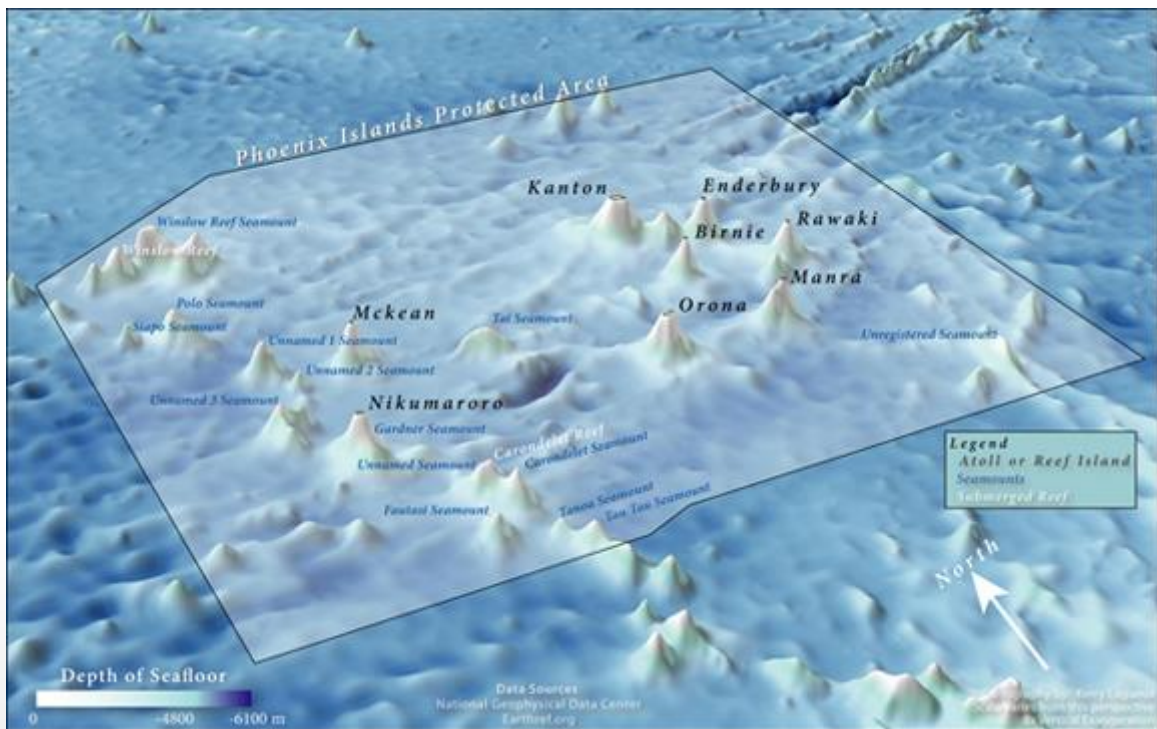


# Terminal Evaluation of the UN Environment GEF Project “Phoenix Islands Protected Area” (PIPA)

## FINAL REPORT



Evaluation Office of UN Environment  
August 2017



## Evaluation Office of UN Environment

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Once the TE was already ongoing, the project was granted another no cost extension to September 2017. Therefore, it is worthwhile to note that this TE only covers the project period to 31 December 2017, and thus does not cover the project implementation from 1 January to 31 September 2017.

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## ABOUT THE EVALUATION<sup>1</sup>

**Joint Evaluation:** No

**Report Language(s):** English

**Evaluation Type:** Terminal Project Evaluation

**Brief Description:** This report is a terminal evaluation of a UN Environment-GEF project implemented between 2011 and 2017. The project's overall development goal was to build capacity in Kiribati to more effectively manage a large protected area in the form of PIPA and create a sustainable financing system for such large sites that could be used as a model for application elsewhere. The evaluation sought to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The evaluation has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UN Environment, the GEF and their executing partner the Government of Kiribati Ministry of Environment, Lands and Agricultural Development and the project partners and stakeholders.

**Key words:** atoll; biodiversity; ecosystem management; financing; fisheries; fishing; Global Environment Facility; GEF; invasive species; island; marine; marine environment; marine protected area; MPA; Phoenix Island; protected area; project evaluation; protected area management; restoration; small island developing states; SIDS; terminal evaluation; TE; trust fund; world heritage

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<sup>1</sup> This data is used to aid the internet search of this report on the Evaluation Office of UN Environment Website

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## List of acronyms & abbreviations

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BEN	South Equatorial Current
BES	South equatorial branch of the South Equatorial Current
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CEPF	Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund
CI	Conservation International
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
COP	Conference of Parties
CRISP	Coral Reef Initiative in the Pacific
DSL	Deep Scattering Layer
DWFN	Distant Water Fishing Nation
ECD	Environment and Conservation Division (MELAD)
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EIC	Equatorial Intermediate Current
EN	Endangered IUCN Red List category
ENSO	El Niño-Southern Oscillation
EOU	Evaluation and Oversight Unit, UNEP
FAD	Fish Aggregating Device
FFA	Forum Fisheries Agency
FSP	Foundation of the Peoples of South Pacific
GBRMPA	Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority
GCF	Global Conservation Fund of Conservation International
GoK	Government of Kiribati
GEIC	Gilbert Ellice Island Colony
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEF PAS	GEF Pacific Alliance for Sustainability
GLISPA	Global Island Partnership
GoK	Government of Kiribati
IAS	Invasive Alien Species
IBA	Important Bird Area of Birdlife International
IFAW	International Fund for Animal Welfare
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
IUU	Fishing Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing
KANGO	Kiribati Association of Non-Governmental Organisations
KBA	Key Biodiversity Area of Conservation International
KDP	Kiribati Development Plan
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreement
MELAD	Ministry of Environment, Lands & Agricultural Development
MFMRD	Ministry of Fisheries, Marine Resource and Development
MIC	Micronesians in Island Conservation
MLPID	Ministry of Line and Phoenix Islands Development
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPA	Marine Protected Area
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NDS	National Development Strategy
NEAq	New England Aquarium
NGO	Non Government Organisation
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NSCC	North Sub-surface Counter-current
NZ	New Zealand
NZAid	New Zealand Aid
NZ-DOC	New Zealand Department of Conservation
PA	Protected Area
PAS	Pacific Alliance for Sustainability
PCA	Project Cooperation Agreement



PCB	Polychlorinated Biphenyl
PIF	Project Identification Form
PII	Pacific Invasives Initiative
PIO	Phoenix Islands Protected Area Implementation Office
PIPA	Phoenix Islands Protected Area
PIPA-MC	Phoenix Islands Protected Area Management Committee
PISC	Phoenix Islands Steering Committee
PMNM	Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument
POP	Persistent Organic Pollutants
RNHP	Regional Natural Heritage Programme of Australia
SAMTEC	The Space and Missile Test Center
SECC	South Subsurface Counter-current
SOPAC	Secretariat of the Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission
SPC	Pacific Community
SPREP	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme
TH	Threatened IUCN Red List Category
TBAP	Tuna and Billfish Assessment Programme
TIGHAR	The International Group for Historic Aircraft Recovery
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNFCC	United Nations Framework on Climate Change
USA	United States of America
USAF	United States Air Force
USFMT	US Fisheries Multilateral Treaty
USP	University of the South Pacific
VMS	Vessel Monitoring System
VU	Vulnerable IUCN Red List Category
WCO	Wildlife Conservation Ordinance
WCPFC	Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission
WCU	Wildlife Conservation Unit
WHC	World Heritage Convention
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development
WWII	World War II
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature
nm	nautical mile

Figure 1: General Map of the Phoenix Islands Protected Area project location.



