of the South Pacific (USP)
- ? Women United Together in the Marshall Islands (WUTMI)
- ? Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade (MoFAT)
- ? Jo-Jikum

Federated States of Micronesia Working Group - PAN Technical Committee (TC)

This GEF regional International Waters project will provide resources to the FSM government through the Department of Resources and Development (R&D) to advance nationwide PAN management. The FSM government formalized its PAN Framework in 2019 which included the formalization of a PAN Technical Committee (PAN TC). While the PAN TC has been formalized on paper, the TC has not yet met in person. The objective of the PAN TC is to provide support for PAN implementation at the state level, especially focused on harmonizing efforts across FSM. Project Outcome 1.1 will include support to the PAN TC for technical and policy recommendations that can inform the development of enhanced protected area management strategies while also benefiting the parallel development of the coastal fisheries policy and nation-wide yet state-led coastal and marine resource management plan, with an emphasis on the role of protected areas in ecosystem-based management of coastal fisheries (as informed by the recent state coastal fisheries assessment conducted by the World Bank/PROP). Technical support at the national level via the PAN TC provided by the project facilitates further development of state efforts, using similar integrated marine resource management approaches that are aligned with broader efforts at the national and regional level and are tuned for the local context. The planned state-led PAN management efforts in FSM create a strong need, especially at early stages during the three-year project duration, for coordinated in-person meetings. The project will support the PAN TC with funding to host convenings for state and national PAN affiliates over the course of the project to share case studies, lessons learned, and implementation strategies. These convenings shall provide an opportunity for a broader view of the status of PAN in FSM as well as a forum to explore other opportunities in PAN implementation. This technical support may also assist states in their PAN-related decision making by providing them with project-supported targeted, science-based information related to proposed PAs and MPAs and the process by which to create these MPAs and the extent of their parameters.

Funding will be made available to R&D for the following identified indicative activities:

- a) R&D to commission the development of a national policy gap analysis that identifies priority pathways for FSM to achieve MC 2030 Targets;
- b) PAN TC to host an initial national priority-setting workshop to identify the top national priority(ies) that will be the specific national focus and deliverable(s) of the project aligned under the above stated priorities and Micronesia Challenge 2030 goals.
- c) PAN TC to host meetings, including travel costs for state members, and regional and international experts, as requested by the PAN TC members, to facilitate an on-going review, refinement, and finalization of a science-based nation-wide integrated coastal and marine resource management plan with a focus on coastal fisheries;
- d) Funding for the PAN TC to commission specific reports, technical assessments, planning tools, and other documents, that directly support development of at least two policy recommendations or planning tools relevant to the strategic planning goals of PAN TC and state-level PAN priorities aligned with regional Micronesia Challenge 2020 and 2030 goals;
- e) R&D to commission the development of a National Micronesia Challenge 2030 Strategic Plan for FSM;

- f) PAN TC funding for modest publication costs, including copy editing, graphic design, and printing for intermediate and final deliverables from the Working Group.

Proposed PAN Technical Committee Membership:

- ? State Focal Points (four members - one per state)
- ? FSM Resources and Development (one member and committee secretariat)
- ? FSM College of Micronesia (one academic member)
- ? Regional Science Organization (one member - SPC)
- ? International NGO (one member - TNC)
- ? Micronesia Conservation Trust (one non-voting member)

Palau Working Group ? Domestic Pelagic Fishery Inter-agency Working Group

This GEF regional International Waters project will provide resources to the Palauan government through MNRET to enhance enabling conditions for a domestic pelagic fishery sector. As part of the Palau National Marine Sanctuary (PNMS) implementation, it has been recognized that establishing a domestic pelagic fishery is an economic opportunity to bolster Palau's domestic fishing sector, while relieving the current fishing pressure on Palau's coral reefs, a national treasure largely responsible for Palau's tourism boom over the past two decades. Given that foreign fishing fleets dominate Palau's domestic supply of pelagic fish, the establishment of a domestic pelagic fishery may also serve to stabilize supply of pelagic fish due to potentially declining catch of foreign fishing resulting from restricted access from PNMS. If the supply of pelagic fish does not meet Palau's demand, tourists will switch to eating reef fish even though they have no strong preference for either fish type—a potential unintended consequence of the PNMS. The government of Palau has requested that an inter-agency working group be established to assess and provide recommendations for government action to bolster its domestic pelagic fishery sector in Palau. The Bureau of Marine Resources within the Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment & Tourism (MNRET) has been tasked with this effort and aims to invite representatives from key government agencies, non-governmental organizations, stakeholders groups, fishermen, business leaders and regional experts to design policy recommendations, programs, initiatives and tools for enhancing Palau's domestic pelagic fishery (from harvest to consumption).

This project will directly support the working group with funding for at least two in-person meetings in Palau per year for three years with virtual meetings in between. Similar to the other working groups in RMI and FSM, the project will also facilitate working group objectives towards designing policies and solutions to overcoming the major obstacles hindering fishers from entering the pelagic fishery as well as marketing opportunities for optimizing economic revenue, including through supporting value-added products. For example, market-based solutions, like designing a local sustainable "brand" of pelagic fish served in restaurants, will be discussed by the group to co-develop, evaluate and adapt the implementation of such solutions. This group will also assess ways Palau's marine management agencies (e.g., MNRET, MOJ, and PICRC) can facilitate better integration and collaboration across the

public and private sector for supporting and sustaining a domestic pelagic fishery. The deliverables from the project working group including an assessment of the domestic pelagic fisheries sector will be part of a portfolio to illuminate effects of the PNMS, means to strengthen Palau's domestic fishery sector and provide Palau's leaders with information to support evidence-based decision making.

Funding will be made available to MNRET for the following identified indicative activities:

- a) MNRET to commission the development of a national policy gap analysis that identifies priority pathways for Palau to achieve MC 2030 Targets;
- b) MNRET, in forming the Palau Domestic Fishery Working Group to host an initial national priority setting workshop to identify the top national priority(ies) that will be the specific national focus and deliverable(s) of the project aligned under the above stated priorities and Micronesia Challenge 2030 Targets.
- c) Palau Domestic Fishery Working Group to host meetings, including travel costs for outer island members, and regional and international experts, as requested by the working group, to facilitate an on-going review, refinement, and finalization of a science-based nation-wide integrated coastal and marine resource management plan with a focus on coastal fisheries;
- d) Funding for the Palau Domestic Fishery Working Group to commission specific reports, technical assessments, planning tools, and other documents, that directly support development of at least two policy recommendations or planning tools relevant to the strategic planning goals of working group and national PNMS priorities aligned with regional Micronesia Challenge 2020 and 2030 goals;
- e) MNRET to commission the development of a National Micronesia Challenge 2030 Strategic Plan for Palau;
- f) Palau Domestic Fishery Working Group funding for modest publication costs, including copy editing, graphic design, and printing.

Proposed Palau Domestic Pelagic Fishery Working Group membership:

- ? Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment and Tourism
 - o Bureau of Marine Resources
 - o Division of Oceanic Fisheries Management
- ? Ministry of Finance
- ? Ministry of Justice
- ? Palau International Coral Reef Center
- ? Palau Sport Fishing Association

- ? Ebiil Society
- ? Belau Offshore Fisheries Inc.
- ? Businesses (fishery operations, restaurants, consolidators)
- ? Friends of the PNMS
- ? Representatives of state governments
- ? Northern Reefs Fisheries Co-op
- ? Palau Conservation Society
- ? External and regional fisheries development and marketing experts
 - o Parties to the Nauru Agreement Office (PNAO)
 - o Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA)
 - o The Pacific Community (SPC)
 - o Economists
 - o Fisheries Specialists
 - o Marketing and Sustainability experts

Component 2. Sustaining regional marine resources management in Micronesia

Component 2 has been designed with two complementary outcomes. The first project outcome aims to strengthen the Micronesia Challenge Regional Office (MCRO) to successfully coordinate the implementation of MC 2030. The second project outcome strives for high-level government support for the MC 2030 goals for improved marine ecosystems. Together, a strengthened MCRO to coordinate a MC 2030 with positive political momentum creates a strong enabling environment for successful implementation of national and regional MC 2030 Strategic Plans and significantly increases the likelihood for achieving the expanded conservation and community benefit targets and process targets of the MC 2030.

Outcome 2.1: Strengthening MCRO for successful implementation of MC 2030

Project Outcome 2.1 will be achieved through two project outputs that are focused on strengthening the Micronesia Challenge Regional Office (MCRO) to foster collaboration and coordination of nations in planning and implementation of MC 2030 goals to sustain healthy ecosystems and promote sustainable nearshore fisheries management. The first output (Output 2.1.1) is focused on providing resources to strengthening coordination of the Micronesia Challenge. The second output (Output 2.1.2) will support development of key Micronesia Challenge communication products. Collectively these two outputs

will provide key resources to that strengthen MCRO's ability to deliver its mandate of MC coordination, including the expanded responsibilities identified under the MC 2030 process targets (see Appendix J).

Output 2.1.1: Updated Strategic Plan, monitoring protocols, and communication plan & products

Project Output 2.1.1 will support coordination for the future of the Micronesia Challenge. The specific project activities of this output include resources for the MCRO to both build capacity as well as raise the profile of the MCRO among Micronesia partners, especially as the key coordination office for the Micronesia Challenge. This will be accomplished through seven project activities.

Activity 2.1.1.1 MCRO Coordinator engaging across MC region

This project activity is focused on providing resources for the MCRO coordinator to travel to at least one national working group meeting (linked to Component 1) per year, for a total of participation in three national working group meetings by the end of the project. Not only will MCRO coordinator participation in the national working groups provide regional insights to national-level planning, but it will also provide an opportunity for the MCRO to better learn about national-level challenges and opportunities related to MC 2030 strategic planning. Additionally, as the MCRO coordinator is a relatively new position, this activity also provides a good opportunity for relationship building and networking among national and regional entities.

Activity 2.1.1.2 MC representation at key ocean events

There are multiple important ocean-related regional and international events planned over the project's duration (2021-2023). This project activity aims to capture this opportunity to showcase past Micronesia Challenge successes as well as build momentum and support for the future MC 2030 targets. This will be achieved by providing funding for the MC to be represented by at least one staff person (e.g., from MCSC, MCRO, member nations, or regional entity) at key ocean events—including virtual and in-person participation to reflect national policies and post-pandemic realities. Where Micronesia governments are already participating in their own national capacity, this project activity will also provide resources to ensure government representatives have coordinated MC materials and talking points. The project has specifically identified two important ocean events: a) the UN Oceans Conference held annually in June, and b) CBD COP held biennially in the fall.

Activity 2.1.1.3 Develop a MCRO 2020-2030 Strategic Plan, including fundraising plan and MCRO operational structure recommendations

This project activity is aimed at developing a MCRO 2020-2030 Strategic Plan, which includes a specific emphasis on MCRO fundraising and operational structure recommendations. The funding from this activity is intended to be used for recruiting a consultant to facilitate a long-term planning dialogue with relevant MC stakeholders and outside experts to inform an overall MCRO Strategic Plan. This MCRO 2020-2030 Strategic Plan facilitation will include incorporating recommendations from past GEF and non-GEF project evaluations and the recently complete Micronesia Challenge evaluation from May 2020. The MCRO 2020-2030 Strategic Plan will be a key document for MCRO to

successfully implement the MC 2030 goals by building on over a decade of lessons learned from the previous phase of the MC.

Activity 2.1.1.4 Establish central document repository

As part of efforts under Outcome 2.1 to strengthening MCRO, Activity 2.1.1.4 is focused on improving MCRO's ability to manage document and data resources for greater coordination and transparency throughout the region. The current absence of any central document repository has been a major barrier for capturing regionally relevant resources that stem from national-level dialogues, archiving Micronesia Challenge institutional memory, efficient staff handing-over of MCRO staff and MCSC members, and improved accountability from decisions and follow-up items at MC and MCRO meetings. Further, the role of MCRO in managing a central document repository online will continue to strengthen the understanding of MCRO's role in coordination of the Micronesia Challenge for not just core Micronesia partners, but also external audiences. The specific activity funding will be directed at obtaining a license to use a web-based software management system that is actively managed by MCRO staff. The document repository will be part of the current Micronesia Challenge website that is managed by MCRO. The primary documents of interest include, but are not limited to: Articles of Incorporation for MC jurisdictions, initial Strategic Plan, MIF Communiques, Communications Plans (regional and per jurisdiction), bylaws, and relevant publications.

Activity 2.1.1.5 Organization and logistics for MC side event at major international event

Similar to Activity 2.1.1.2, this project activity is focused on capturing the opportunity of a major international conference to showcase Micronesia Challenge successes and build momentum and support for MC 2030. The specific funding for this activity is focused on contracted staff time on organization, logistics, and associated direct costs for executing a high-level Micronesia Challenge side event at a major event for global ocean-minded audiences. This GEF activity is expected to be matched with additional funding from MCT for the event. The Micronesia Challenge high-level side event will also be closely linked to the updated MC communications plan under Output 2.1.2. This will include leveraging the current MC Young Champions program, whereby videos made by MCYC interns can be used for fundraising.

Activity 2.1.1.6 MCT Provides technical support to MCRO

Based on severely limited capacity of the MCRO, the Micronesia Conservation Trust (MCT) has provided substantial financial and administrative backstopping to MCRO, including fundraising, grants management, and strategic advising. In an effort to strengthen MCRO, this project activity is focused on funding MCT Technical Support for the MCRO over the life of the project, with an explicit focus on MCRO staff training to build financial and project management capacity of MCRO (e.g., budget development and oversight, work plan development and operationalization), such that MCRO is in a stronger position after three years without the current level of MCT backstopping. This activity funding will be specifically for part-time MCT technical and financial staff support and associated technical assistance to the MCRO coordinator.

Activity 2.1.1.7: Enhance MC Measures databases and monitoring capacity

This project activity is aimed at enhancing three aspects of the MC Measures groups: 1) advance group objectives for effective monitoring, 2) enhance capacity of monitoring data collection, management, and analysis, and 3) improve the process of coordination amongst the Measures group leads, the MCRO Coordinator, MC Steering Committee and national inter-agency working groups under Project Outcome 1.1. As stated in the Micronesia Challenge Evaluation (completed in May 2020), there is a need to refine the sets of indicators and monitoring approaches for assessments that can inform management. Each of the three Measures groups (marine, terrestrial, and socio-economic) have evolved and matured since 2008 along different timelines. In that time, unique needs for each group have been identified. In addition, the distinct work streams have led to an increased need for re-emphasis of coordination in monitoring and communication efforts. Ultimately, there is a greater need for consistent coordination to ensure that the monitoring efforts and processes align with the operations and objectives of the MC as it relates to improved management of coastal ecosystems and fisheries.

The funds for this activity will be subcontracted through Micronesia Conservation Trust to lead organizations within the respective measures groups to advance database systems and analysis methods. Through MCT/MCRO and the PMU, these efforts will be conducted in concert with the national-level project activities under Component 1 to improve coordinated efforts to monitor the respective stress and progress indicators linked to the policy recommendations and broader MC goals for improving marine ecosystem health and advancing sustainable coastal fisheries management. Funds will also be used to provide capacity building experiences that improve monitoring data collection. Because of the project's focus on coastal and marine ecosystem health and sustainable coastal fisheries management, there will be an inherent focus of this activity on the MC marine measures group, but relevant terrestrial and socio-economic measure group efforts that advance the project's marine focused objectives will also be included as part of an integrated and source-to-sea approach. The resulting refined approach to measures data collection, management, and analysis will aid broader MCRO coordination, tracking progress towards MC 2030 goals, and MCSC decision making.