Source: <http://www.infoplease.com/atlas/pacificislandsandaustralia.html>

**Table 1: Project Identification Table**

UNEP PIMS ID:	00401 (ADDIS)	IMIS number:	6FL-2328-2712-4C29
Sub-programme:3 POW 2012-2013	Ecosystem Management	Expected Accomplishment(s):	a) Enhanced capacity of countries and regions to integrate an ecosystem management approach into development planning processes.  Outcome 1.1: Improved management effectiveness of existing and new protected areas.  Outcome 1.2: Increased revenue for protected area systems to meet total expenditures required for management.
UNEP approval date:	23 December 2011	PoW Output(s):	2. Coherent application of tools and approaches for the assessment and conservation of biodiversity is promoted by countries and the uptake of such tools and approaches is catalyzed through the United Nations system.  Output 1.1. New protected areas (number) and coverage (hectares) of unprotected ecosystems.  Output 1.2. New protected areas (number) and coverage (hectares) of unprotected threatened species.  Output 1.3. Sustainable financing plans.
GEF project ID:	GFL 3897	Project Type:	MSP
GEF OP #:	1	Focal Area(s):	Strategy and Biodiversity
GEF approval date:	12 September 2011	GEF Strategic Priority/Objective:	Ecosystem Management. BD-SP1;BD-SP2;BD-SP3;BD-SP4 & BD-SP5 BD-SP 1 & CC-SP4
Expected Start Date:	30 October 2010	Actual start date:	25 December 2011
Planned completion date:	30 November 2014	Actual completion date:	31 December 2016 31 September 2017
Planned project budget at approval:	\$2,663,100	Total expenditures reported as of 31 December 2016	\$1,880,203

XBF secured:		Leveraged financing:	\$ 5,000,000 <sup>2</sup>
GEF Allocation:	\$870,000	GEF grant expenditures reported as of 31 December 2016]:	\$ 746,725
PDF GEF cost:	\$13,829	PDF co-financing:	\$43,611
Expected MSP/FSP co-financing:	\$1,793,100	Secured MSP/FSP co-financing:	\$1,133,478
First Disbursement:	14 January 2011	Date of financial closure:	TBA
No. of revisions:	1	Date of last revision:	25 March 2015
Date of last Steering Committee meeting:	October 2015		
Mid-term review/evaluation (planned date):	June 2014	Mid-term evaluation review/ (actual date):	March - June 2104
Terminal Evaluation (actual date):	June 2017		

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<sup>2</sup> Note the US\$ 5 million referred to here represents the commitment of the Oceans Five and Waite Foundations to PIPA which is being executed by the PIPA Trust Fund as a five year "sinking" fund (2015 - 2020).

## Executive summary

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### Evaluation overview

1. This report presents the results of the terminal evaluation (TE) of the GEF funded project, *Phoenix Islands Protected Area (PIPA) Project No. GFL 3897* executed by the Government of Kiribati Ministry of Environment, Lands and Agricultural Development and implemented by UN Environment. The TE was undertaken to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and to determine the degree of achievement and/or likelihood of outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the Project, including their sustainability. In the interests of cost efficiency, the PIPA TE country visit was linked to those of Terminal Evaluations of two other GEF4 projects in the Pacific (Prevention, control and management of Pacific Invasive Alien Species (IAS) and the Integrated Island Biodiversity (IIB) Projects) and undertaken in September 2016.

### Evaluation methodology

2. The Terminal Evaluation used a mix of desktop reviews of project documents and other relevant literature and studies, and interviews (face-to-face, by Skype or telephone, and by email) with key individuals involved in the design, implementation and management of the Project, as well as selected national partner representatives and other international stakeholders who have participated in the Project. A Reconstructed Theory of Change was prepared to assist with understanding the rationale of the project and the achievement of results, especially project impacts, through analysis of the causal flow of progress from activities through outputs and outcomes to actual or potential long term project impacts. The Evaluation Consultant visited Tarawa in Kiribati in September 2016 to hold interviews with key staff from the Kiribati Government and PIPA related institutions. The evaluator was unable to travel to the PIPA site due to the difficulty of logistics and the high costs of travel to Kanton atoll, 1,700 Km from Tarawa. This travel must be done by chartering a vessel, which is prohibitively expensive and time-consuming.

### Summary of the main evaluation findings

#### A. Strategic relevance:

3. The Project's Goal, Objectives and implementation strategies were strongly aligned with national, regional and international protected area and biodiversity conservation Conventions, Strategies and Frameworks. Internationally and globally the project also aligned with the biodiversity and development aims of UN Environment's Medium Term Strategy 2010-2013 and the capacity and sustainability provisions of the Bali Strategic Action Plan. At the national level, the project worked to align with the Kiribati National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan and at the regional level, harmonisation of the project with the regional Action Strategy for Nature Conservation and Protected Areas 2008-2012 and the subsequent Framework for Nature Conservation and Protected in the Pacific Region 2014 - 2020 was achieved. As a World Heritage Convention site, PIPA is required to meet high standards of protected area management and the project's focus on strengthening capacity assists Kiribati to meet its World Heritage obligations. It was also closely aligned to the priorities of the two key NGO partners, Conservation International (CI) and the New England Aquarium (NEAq) and those of donors including the Packard Foundation and New Zealand AID. The project included support for the PIPA management priorities identified in the PIPA Management Plan 2009 - 2014 and the associated Strategic Action Plan 2010 - 2015.

#### B. Achievement of outputs:

4. Although the project was slow to get underway and the suite of activities were ambitious for the original three- year project term, the extension of the term to five years resulted in most outputs being achieved by project termination. This could not have been achieved without: (i) the assistance of project partners CI and NEAq, (ii) outside external technical expertise as was the case with atoll restoration (rat eradication) on three of the four priority atolls, (iii) project support for PIPA Conservation Trust establishment activities; (iv) the development and agreement on the conservation contract and (v) the associated "reverse fishing license" compensatory mechanism. The evaluation rated the achievement of Outputs as Satisfactory as the key outputs were of sufficient quality produced in a timely and useful manner. (See section 3.2 and Table 6 for detailed analysis).