Output 2.1.2: Enhanced visibility of Micronesia Challenge

With the end of the initial Micronesia Challenge, Sustainable Development Goals and Aichi Target milestones, Our Oceans, CBD COP and establishment of 2030 targets and plans, IW-LEARN IWC10, and other key regional events, 2020 will be the beginning of an important decade for the marine conservation and environmental development community. The focus of this output is to develop communication products, including a MC communication plan, to increase fundraising, support, participation, and collaboration of Micronesia countries at regional and global processes, with the goal to bolster their conservation leadership for increased influence, investment, and impact.

This output will be achieved through four project activities. Building from the enhanced visibility of the MC through representation at major ocean events in during the project duration (Output 2.1.1), this output also provides resources for MC representation in the second and third years of the project. An updated Communications Plan with additional communication products, including an enhanced social media presence, will enhance messaging of the successes of the Micronesia Challenge at these upcoming global events. This messaging will be backed by the soon-to-be-completed MC evaluation and specific science-based analyses generated in the national-level working groups in Component 1.

Activity 2.1.2.1 MC rep attend/present at least one highly relevant international conference per year

While 2020 is an important year for ocean-related events, there are additional important regional and international events happening from 2021 through 2023 that will be highly relevant for the long-term success of the Micronesia Challenge and ongoing platforms to elevate MC communication. These include increased presence at annual events like the Micronesia Island Forum (MIF) and US Coral Reef Task Force, IW:LEARN Conference and other events, and future UN Oceans and Our Ocean events. This activity aims to fund travel and per diem for at least one MC representative (either MCRO, MCT, or national government) to attend on behalf of the MC or present on MC at least one conference per year in 2022 and 2023 (project Y2 and Y3). This attendance will be enhanced by the revised Communications Plan, communications products, as well as additional materials that can be used to broaden the message of MC 2030 to global audiences.

Activity 2.1.2.2 Update MC 2008 Communications Plan

The MC currently is operating from a communications plan that is more than 10 years old. This project activity will provide resources to update the MC communications plan, inclusive of the MC 2030 targets. The funding will be used to recruit a professional communications firm to advise on current multimedia communication practices, updating the MC brand, and other associated tasks. The consultant will be tasked with facilitating an inclusive plan development process to ensure national-level perspectives are heard and incorporated into future MC communication needs. The communication plan will be developed in coordination with the MCRO Strategic Plan that includes fundraising. As MC communication is implemented across national and regional stakeholders, the communication plan will focus both consistent messaging and on coordination of action among stakeholders.

Activity 2.1.2.3 Develop at least two communications products per year (coordinated with project knowledge management products)

As part of the increasing awareness of the MC 2030, the project is providing dedicated funding for the development of at least two communication products per year (a total of at least six over the three-year project). The funding will be specifically used for in-house staff or recruitment of consultants to develop communication products. These products will be closely coordinated with the development of knowledge management products under project component 3.

Activity 2.1.2.4 Maintenance of Micronesia Challenge social media presence

The final activity under this project component is focused on significantly enhancing the social media presence of the Micronesia Challenge over the three-year project duration. This will likely include an active presence on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube. The funding will be used to recruit MC communications capacity (intern level) to expand on the MC's current social media presence. This activity will also leverage the current MC Young Champions program by providing additional platforms for MCYC's to showcase their communication products.

Outcome 2.2: Government commitment for MC 2030 goals of marine resource management

As Micronesia Challenge jurisdictions celebrate current successes, there is also a need to build on the MC 2030 conservation and community benefit targets and process targets that were one of many political aspirations stated in the MIF 2019 Communique. Outcome 2.2 is designed to ensure a continued high-level government commitment with the expanded MC 2030 targets for the next decade and beyond. This outcome is focused on the development of a high-quality visioning publication and associated visioning events, including a high-level visioning ceremony at key regional and international events. Rallying high-level government support and showcasing the government commitment of the Micronesia Challenge to the global community at a CBD COP will reinvigorate the Micronesia Challenge at a time when its long-term direction is most important.

Output 2.2.1: MC 2030 vision document endorsed by three nations

As a mechanism to maintain momentum, the project will provide resources that create the necessary enabling conditions to guide the Micronesia Challenge 2030 vision for targeted high-level governance audiences. To achieve that goal, project members will collectively draft content for a high-quality MC 2030 visioning publication that is then celebrated with two associated high-level MC 2030 visioning events. This output will ultimately lead to improved fundraising efforts and a high-level celebration of the 2030 Micronesia Challenge at an upcoming Convention on Biological Diversity Conference of Parties, the same forum at which the Micronesia Challenge was launched in 2006 at CBD COP 8 in Curitiba, Brazil.

Activity 2.2.1.1 Consultant(s) recruited, stakeholder consultation/validation, and drafting of MC 2030 high-quality visioning publication(s)

This first activity under Output 2.2.1 is focused entirely on the development of the high-quality

MC 2030 visioning publication. The publication is intended to be image-rich, showcasing the rich natural resources of Micronesia along with the people that benefit from them, and aimed to invoke empathy and a call to action for supporting the Micronesia Challenge. The project funding will be for recruitment of a consultant who will produce a high-quality publication and associated visioning and artistic direction for side events noted in Activity 2.2.1.2 and 2.2.1.3. The consultant will be responsible for drafting the visioning publication in an inclusive manner, prioritizing stakeholder consultation and validation. The visioning document will be directly coordinated with the longer-term MCRO Strategic Plan (Activity 2.1.1.3) and the updated MC communication plans (Activity 2.1.2.2). Additionally an online version of the document will be made freely available on the MC website, the IW:LEARN website, and other project partner websites.

Activity 2.2.1.2 Host high-level event to support MC 2030 visioning document potentially at 2021 MIF and Activity 2.2.1.3 MC 2030 Launching Celebration at CBD COP in October 2022

Activity 2.2.1.2 and 2.2.1.3 both are focused on executing high-level side events at least one major regional and international meeting. The anticipated regional meeting is the 2021 Micronesia Island Forum (MIF). The anticipated international meeting is the 2022 CBD COP. For both events, project

funding will be used for organization, logistics, and other associated direct costs for putting on high-level side events to promote the MC 2030 visioning document.

Component 3. Knowledge Management and Project Monitoring & Evaluation

Knowledge management and project monitoring & evaluation are essential components of all GEF projects to ensure that knowledge gleaned and other project information can readily be applied to improve project management, as well as disseminate, replicate, and scale most effectively for a lasting impact beyond the project duration. This is especially important for the long-term viability of the Micronesia Challenge where significant knowledge has already been developed but not well managed or disseminated. This project component has been designed with two key project outcomes. The first is focused on project knowledge management. and the second outcome is focused on project monitoring and evaluation.

Outcome 3.1 Project knowledge management

Outcome 3.1 focuses on capturing knowledge at the national and regional level for dissemination at key events and through relevant networks, including the International Waters Learning and Exchange Resource Network (IW:LEARN). The project will also make use of additional dissemination resources through project partners, including Stanford Center for Ocean Solutions, the Nature Conservancy, and the Micronesia Conservation Trust. Knowledge products and resources will be formalized and archived for improved distribution and uptake. The existing pathways through IW:LEARN will be a core component of sharing products and lessons.

Output 3.1.1 Project knowledge captured and disseminated including through IW:LEARN

As a GEF IW funding project, this project will actively participate in the IW:LEARN community. Funding for IW activities in this project (Output 3.1.1) constitutes 1.375% of the overall project budget at US\$27,500 (see Section 2.7: Budget and Budget Notes for additional detail).

Activity 3.1.1.1 Knowledge products developed and disseminated on MC, MCT, and IW:LEARN websites (at least one knowledge product per year)

This first project activity is designed to capture project knowledge through knowledge briefs and similar print and online documents. These knowledge briefs will highlight important lessons learned, best practices, and other types of knowledge from the project that highlight project results and opportunities to inform other current and future practitioners. This activity aims to yield at least one knowledge product per year for a total of at least three knowledge products by the end of the project. Project funding will be for knowledge product development and dissemination, potentially including costs for development (via existing MCRO staff or consultant), product graphic design, and printing costs. The knowledge products will be disseminated through key project partners, including MCRO, the MCSC, MCT, TNC, Stanford COS, and IW:LEARN. The knowledge products will also be developed in close coordination with the updated MC Communications Plan and communication products from Component 2 to ensure a consistent MC branding moving forward.

Activity 3.1.1.2 Establish project website on IW:LEARN

The project will participate in the IW:LEARN community through the development of a project webpage on the IW:LEARN website within the first year of project inception (2021). The MC project page will serve as an additional mechanism to disseminate project deliverables, include project communication and knowledge products. The project webpage on IW:LEARN will also be linked with the Micronesia Challenge website. The project webpage on IW:LEARN will serve as an important channel to closer link the project objectives and MC goals with the IW:LEARN community and the GEF IW objectives. Specific activity funding will be for webpage development and maintenance, including staff time and any software resources as necessary.

Activity 3.1.1.3 Develop at least one IW:LEARN project experience note

As part of engagement in IW:LEARN and to showcase the successes of the Micronesia Challenge throughout the three-year project duration, the project will develop at least one project experience note. The project experience note will consist of a small report (~5 pages) that captures a key lesson or best practice from the project that can be shared with the broader IW:LEARN community. The project experience note will differ from project knowledge products in that the experience note is a more detailed case study of a specific project activity that assesses and synthesizes the experience to highlight important lessons that are applicable to the broader IW:LEARN community. Funding for this activity will be for experience note development (via existing MCRO staff or consultant) and graphic design/formatting. The experience note will be disseminated electronically via the project webpage on IW:LEARN and on the MC website, along with through the respective channels of project partners. The project experience note will be developed in close coordination with the updated MC Communications Plan and communication products from Component 2 to ensure a consistent MC branding moving forward.

Activity 3.1.1.4 Project participation in at least one project twinning or other IW:LEARN event

Not only will the project actively participate in the online IW:LEARN community it will also engage in at least one in-person IW:LEARN event. Funding is made available in this activity for at least one MC representative, likely to be the MCRO coordinator, to participate in at least one IW:LEARN event. The IW:LEARN event will be identified during the three-year project in close coordination with the IW:LEARN secretariat based in IOC-UNESCO in Paris, France. Potential IW:LEARN events include a project twinning, a regional thematic IW:LEARN event, an LME:LEARN or similar IW:LEARN LME event, or the biannual IW:LEARN Conference (IWC). The identified event will be noted in advance and budgeted into the annual project workplan that is approved by the Project Steering Committee. Specific costs for this activity will largely include travel costs (airfare, lodging, etc.) to participate in the event.

Outcome 3.2 Project monitoring and evaluation system

Project outcome 3.2 will complement knowledge management with an effective project monitoring system that will inform knowledge generation in near real-time to allow of efficient adaptive management. The key mechanisms for this will be through six-month project progress reports,

quarterly financial reports, annual GEF Project Implementation Report (PIR), a terminal evaluation, and additional ad hoc monitoring as recommended by the Project Steering Committee. Additional project monitoring will be accomplished through annual GEF Agency supervision missions.

Output 3.2.1 Monitoring and Evaluation reports (e.g. project progress reports, midterm review, terminal evaluation)

Activity 3.2.1.1 Project monitoring system developed for timely completion and submission of reports (aligned with MC Measures group where possible) A three-year project monitoring plan will be developed by the project management unit (MCRO and COS), based on the project results framework (Appendix C). The project monitoring plan will be main tool to track project progress, with monitoring indicators detailed at the project output and outcome level. The monitoring plan will be developed in direct coordination with any relevant recommendations from the soon-to-be-released MC evaluation and in consultation with the MC measures groups, and assessed and steered through a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (Section 2.4) that requires strong stakeholder inputs to the project's outputs and to their on-the-ground delivery. The project monitoring plan will closely mirror the project workplan and inform the development of annual project workplan and budgets. Specific costs associated with the development of the project monitoring plan are for staff time and other direct costs associated with ensuring stakeholder input into monitoring plan development and tracking. For more information on project monitoring, please see the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (Appendix E). The project gender action plan is mainstreamed into the overall project monitoring system and includes monitoring activities for the gender action plan activities and progress on the project GEF core gender indicator.

Activity 3.2.1.2 Project terminal evaluation completed and submitted in a timely manner

This GEF medium sized project (MSP) will have an independent terminal project evaluation following WWF GEF and GEF Independent Evaluation Office (GEF IEO) guidelines. The project terminal evaluation will be conducted within six months of project close (expected in winter quarter 2023). The project terminal evaluation will be an important mechanism to advise national governments and project partners on any gaps or outstanding issues that may prevent success of the MC 2030. Further, the terminal evaluation will be instrumental in informing any follow-on GEF project development focused on the implementation of the Micronesia Challenge to achieve the expanded 2030 targets. The specific activity costs for the terminal evaluation will be for recruiting a consultant(s) to conduct the evaluation, inclusive of travel to the region to engage with stakeholders and producing a final project terminal evaluation report. The terminal evaluation will be disseminated to participating national governments and MCSC members and through proper channels of the WWF GEF and GEF IEO, as well as made available on the project webpage on IW:LEARN and the MC website.

4) alignment with GEF focal area and/or impact program strategies;

As a regional project promoting improved transboundary marine natural resources management across Micronesia, the project has been designed for direct alignment with the GEF-7 International Waters Strategy Objective 1: *Strengthening Blue Economy opportunities*, including the GEF-7 IW Program 1.1: *Sustaining Healthy Coastal and Marine Ecosystems*, and Program 1.2: *Catalyzing Sustainable Fisheries Management*. This design builds on past GEF investments that include the primary marine

transboundary concerns highlighted by the WPWP LME TDA-SAP and the progress from the initial phase of the MC. The project's design is also based on recommendations from the 2020 MC evaluation, relevant past GEF project evaluations, and the SPREP 2020 State of the Environment and Conservation in the Pacific Islands.

Under the GEF-7 IW Objective 1-1: *Sustaining Healthy Coastal and Marine Ecosystems* program, the project is designed to align with investments focused on supporting the Micronesia governments with development of marine management strategies addressing primary transboundary concerns identified by the WPWP LME SAP that advance progress towards national sustainable development goals, which for these island nations constitute blue economy strategies that link sustainable use of marine natural resources to improvements in socio-economic development, food security, and overall community wellbeing. This will include the mainstreaming of marine area based management and spatial tools and recommendations for addressing policy gaps and development of specific national strategies to secure stronger marine management mechanisms helping governments advance MC 2030 goals. In RMI and FSM, this includes directly supporting technical committees advising PAN management: CMAC in RMI and the PAN TC in FSM. In Palau, support is directed at a government working group addressing their domestic pelagic fishery sector as part of long-term implementation of Palau's PNMS by relieving coastal fishing pressure on critical habitats outside of PNMS.

Within each country is also a focus on strengthened national policy and planning tools promoting sustainable coastal fisheries management aligned under the Objective 1-2: *Catalyzing Sustainable Fisheries Management* program. More specifically, the national working groups under Outcome 1.1 will assess the necessary policy and planning required to integrate coastal fisheries management with marine protected area networks to meet the MC 2030 Process Target, *?'Incorporate regional and jurisdictional fisheries management approaches, integrated with MPAs; (linked to SDG Goal 14.1)?*. Each national working group will also function as a platform, as nationally appropriate, for private sector engagement with relevant industry actors and groups, most specifically private fishing entities mutually invested in the long-term health of coastal and pelagic fish stocks. This will lead to the advancement of new national level policy frameworks that advance ecosystem-based management of nearshore fisheries integrated with national protected area network systems.