#### C. Effectiveness (attainment of project objectives and results):

5. The evaluation of the achievement of outcomes as defined in the reconstructed ToC was assessed as being moderately successful, reflecting the fact that not all project's intended outcomes were delivered and the uncertainty surrounding key outcome 2.1.1, the adequacy and sustainability of PIPA financing. Some direct outcomes were satisfactorily achieved such as the improvement of PIPA management capacity through the establishment of the PIPA office in Tarawa) and the recruitment of Phoenix Islands Protected Area Implementation Office (PIO) and Kanton field staff. The Kanton office<sup>3</sup> was also established and in use but requires some structural finishing. However, the failure to establish a satisfactory satellite connection for internet purposes planned for December 2016 is a setback. Other outcomes such as outcome 1.2.1: the restoration of four priority atolls (through invasive species i.e. rat and rabbit eradication and the outcome 1.1.5 development of a demonstration tourism enterprise on Kanton were progressed but did not achieve the planned results. On the other hand outcome 1.2.2 relating to the sustainable management of offshore commercial fisheries was successful, with the increase in PIPA "no take" (zero fishing) zone from a planned 25% to almost 100% of the EEZ, supported by highly sophisticated monitoring and surveillance systems. Similarly, the work done to assess and document the climate change vulnerability and adaptation strategies under outcome 1.2.3 ensures PIPA climate change vulnerability and resilience are well understood and able to be incorporated into future management plans. The key question addressed by the evaluation relating to effectiveness was the extent to which the project succeeded in developing and implementing the PIPA 2009-2014 management plan and the timely delivery the management plan's strategic action plan outputs and outcomes and in this regard, overall and on balance, the evaluation rated the project's effectiveness as moderately successful.

D. Sustainability and replication:

6. At the outset of the evaluation, it was noted that the project was part of a long term continuum of PIPA development and was a timely intervention to provide an institutional and operational foundation on which to build long term management and financing capacity. In respect of the long term management of PIPA, the project has been successful with the strengthening of the management capacity in both Tarawa (the PIPA Implementation Office and staff and the establishment of the Kanton Field Base and staff. Coupled with this are improved financial and related management and administration processes. PIPA staff overall have a better understanding of the need for strategic planning and monitoring and evaluation and although there is good baseline data on many of the biological and ecological features of PIPA, the high cost and technical requirements means PIPA management is still heavily reliant on external agencies and partners for both the operationalization of the management plan and related monitoring and evaluation support
7. It is also noted that through component 2, the project helped establish a strong institutional base for the PIPA Trust Fund which has helped secure the current US\$5 million endowment and the US\$5 million commitment (\$1 million a year over the five years 2015 - 2020) from the Waite and Oceans Five Foundations. While this funding is substantial, the actual endowment capitalisation remains at \$5 million which is well short of the conservatively modest \$13.5 million originally estimated as being necessary to support PIPA operations and brings into question the adequacy of PIPA financing after 2020, especially if the work of the Fisheries Working Group finds that the PIPA Trust is required to provide "compensatory" funding to the GoK for lost fishing revenue. Nor does it guarantee long term financial sustainability or answer the key question "in the absence of on-going external funding how will the effective management of PIPA be sustained?". Thus the evaluation identifies the uncertainty surrounding funding beyond 2020 when the current generous commitment of USD 5 million over 5 years from the two private Foundations contributing to the PIPA Trust Fund expires, as a major factor affecting sustainability. In doing so however, it is also acknowledged that it is unlikely that the PIPA will not be sustained (perhaps with on-going government funding although this too is uncertain), in one form or another over the long term, especially given its World Heritage status and international profile, even though the future level of funding beyond 2020 remains clouded. There are also questions over the environmental sustainability of PIPA which arise from factors such as the need to complete IAS eradication and undertake effective monitoring and the unknown impact of climate related events, particularly rising sea temperatures and levels. Overall the evaluation has taken a conservative approach to the sustainability of project outcomes rating this as likely.

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<sup>3</sup> Outcome 1.1.2 PIPA Kanton Field Station Operational (2 staff, office and housing)

Catalytic role and replication:

8. Overall, the project has assisted in catalysing improved understanding and awareness within the broader Kiribati community of the international status and global importance of PIPA and the role it plays in the conservation of Kiribati biodiversity as envisaged in component one outputs. Indirectly, the project has assisted in maintaining cultural connections to the environment and Kiribati natural heritage. The PIPA project has supported the PIPA Management Committee which is aimed at providing a forum for encouraging/catalysing cooperation and coordination between the Government of Kiribati (GoK) agencies, the Primary NGO partners and other key stakeholders. It has also been instrumental in helping to establish the PIPA Trust which can be viewed as an innovative mechanism and useful model for possible replication as sustainable financing mechanism for large and globally significant protected areas or national protected area networks and their attendant conservation and awareness strategies. So does the innovative "reverse fishing license" model for encouraging sustainable offshore fisheries and embodied in the PIPA Conservation Agreement. Finally and most importantly, the PIPA model itself has proved to be a catalyst for encouraging large scale oceanic marine protected areas in the Pacific with the Cook Islands recently announcing the designation of a 1.1 million km<sup>2</sup> protection zone over her territorial waters and EEZ (Marae Moana) which has been supported by the same NGO and donor partners involved with PIPA. In this regard the project has been evaluated as being highly satisfactory.

E. Efficiency:

9. At the time of the Terminal Evaluation, the project GEF funds were 12% under spent despite the project running two years over the originally planned three year time frame. However, it is noted that cost-saving measures were implemented, sometimes out of necessity. For example, the high cost of transport and travel to Kanton required the project to coordinate with shipping providers and to seek diversion of existing services to include a side trip to Kanton as opposed to chartering a vessel for a specific journey. While more cost effective this approach also added to the delays experienced by this project. At another level, use was made of Skype for teleconferences between the members of the Project Management Group in deference to the cost of bringing this group together for face to face meetings. A factor of the efficiency assessment is the timeliness of project reporting and output delivery and in this regard, the project did not perform strongly.
10. Project efficiency is also related to the manner in which project teams have been able to make use of and build on existing relationships, partnerships and synergies and complementarities with initiatives and projects. In this regard, the project can point to long term partnerships with key supporting organisations (New England Aquarium and Conservation International) and synergistic linkages to the "sister" GEF4 project "Prevention, control and management of Invasive Alien Species in the Pacific" each of which contributed to assisting with various aspects of project implementation. The almost symbiotic partnership with the PIPA Trust Fund is another key relationship which needed to be nurtured by the project team but as with the relationships with the key supporting organisations, there has developed a degree of frustration between the institutions which needs to be overcome in the interests of future efficient management of PIPA. This and other factors mentioned above contributed to an evaluation rating of moderately unsatisfactory.

F. Factors affecting project performance:

11. The evaluation found that issues relating to preparedness and readiness, project implementation and management and financial planning and management negatively affected project performance leading to delays in implementation requiring extensive extension. Further, it was apparent that management issues had contributed to the deterioration of working relationships between the key project partners. This was of particular concern as the partners had previously worked cooperatively together to establish PIPA from its infancy. In the interests of the future of PIPA and its sustainable and effective management, it is to be hoped that these differences can be satisfactorily resolved.

**Table 2: Summary of Evaluation Ratings**

Criterion	Overall Rating
A. Strategic relevance	Highly Satisfactory
B. Achievement of outputs	Satisfactory

Criterion	Overall Rating
C. Effectiveness: Attainment of objectives and planned results	Satisfactory
1. Achievement of direct outcomes as defined in the reconstructed TOC	Moderately Satisfactory
2. Likelihood of impact using ROTl approach	Likely
3. Achievement of formal project objectives as presented in the Project Document.	Satisfactory
D. Sustainability of outcomes	Likely
1. Socio-political sustainability	Likely
2. Financial resources	Moderately Likely
3. Institutional framework	Likely
4. Environmental sustainability	Moderately Likely
5. Catalytic role and replication	Satisfactory
E. Efficiency	Moderately Unsatisfactory
F. Factors affecting project performance	
1. Preparation and readiness	Unsatisfactory
2. Project implementation and management	Moderately Unsatisfactory
3. Stakeholders participation, cooperation and partnerships	Satisfactory
4. Communication and public awareness	Highly Satisfactory
5. Country ownership and driven-ness	Satisfactory
6. Financial planning and management	Unsatisfactory
7. Supervision, guidance and technical backstopping	Satisfactory
8. Monitoring and evaluation	Satisfactory
i. M&E design	Satisfactory
ii. M&E plan implementation	Satisfactory
Overall project rating	Moderately Satisfactory

## Summary of recommendations and lessons learned

12. The following is a summary of the main recommendations that have been generated from the evaluation findings:

**Recommendation # 1.** The 8 atolls within the PIPA are known to harbour some of the most important sea bird breeding sites in the world and certainly in the tropical Pacific. Their protection is central to the vision and purpose of PIPA which enjoys World Heritage status based largely on its biodiversity and the pristine nature of its ecosystems. The presence of rats and other invasive alien species including rabbits poses a major threat not only to the seabird breeding colony but its other native fauna and flora and this recommendation calls for an urgent effort by the Government of Kiribati with support from the PIPA Trust Fund, international donors and NGO's and regional organisations like SPREP, to complete the rat eradication programme started under the project. (S 3.2.1)

**Recommendation # 2** The PIPA Trust Fund has many similarities in terms of vision and objectives with the very successful Micronesia Conservation Trust (MCT) which acts as a sustainable financing mechanism and catalyst for biodiversity conservation in the neighbouring member States of the



Micronesia Challenge (Palau, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands). The MCT has been highly successful in its efforts to build a substantial endowment to support implementation of the Micronesia Challenge which is a critical task facing the PIPA Conservation Trust. This recommendation calls on UN Environment and the PIPA Trust Fund to facilitate a knowledge sharing and learning exchange with the MCT with a particular focus on sharing information and assessing operating procedures, fundraising, fund capitalisation and capital management protocols, the role of trust funds in catalysing conservation and supporting socio-cultural and community development aspects of biodiversity conservation and monitoring and evaluation results. (S 3.2.2)

**Recommendation # 3** This recommendation reflects the need to continue to strengthen the PIPA management capacity and calls on UN Environment, working with MELAD as the Executing Agency, to undertake a capacity needs assessment and professional development programme for PIPA management staff. It suggests such a programme should be developed in cooperation with SPREP and include options to link staff with other Pacific regional protected area training initiatives such those supported by BIOPAMA, and training activities associated with GEF projects such as the UNDP implemented Ridges to Reef GEF 5 Programme. Additional opportunities available through the World Heritage Commission should also be assessed. (S 3.3.1)

**Recommendation #4** This recommendation suggests that in view of the remoteness of Kanton atoll and the potential for accident and emergency situations to impact on the PIPA field management, PIPA field management capacity should be further strengthened by the addition of a third conservation officer on standby in Tarawa. It calls on the Government of Kiribati together with the PIPA Trust Fund to provide the funding needed to bolster the Kanton field staff by at least one further conservation officer and that all three field staff be rotated on and off Kanton on 4 monthly assignments or as available charter transport permits, with one person remaining in Tarawa as backup. (S3.3.1)

**Recommendation #5** In the Pacific island context government funding can be the most reliable and sustainable source of revenue available for conservation management and is often a marker for financial sustainability for protected areas. In this regard it would be encouraging to all PIPA stakeholders if the government was to formally endorse the 2015 - 2020 PIPA Management Plan and in doing so, indicate its willingness to commit future GEF funding to its implementation. This would both strengthen the overall perception of national ownership of this globally important MPA and serve to help ensure the continuity and sustainability of the PIPA management. The recommendation calls on the Government of Kiribati to formally adopt or endorse at Executive level, the 2015 - 2020 PIPA Management Plan and in doing so, indicate a commitment to allocate future GEF funding towards its implementation including giving consideration to negotiating the allocation of GEF funds towards the further capitalisation of the PIPA Trust Fund and related activities under the "Bring PIPA Home" campaign.

**Recommendation #6** Accounting for co-financing (both cash and in-kind) can be difficult where there are several agencies and partner organisations involved and this has proved to be the case with the PIPA Project. Unfortunately, mis-communication and mis-understanding of the nature of the co-financing arrangements and associated accounting have led to a degree of tension between the PIPA Implementation Office/ MELAD and the NGO partners. The recommendation seeks to provide a means for the partners to resolve their differences and ensure project co-financing is fairly reconciled in the final accounts. (S3.6.6)

**Lesson # 1** The desire of the Government of Kiribati to execute the PIPA project to further the development of project management skills within the relevant government agency was commendable. However, where a GEF project is to be executed by a national agency, both the IA and the EA need to undertake an honest and realistic assessment of the project administration needs, available capacity and experience of the EA to meet UN Environment/GEF reporting and administrative requirements and standards. Where this appraisal indicates capacity shortfalls, consideration should be given to hiring an external project manager for up to 12 months of the initial year of implementation (or longer if deemed necessary) to assist with initial systems setup and training and ensure the project gets off to a strong start. The role and position of the advisor would be regularly assessed from the perspective of phasing it out as capacity and capabilities are strengthened and a further dimension of the TOR could be periodic returns to undertake training in the event of staff turnovers. (S3.6.1)

## 1 INTRODUCTION

13. The *Phoenix Islands Protected Area (PIPA)* project number GFL 3897, hereafter referred to as the PIPA project, was approved by the GEF Secretariat on 12 September 2011 and started on 25 December 2011. The three year project was originally due for completion on 30 November 2014, but subsequent extensions led to a final completion date of 31 December 2016. The project was designed to provide support to the newly established Phoenix Islands Protected Area in the Republic of Kiribati, which at 408,250 km<sup>2</sup> was acclaimed as second largest marine protected area in the world, encompassing a wide range of atoll, near shore and oceanic habitat types unique and important enough to support its nomination as a World Heritage Area.
14. The PIPA project was one of four biodiversity and ecosystem management projects approved under the GEF Pacific Alliance for Sustainability (GEFPAS) which was established to provide an integrated framework for the delivery of GEF4 funding to support biodiversity conservation and sustainable development in the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) of the Pacific. Other projects were the Prevention, management and control of Invasive Alien Species in the Pacific (IAS) and the Integrated Island Biodiversity project (IIB), both executed by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment (SPREP) and the Micronesia Challenge (MC) project focussed on sustainable financing of biodiversity conservation in the sub region of Micronesia and executed by the Micronesia Conservation Trust.