Lastly, the project is aligned with the GEF-7 IW Objective 1 investment priority of engaging with national, regional and global stakeholders to increase collaboration among LMEs and provide experience sharing and cross-support to investments and regional management processes, including through dedicated activities within the IW-LEARN community and with important ocean-related international events. These project collaboration efforts are a critical part of strengthening MCRO's role in the MC that aligns with multiple MC 2030 process targets.

Collectively the project alignment under the GEF-7 IW focal area is captured through monitoring progress under GEF Core Indicator 7: *Number of shared marine ecosystem under improved cooperative management*, GEF Core Indicator 8: *Globally over-exploited marine fisheries moved to more sustainable levels (metric tons)*, and GEF Core Indicator 11: *Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment*.

5) incremental/additional cost reasoning and expected contributions from the baseline, the GEFTF, LDCF, SCCF, and co-financing;

The small island developing states of Micronesia disproportionately rely on coastal and marine resources to achieve national economic development goals. Yet despite the exceptionally long distances separating them, the coastal and marine ecosystems these Micronesian island nations depend on are inextricably connected and require shared transboundary marine resource management for long-term ocean health and meeting national development goals. With increasing pressure on these natural resources, coupled with the impacts of climate change, the integration of sustainable coastal and marine resources management into the broader socio-economic agenda is essential for a healthy future environment, economy, and national food security.

The GEF supported and SPREP-led WPWP LME TDA and SAP identified three priority transboundary concerns: (i) pollution of marine and freshwater (including groundwater) from land-based activities; (ii) physical, ecological and hydrological modification of critical habitats, and; (iii) unsustainable exploitation of living and nonliving resources. While there has been ongoing support towards addressing transboundary management of pelagic fisheries due to their immediate economic importance for many island nations, far less support has been made available for the other SAP priority transboundary concerns; (i) pollution of marine and freshwater (including groundwater) from land-based activities, and; (ii) physical, ecological and hydrological modification of critical habitats, including addressing the unsustainable exploitation of reef fisheries and other living and nonliving resources. This is further reinforced by the 2020 State of the Environment and Conservation in the Pacific Islands report that stressed continued environmental problems across national and regional governance and conservation approaches and the degradation of biodiversity and coastal and marine habitats. Among the many important recommendations from the report are regional recommendations for regional coordination to mitigate transboundary hazards that threaten coastal fish populations, coral reefs, and other essential habitats for food security and economically important pelagic fish.

The governments of RMI, FSM, and Palau have taken large steps towards meeting many of these marine management priorities, most notably under the Micronesia Challenge and promotion of national commitments for protection of at least 30% of nearshore marine areas by 2020. The GEF previously invested in both national and regional marine management in Micronesia, including the Micronesia Challenge through the establishment of Micronesia Conservation Trust, an innovative sustainable financing mechanism. However, with the 2020 Micronesia Challenge deadline now passed, the long-term post-2020 future for marine management in Micronesia begins. As the WPWP LAM SAP and 2020 State of the Environment and Conservation for the Pacific Island highlight, this includes addressing several persistent marine transboundary concerns. The Micronesia Challenge serves as a critical framework to address the transboundary concerns through a fostering collaboration within the WPWP LME and overseeing coordination of national efforts of strengthen current marine ecosystem and coastal fisheries management. . The independent evaluation of the Micronesia Challenge and the terminal evaluation of the 2015 GEF-UNEP Micronesia project both clearly highlights the successes and continued added value of the Micronesia Challenge, but also the barriers that exist at the national and regional levels.

The five Micronesia jurisdictions agreed to an expanded set of 2030 Micronesia Challenge conservation goals and process targets at the 24th Micronesia Island Forum (MIF) meeting in July 2019 (Appendix J). Many of these expanded MC 2030 targets echo the transboundary priorities raised by the WPWP LME SAP and respond to the recognized importance of the marine environment for meeting long-term development goals for the Micronesia region. This is further reflected in the close alignment of the expanded MC 2030 goals with the Sustainable Development Goals and the national prioritization of specific SDGs, including SDG 14 focusing on life underwater. Yet with the expanded 2030 MC goals comes additional and new responsibilities. The current abilities of the regional coordination mechanisms of the Micronesia Challenge are highly strained. To successfully meet the new MC 2030 goals will require

targeted financial support from the GEF to strengthen transboundary integrated marine resource management across Micronesia to ensure successful implementation of Micronesia Challenge 2030 goals. This effort includes supporting national and regional integrated resource planning, coordination, and awareness so that by the end of the project there is a significantly improved MC enabling environment with a detailed road map to guide each country towards meeting its national and regional MC 2030 goals. These benefits will require overcoming regional and national barriers that are compromising integrated natural resource planning, weak coordination, and declining awareness.

The five Micronesia jurisdictions that support the Micronesia Challenge are already investing in these efforts, especially the three GEF-recipient countries that are supported by this project, including the RMI, the FSM, and Palau. The ongoing baseline efforts in each country build from their current progress towards the 2020 Micronesia Challenge goals, largely driven by the development, expansion, and strengthening of their respective Protected Area Networks (PANs). In all three countries, the expanded MC 2030 goals require planning and mainstreaming into current baseline efforts. The RMI baseline builds from the government's 2018 amendment of their PAN Act which has formalized their Coastal Management Advisory Council (CMAC) with an expanded mandate to support PAN implementation. Similarly, the FSM baseline builds from the recently passed legislation for the National Protected Areas Network Policy Framework and a 2017 expansion of fisheries management, creating a need for a nation-wide and state-led integrated coastal resource management plan. In Palau, the baseline builds on the government efforts to establish a domestic pelagic fishery as part of long-term sustainability of their PNMS implementation. Among all this regional and national baseline activity in Micronesia, the international community has recently turned its focus towards ocean conservation, the blue economy, and the critical role oceans play in sustainable development. This revised focus is best captured by the amount of political momentum leading up to multiple high-level conferences focused on the oceans that were planned in 2020 and 2021. Further, The United Nations has proclaimed the next decade (2021-2030) as the Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development to support efforts to reverse the cycle of decline in ocean health and gather ocean stakeholders worldwide behind a common framework that will ensure ocean science can fully support countries in creating improved conditions for sustainable development of the Ocean.

An unfortunate business-as-usual scenario without support from the GEF International Waters focal area would almost certainly lead to missing out on this rare window of opportunity to leverage national, regional, and global political momentum towards protecting one of the most biologically and

economically important areas of the globe. Without GEF support, the current pace of progress for marine management in Micronesia will likely struggle to survive with declining funding, coordination, and national political interest and participation. This struggle will likely result in highly inconsistent progress among the three countries, with many missed opportunities for policy cooperation and management collaboration among neighboring nations to learn and share experiences. Lack of assistance to address the presented barriers will further lead to a low functioning and low visibility MCRO that will be unable to become more self-sufficient through political support and fundraising, and almost certainly missing the MC 2030 process targets towards MCRO strengthening. The inevitable turnover in national level politics will further ensure that the not just the MC, but the role healthy oceans play in sustainable development, slips farther from the forefront of local and national political agendas. And perhaps the largest impact will be the continued disintegration of national and regional efforts without any guiding strategies, ensuring weakening of natural resource management efforts and counterproductive activities that severely limit results. Ultimately a business-as-usual scenario will fail to intervene on the primary marine transboundary concerns for Micronesia, leading to further declines in commercially important coastal fish stocks and marine habitats, severely undermining national sustainable development and blue economy strategy implementation.

The GEF International Waters focal area is uniquely positioned to support this regional effort to strengthen transboundary integrated marine resource management across Micronesia to ensure successful implementation of Micronesia Challenge 2030 goals for sustaining healthy coastal and marine ecosystems and fisheries management as part of larger investments in supporting national sustainable development and blue economy. GEF International Waters will build on key past successes including the WPWP LME SAP and the MC 2020 and current national and regional baseline efforts for targeted removal of specific barriers. These barriers include: a) insufficient inter-institutional and multi-sectoral planning and management; b) limited national and regional capacity and insufficient management effectiveness; c) limited national, regional, and transboundary coordination and harmonization of management efforts, and; d) limited political and general public awareness of Micronesia Challenge goals. By removing these barriers through the project, the GEF will directly support strengthening the enabling environment for successful implementation of the 2030 Micronesia Challenge, including support towards regional and national integrated natural resource planning, coordination, and awareness.

The GEF funded alternative scenario proposes a GEF International Waters project that has been carefully designed to build on existing national and regional baseline efforts through three project components. The project directly responds to recommendations from the independent evaluation of the MC , the GEF-UNEP MC project terminal evaluation, and the 2020 State of the Environment and Conservation in the Pacific Islands, consistent with the primary marine transboundary concerns highlighted by the WPWP LME TDA-SAP. Coordinated GEF support to national working groups in RMI, FSM, and Palau for strengthening marine planning and management efforts includes assessing the current policy gaps for achieving national MC 2030 priorities, the marine policy recommendation and planning tools to address these gaps, and the development of national MC 2030 strategic plans. In the Marshall Islands, the project will support the Coastal Management Advisory Council (CMAC) with the very new mandate to advise the PAN office. In FSM, the project will directly support a Technical Committee that has recently been established the be revised PAN Framework. In Palau, the project will

support a working group assembled by MNRET to establish a domestic pelagic fishery as part of sustainable implementation of the PNMS. Regionally, the project is directly supporting the strengthening of the MCRO for long-term success with meeting the MC 2030 goals. This support includes investments into updated regional operation and communication strategies and creation of political momentum to support the MC.

Collectively the GEF investment will leave the three participating countries and the key regional MC entities with consistent and well-coordinated national and regional MC 2030 strategic plans and renewed political momentum for the Micronesia Challenge. These efforts will ensure there is a far more favorable enabling environment for the Micronesia Challenge by the end of the project that is primed for national and regional MC 2030 strategy implementation in the remaining six to seven years until 2030. The GEF investments will further accelerate national-level baseline progress that meets national priorities aligned with the priorities of the WPWP LME SAP as well as the more recent SDGs. As several ocean-related conferences are being planned, unique opportunity exists to leverage growing political momentum at the national, regional, and international level connecting the importance of the MC to meet broader sustainable development objectives. These events also allow an opportunity to celebrate the Micronesia Challenge successes to date with past and present project partners, especially including the GEF and its significant past support to the Micronesia Challenge. As the Micronesia Challenge has served as a successful model for other LMEs and regions, this project provides the timely resources to properly document and disseminate lessons learned to the global community through IW:LEARN and these major international fora while international attention is focused on oceans through 2021-2030 as part of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.

6) global environmental benefits (GEFTF) and/or adaptation benefits (LDCF/SCCF);

The Micronesia region is home to globally important marine environments that provide critical ecosystem services, including world class tourism and habitats for globally important commercial fisheries, everything from multiple coastal finfish and invertebrate species to pelagic species like tuna. From an investment perspective, this GEF international waters marine transboundary project is designed to yield multiple global environmental benefits as measured by three GEF Core Indicators and multiple project-level indicators.

The project will invest in cooperation among all five Micronesia jurisdictions, including three GEF-recipient countries, to strengthen transboundary marine resource management across an ocean area of nearly 5.6 million km², or roughly the size of the continental United States. This will be accomplished through parallel national and regional components supporting planning to meet MC 2030 goals. At the national level the focus is on parallel national dialogues aimed at conserving and restoring marine ecosystem goods and services, including the integration of marine protected area networks and management with globally significant marine biodiversity and economically important coastal fisheries. Indirectly through improved management of marine natural resources, the project will also lead to increased capacity of natural systems to sequester carbon and improved coastal and marine ecosystem resilience to reduce vulnerability to certain impacts to climate change. At the regional level, the focus on strengthening the Micronesia Challenge will directly benefit improved coordination and management among the five Micronesia jurisdictions within the WPWP LME.

The project will specifically yield results that are tracked by three GEF Core Indicators. To start, the project will advance GEF Core Indicator 7: *Number of shared water ecosystems (fresh or marine) under new or improved cooperative management*, though the direct support the WPWP LME. Further, additional tracking of this indicator will be made under GEF Core Indicator 7.3: *Level of National/Local reforms and active participation of Inter-Ministerial Committees* by moving all three project countries from a 1 (1 = Neither national/local reforms nor IMCs) to a 3 (3 = National/local reforms and IMCs in place). Next, the project will make progress on GEF Core Indicator 7.4: *Level of engagement in IW:LEARN* through participation and delivery of key products by the end of the project achieving a target of 4 (4 = As above, plus active participation of project staff and country representatives at IW Conference and the provision of spatial data and other data points via project website).

The project will also monitor progress against GEF Core Indicator 8: *Globally over-exploited marine fisheries moved to more sustainable levels (metric tons)*, with an end of project target of 281,947 metric tonnes for all three participating countries. This will be accomplished through the integration of management of nearshore fisheries policies with national marine protected area networks as part of the policy and planning recommendations from Output 1.1.3. ProDoc Appendix L provides details on the methodology used to calculate and monitoring against this GEF Core Indicator.

The project also supports progress on GEF Corporate Indicator 11: *Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment*, through supporting at least 506 women, 576 men beneficiaries, totaling 1082 beneficiaries as reflected in the project Results Framework (ProDoc Appendix C), Gender Action Plan, and Core Indicator Methodology (ProDoc Appendix M).

7) innovativeness, sustainability and potential for scaling up. ?

Innovativeness: The proposed project will provide means for enhanced regional dialogues that address mutual interests to achieve the stated goals of the Micronesia Challenge. Given the movement of pelagic fish stocks across national boundaries and the deep cultural heritage shared among Western Pacific big ocean states, possibilities for a collaborative, interdisciplinary, multi-national series of targeted convenings could catalyze action on marine resource management. The multi-phase working group model will emphasize the importance of a regionalized approach while leveraging lessons from initial efforts on implementation of the Palau National Marine Sanctuary.

Sustainability: Ensuring long-term sustainability of this three year project is critical for meeting the overall objective of ensuring successful implementation of the MC 2030 goals. This

will be ensured through establishing a stronger and more resilient enabling environment among national and regional actors through carefully designed project deliverables grounded in the existing regional partnerships and agreements for cooperative transboundary marine resource management. This includes: 1) operational MC strategies and plans at the national and regional level, 2) shared knowledge, 3) information management technology, 4) targeted policy interventions supporting coastal fisheries management and private sector engagement, and 5) capacity building. The development of updated and coordinated national and regional strategies and plans to meet MC 2030 goals, including an MCRO operational strategy and MC communications plan, will provide the critical tools necessary to guide the region towards meeting MC 2030 goals after the project concludes. Next, an interest in

sharing knowledge on coastal management to support MC 2030 goals exists, yet the current resources to do so are intermittent. The knowledge generated by the project and the strengthening of mechanisms to disseminate it, such as strengthening the MC measures groups and participation in IW:LEARN, will fill important knowledge gaps that will provide guidance well after the project ends. Further, by focusing on the incorporation of information management technology for environmental monitoring, data organization, and fishery observations, for example, each partner nation will gain additional targeted resources for long-term management efforts. Fourth, each national working group has an established pathway for private sector stakeholders to engage in development and refinement of project deliverables. In addition, the regional project activities under Component 2 further provide targeted paths for engaging with private sector actors, specifically tied to supporting MCRO and meeting MC 2030 goals. Fifth, management that incorporates information technology will require the necessary cooperation and training to build for managers of the future. Both the national and regional working group convenings and events will elevate individual skills and resources necessary for achieving long-term MC 2030 goals.

This medium-sized project is designed to create the necessary enabling environment for sustaining longer-term impact through implementation of national and regional strategies and plans aligned with future GEF international waters focal area objectives. The communications and visioning resources produced through this project will be a foundational investment into enhancing fundraising opportunities that could increase the sustainability of the increased staff capacity. Through these highly consultative processes as well as regional and global MC events, the project will elevate the profile of MC to ensure stronger political, operational, and financial support to the MC. The outputs from this project—including a communication plan, document repository, MC 2030 strategic plan, MC 2030 vision document, and related fundraising recommendations—will enshrine the critical, financially stable, role of the MCRO and be inputs into the next decade of conservation in Micronesia.

Scalability: The proposed project is inherently scalable to broader geographies as multi-national dialogues and shared lessons are integral pillars of the initiative. The working group process will emphasize scalability and include key experts from the broader region—including Melanesia and Polynesia and from regional actors such as the Nature Conservancy and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community. With the focus on scalability, active engagement with regional bodies and decisionmakers, and the support from the Global Environment Facility, the project will be able to directly disseminate our lessons learned and policy recommendations throughout the region.

There is a long history of Western Pacific nations working together, through organizations such as Western & Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), Parties of the Nauru Agreement (PNA), Pacific Judicial Council, the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), and The Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC). Best management practices put in place by one nation often diffuse throughout the rest. With the project focus on transferability and our active engagement with regional bodies and decisionmakers, it will be able to directly disseminate our lessons learned and policy recommendations throughout the region and beyond. Given the oceanic linkages in pelagic fish stocks and cultural heritage among these big ocean states, possibilities for this working group to link fisheries and food security policy and practice throughout Oceania abound. Thus, there is both political

impetus to address these challenges, and a real prospect for lessons learned from one island jurisdiction to bolster ocean sustainability in other island locations?both in the region and globally.

[1] Micronesia Challenge ?We are One? Business Plan and Conservation Plan

[2] FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Country Profiles

[3] Micronesia Challenge ?We are One? Business Plan and Conservation Plan

[4] <https://iwlearn.net/resolveuid/d52d798b-63aa-4d49-8c59-ae709d5fea78>

[5] For more information about the Micronesia Challenge 2020, please see:
<http://themicronesiachallenge.blogspot.com/p/about.html>

[6] <https://oceanwealth.org/project-areas/micronesia/>

[7] For more information about the Micronesia Challenge 2020 Evaluation, including summaries of each jurisdiction? successes and accomplishments, please see:
<https://themicronesiachallenge.blogspot.com/p/community.html?m=1>

[8] Gillett, R. D. *Fisheries in the Economies of Pacific Island Countries and Territories*. Secretariat of the Pacific Community (2016).

[9] Gillett, R. 2016. *Fisheries in the economies of Pacific Island Countries and Territories*. Pacific Community (SPC).

[10] *Ibid*

[11] Harley, S., Peter, W., Nicol, S., Hampton, J. & Brouwer, S. *The Western and Central Pacific Tuna Fishery: 2018 overview and status of stocks*. Tuna Fisheries Assessment Report No.15 (2019).

[12] Birkeland, C. Working with, not against, coral-reef fisheries. *Coral Reefs* **36**, 1?11 (2017).

[13] The Micronesia Challenge 2020 Evaluation Report can be found at:
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1e503p9takhxTRRH76oD6Gdri7AYhsbNA/view>

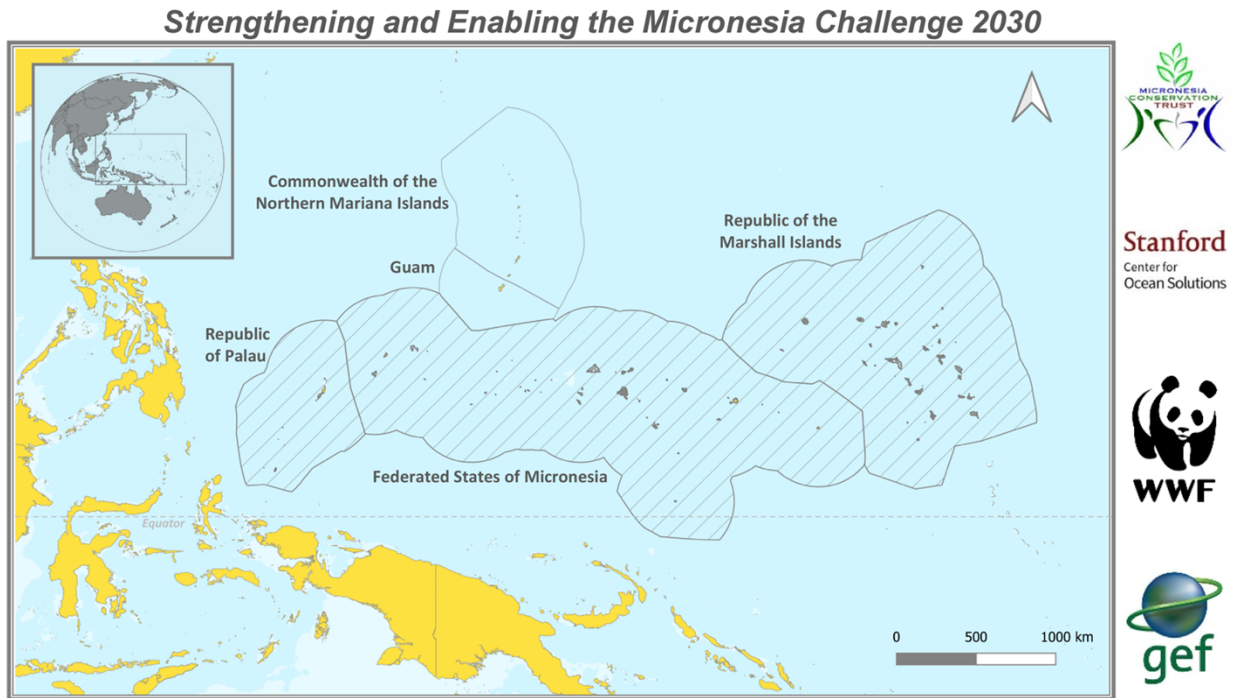
[14] The marine measures database can be found at: <https://micronesiareefmonitoring.com>

[15] The terrestrial measures database can be found at <https://mcterrestrialmeasures.org/#/intro>

[16] For more information, see; <https://www.nature.org/en-us/about-us/where-we-work/asia-pacific/the-pacific-islands/stories-in-the-pacific-islands/micronesia-challenge/>

1b. Project Map and Coordinates

Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.



1c. Child Project?

If this is a child project under a program, describe how the components contribute to the overall program impact.

N/A

2. Stakeholders

Please provide the Stakeholder Engagement Plan or equivalent assessment.

The Stakeholder Engagement Plan has been attached.

In addition, provide a summary on how stakeholders will be consulted in project execution, the means and timing of engagement, how information will be disseminated, and an explanation of any resource requirements throughout the project/program cycle to ensure proper and meaningful stakeholder engagement.

Please refer to Section 2.4 and Appendix D of the WWF GEF Project Document for a full description of the project's Stakeholder Engagement and Stakeholder Engagement Analysis.

Key Project Stakeholders

RMI Stakeholders	Role	Engagement Approach
Marshall Islands Marine Resources Authority (MIMRA)	Influential Stakeholder	Continued engagement through director as well as senior-level staff
Climate Change Directorate (CCD)	Influential Stakeholder	Continued engagement through director and deputy director
Coastal Management Advisory Council (CMAC)	Influential Stakeholder	Direct engagement through existing contacts at MIMRA and CCD
Marshall Islands Conservation Society (MICS)	Influential Stakeholder	Vice-Chair of CMAC and important non-government technical resource
Environmental Protection Authority (EPA)	Influential Stakeholder	Chair of CMAC and important government technical resource
Mr. Clarence Samuel	Operational Focal Point	Initial discussion on conceptual framework of project, continued engagement through a point of contact of his choosing

FSM Stakeholders	Role	Engagement Approach
Department of Resources and Development (R&D)	Influential Stakeholder	Continued engagement through Secretary as well as senior-level staff
National Oceanic Resource Management Authority (NORMA)	Influential Stakeholder	Direct engagement through existing contacts at R&D
Honorable Mr. Andrew Yatilman, Office of Environment and Emergency Management	Operational Focal Point	Initial discussion on conceptual framework of project, continued engagement through a point of contact of his choosing

Palau Stakeholders	Role	Engagement Approach
Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment & Tourism (MNRET)	Influential Stakeholder	Continued engagement through Minister as well as senior-level staff
Palau International Coral Reef Center (PICRC)	Influential Stakeholder	Continued engagement with Director and staff via existing and growing collaborative work.

Mr. King Sam, MNRET and Protected Area Networks	Operational Focal Point	Continued engagement throughout the duration of project inception and evolution.
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Regional Stakeholders	Role	Engagement Approach
Micronesia Challenge Regional Office (MCRO)	Project Partner	Key project partner leading project Components 2 and 3
Micronesia Conservation Trust (MCT)	Project Partner	Key project partner directly supporting MCRO and active MCSC member. Will continue to engage with Director and Deputy Director
Micronesia Challenge Steering Committee (MCSC)	Influential Stakeholder	Direct engagement with MCSC members as PSC and through the MCRO Coordinator as a liaison
The Nature Conservancy (TNC)	Influential Stakeholder	Continue to engage with relevant staff at regional level throughout Micronesia as well as with key staff in nations of interest
Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)	Indirect project stakeholder	Will be directly and indirectly engaged at national level due to parallel initiatives on State of the Environment

This led to a prioritizing exercise of stakeholders which was followed by in-person discussions in December 2018 as well as July, September, and October of 2019 in locations including Majuro in RMI, Pohnpei and Chuuk in FSM, Koror in Palau, and Guam. Furthermore, these discussions involved multiple contacts within distinct agencies at a national or regional level.

The key topics of interest for each national working groups dynamically grew from these conversations. The topics now include:

? **RMI:** Support the Coastal Management Advisory Council (CMAC) in producing policy recommendations and planning tools that align with the 2018 amended Protected Area Network Act as well as the National Ocean Policy and the National Environmental Management Strategy.

? **FSM:** Support the FSM Protected Area Network Technical Committee (PAN TC) in producing policy recommendations and planning tools that inform development of a nation-wide, state-led coastal and marine resource management plan with an emphasis on the role of protected areas in ecosystem-based management of coastal fisheries.

? **Palau:** Support a new inter-agency working group that will be established to assess and provide recommendations for government action to bolster a domestic pelagic fishery sector in Palau.

As stated above in the section on Barriers (Section 1.4), lack of coordination is a main barrier to harmonized engagement and therefore, this project seeks to develop and set up key coordination mechanisms (memos, meetings, etc.) during the life of the project to facilitate cooperation with ongoing activities and coordination with key stakeholders (see engagement approaches below). Information regarding the project will be included and updated regularly and shared with all collaborative partners.

The project will fund a series of parallel working group meetings (approximately six per nation (two per year)) at the national level. Output 1.1.1 notes the organization and facilitation of at least two in-person meetings per year per country. In preparation for these meetings, each meeting organizing group will host a series of 1?3 calls or video meetings or community dialogues to gain stakeholder feedback and ?connect? with relevant community members on the topics for discussion and overall framework. This approach may also include in-person, small group meetings as needed. Preceding these events, the organizers will gain stakeholder input or feedback via phone, email, or in-person dialogues to shape the discussion content. The set of key stakeholders in project implementation has been defined during project preparation and is outlined in the tables below. This will also include a dedicated emphasis in engaging national private sector actors for leveraging additional investment and long-term sustainability opportunities, as relevant within national context and priorities and where appropriate.

Anticipated Working Group Members ? RMI

The working group in RMI will be comprised of members of the Coastal Management Advisory Council (CMAC).[1]

Organization	Engagement Approach
Marshall Islands Marine Resources Authority (MIMRA),	CMAC secretary; primary point of contact
RMI Environmental Protection Authority (RMIEPA)	Current CMAC Chair
Marshall Islands Conservation Society (MICS)	Current CMAC Vice-Chair
Climate Change Directorate (CCD)	CMAC Member, attending all meetings
College of the Marshall Islands (CMI)	CMAC Member, attending all meetings
Marshall Islands Historic Preservation Office (RMI HPO)	CMAC Member, attending all meetings
International Office of Migration (IOM)	CMAC Member, attending all meetings
Ministry of Culture and Internal Affairs (MoCIA)	CMAC Member, attending all meetings

RMI Ministry of Natural Resources and Commerce (MoNRC)	CMAC Member, attending all meetings
Office of Commerce, Investment and Tourism (OCIT)	CMAC Member, attending all meetings
SPREP Marshall Islands Office	CMAC Member, attending all meetings
University of the South Pacific (USP)	CMAC Member, attending all meetings
Women United Together in the Marshall Islands (WUTMI).	CMAC Member, attending all meetings
Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade (MoFAT)	CMAC Member, attending all meetings
Jo-Jikum	CMAC Member, attending all meetings

Anticipated Working Group Members ? FSM

The working group in FSM will be comprised of members of the Protected Area Network Technical Committee.[\[2\]](#)

Organization	Engagement Approach
FSM Resources and Development (one member and committee secretariat)	PAN TC Secretariat, primary point of contact, attending all meetings (virtually or in person)
State Focal Points (four members ? one per state)	PAN TC Member, attending all meetings
National Oceanic Resources Management Authority (one member)	PAN TC Member, attending all meetings (virtually or in person)
Micronesia Conservation Trust (one non-voting member)	PAN TC Member, attending all meetings (virtually or in person)
FSM College of Micronesia (one academic member)	PAN TC Member, attending all meetings (virtually or in person)
Regional Science Organization (one academic member - SPC)	PAN TC Member, attending all meetings (virtually or in person)
International NGO (one member - TNC)	PAN TC Member, attending all meetings (virtually or in person)

Anticipated Working Group Members ? Palau

The working group in Palau will be comprised of members from organizations and agencies with a concerted interest in the Palauan domestic fishery sector.

Palau International Coral Reef Center	Invited to all meetings
Palau Sport Fishing Association	Invited to select meetings
Ebiil Society	Invited to all meetings
Businesses (fishery operations, restaurants, consolidators)	Invited to select meetings
Friends of the PNMS	Invited to all meetings
Representatives of state governments	Invited to all meetings
Northern Reefs Fisheries Co-op	Invited to all meetings
Palau Conservation Society	Invited to all meetings

The Micronesian governments, as the main beneficiaries of the MC and the leaders at the site level, will be engaged in all national activities and will benefit from subgrants. Government agencies (national, state and local) will provide an enabling legal and policy framework for the project activities and those of the MC at the regional level. Stanford COS, in coordination with MCRO, will play a lead role in managing and disbursing funds through the project framework. Each national government will lead the subgranting activities for their national interests (Component 1). The MCT will play a lead role in providing subgrants for regional objectives (Components 2 and 3).

[1] For more information about CMAC, please see: <https://www.atollconservation.org/cmac>

[2] For more information regarding the FSM PAN Technical Committee, please see:

<http://www.spc.int/CoastalFisheries/CFM/Document/ShowDocument/008858b9-c8ea-474a-bc39-443f7b19a6b5?attachment=True>

Select what role civil society will play in the project:

Consulted only;

Member of Advisory Body; Contractor;

Co-financier; Yes

Member of project steering committee or equivalent decision-making body; Yes

Executor or co-executor; Yes

Other (Please explain)

3. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Provide the gender analysis or equivalent socio-economic assesment.

Please refer to Section 2.5 and Appendix G of the WWF GEF Project Document for a full description of gender equality and woman?s empowerment and Gender Analysis.