### 1.1 Subject and scope of the evaluation

15. The PIPA was widely recognised as offering a unique opportunity to demonstrate effective solutions to a fundamental set of issues facing protected area establishment and management in both the Pacific Island countries and globally. These included the need to: 1) promote investment in protected areas at a scale or size to achieve national, regional and global benefits, 2) successfully demonstrate marine protected areas (MPAs) as useful tools in fisheries management including pelagic fisheries e.g. tuna, 3) demonstrate the utility of a large oceanic MPA in helping manage a country's EEZ, 4) address critical and urgent invasive species issues on vulnerable islands, effectively conserve habitat at an appropriate scale for globally important and threatened species (e.g. seabirds, turtles) and 6) ensure sustainable financing is established to achieve success.
16. More specifically, the project's principal goal was to assist the Government of Kiribati and the project partners to implement the first PIPA Management Plan (2010-2014). This was to be achieved through a focus on (i) strengthening the core PIPA management operations (capacity, infrastructure, spatial planning and zonation, surveillance and enforcement, monitoring and evaluation), (ii) achieving outcomes related to atoll restoration, establishing a 'reverse fishing licence' to compensate for lost fishing revenue, tourism, climate change adaptation and World Heritage site compliance) and (iii) supporting the operation of the PIPA Trust and its sustainable financing system.
17. The PIPA is vast in size (408,205 km<sup>2</sup>) but is located in one of the most remote parts of the Pacific and the one inhabited atoll which serves as the PIPA field headquarters (Kanton), is approximately 1,700 km from Tarawa, the main island and capital of Kiribati. There are no scheduled air or shipping services and the costs of chartering either aircraft or boats is extremely high. The realities of the vast geographical scales involved presented significant challenges to project implementation. The project management capacity of the PIPA core management and operational team also presented an added challenge, especially given the complexity of both the project and the PIPA Management Plan.
18. The terminal evaluation covers the project period up to 31 December 2016, but does not cover what was implemented during the last project extension to September 2017, since the extension was granted once the TE was already underway.

### 1.2 Evaluation objectives

19. In line with UNEP Evaluation Policy and the requirements of the GEF, the PIPA project terminal evaluation aims to objectively assess project performance particularly in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency and to determine its actual and potential outcomes and impact, including their replicability and sustainability. The Evaluation has two primary purposes: i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and ii) to promote operational improvement, learning

and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP, the Government of Kiribati MELAD as the Executing Agency (EA) and the main project partners, Conservation International and the New England Aquarium. In doing so, the evaluation also formulates recommendations to assist project follow up and identifies lessons of operational relevance for future project formulation and implementation.

20. The evaluation has focussed on assessing whether overall the project has resulted in the improved management of PIPA and effectively addressed a range of critical issues impacting on PIPA sustainability including its role as a fisheries management mechanism, the impact of invasive species on atoll habitats and their restoration, the impact of climate change on PIPA and the role of the project in improving the financial sustainability of PIPA and its future management. Also, the evaluation will assess the projects effectiveness in strengthening government and stakeholder support and importantly, in improving human capacity and technical capability to manage the PIPA.

### **1.3 Evaluation approach and methodology**

21. The Evaluation was undertaken by an independent consultant with considerable experience working with regional organisations, governments and NGO's in all facets of biodiversity conservation and sustainable natural resource management in the Pacific. Overall responsibility for and management of the Evaluation rests with the UNEP Evaluation Office and it was undertaken in consultation with the UNEP Task Manager. It should be noted that the UNEP Task Manager retired during the Evaluation but to his great credit, remained personally committed and was able to assist with advice on an "as required" basis.

22. The TE was carried out using a participatory approach whereby key stakeholders were consulted during the evaluation process. Qualitative evaluation methods were primarily used to determine project achievements against the expected outputs, outcomes and impacts. These included the development of a standard questionnaire and discussion guide which was used in a semi-structured way in face-to-face and Skype interviews. This was designed to provide the evaluator with information from a cross section of project stakeholders on the key evaluation questions. To the extent possible information was triangulated (i.e. verified from different sources. In addition a quasi-quantitative evaluation of progress achieved, measured against outputs and activities, was undertaken in conjunction with the Project Manager.

23. The TE involved a mix of desk reviews, in-depth interviews (face-to-face, and by Skype) with project management staff and other relevant national government staff that have been involved in the design, implementation or management of the Project, as well as selected partner representatives and other international stakeholders, including technical experts who have participated in the Project. See Annex II Table 2 for a full list of persons consulted.

24. The findings of the evaluation were based on the following:

(a) Relevant background documentation, inter alia,

- The PIPA Project Document including the Results Framework, Work Plan and Timetable and Budgets.
- Minutes of the UNEP Project Approval Group meeting 11 September 2008;
- Submission of Request for Project Preparation Grant (PPG) for Medium Sized Project (MSP) 17 February 2009 (with Project Information Form (PIF))
- GEF Secretariat approval of PIF and PPG 3 March 2009
- Small Scale Funding Agreement for PPG with Kiribati Government Ministry of Environment, Lands and Agricultural Development (MELAD) 5 October 2009;
- Project Cooperation Agreement between UNEP and Government of Kiribati (MELAD) prepared 28 June 2011
- Extension to PPG (Milestone Extension Request (to November 2009) 16 June 2009
- Extension to PPG (Milestone Extension Request (to January 2011) 3 September 2009
- Project reports such as Final Report on PPG, Correspondence relating to Final PPG expenditures and failure of consultant to complete PPG contract.

- Quarterly Expenditure Reports, six monthly progress and financial reports, Fixed Asset Report
- Mid-term Review - Phoenix Islands Protected Area (PIPA)
- Draft Terminal Report PIPA GEF PAS 2011-2014,
- Project documentation related to its activities, outputs and deliverables such as the Communication Strategy, media articles concerning the project, Project newsletter, information on the Project on the internet, and other communication products (see <http://www.phoenixislands.org/technical-publications.php>) for project related publications;
- Evaluations/reviews or information on related GEFPAS projects including the Integrated Island Biodiversity (IIB) Prevention, control and management of Invasive Alien Species in the Pacific (IAS) and Micronesia Challenge(MC) projects.

See also Annex III Bibliography for detailed list of additional reference documents.

25. During the course of the country visit to Kiribati the consultant visually verified to the extent possible, written project outputs such as strategies, policy documents and awareness materials.

(b) Interviews (individual or in a group see Annex C) with:

- UNEP Task Manager;
- PIPA Project Manager and other project management and execution support staff;
- Individuals that were involved in the project design and implementation including from Conservation International and New England Aquarium;
- PIPA Trust Fund Management Officers;
- Project's stakeholders and participants;
- Representatives of other relevant stakeholder and donor organisations, with an interest in PIPA and large scale marine conservation areas and networks in the Pacific.

(c) Field Visits.