To promote gender equality and the empowerment of women, the project has undertaken a Gender Analysis (Appendix G) to understand the context on gender regionally and within RMI, FSM, and Palau to identify specific entry points for gender mainstreaming. Based on this analysis, a gender-sensitive approach has been identified for the project outcomes, outputs, and activities, and gender-sensitive indicators have been developed for the proposed project. This includes reporting against GEF Core Indicator 11: *Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment*, with a project target of at least 1,082 direct project beneficiaries, 506 woman and 576 men (see ProDoc Appendix M for further details).

Gender issues vary between Pacific Island countries according to their levels of economic development, social and cultural norms, levels of population, migration, and emigration, and political climate. In the past 20 years, there has been significant progress in the increasing recognition of gender equality in Pacific Island countries (PIC). PIC have signed onto international treaties, including the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), as well as regional platforms, including The Revised Pacific Platform for Action on Advancement of Women and Gender Equality: A Regional Charter. Pacific Island countries have also established national gender equality policies and institutional mechanisms for gender equality. However, gender-based inequalities remain in several dimensions, including: high rates of gender-based violence, low proportions of women represented at all levels of decision-making, under-representation of women in the formal economy, inequitable access of women to health and social services, limited involvement in strategies related to climate change, natural disasters, and food security.

More specific to this project?s objective, gender mainstreaming was highlighted at the 2019 MIF which also initiated the momentum for the 2030 Micronesia Challenge. The 2019 MIF Joint Communique

proposed the establishment of a Standing Gender Equality Committee to support promotion of gender equality. In addition, the MC independent evaluation also included key recommendations to promote gender equality. As part of recommendations for conservation actions and goals, the evaluation recommended for increased involvement of women's groups or organizations due to their influence in societies across Micronesia to help carry the MC messages and implement actions needed to attain the goals of the Micronesia Challenge. It also noted that woman's groups are an important stakeholder to be engaged in planning the future of the MC.

The Republic of the Marshalls Islands (RMI) has committed to achieve gender equality through international and regional conventions and instruments including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW), the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Beijing Platform for Action, the Revised Pacific Platform for Action for the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality, and the 2012 Forum Leaders Gender Equality Declaration.[1] In 2015, the RMI government published the National Gender Mainstreaming Policy to guide the process of developing laws, policies, procedures, and practices that will address the needs and priorities of all women and men to end the discrimination and inequality. The main gender issues in RMI include provision for sexual and reproductive health,[2] higher rate in teenage pregnancy,[3] the rates of violence that women experience,[4] lack of work opportunities, and underrepresentation in management positions.[5] Despite the influential matrilineal culture of RMI, where women are perceived as custodians of land, culture, and tradition, men are, in the end, the primary decision-makers. Even though women are likely to have access to land, they have limited control, due to the traditional governance systems which determine decisions about its use. The combination of a lack of land ownership and decision making for resource management puts RMI women in a disadvantaged position regarding economic autonomy.

The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) contains distinct ethnic groups, which influences the roles, responsibilities, and status of women. Except for Yap and a few remote islands in Pohnpei, most ethnic groups are matrilineal, with land ownership, use rights, and customary titles passed through the female line. Nevertheless, matrilineal descent does not guarantee women a voice in decision-making about resources.[6] While inheritance may pass through the female lineage, power over resources is often conferred to men. In the past decade, the FSM government has adopted international platforms, including the Pacific Platform for Action on Women (PPA, 1994), Cairo Platform for Action on Population and Development, the Global Platform for Action on Women (GPA, 1995), and the Beijing Global Platform for Action (GPA, 1995).[7] FSM does not currently have a national gender policy, and the current laws provide inadequate protection and safety for victims of gender-based violence (GBV). The main challenges for women in the FSM are related to reproductive health, domestic violence, sexual harassment, legal inequality, high rates of illiteracy, reduced job opportunities and limited access to the highest levels of decision making.

The Republic of Palau has a society that follows matrilineal traditions, particularly in relation to marriage and inheritance of land and titles. However, gender equality continues to be a significant social, economic, and political issue.[8] In 2013, the Palau government signed on to international gender policies and ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Beijing Global Platform for Action, and has signed the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). In the past years, the Ministry for Community and Cultural Affairs has been working to introduce gender mainstreaming across all its policies and programs, designing for the first time a participatory mainstreaming policy and strategy for the country. Despite all these efforts, Palau society has significant challenges regarding gender equality. Some of the main issues are related to the lack of representation in the parliament, limited access to the formal and informal labor force, physical and sexual violence, sexual health, high rates of teenage pregnancy, and lack of representation in the decision-making table for private and public organizations.[9]

[1] Office of the Chief Secretary/ Economic, Planning and Statistics Office. National Gender Mainstreaming Policy of the Republic of the Marshall Islands. 2015. The Republic of the Marshall Islands: Majuro.

[2] Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women. 2001. Gender Mainstreaming: Strategy for Promoting Gender Equality. Factsheet.

[3] Republic of the Marshall Islands. 2014. Review of progress in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action in the Republic of Marshall Islands. National Review.

[4] the Republic of the Marshall Islands. Ministry of Internal Affairs. 2014. Family Health and Safety Survey.

[5] Republic of the Marshall Islands. 2014. Review of progress in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action in the Republic of Marshall Islands. National Review.

[6] The Federated States of Micronesia. Millennium Development Goals & the Federated States of Micronesia Status Report. 2010. Available:
https://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/MDG/english/MDG%20Country%20Reports/Micronesia/FSM_MDG%202010.pdf

[7] FSM Department of Health and Social Affairs. 2014. *Federated States of Micronesia Family Health and Safety Study*. Report on the FSM. Available: FSM [Family Health and Safety Study](#).

[8] Australian Government. *Pacific Women: Shaping Pacific Development*. Available:
<http://pacificwomenreport.org/progress-by-location/palau/>

[9] Pacific Community and UN Women. Stock take of the gender mainstreaming capacity of Pacific Island Governments Republic of Palau. 2012.

Does the project expect to include any gender-responsive measures to address gender gaps or promote gender equality and women empowerment?

Yes

Closing gender gaps in access to and control over natural resources;

Improving women's participation and decision making Yes

Generating socio-economic benefits or services or women

Will the project's results framework or logical framework include gender-sensitive indicators?

Yes

4. Private sector engagement

Elaborate on private sector engagement in the project, if any

Private sector stakeholders serves an important strategy for ensuring long-term success towards the project objective of strengthening transboundary integrated marine resource management across Micronesia to ensure successful implementation of Micronesia Challenge 2030 goals. To achieve this within the project, private sector engagement will primarily occur at the national level through the government inter-sectoral working groups under Output 1.1.2, as appropriate. For example, Palau's goal of establishing a domestic pelagic fishery to support implementation of PNMS, will rely on nurturing market uptake from local fishing companies, fish processors and traders, and restaurants promoting domestically caught seafood. Likewise, in RMI and FSM, private sector actors in the fishing sector will be solicited for the aim of improving sustainable coastal fisheries management through an ecosystem-based approach by integrating with marine protected area management. The expected result of private sector engagement through the project will focus on improving the policy enabling environment to encourage private sector participation in local resource management, and ideally to also facilitate new investments towards this goal. The project will also make opportunities to engage with private sector actors at the regional level in support of raising the profile of the Micronesia Challenge as part efforts to accomplish sustainable development and blue economy strategies. Tracking of private sector engagement is included as part of the project results framework (see ProDoc Appendix C).

5. Risks to Achieving Project Objectives

Elaborate on indicated risks, including climate change, potential social and environmental risks that might prevent the project objectives from being achieved, and, if possible, the proposed measures that address these risks at the time of project implementation.(table format acceptable):

Risks Table:

Risk	Risk Rating	Mitigation Measures
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Impacts of climate change, including ocean warming and acidification, that may disrupt marine ecosystems and impact commercial fisheries	H	The project will be connecting international marine science experts with local needs, and replication of these experiences across all three participating countries. Adoption of the latest climate science will be facilitated through national workshops and dialogues, as well as prioritization of long-term monitoring of marine natural resources to support adaptive management.
Political elections and administrative turnover leads to deprioritization of marine management issues	M	An overarching goal of the project is to demonstrate the linkages of national development agendas with marine management, including issues of economic development and food security. The project is working with across all branches of national government to ensure a change in anyone branch does not become a major setback. By engaging with all key government stakeholders early and often in each country, the goal is to promote inclusive and natural marine management plans that achieve already supported national sustainable development goals.
Government engagement or coordination declines during life of project	L	The project will directly strengthen development and implementation of national marine management plans, building on national priorities. These efforts are linked with the Micronesia Challenge and will leverage existing coordinating mechanisms facilitated by the Micronesia Conservation Trust to ensure country engagement remains high.
Financial support to MCRO declines and becomes inoperable	L	MCRO is financially supported by annual dues from the five jurisdictions. The jurisdictions typically pay on-time, though occasionally payment lapses do occur. The project is directly supporting MCRO to increase its profile and relevance, as well as raising the awareness and momentum of the MC 2030 within high levels of MC governments. This should ensure that annual dues are continued to be paid in full, if not increased due to increased political support for the MC.
MCRO staff leaving for other professional opportunities	H	In recognizing the critical role of the MCRO, ensuring staff consistency throughout the duration of the project will be of critical importance. As noted above, one aspect is maintaining financial resources necessary to host the position as well as plans to add additional staff per guidance from the MC Evaluation. In addition, MCRO project management capacity and workload will be ameliorated by support from the virtual PMU and MCT. In the event of a change in MCRO staffing, the project will rely upon the collective capacity and operational framework until the staffing vacancies are quickly addressed by the MCSC.

National working groups are overworked and unable to effectively deliver project results	M	The project is leveraging existing government inter-agency working groups where possible ? including an ad hoc working group in Palau supporting PNMS policy. This ensures that a certain level of awareness exists already among members to ensure they can realistically deliver what has been discussed in the project. In the event a working group becomes overwhelmed by the project and cannot deliver results, the working group has the option to recruit outside help via consultancies or discuss in-kind technical support from Stanford COS or explore new expanded national and regional partners that can provide support.
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COVID-19 Risk Analysis

Risk Category	Potential Risk	Mitigations and Plans
Availability of technical expertise and capacity and changes in timelines	COVID-19 impacts within participating Micronesia countries (such as intra-national island travel, gathering size restrictions, and government staff prioritization) impacts project activities and execution timeline.	The PMU and government partners will ensure national/regional COVID-19 restrictions are complied with. Further, due to the reality of extreme distances and challenging logistics working with remote Micronesia island nations, the project already embraces many virtual technologies and remote capacities for project management, consultation, decision making, and reviews. Lastly, existing monthly meetings of the MCSC and quarterly monitoring of project progress, allow for ongoing adaptive management throughout the project's duration.
	Impacts to key project stakeholders from outside of Micronesia region participating in project activities, such as national and regional working groups, project events, and trainings, including IW:LEARN	As needed due to travel bans and other COVID containment measures, project stakeholders outside the Micronesia region will be engaged using virtual technologies that are already in place. The project will also make use of online platforms used by international events and forums. Lastly, the project will make use of the MCRO, MCT, and Stanford COS websites and active social media presence to continue to engage the international audience and elevate the profile of the MC.

	<p>Changes in baseline and co-financing sources and amounts may change due to changed government/project partner priorities, reduced funding availability or due to delays in implementation. This is especially a concern for Micronesia economies that are often reliant on a single sector such as tourism or fisheries.</p>	<p>National project cofinancing is from in-kind support from technical agencies and staff that are not directly involved in national COVID mitigation efforts, so reallocation of financial resources is not expected. It's possible that overall decreases in government budgets will reduce national cofinancing, but the impact is expected to be minimal. The PMU and PSC will continue to monitor the cofinancing situation through the project duration and seek sources of additional project cofinancing opportunities, especially from non-government and private sources.</p>
Stakeholder engagement process	<p>Travel and meeting restrictions (intra and inter-island travel bans, quarantine delays, and restriction on group gatherings) may prevent convening national working groups and consultations at sub-national and community level during project implementation.</p>	<p>The project will respect national and regional travel and meeting restrictions. As needed, the PMU will work closely with each national partner and the MCSC to identify alternative meeting and convening formats that adhere to relevant national policies. This may include convening more often yet through smaller meetings/convenings, virtual or telephone participation, and alternative outdoor meeting venues. Due to the multiple variables involved, this will be dealt with on a case by case basis.</p>
Future risk of similar crises	<p>It is not anticipated that this project will have adverse impacts that might contribute to future pandemics; rather, this project is focused on enhancing the ability to effectively manage or conserve natural systems.</p>	<p>No specific mitigation efforts planned at this time.</p>

Impacts on project strategy	The main potential risk to the project strategy is the increased risk of country isolation and threats to the project (and GEF IW) goal of strengthening cooperation and coordinated management across Micronesia.	While in-person travel has been significantly reduced, the participating Micronesia countries are continuing to operate in relevant MC and regional engagements without major disruptions so far. The momentum from this GEF project is now more critical than ever to translate the MC 2030 political aspirations into coordinated action at the national level.
	While too soon to tell, COVID-19 may have lasting impacts on the national conservation strategies of project national working groups. For example, how Palau's local demand from a domestic pelagic fishery sector is disrupted due to declines in tourism.	As the project goal for national level working groups is to integrate/update MC 2030 planning, the need to revisit existing conservation logic due to COVID impacts will also be integrated into discussions. It is not anticipated there will be major changes to current national working group approaches, but the PMU will work closely with the PSC, the WWF GEF Agency, and if necessary, the GEF Secretariat, to ensure the continued project alignment with project objective.

COVID-19 Opportunity Analysis

Opportunity Category	Potential	Project Plan
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<p>Can the project do more to protect and restore natural systems and their ecological functionality?</p>	<p>Central to the Micronesia Challenge is protecting marine and terrestrial natural systems and their ecological functionality. Through project support to the Micronesia Challenge, there are opportunities to emphasize these natural recovery strategies at the regional, national, and community level.</p>	<p>A core goal of the project is to restore ecosystem function, such as support to coastal ecosystems through improved management to improve fisheries health. This will be primarily achieved through support to the three parallel national working groups addressing key goals that including formulating strategies for meeting MC 2030 goals. Identification of opportunities will be part of these national efforts.</p>
<p>Can the project promote circular solutions to reduce unsustainable resource extraction and environmental degradation?</p>	<p>Across Micronesia, the main unsustainable resource extraction activities are commercial fishing and tourism.</p>	<p>The project will consider opportunities for circular solutions in national policy recommendations to support participating countries meet MC 2030 goals.</p>

<p>Can the project innovate in climate change mitigation and engaging with the private sector?</p>	<p>While the project is not focused directly on addressing climate change, it does present opportunities to indirectly mitigate carbon emission and engage with the private sector at the national level.</p>	<p>The project will not directly focus on mitigation efforts, yet it will have an impact on adaptation efforts?primarily through a strengthening of the MC Measures Working Groups. However, for a region spread across a vast area of the Pacific Ocean and heavily reliant on air travel, an indirect benefit due to the impacts of COVID will be increased virtual participation and thus reduced project carbon emissions linked to air travel. In some instances at the national level, the project will also engage the private sector. For example, the Palau national working group aiming to develop a domestic pelagic fishery as part of the PNMS will include private fishing companies as a key participant.</p>
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6. Institutional Arrangement and Coordination

Describe the institutional arrangement for project implementation. Elaborate on the planned coordination with other relevant GEF-financed projects and other initiatives.

Please refer to Section 2.3 of the WWF GEF Project Document for a full description of the project's institutional arrangements and coordination with other GEF and non-GEF projects.