26. The vast distances involved in travel between the small island countries of the Pacific coupled with the high costs of airfares, the irregularity of flights (Kiribati has only two major flights a week), coupled with a limited TE budget, dictated that the field site component of the evaluation would best be aligned with the schedule of visits to other Pacific countries associated with the work of the consultant on two related TE's (IIB and IAS). The visit to Kiribati was expensive but made possible as it coincided with the evaluator's visit to undertake consultations on the related GEFPAS IAS Terminal Evaluation. This provided a unique opportunity to assess the coordination between the two projects and to discuss the outcomes of the IAS interventions, particularly in relation to PIPA atoll restoration outcomes.

27. As already mentioned, a major factor to take into consideration when assessing the methodology (and project achievements) is the extreme remoteness of the actual project site. The Phoenix Islands lie some 1,500 km east from the Kiribati capital on Tarawa Island and access to the main island of Kanton is very expensive and uncertain. Usually this requires the charter of either a boat or small aircraft or at best, waiting until one of the outer-island cargo runs to Christmas (Kiritimati) Island in more distant Line Islands group is being planned and paying extra for that boat to divert to Kanton in the Phoenix group. Even under these circumstances, a visitor to Kanton would need to be prepared to wait several weeks for the return voyage. Consequently, the evaluator was unable to travel to the site but did his best to corroborate reports of achievements through technical reports, photographs and video where available.

28. Finally, at the conclusion of the country visit, the Evaluator discussed his preliminary assessment of the results with the key individuals involved in project management. This involved a meeting with members of the focal government agency (MELAD) and the PIPA Management Office. The Evaluator outlined his findings in terms of the strengths and weaknesses of the project performance and invited comments. This process led to further information being forthcoming and allowed for deeper understanding of the local perceptions of the issues being discussed.

**Table 3. Schedule of Country Visits**

Country Visit	Dates	Sites / Meetings
New Zealand	8-9 September 2016	Auckland
Kiribati	19 - 23 September 2016	Tarawa

See also Table 13 Annex III

29. A theory of change (ToC) for the project was reconstructed (RToC) using the result statements identified in the project document, including the logical framework. The RToC was then applied to help formulate evaluation questions and to evaluate the project, particularly in terms of achievement of outcomes and likelihood of impact. The RToC does not include the two project managerial components 3 and 4, which are about project management and establishment of the project monitoring frameworks. However, components 3 and 4 are discussed under sections 3.2 (Achievement of outputs) and 3.3 (Effectiveness), and under section 3.6.2 (Project implementation and management) and 3.6.8 (Monitoring and evaluation).

#### 1.4 Main evaluation criteria and questions

30. In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy and the UNEP Programme Manual, project performance is assessed in terms of relevance, efficiency and effectiveness; outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project; and their sustainability. An evaluation matrix presenting broad categories of areas to be addressed and key sample questions to be asked during the evaluation process, with sources of data and information and the methods by which these would be gathered, was compiled and approved during the TE's inception period (set out in an Inception Report (an internal document submitted to the UNEP EOU) produced in September 2016). These questions served as guides and were integral to the guiding questionnaire used in all interviews, tailored for each stakeholder.

31. Overall the evaluation aimed to assess project performance and determine outcomes and impacts, by focussing on the following key questions:

- How and to what extent did the Phoenix project succeed in developing and implementing the PIPA Management Plan (2010-2014)?
- Does PIPA Management Plan have allocated sufficient resources to support its future implementation?
- Has PIPA Management Plan delivered its intended outputs and outcomes on time and in budget all components?
- How well has the project enhanced the technical and human capacities available and for longer term to support the operationalization of the PIPA Management Plan?
- To what extent has the project ensured that PIPA Plan and decision-making process were based on effective and transparent processes?
- To what extent is this leading to the strengthening of core management capacities, achieving of strategic outcomes and development of conservation trust for the government of Kiribati?
- To what extent did the delay in implementation affect the delivery of the projects' outcomes?
- How satisfied are the two key international conservation NGO partners (Conservation International and New England Aquarium) with the project results and how do they see their on-going role in PIPA?
- Has the project helped identify a successful method(s) of planning for and facilitating Integrated Ecosystem Management (or similar) which may serve as useful models for further GEF funded projects (or other sources of funding).
- To what extent the PIPA Management Plan model could be used as a model for application elsewhere?

Additional questions of interest to the Evaluator were:

- How realistic is it to expect the on-going management costs of PIPA to be funded from PIPA Trust Fund endowment revenue and what is the likelihood of the Government of Kiribati to commit funding to support PIPA in the absence of sufficient endowment revenue?
- In the absence of on-going external funding, how will the effective management of PIPA be sustained?
- How will the results of the "reverse fishing licence" mechanism and related contract to compensate the Government of Kiribati for lost tuna fishing revenue after the five year assessment of catch records is completed impact on the PIPA and its future management?

## 2PROJECT BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Context

32. Marine Protected Area establishment and management in the Pacific Islands region (and indeed, globally) faces a fundamental set of issues to demonstrate effectiveness and success. These include the need to: (1) promote investment at a scale or size to achieve necessary national, regional and global benefits, (2) successfully demonstrate marine protected areas (MPAs) as a useful tool for fisheries management, including pelagic fisheries (e.g. tuna), (3) demonstrate MPA utility in managing a state's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) as part of effective marine spatial planning and inclusive of coastal, offshore, deep-sea/seamount and open ocean habitats and the connectivity between them, (4) address critical urgent invasive species management on vulnerable islands, (5) effectively conserve at an appropriate scale for globally important and threatened species (e.g. seabirds and turtles), and (6) ensure sustainable financing to achieve success in such protected area objectives.
33. In 2006 the Republic of Kiribati declared the eight atolls in the Phoenix Islands group under its jurisdiction and their surrounding waters as the Phoenix Island Protected Area. Two other atolls in the group, Baker and Howland, are historically under USA jurisdiction. The PIPA was formally gazetted in 2008 and at the time was the world's largest MPA. Subsequently PIPA was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list in July 2010 recognised for its outstanding natural values and global importance.
34. Seven of the atolls (Birnie, Enderbury Manra, McKean, Nikumaroro, Orana and Rawiki are fully protected and uninhabited with visitation only allowed under strict permit conditions. The remaining island, Kanton is host to government paid caretakers of the archipelago and their families making up a population of about 30 - 40 people. Kanton has become the entre port for all visitors to PIPA and the base for PIPA site management.
35. At 408,250sq km and inclusive of all habitat types (atoll terrestrial, coastal coral reef and lagoons, offshore, deep-sea and open ocean habitats), PIPA is currently the world's second largest declared marine protected area (MPA), the largest in the Pacific Ocean, and the largest committed to by a developing country. The Phoenix Islands Protected Area represents a bold initiative by the Government of Kiribati and its partners to demonstrate commitment to the conservation of the nation's unique and vulnerable biodiversity, ecosystems, habitats and threatened species. It also offers the opportunity to trial effective solutions to these fundamental sustainable development issues identified above by using new innovations (e.g. 'reverse fishing license'), a new scale of site investment, support by public-private partnerships and up-scaling to effect a new level of conservation achievement in developing states. PIPA is an integrated approach to conservation and sustainable use with key elements of sustainable financing, atoll restoration, coastal coral reef and lagoon/offshore/open-ocean/deep-sea fisheries conservation management, conservation of threatened and globally important species, market for biodiversity goods and services, and adaptation to climate change.

## 2.2 Project Objectives and Components

### 2.2.1 Objectives

- 36. The **Project Goal** (Development Objective) is to "build capacity in Kiribati to more effectively manage a large protected area in the form of PIPA and create a sustainable financing system for such large sites that could be used as a model for application elsewhere."
- 37. The **Primary Project Objective** is to "To advance the implementation of the PIPA Management Plan (PIPA MP) 2010-2014 through a twin focus on (i) Core Operations (capacity, infrastructure, zonation, enforcement, monitoring and evaluation) and Strategic Outcomes (atoll restoration, reverse fishing licence, World Heritage site management, tourism initiatives climate change adaptation) and (II) to support the operation of PIPA's Sustainable Financing System (the PIPA Trust).

### 2.2.2 Components

- 38. The PIPA Project design identified four components of the project: (1) PIPA Management Plan Implementation, (2) PIPA's Sustainable Financing, (3) Project Evaluation and Monitoring and (4) Project Management Coordination.

Component 1: PIPA Management Plan Implementation.

- 39. This component focused on the resources and capacity required to support the implementation of the PIPA Management Plan (2010-2014). It included the provision of core operational resources to build supporting office infrastructure and strengthen management capacity and core activities (information management, education and outreach, surveillance and enforcement, tourism development, sustainable resource use on Kanton Island) and additional technical resources for the delivery of several key priorities (PIPA Plan Strategic Outcomes) selected from the management plan (Atoll/island restoration, Offshore fisheries management and Climate change).

Component 2: PIPA's Sustainable Financing.

- 40. This component supported the establishment and development of the PIPA Sustainable Financing System (the PIPA Trust) which includes the establishment and operation of the PIPA Conservation Trust Fund Board, its Executive Director and supporting Office infrastructure. It was expected that the operational support to the Trust Fund will result in the capitalisation of the Fund at \$13.5 million and help provide a sustainable financial future for PIPA management.

Component 3: Project Monitoring and Evaluation.

- 41. Project monitoring and evaluation was to focus on assessing management performance and effectiveness together with the impact of project interventions on PIPA management plan implementation and the achievement of objectives and targets for both core operations and the strategic priorities.

Component 4: Project Management Coordination.

- 42. The fourth component established the project management structure including a Project Management Group consisting of representatives of UNEP as the Implementing Agency, MELAD (Government of Kiribati Ministry of Environment, Lands and Agricultural Development) as the Executing Agency and Conservation International (CI) and the New England Aquarium (NEAq) as Co Executors and main co-financiers of the project. The PMG is expected to work closely with the PIPA Management Committee (PMC).

- 43. A summary version of the project's logical framework is presented in Table 3 below.

**Table 3: Project Logical Framework**

Components	Outputs	Outcomes
Component 1. PIPA Management Plan Implementation		



Components	Outputs	Outcomes
Sub-component 1.1 PIPA Core Management		
1.1.1 PIPA Operations Tarawa	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office operational</li> <li>Trained and capable PIPA office staff</li> </ol>	Fully Operational PIPA Office in Tarawa with 4 staff
1.1.2 PIPA Operations Kanton	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office operational including staff housing</li> <li>Trained and capable PIPA Kanton Field Station staff</li> </ol>	Fully Operational PIPA Office on Kanton Atoll with 4 staff
1.1.3 PIPA Information Management, Education and Outreach	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PIPA Awareness Programme Plan</li> <li>PIPA website updated regularly</li> <li>A range of PIPA Education, Awareness and resource materials</li> </ol>	Increased awareness and understanding of PIPA and its work nationally, regionally and internationally
1.1.4 PIPA Surveillance and enforcement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Surveillance and Enforcement Reports (quarterly).</li> </ol>	Improved fisheries management in the PIPA EEZ.
1.1.5 PIPA Tourism Development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PIPA Tourism Development Plan</li> <li>Kanton Infrastructure Assessment</li> </ol>	Potential for tourism assessed And recommendations under implementation.
1.1.6 PIPA Kanton Atoll Sustainable Development Plan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kanton Resource Use Assessment</li> <li>Kanton Sustainable Resource Use Plan.</li> </ol>	Resource Use needs by Kanton community understood and ongoing resource use is sustainable.
Sub-component 1.2 PIPA Strategic Outcomes		
1.2.1 Atoll and reef island restoration and bio-security	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PIPA Atoll Restoration Programme designed for PIPA 8 atolls and implemented in at least 4 atolls under PIPA Management Plan.</li> <li>Design and establishment of a PIPA Biosecurity Programme to prevent further invasions. Atoll restoration priorities determined agreed for the next PIPA MP</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Successful eradication of rats and rabbits from at least 4 PIPA atolls completed and results in terms of recovery of globally important and threatened seabirds and overall atoll restoration assessed.</li> <li>No further invasive species introductions with successful prevention measures in place.</li> <li>Development of core capacity in Kiribati to effectively manage invasive species.</li> </ol>
1.2.2 Offshore Fisheries	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GoK agreement with the PIPA Trust on a Conservation Contract (“reverse fishing license”) for lost DWFN license revenue commensurate with an increase in no take zone areas of 25%.</li> <li>Phoenix EEZ tuna catch records monitored and reported.</li> </ol>	No take zone for pelagic (tuna) fishing through a reverse fishing license designed and implemented for not less than 25 % of PIPA’s offshore ecosystems by the end of 2013.



Components	Outputs	Outcomes
	3. PIPA contribution to tuna spawning ground conservation investigated	
1.2.3 Climate Change	<p>1. PIPA Climate Change Vulnerability and Resilience assessment in relation to the design and ongoing management of the PIPA.</p> <p>2. Assessment of priorities reflected in the next PIPA Management Plan.</p> <p>1. Climate change scenarios in the design and ongoing management of the PIPA.</p>	<p>Climate change scenarios in the design and ongoing management of the PIPA.</p> <p>2. Pilot project to increase understanding of climate change adaptation for a large MPA.</p>
Component 2. PIPA Sustainable Financing	<p>1. Finance Plan (including fund raising) completed.</p> <p>2. First PIPA Conservation Contract ("reverse fishing license") is agreed between the Trust Board and GoK.</p> <p>3. PIPA Conservation Trust Fund established.</p> <p>4. PIPA Zonation plan implemented inclusive of compensation to GoK for lost DWFN license fees as resources allow.</p>	PIPA Financing Vehicle is operational.
Component 3. Project Monitoring and Evaluation	<p>Project Inception Mission and report, Quarterly Project reporting, Mid Term Review completed, Final Project Report, Terminal Project Evaluation and Audit reports</p>	Project integrity maintained and UNEP standards of transparency, accountability and success metrics are objectively assessed.
Component 4. Project Management	Project deliverables produced on time and within budget, reporting and monitoring and evaluation requirements met.	Effective project management and coordination in place.