Project Governance

The GEF Agency for the project is World Wildlife Fund, Inc. (WWF) based in Washington, D.C. Project execution functions will be led by MCRO with administrative and financial project management support provided by the Executing Agency, the Stanford Center for Ocean Solutions (COS), based in Palo Alto, CA. The main project partners leading project activities will be the three national governments and MCRO (via MCT). Project Component 1 execution will be led by national government partners in RMI through MIMRA, FSM through R&D, and Palau through MNRET. Project Component 2 and 3 will be led by MCRO for regional project activities.

A Project Steering Committee (PSC) will be established to serve as the main decision-making body for the project. The main function of the PSC will be to provide overall project oversight and serve as the final decision making body for project execution. This includes providing strategic direction to the project management unit (PMU), approving the annual project workplan and budget, reviewing project reporting, and discussing and solving high-level project execution issues. The PSC will leverage members of the current Micronesia Challenge Steering Committee (MCSC) that currently holds virtual monthly meetings, including two face-to-face meetings per year. MCSC membership includes focal points from the five MC jurisdictions (RMI, FSM, Palau, Guam, and CNMI), as well as representatives of MCT and TNC as observers. The MCRO functions as the MCSC secretariat. The PSC will include the following members, or designates by these members: 1) the MCSC representative from RMI; 2) the MCSC representative from

FSM; 3) the MCSC representative from Palau. The following will have observer status on the PSC: 4) the MCSC observer from the Micronesia Conservation Trust, and; 5) the MCSC observer from TNC. As full MCSC members and to ensure robust pan-Micronesia coordination, the government representatives of Guam and CNMI are welcomed observers to PSC meetings funded with in-kind financial support. The WWF GEF Agency will be invited to participate in annual PSC meetings as an observer and as requested by the PSC. The PSC will be supported by the Project Management Unit, including leveraging existing secretariat services provided by the MCRO Coordinator to the MCSC, with administrative and financial project backstopping from Stanford COS. Of the two face-to-face MCSC meetings per year, the PSC will hold at least one annual in-person meeting. To reduce costs the PSC can meet as an additional day or half-day meeting before or after an in-person MCSC meeting, likely in conjunction with annual Micronesia Island Forum (MIF) events.

The MCSC government focal points from RMI, FSM, and Palau also serving on the PSC will be the same individuals responsible for internal government coordination with their national-level working groups. This individual coordination responsibility is independent of institutional responsibilities of the subgrant recipients. For the case of RMI, CCD is the official MCSC focal point, and is a member of CMAC. CMAC will lead RMI's technical activities under project component 1 with the project funding allocated to MIMRA. In FSM, R&D is the current MCSC focal point and will also lead their respective technical activities under project component 1. In Palau, MNRET is the MCSC focal point and will also lead their respective lead technical activities under project component 1. To ensure project-related decisions do not significantly increase the MCSC workload and following on recommendations from the recent MC evaluation for more nimble MCSC decision making process, the three MCSC officers will serve as an informal group to aid the PMU with more frequent MCRO advising and other project decision needs that do not warrant a full committee decision. The expected time commitment for this ad hoc informal support function to the PMU is anticipated to be approximately no more than 5% time for the three-year duration of the project.

Project Management

A Project Management Unit (PMU) will be established that supports the day to day project management needs. Due to the large geographic distances, multiple time zones, and high transaction costs of travel, a virtual PMU will be established. Collectively the MCRO coordinator and Stanford COS will function together as a Project Management Unit (PMU). Leveraging the existing coordination role of the MC, the MCRO Coordinator will lead overall technical project coordination with administrative and financial project management backstopping by Stanford Center for Ocean Solutions. The PMU will be staffed with three positions, including a Project Coordinator, a Project Manager, and a Finance Manager. The MCRO Coordinator will be the primary project coordinator for the project in region providing project support as part of current MCRO responsibilities. Through cofinanced effort, the MCRO Project Coordinator will interface directly with stakeholders in the region while deferring any project-specific administrative and financial tasks to the two following virtual PMU members. The Stanford COS Research Development Manager will support administrative project management. The Stanford COS Finance and Administration Manager will support financial project management. Additional details can be found in the Terms of Reference (TOR) documents for each role within the virtual PMU (ProDoc Appendix N).

Consistency with on-going initiatives:

The project will build on and be closely coordinated with relevant initiatives at the national and regional level. The two most relevant are currently active GEF projects in Micronesia that include the GEF-World Bank Pacific Regional Oceanscape Program (PROP) and the GEF- UNDP Pacific Ridge to Reef (R2R) Program. These GEF initiatives have national activities in Micronesia through respective child projects:

Republic of the Marshall Islands: In the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the project will be coordinated with ongoing GEF initiatives related to ocean resources management. This includes the GEF-World Bank *Pacific Regional Oceanscape Program (PROP)* child project in RMI, *Pacific Islands Regional Oceanscape Program - Republic of the Marshall Islands?*. The project will also be coordinated with the GEF-UNDP Pacific Ridge to Reef Program child project, *R2R Reimaanlok Looking to the Future: Strengthening Natural Resource Management in Atoll Communities in the Republic of Marshall Islands Employing Integrated Approaches: RMI R2R?* (GEF # 5544). Marine management activities for both of these child projects work closely with MIMRA and CCD, with updates provided to CMAC. As such, coordination of this project with these other ongoing GEF initiatives will be through appropriate government tasked with project coordination.

Federated States of Micronesia: In the Federated States of Micronesia, the project will similarly be coordinated with the GEF- UNDP Pacific Ridge to Reef Program child projects, *R2R Implementing an Integrated Ridge to Reef Approach to Enhance Ecosystem Services, to Conserve Globally Important Biodiversity and to Sustain Local Livelihoods in the FSM?* (GEF #5517). In FSM, coordination will be ensured through existing inter-agency government meetings of development projects, including officials from the Department of Resource and Development, and the Department of Environment, Climate Change & Emergency Management.

Republic of Palau: In the Republic of Palau, the project will likewise also maintain coordination with several important GEF investments. The most relevant project is the recently approved GEF-UNDP STAR BD project titled, *Strengthening the Palau National Marine Sanctuary for the Conservation and Management of Global Marine Biodiversity and Sustainable Fisheries?*. Also relevant is the GEF- UNDP Pacific Ridge to Reef Program Palau child project implemented by UNEP, titled, *Advancing Sustainable Resources Management to Improve Livelihoods and Protect Biodiversity in Palau?* (GEF #5208). The project will also maintain communication with the GEF-UNDP project, *Integrating Biodiversity Safeguards and Conservation into Planning and Development?* (GEF #9208) that has recently begun implementation, to ensure transaction costs within government offices are kept to a minimum. Coordination with these projects will be ensured through close communication with the GEF Operational Focal Point office that is also closely engaged with implementation of the Palau National Marine Sanctuary, the Protected Areas Network (PAN) office within the Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment & Tourism, and functions as the primary subgrant recipient for this project and a key member of Palau's inter-agency working group.

Regional: Regionally, there are several important initiatives that the project will remain coordinated with. The most important of regional GEF initiatives is the GEF-UNEP project, *The Micronesia Challenge: Sustainable Finance Systems for Island Protected Area Management?* (GEF # 3626) that was under the GEF Pacific Alliance for Sustainability (PAS). This project helped establish the management and

sustainable financing mechanisms of the Micronesia Challenge through the strengthening of the Micronesia Conservation Trust (MCT). MCT is also a main partner of this regional project. Project 3626 has ended and this project has ensured that recommendations and lessons learned from the project, as provided in the terminal evaluation, have been incorporated into this project design. Additional recommendations have also been incorporated from another (and currently ongoing) third-party evaluation of the Micronesia Challenge that has been commissioned by the MC Steering Committee (MCSC). Overall coordination with MCT during implementation of the project will be ensured through MCT's observer membership on the MCSC, which will also serve as the steering committee for this project.

Each of the participating countries has a child project under the GEF-UNDP *Pacific Ridge to Reef (R2R) Program*, formally titled, *Testing the Integration of Water, Land, Forest & Coastal Management to Preserve Ecosystem Services, Store Carbon, Improve Climate Resilience and Sustain Livelihoods in Pacific Island Countries?* (GEF # 5404). Project coordination will be focused through national-level focal points given the high contributions of GEF STAR from the three participating project countries. Future R2R regional coordination will also be ensured through frequent check-ins and supporting implementation of R2R concepts as they relate to connecting terrestrial, marine, and socio-economic goals of the MC 2030 with respective national strategies and plans.

The GEF-World Bank *Pacific Islands Regional Oceanscape Program (PROP)* (GEF #6970), while only operating in one of the three project countries, can serve as a valuable project partner for the sharing regional data and information that may benefit all Micronesia jurisdictions. The project's main coordination with PROP will be through the national efforts in Marshall Islands via MIMRA, while coordination will also be explored at the regional level through the remainder of the project timeline.

While this project is not solely focused on fisheries management, it's important to further recognize the series of GEF-UNDP investments ? GEF ID 4746: *Implementation of Global and Regional Oceanic Fisheries Conventions and Related Instruments in the Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS) ? Phase II* and GEF ID #10394: *Mainstreaming climate change and ecosystem-based approaches into the sustainable management of the living marine resources of the WCPFC*. The focus of these investments are to strengthen regional fisheries governance, including support to the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) and the with implementation of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Convention (WCPFC Convention) that was established to reform, realign, restructure and strengthen SIDS' national fisheries laws, policies, institutions and programs. The more recent GEF-7 project (#10394) is focused on addressing climate change adaptation concerns, with the stated project objective to implement the 2019 Strategic Action Programme for the Sustainable Management of Living Oceanic Resources by the Pacific SIDS to address the primary and emerging threats, particularly climate change. This first project (#4746) is nearing completion scheduled for end in early 2020 and recommendations from the project terminal evaluation will be reviewed closely to see where adaptive management adjustments might be made that can improve success of future project implementation. The second project was PIF approved in 2020 and this project

will work closely with UNDP during full project development during 2020-2021 to ensure close coordination with Micronesia specific goals.

The GEF International Waters focal area is also supporting a new project on freshwater resources management in Micronesia, titled, *Managing Coastal Aquifers in Selected Pacific SIDS* (GEF #10041). Coordination with this project will be maintained through national GEF operational focal point offices, and opportunities to reduce transaction costs will be continuously explored throughout project implementation.

7. Consistency with National Priorities

Describe the consistency of the project with national strategies and plans or reports and assessments under relevant conventions from below:

NAPAs, NAPs, ASGM NAPs, MIAs, NBSAPs, NCs, TNAs, NCSAs, NIPs, PRSPs, NPFE, BURs, INDCs, etc.

Please refer to Section 3.5 of the WWF GEF Project Document for a full description of the project's consistency with national priorities.

For the large ocean states of Micronesia, marine management is a national priority. This has been explicitly stated in the expanded MC 2030 conservation goals and process targets which build on the Sustainable Development Goals. This project has been co-designed with national government and key regional partners to specifically support the alignment of the MC 2030 with national priorities and plans. The project's success relies on advancing planning and strengthening the regional and national enabling environments for the MC 2030 goals through careful alignment and consistency with current national priorities and plans.

From a regional perspective, the Micronesia Challenge also builds on political commitments towards marine management from the executive, judiciary, and legislative branches of the governments of RMI, FSM, and Palau. The first such meeting was at the 13th International Coral Reef Symposium Leaders' Summit in Honolulu, Hawai'i in 2016. The Heads of State from RMI, FSM, and Palau signed a Call to Action, promoting: a) bridge between science and policy; b) partnerships with international science and technical communities; c) coral reef stewardship with open and transparent process; d) leveraging national and regional frameworks, and; e) integrating traditional knowledge and scientific research to guide policies. Building off Micronesia executive branch support for marine conservation, the Pacific Judicial Council held an Environmental Law and Science Conference in 2017 to discuss legal and policy gaps for strengthened judicial branch enforcement. In 2018, the Association of Pacific Island Legislatures (APIL)

passed Resolution APIL Resolution No 37-GA-19, CD1, where they strongly urged *member jurisdictions to take action to conserve biodiversity and ease the impacts of climate change through the creation of marine protected areas in thirty percent (30%) of their jurisdictional waters by 2030.*^[1] These past actions were most recently galvanized in the Joint Communique that presented the expanded conservation goals and process targets of the 2030 Micronesia Challenge from ministers and heads of state of the governments of CNMI, Guam, RMI, FSM, and Palau at the 24th Micronesia Island Forum (MIF) in Chuuk State in July 2019. All participating governments also support the Sustainable Development Goals, especially including SDG 14 focusing on sustainable use of the oceans and SDG 14.7 which states, *By 2030, increase the economic benefits to Small Island developing States and least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism.*

Through close co-design of the project with national partners, there is direct consistency of the project interventions with national priorities and plans. Building on the success of the Micronesia Challenge, the RMI government developed a national conservation area plan in 2007 titled *Reimaanlok*. *Reimaanlok* presents a process for building community-based conservation in the Marshall Islands, guiding the principles and process to inform design and management of protected areas by local communities. As such, the goals of the *Reimaanlok* process are not to directly identify specific protected areas.^[2] While *Reimaanlok* predates the Micronesia Challenge, the goals of *Reimaanlok* are very well aligned towards a common goal. In 2015, the Marshall Islands Protected Areas Network Act was passed.^[3] Currently the Marshall Islands have met their protected area coverage targets under the Micronesia Challenge and the CBD Aichi Target 11, but they still have need for significant strengthening of marine resource management both within and outside of protected areas. In 2017, the RMI held its first National Ocean Symposium (NOS), led by the Marshall Islands Marine Resources Authority (MIMRA). The outcome of the NOS resulted in a set of Guiding Principles with accompanying implementation plan that provides a set of policy directives to the national government to steer its activities at the national and local government level as well as communicate the RMI's priorities and activities at the international level. This National Ocean Policy is also supported by the recently amended 2018 Protected Areas Network (PAN) Act that formalized the Coastal Management Advisory Council (CMAC) and established a new PAN office in MIMRA. The project is directly supporting CMAC's and its growing mandate, including ensuring national alignment of the MC 2030 within RMI.

Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) has also acted to achieve marine goals. Building off their 2002 NBSAP, a collation of national and state governments partnered with international organizations, NGOS, and academic experts to develop, *A Blueprint for Conserving the Biodiversity of the Federated States of Micronesia* (FSM Blueprint) to guide FSM towards improved biodiversity and natural resource management. The FSM Blueprint identified overfishing as one of the most urgent and critical threats across marine areas of biological significance in all states.^[4] More recently in 2017, the Federated States of Micronesia extended management of their territorial seas to 24 miles, effectively closing an area of 10% of its EEZ of more than 1.3 million square miles to commercial fishing and exploitation of natural resources. Marine resources management varies across the States of Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei, and Yap, including

state-level biodiversity strategy and action plans (SBSAPS). FSM has recently completed an update on their NBSAP and SBSAPs which, once adopted, will provide updated national and state level guidance. Most recently, FSM passed the National Protected Areas Network (PAN) Policy Framework which is administered by the Department of Resources and Development in conjunction with State Focal Points, the MCT and a recently established PAN Technical Committee. The project will be directly supporting the recently established PAN Technical Committee in its new role for development of a nation-wide coastal and marine resource management plan, including alignment with the MC 2030 goals.

The Government of Palau declared 80% of its Exclusive Economic Zone (approximately 500,000 km²) protected under the *Palau National Marine Sanctuary (PNMS) Act* in 2015.^[5] The PNMS legislation, planned for full implementation in 2020, limits fishing to the remaining 20% of the EEZ, reserving it for domestic fishing efforts. Palau, and the broader western Pacific, is under increasing pressure from climate change while simultaneously more vulnerable than most places due to the sensitivity and exposure of small, coral reef-based islands. With its expansive, highly diverse reefs and broad national support of science, researchers from around the world have examined many components of Palau's social-ecological systems. Studies have documented the effects of individual stressors on Palau's nearshore ecosystems^{[6],[7],[8]} such as climate, inland development, tourism^[9], coastal development^[10], typhoons^[11] and fishing^[12]. Yet integration among disciplines and between science and policymaking could be significantly strengthened to overcome barriers for successful implementation of the PNMS. In March 2018, Palau International Coral Reef Center (PICRC) partnered with the Stanford Center for Ocean Solutions to convene discussions with government and other regional and international experts for developing stronger science-based national marine resource management options in support of the PNMS. PNMS legislation aims to foster the creation of a more productive domestic fishing industry to benefit local livelihoods and food security. The implementation of the PNMS legislation provides a catalyzing moment for determining the enabling conditions for established a domestic pelagic fishery, but requires an integrated national plan and the necessary resources. The project is directly supporting the Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment & Tourism (MNRET) to establish a multi-stakeholder working group to discuss and guide development of the domestic pelagic fishery, aligned with MC 2030 goals and in support of long-term sustainability of the PNMS.

[1] <https://apilpacific.com/files/37thGA/37-GA-19,%20CD1.pdf>

[2] Reimaan National Planning Team. 2008. Reimaanlok: National Conservation Area Plan for the Marshall Islands 2007-2012. Published by: N. Baker: Melbourne.

[3] http://www.pacii.org/mh/legis/num_act/pana2015284.pdf

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[9] Pratt, S. and D. Harrison. eds. 2015. *Tourism in Pacific Islands: current issues and future challenges*. Routledge.

[10] Richmond, R.H., T. Rongo, Y. Golbuu, S. Victor, N. Idechong, et. al. 2007. Watersheds and coral reefs: conservation science, policy, and implementation. *AIBS Bull.*, 57(7):598-607.

[11] Gouezo, M., Y. Golbuu, R. van Woesik, L. Rehm, S. Koshiba and C. Doropoulos, C., 2015. Impact of two sequential super typhoons on coral reef communities in Palau. *Mar. Eco. Pro. Ser.*, 540:73-85.

[12] Prince, J., S. Victor, V. Kloulchad and A. Hordyk. 2015. Length based SPR assessment of eleven Indo-Pacific coral reef fish populations in Palau. *Fisheries Res.*, 171:42-58.

8. Knowledge Management

Elaborate the "Knowledge Management Approach" for the project, including a budget, key deliverables and a timeline, and explain how it will contribute to the project's overall impact.

Please refer to Section 3.7 and Appendix F of the WWF GEF Project Document for a full description of the project's knowledge management plans, including budget, key deliverables, and timeline.

This project has been designed based on recommendations from existing lessons learned and best practices from the region, with mechanisms in place to capture additional knowledge as it becomes available to inform timely adaptive management, enhanced capacity building, and to guide success for a sustained and long-term impact for future generations of the Micronesia Challenge. The project design was directly informed by the independent evaluation of the Micronesia Challenge that was commissioned by the MCSC. The evaluation's recommendations were helped guide the aspirational MC 2030 goals at the Micronesia Island Forum (MIF) in July 2019. This evaluation was also the basis for much of the project's design. Among the key recommendations from this evaluation were the successes of the current support groups and measures groups, as well as successes and areas for improvement on MC governance at the national and regional level. As an example, below are key recommendations from the governance section of the evaluation that inform this project's design and how they have been incorporated into this project:

MC Evaluation Recommendation	Project Design
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Review/Celebrate jurisdictional accomplishments toward the 2020 goals and challenges faced in achieving the goals	Component 2 activities at regional and international ocean conferences
Review and discuss the 2030 goals (presented by Chief Executives) in relation to local priorities and needs, including sustainable development, to identify how the MC 2030 can best support local efforts	Component 1 working groups of key national stakeholders are tasked with discussing national efforts and priorities and how they align with the MC 2030 goals.
Draft a local implementation plan to achieve the existing 2020 commitments and/or the 2030 goals based on existing efforts and review how agency work plans and budgets can support these goals	Output of Component 1 will be national-level MC 2030 Strategic Plans to guide future implementation
It is recommended that the framework of the MC be revisited and more structured to improve true regional level coordination	Component 2 supports the development of a MCRO 2020-2030 Strategic Plan which will include a more structured regional coordination mechanism
MCRO focus on high-level regional communication and coordination with executive leadership, legislatures, and cabinet/minister-level leaders. The first year of the MCRO should aim to support the coordination of jurisdictional planning meetings and understanding how jurisdictional efforts and needs fit into a regional context	Component 2 supports MCRO communications. Components 1 and 2 supports jurisdictional planning efforts

Project Knowledge Management Mechanisms and Strategic Communications

There are multiple processes designed into the project to capture, assess, and document information, lessons, best practices, and expertise generated during project implementation. The third project component has been specifically designed to capture, manage, and disseminate project knowledge. Under Output 3.1: Project Knowledge Management Captured and Disseminated, including through IW:LEARN, the project will develop at least one knowledge product per year (total of at least three knowledge products), with dissemination on the MC and MCT websites, as well as the project page on the IW:LEARN website. The project will develop at least one experience note and engage in IW:LEARN events. Additionally, the project will capture knowledge under Component 2 by developing at least two MC communication products per year for a total of six communication products. While not solely focused on disseminating project knowledge, these communication products will be coordinated with the

knowledge management products under Component 3 and are a secondary knowledge management process that will ensure consistent messaging and amplifying of knowledge generated by the project.

Knowledge developed and captured by the project will be disseminated at both the national, regional, and global levels. At the national level, the project will disseminate knowledge through the national working groups that are being directly supported by the project (Component 1), knowledge can then be transferred immediately to key government and non-government entities. At the regional level, project knowledge will be disseminated chiefly through existing MC processes. These include the MCRO, MCT, and focal points of the MCSC. Further, the project will also be disseminating project knowledge through the MC, MCT websites, as well as through the expanded social media presence that is directly being supported by the project. Project partners, including Stanford COS, TNC, and local CSOs will also provide additional platforms to disseminate project knowledge. At the global level, this GEF IW project will be an active participant in IW:LEARN and will leverage the IW:LEARN platform to share knowledge and lessons learned with the global IW community, including through the project webpage on the IW:LEARN website, IW Conferences and other IW:LEARN events, and the development of a project experience note. Further, the project has been designed to raise the profile of the MC at important international events, including UN Oceans and Our Oceans conferences and the CBD COP.

Based on the initial recommendations for the Micronesia Challenge independent evaluation, communications to raise awareness of the Micronesia Challenge are deemed critical for future success. A large focus of this project involves enhancing strategic communications for the Micronesia Challenge, both at the national and regional level. There is dedicated funding for communications in Components 2 and 3 of the project. More specifically, under output 2.1.2 the project is directly supporting the development of an updated MC communications plan from the current 2008 plan. The project is also developing at least two communication products per year for a total of at least six communication products in total. The project is also supporting enhancement of the MC's social media presence. Further, the project will have a direct impact on elevating the branding and consistent messaging of the Micronesia Challenge. Combined with increased participation at international events over the coming years, the Micronesia Challenge will rely heavily on the enhanced role of communications to have a lasting impact.

Long-term Knowledge Management Impact

Knowledge and learning are recognized as critical aspects that ensure that the impact of the project persists far beyond the short project duration. Long term sustainability will be achieved through multiple knowledge management efforts, including using the project's own knowledge management processes while also participating in the GEF International Waters knowledge management community, IW:LEARN. Project sustainability and long-term impact relies heavily on raising the profile of the Micronesia

Challenge at the national and regional levels. This is why the project has a heavy focus on project communications, including development of communication strategies and plans. Past knowledge and experiences as well as knowledge gleaned from the current project will factor heavily into ensuring future planning. This includes following recommendations from the Micronesia Challenge independent evaluation. By improving the Micronesia Challenge community, not only can project knowledge be disseminated to a wider regional audience, but it will also cast a wider net of stakeholder engagement to glean knowledge that may enhance the future success of the Micronesia Challenge.

Looking to the future, the project is also directly supporting outreach to younger generations of Micronesians by leveraging the Micronesia Challenge Young Champions program as well as enhancing the MC's social media presence. These activities will raise the profile of the MC among future generations of Micronesians (and potentially beyond the Micronesia region). In a region with a relatively small population where local champions can be highly influential, such targeted efforts can have a significant and lasting impact. By growing the overall Micronesia Challenge community, a positive feedback loop can be created by the project that mainstreams the MC 2030 goals into local government and communities, and ultimately primes the region for renewed interest and investment to meet the MC 2030 goals over the coming decade.

9. Monitoring and Evaluation

Describe the budgeted M and E plan

Please refer to Appendix E of the WWF GEF Project Document for a full description of the project's monitoring and evaluation plans.

The project monitoring and evaluation plan has been developed in coordination with national and regional project stakeholders. A total of \$30,000 has been budgeted for M&E under Outcome 3.2 (see Appendix E: Monitoring & Evaluation Plan and Appendix H: Detailed Budget Tables). This includes allocations of \$30,000 for independent consultants to complete a project terminal evaluation within Output 3.2.1.

The Project will be monitored through the Project Results Framework (Appendix C of WWF GEF Project Document). The Results Framework includes one indicator for Component 1, two indicators for Component 2, and two indicators for Component 3. The baseline has been completed for each indicator along with feasible targets, set annually and/or life of project where relevant. A methodology for measuring indicator targets is provided. Indicator targets are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (SMART), and disaggregated by sex where applicable. Component 3 of the Results Framework is dedicated to M&E, knowledge sharing and coordination. Relevant Core indicators have been included to provide a portfolio level understanding of progress towards the GEF Global Environmental Benefits (GEBs).

The Project Coordinator and Project Manager will be responsible for gathering M&E data for the annual results framework tracking to improve the results, efficiency, and management of the project.

The following is a summary of project reports:

M&E/ Reporting Document	How the document will be used	Timeframe	Responsible
Inception Report	Summarize decisions made during inception workshop, including changes to project design, budget, Results Framework, and Y1 Annual Work Plan and Budget	Within three months of inception workshop	PMU Project Manager and M&E Officer
Quarterly Financial Reports	Assess financial progress and management.	Every three months	PMU F & A officer
WWF Project Progress Report (PPR) with RF and workplan tracking.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Inform management decisions and drafting of annual workplan and budget; -Share lessons internally and externally; -Report to the PSC and GEF Agency on the project progress. 	Every six months	PMU Project Manager and M&E Officer
Terminal Project Evaluation Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -External summative evaluation of the overall project; - Recommendations for GEF and those designing related projects. 	Within six months after project completion	External expert or organization

Independent formal evaluations have been budgeted by the project and will adhere to WWF and GEF guidelines and policies. The Terminal Evaluation will be completed within six months of the official close of the project. The evaluations provide an opportunity for adaptive management as well as sharing of

lessons and best practices for this and future projects. The Operational Focal Point will be briefed and debriefed before and after the evaluation(s) and will have an opportunity to comment on the draft and final report.

An annual reflection will be led by the PMU and conducted with the PSC to review project progress and challenges to date, taking into account results framework tracking, work plan tracking, stakeholder feedback and quarterly field reports to review project strategies, risks, and the theory of change (ToC). The results of this workshop will inform project decision making (i.e., refining the ToC, informing PPRs and AWP&Bs).

10. Benefits

Describe the socioeconomic benefits to be delivered by the project at the national and local levels, as appropriate. How do these benefits translate in supporting the achievement of global environment benefits (GEF Trust Fund) or adaptation benefits (LDCE/SCCF)?

Please refer to Section 3.3 of the WWF GEF Project Document for a full description of the project's anticipated socioeconomic benefits.

Through supporting participatory processes to achieve integrated resource management at national and regional levels, this project aims to help the three countries improve livelihoods within local communities, minimize unintended consequences, and assess socioeconomic trade-offs of ecosystem services. Integrating human dimensions into conservation management is central for positive social, environmental, and management outcomes, and failure to do so can undermine success and lead to significant conflict and resistance to management strategies.[1],[2],[3] Therefore, this project will support workshops and stakeholder engagement processes to help national leaders ?connect? the importance and existence value of the marine protection to the daily lives and social wellbeing of stakeholders and the public.[4] Marine resource management authorities will identify and involve stakeholders and create opportunities for meaningful input from these groups in management planning.[5]

This project will support the synthesis of existing data, and identify data gaps, to understand the socioeconomic effects of national and regional level marine management and to minimize the potential for unintended consequences. It is not uncommon for conservation strategies, like marine protected areas, to have unintended consequences.[6],[7] For example, strategies limiting access to a resource (e.g., establishing a partial no-fishing) can shift market equilibrium leading to negative, unintended market outcomes such as price fluctuations and shifts to other goods²⁴. Thus, in order to achieve conservation goals and avoid unintended consequences, protected-area policies need to be based on a deep understanding of socioeconomic trade-offs,[8],[9],[10],[11],[12],[13] and this project will support in-country and cross-country efforts to analysis socioeconomic tradeoffs of marine resource management.

Marine ecosystem services (e.g. coastal protection, biodiversity, recreation and other cultural services), have high economic values to national economies, and can be derived from multiple marine ecosystems.[14] Minimizing damage to these ecosystems through ecosystem-based resource management, including marine protected areas, can optimize the value derived from them by local

communities.[15],[16]¹⁶ This project will support the designing and management of ecosystem-based marine resource management at the national and regional scale to optimize the respective ecosystems services. Regional benefits exist from effective marine resource management at the local level.[17]¹⁷,[18]¹⁸ Thus, the regional component of this project is essential to ensure local, in-country efforts lead to regional environmental outcomes.

[1] Day, Jon C., and K Dobbs. 2013. "Effective Governance of a Large and Complex Cross-Jurisdictional Marine Protected Area: Australia's Great Barrier Reef." *Marine Policy* 41 (14):24.

[2] Gaymer, C.F., A.V. Stadel, N.C. Ban, P.F. Carcamo, J. Ierna Jr., and L.M. Lieberknecht. 2014. "Merging Top-down and Bottom-up Approaches in Marine Protected Areas Planning: Experiences from around the Globe." *Aquatic Conservation: Marine and Freshwater Ecosystems* 24 (S2): 128-44.

[3] Richmond, L, and D Kotowicz. 2015. "Equity and Access in Marine Protected Areas: The History and Future of traditional Indigenous Fishing." *Applied Geography* 59: 117-24

[4] Christie, Patrick, Nathan J. Bennett, Noella J. Gray, T. Aulani Wilhelm, Nai'a Lewis, John Parks, Natalie C. Ban, et al. 2017. "Why People Matter in Ocean Governance: Incorporating Human Dimensions into Large-Scale Marine Protected Areas." *Marine Policy* 84 (January): 273-84. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2017.08.002>.

[5] Lewis, N, Jon C. Day, A Wilhelm, D Wagner, C.F. Gaymer, J. Parks, A.M. Friedlander, et al. 2017. "Large-Scale Marine Protected Areas: Guidelines for Design and Management."

[6] Gaymer, C.F., A.V. Stadel, N.C. Ban, P.F. Carcamo, J. Ierna Jr., and L.M. Lieberknecht. 2014. "Merging Top-down and Bottom-up Approaches in Marine Protected Areas Planning: Experiences from around the Globe." *Aquatic Conservation: Marine and Freshwater Ecosystems* 24 (S2): 128-44

[7] Lim, Felix K.S., L. Roman Carrasco, Julian McHardy, and David P. Edwards. 2017. "Perverse Market Outcomes from Biodiversity Conservation Interventions." *Conservation Letters* 10 (5): 506-16. <https://doi.org/10.1111/conl.12332>

[8] Clifton, Julian, Eslam O. Osman, David J. Suggett, and David J. Smith. 2019. "Resolving Conservation and Development Tensions in a Small Island State: A Governance Analysis of Curieuse Marine National Park, Seychelles." *Marine Policy*, no. July: 103617. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2019.103617>.

[9] Pringle, Robert M. 2017. "Upgrading Protected Areas to Conserve Wild Biodiversity." *Nature* 546 (7656): 91-99. <https://doi.org/10.1038/nature22902>

[10] Watson, James E M, Nigel Dudley, Daniel B Segan, and Marc Hockings. 2014. "The Performance and Potential of Protected Areas." *Nature* 515 (7525): 67-73. <https://doi.org/10.1038/nature13947>

[11] Ban, Natalie C., Georgina Grace Gurney, Nadine A. Marshall, Charlotte K. Whitney, Morena Mills, Stefan Gelcich, Nathan J. Bennett, et al. 2019. "Well-Being Outcomes of Marine Protected Areas." *Nature Sustainability* 2 (6): 524-32. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41893-019-0306-2>.

[12] Larrosa, Cecilia, Luis R. Carrasco, and E. J. Milner-Gulland. 2016. "Unintended Feedbacks: Challenges and Opportunities for Improving Conservation Effectiveness." *Conservation Letters* 9 (5): 316-26. <https://doi.org/10.1111/conl.12240>.

[13] Gardner, Charlie J., Julia E. Latham, and Steve Rocliffe. 2017. "Intended and Unintended Outcomes in Fisheries Learning Exchanges: Lessons from Mexico and Madagascar." *Marine Policy* 77 (March): 219-26. <https://doi.org/10.1016/J.MARPOL.2016.04.040>.

[14] Barbier, Edward B. 2017. "Marine Ecosystem Services." *Current Biology* 27 (11): R507-10. <https://doi.org/10.1016/J.CUB.2017.03.020>.

[15] Edgar, Graham J., Rick D. Stuart-Smith, Trevor J. Willis, Stuart Kininmonth, Susan C. Baker, Stuart Banks, Neville S. Barrett, et al. 2014. "Global Conservation Outcomes Depend on Marine Protected Areas with Five Key Features." *Nature* 506 (7487): 216-20. <https://doi.org/10.1038/nature13022>.

[16] Rosenberg, AA, and KL McLeod. 2005. "Implementing Ecosystem-Based Approaches to Management for the Conservation of Ecosystem Services." *Marine Ecology Progress Series* 300: 270-74.

[17] Carlsson, Lars, and Fikret Berkes. 2005. "Co-Management: Concepts and Methodological Implications." *Journal of Environmental Management* 75 (1): 65-76. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvman.2004.11.008>.

[18] Hassler, Björn, Kira Gee, Michael Gilek, Anne Luttmann, Andrea Morf, Fred Saunders, Igne Stalmokaite, Helena Strand, and Jacek Zaucha. 2018. "Collective Action and Agency in Baltic Sea Marine Spatial Planning: Transnational Policy Coordination in the Promotion of Regional Coherence." *Marine Policy* 92 (June): 138-47. <https://doi.org/10.1016/J.MARPOL.2018.03.002>.

11. Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS) Risks

Provide information on the identified environmental and social risks and potential impacts associated with the project/program based on your organization's ESS systems and procedures

Overall Project/Program Risk Classification *

PIF	CEO Endorsement/Approva I	MTR	TE
Low			

Measures to address identified risks and impacts

Elaborate on the types and risk classifications/ratings of any identified environmental and social risks and impacts (considering the GEF ESS Minimum Standards) and any measures undertaken as well as planned management measures to address these risks during implementation.

The Enhancing National and Regional Marine Management for Sustainable Development in Micronesia GEF project has been classified as "Category C," since it is a technical assistance project and there are no negative environmental and social impacts anticipated. Long-term positive impacts are expected since the work is designed to assist countries in Micronesia to improve national and regional marine management in line with the Micronesia Challenge.

Supporting Documents

Upload available ESS supporting documents.

Title	Module	Submitted
SST Micronesia signed	CEO Endorsement ESS	
CategorizationMemo_MicronesiaFinal2March26v2	CEO Endorsement ESS	

ANNEX A: PROJECT RESULTS FRAMEWORK (either copy and paste here the framework from the Agency document, or provide reference to the page in the project document where the framework could be found).

Please see Appendix C (page 107) in the Project Document.

ANNEX B: RESPONSES TO PROJECT REVIEWS (from GEF Secretariat and GEF Agencies, and Responses to Comments from Council at work program inclusion and the Convention Secretariat and STAP at PIF).

The project response to the reviews of this Request for CEO Endorsement is included in the response matrix.

ANNEX C: Status of Utilization of Project Preparation Grant (PPG).
(Provide detailed funding amount of the PPG activities financing status in the table below:

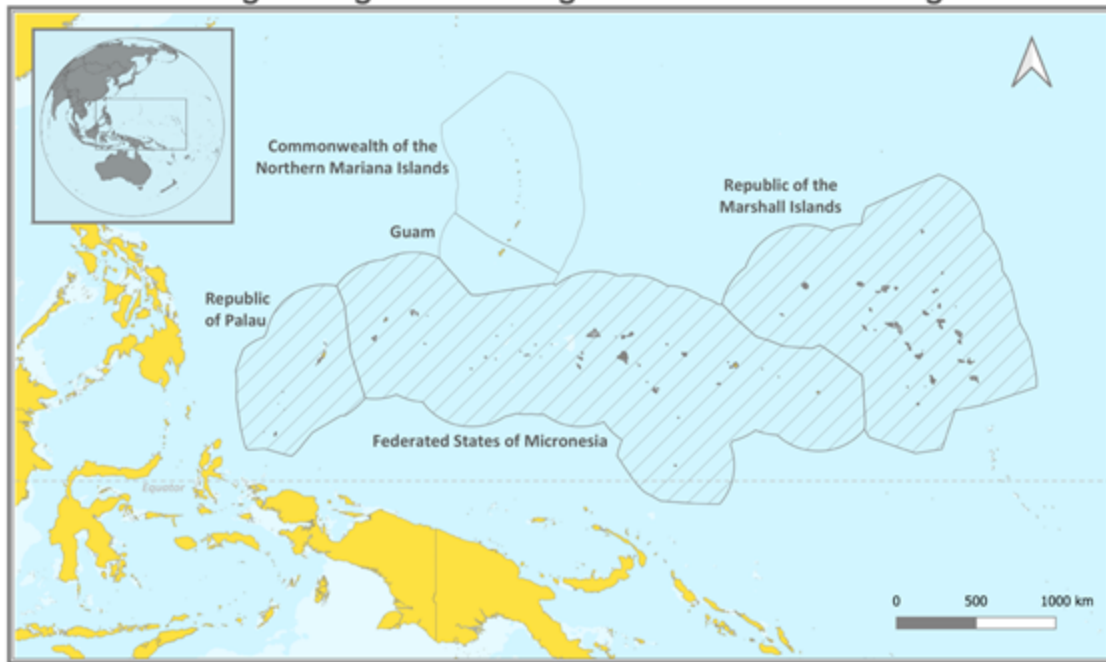
<i>Project Preparation Activities Implemented</i>	<i>GETF/LDCF/SCCF Amount (\$)</i>		
	<i>Budgeted Amount</i>	<i>Amount Spent To date</i>	<i>Amount Committed</i>
Project development salaries and fringe		14,835	
Meetings, Workshops, and Travel		30,620	
Administrative Costs		4,545	
Total	0	50,000	

* PPG reimbursement is requested

ANNEX D: Project Map(s) and Coordinates

Please attach the geographical location of the project area, if possible.

Strengthening and Enabling the Micronesia Challenge 2030



Stanford
Center for
Ocean Solutions



ANNEX E: Project Budget Table

Please attach a project budget table.

Expenditure Category	Detailed Description	Component (US\$eq.)						Total (US\$eq.)	Responsible Entity <small>[Executing Entity receiving funds from the GEF Agency][1]</small>
		Component 1	Component 2	Component 3	Sub-Total	M&E [2]	PMC		
Sub-contract to executing partner/ entity					-			-	
Republic of the Marshall Islands: Marshall Resources Authority (RMI: MIMRA)	Consultancy to undertake MC 2030 National Policy Gap Analysis that informs the working group dialogues, the strategy documents, and the national MC 2030 Strategic Plan	24,200	0	0	24,200	0	0	24,200	Stanford University
	Hosting at least two meetings per year for the Coastal Management Advisory Council (total of at least six meetings) to deliver Outputs 113 and 114 (travel costs for working group members; workshop-related expenses including food/venue)	125,400	0	0	125,400	0	0	125,400	Stanford University
	Consultancy to undertake at least one comprehensive policy recommendation and/or planning tool and new assessment delineating how recommendations/planning tools will enable Coastal Management Advisory Council to align with MC 2030	246,900	0	0	246,900	0	0	246,900	Stanford University
	Consultancy for one MC 2030 National Strategic Plan to ensure connectivity with regional partners and MC 2030 objectives	3,551	0	0	3,551	0	0	3,551	Stanford University
Federated States of Micronesia: Department of Resources and Development (FSM: R&D)	Consultancy to undertake MC 2030 National Policy Gap Analysis that informs the working group dialogues, the strategy documents, and the national MC 2030 Strategic Plan	24,200	0	0	24,200	0	0	24,200	Stanford University
	Hosting at least two meetings per year for the Coastal Management Advisory Council (total of at least six meetings) to deliver Outputs 113 and 114 (travel costs for working group members; workshop-related expenses including food/venue)	159,500	0	0	159,500	0	0	159,500	Stanford University
	Consultancy to undertake at least one comprehensive policy recommendation and/or planning tool and new assessment delineating how recommendations/planning tools will enable Coastal Management Advisory Council to align with MC 2030	212,800	0	0	212,800	0	0	212,800	Stanford University
	Consultancy for one MC 2030 National Strategic Plan to ensure connectivity with regional partners and MC 2030 objectives	3,551	0	0	3,551	0	0	3,551	Stanford University
Republic of Palau: Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment & Tourism (Palau: MNRET)	Consultancy to undertake MC 2030 National Policy Gap Analysis that informs the working group dialogues, the strategy documents, and the national MC 2030 Strategic Plan	24,200	0	0	24,200	0	0	24,200	Stanford University
	Hosting at least two meetings per year for the Coastal Management Advisory Council (total of at least six meetings) to deliver Outputs 113 and 114 (travel costs for working group members; workshop-related expenses including food/venue)	159,500	0	0	159,500	0	0	159,500	Stanford University
	Consultancy to undertake at least one comprehensive policy recommendation and/or planning tool and new assessment delineating how recommendations/planning tools will enable Coastal Management Advisory Council to align with MC 2030	212,800	0	0	212,800	0	0	212,800	Stanford University
	Consultancy for one MC 2030 National Strategic Plan to ensure connectivity with regional partners and MC 2030 objectives	3,551	0	0	3,551	0	0	3,551	Stanford University
Micronesia Conservation Trust, on behalf of Micronesia Challenge Regional Office	Micronesia Challenge Regional Office (MCRRO) Coordinator travel costs for in-person project kickoff meetings and working group kickoff meetings	6,600	0	0	6,600	0	0	6,600	Stanford University
	Consultancies to improve MC coordination through updating and MCRRO Strategic Plan and MC Fundraising Plan as well as to advance communication efforts. Also funds for contractual services to advance MC Measures monitoring protocols as well as funds for travel for MC representation at major ocean events	0	359,779	0	359,779	0	0	359,779	Stanford University
	Enhanced Visibility of Micronesia Challenge through travel funds for representation at major regional and global events, as well as consultancies to develop updated communications plan and products	0	92,400	0	92,400	0	0	92,400	Stanford University
	Travel and Consultancy funds to support process for developing a new MC 2030 Visioning Document as well as travel and event planning expenses for Regional and Global events to launch the 2030 vision	0	101,750	0	101,750	0	0	101,750	Stanford University
	Contracted services for development of knowledge products, experience notes, and IW:LEARN webpage as well as travel funds for participation in IW:LEARN events	0	0	27,500	27,500	0	0	27,500	Stanford University
TOTAL: Sub-contract to executing partner/ entity	1,206,753	553,929	27,500	1,788,182	-	-	1,788,182	Stanford University	
Contractual Services – Company									
Project Financial Audit (Terminal)	0	0	0	0	0	12,000	12,000	Stanford University	
Total: Contractual Services – Company	-	-	-	-	-	12,000	12,000	Stanford University	
International Consultants									
Independent Terminal Evaluation	0	0	30,000	30,000	30,000	-	30,000	Stanford University	
TOTAL: International Consultants	-	-	30,000	30,000	30,000	-	30,000	Stanford University	
Salary and benefits / Staff costs									
Project Manager	0	0	0	-	0	119,027	119,027	Stanford University	
Finance Manager	0	0	0	-	0	19,818	19,818	Stanford University	
TOTAL: Salary and benefits / Staff costs	-	-	-	-	-	138,846	138,846	Stanford University	
Travel									
SFO to Micronesia; three trips to Micronesian region for PMJ for in-person meetings	0	0	0	0	0	14,444	14,444	Stanford University	
TOTAL: Travel	-	-	-	-	-	14,444	14,444	Stanford University	
Other									
Operational assistance for PMC activities (HR, legal, accounting support to the project)	0	0	0	0	0	16,528	16,528	Stanford University	
TOTAL: Other Operating Costs	-	-	-	-	-	16,528	16,528	Stanford University	
Grand Total	1,206,753	553,929	57,500	1,818,182	30,000	181,818	2,000,000		

[1] In exceptional cases where GEF Agency receives funds for execution, Terms of Reference for specific activities are reviewed by GEF Secretariat

[2] M&E costs are accounted for under Component 3. This column shows what costs under Component 3 are related to M&E - it is not 'additional' and therefore not added to the 'subtotal'

ANNEX F: (For NGI only) Termsheet

Instructions. Please submit an finalized termsheet in this section. The NGI Program Call for Proposals provided a template in Annex A of the Call for Proposals that can be used by the Agency. Agencies can use their own termsheets but must add sections on Currency Risk, Co-financing Ratio and Financial Additionality as defined in the template provided in Annex A of the Call for proposals. Termsheets submitted at CEO endorsement stage should include final terms and conditions of the financing.

ANNEX G: (For NGI only) Reflows

Instructions. Please submit a reflows table as provided in Annex B of the NGI Program Call for Proposals and the Trustee excel sheet for reflows (as provided by the Secretariat or the Trustee) in the Document Section of the CEO endorsement. The Agency is required to quantify any expected financial return/gains/interests earned on non-grant instruments that will be transferred to the GEF Trust Fund as noted in the Guidelines on the Project and Program Cycle Policy. Partner Agencies will be required to comply with the reflows procedures established in their respective Financial Procedures Agreement with the GEF Trustee. Agencies are welcomed to provide assumptions that explain expected financial reflow schedules.

ANNEX H: (For NGI only) Agency Capacity to generate reflows

Instructions. The GEF Agency submitting the CEO endorsement request is required to respond to any questions raised as part of the PIF review process that required clarifications on the Agency Capacity to manage reflows. This Annex seeks to demonstrate Agencies' capacity and eligibility to administer NGI resources as established in the Guidelines on the Project and Program Cycle Policy, GEF/C.52/Inf.06/Rev.01, June 9, 2017 (Annex 5).