### 2.3 Target areas/groups

44. The project targeted the PIPA management team and PIPA Implementation Office PIO staff directly involved in the implementation of the PIPA Management Plan. Its focus was on providing this group with the skills, experience and knowledge needed to manage such a large complex and geographically remote oceanic protected area and in helping ensure they had the resources and infrastructure need to be successful in this task. The baseline for protected area management capacity in Kiribati was very weak prior to the project. Other target groups were the people of Kiribati and in particular the youth of the country. PIPA is a prime example of a "flagship" project for biodiversity conservation and sustainable resource management which captures people's imagination and is a source of national pride - the ideal vehicle for the national biodiversity awareness campaign "Bring PIPA Home" which has evolved with the help of the project. A third target was the off shore fishing industry (tuna fishery) with PIPA providing an opportunity for trialling innovative fisheries management and conservation approaches such as the "reverse fishing licence" concept whereby the Government of Kiribati is compensated for lost fisheries revenue from the closure of the PIPA EEZ area through the PIPA Trust Fund. Finally, the project was aimed at strengthening the operations and fund raising capacity of the PIPA Trust and as such, it indirectly targeted the international conservation donor community.

## 2.4 Milestones in Project Design and Implementation

45. Table 4 below presents the milestones and key dates in project design and implementation:

**Table 4: Milestones and key dates in project design and implementation**

Milestones	Completion dates
PIF Developed for Phoenix Islands Protected Area project under GEF PAS (GEF4)	2008
UNEP Project Approval Group cleared the project concept	11 September 2008
Formal submission of Request for PPG for GEF Medium Sized Project( MSP) to GEF SEC	17 February 2009
GEF SEC CEO approval of PIF and PPG	3 March 2009
Small Scale Funding Agreement for PPG with Kiribati Government (MELAD)	5 October 2009
UNEP transfer of PPG funds	6 November 2009
Kiribati Government finally receives PPG funds	4 January 2010
Consultant appointed for PPG	March 10 2010
PPG due for completion*	May 2010
Submission of 1st Milestone Dates Requiring Extension request (June 2009 - Nov 2009)	June 2009
Submission of 2nd Milestone Dates Requiring Extension request (Nov 2009 - Jan 2011)	September 2010
GEF SEC CEO approves the PIPA Project	12 September 2011
Project Start Date set at 25 December 2011 -Planned completion 30 November 2014.	
Mid Term Review completed	July 2014
Project extended to 30 June 2015	25 March 2015
Project extended to 30 June 2016	25 September 2015
Project extended to 31 December 2016	Not available
Project extended to 31 September 2017	Not available
Terminal Evaluation completed	June 2017
* The original project design was not completed by the consultant appointed by the Kiribati government and completion of this task was achieved with help of the former UNEP Pacific regional focal point and key project partners (Conservation International and the New England Aquarium)	

## 2.5 Implementation Arrangements and Project Partners

46. UNEP was the GEF Implementing Agency (IA) through the UNEP Pacific Office with the Pacific regional focal point undertaking the role of Task Manager. The Executing Agency (EA) was the Government of Kiribati, Ministry of Environment, Lands and Agricultural Development (MELAD). In this role MELAD which has been the lead government agency on PIPA since its inception in 2005, was primarily responsible for project implementation and management. A Project Management Group was established and liaised with the PIPA Management Committee.

47. As the **Implementing Agency (IA)**, UNEP was responsible for ensuring that GEF policies and criteria were adhered to and that the project met its objectives and achieved expected outcomes in an

efficient and effective manner. The UNEP project Task Manager was based in the UNEP Pacific Regional Office in Apia, Samoa and was responsible for project supervision on behalf of the GEF Executive Coordinator - Director, Division of Global Environment Facility Coordination, UNEP<sup>4</sup>. UNEP was expected to ensure timelines, quality and fiduciary standards in project delivery were met at all times.

48. The project **Executing Agency** (EA) was the Government of Kiribati, Ministry of Environment, Lands and Agricultural Development (MELAD). In this role MELAD was primarily responsible for the management, including financial and progress reporting. MELAD's PIPA office in Tarawa functioned as the project's administration office. The Secretary of MELAD is the chair of **PIPA Management Committee** and MELAD has been the lead government agency on PIPA since its inception in 2005.

49. The **Project Management Group** (PMG) was established to provide strategic guidance, technical and financial oversight, and to monitor progress. Importantly the PMG also reflected the interest and commitment to supporting the project of key partners, Conservation International and the New England Aquarium. The PMG comprised the Secretary of MELAD as chair, the UNEP Pacific regional focal point and project Task Manager, representatives of CI and NEAq and the PIPA Director.

## 2.6 Project Financing

50. The PIF (GEF Funds US\$890,000) and PPG (US\$65,000 comprising US\$20,000 of GEF funds and US\$45,000 in partner co-financing) for the PIPA project were approved in March 2009. The final overall project budget was approved by GEF on 12 September 2011 at US\$ **US\$ 2,663,300**<sup>5</sup>. This comprised US\$ 870,200 (32.7 %) contributed as cash from the GEF Trust Fund and US\$ 1,019,600 (38.3%) contributed as co-financing cash from the CI/NEAQ partners. The total cash US\$1,889,600 represented 71% of the project finance. In kind contributions by the Kiribati Government (US\$ 357,500-13.4%) CI/NEAQ (US\$ 360,000-13.5%) and the New Zealand AID (US\$ 56,000- 2.1%) comprised 29% of the overall budget. The financial composition of the project is summarised in Table 5 below.

**Table 5: Project budget summary**

Particulars		Amount US \$
<i>Cost to GEF</i>		870,000
Co-financing (cash) CI/NEAQ (includes \$US 500,00 from Packard Foundation)		1,019,600
Sub Total (cash)		1,889,600
In Kind		
Kiribati Government		357,500
CI/NEAQ		360,000
NZAID		56,000
Sub-total (In kind)		<b>773,500</b>
<b>Total Cost of the Project</b>		<b>2,663,100</b>
<b>Project Budget by Component</b>	<b>GEF</b>	<b>GoK/Partners</b>

<sup>4</sup> Note that as of 2013, this was under the Division of Ecosystem Policy Implementation (DEPI) now renamed the Ecosystem Division.

<sup>5</sup> PIPA Project Document

Component 1.1 PIPA Core Operation	486,300	659,500	1,145,800
Component 1 .2 Strategic Outcomes	232,000	641,000	873,000
Component 2 PIPA Sustainable Finance System	68,000	389,600	457,600
Component 3 PIPA Project Monitoring and Evaluation	29,800	33,000	62,800
Component 4 PIPA Project Management	53,900	70,000	123,900
<b>Total</b>	<b>870,000</b>	<b>1,793,100</b>	<b>2,663,100</b>

## 2.7 Changes in design during implementation

51. Although the project design remained fundamentally unchanged throughout the implementation phase the two year delay in the project design process<sup>6</sup> resulted in two of the original activities identified in the PIF being completed prior to start up. These were the formal establishment of the PIPA and the legal establishment of the PIPA Conservation Trust. This led to a shift in emphasis away from the PIF focus on the project supporting early foundation establishment efforts (PIPA MPA, Conservation Trust and regulations and the first PIPA management plan) to ensuring the implementation of the revised PIPA Management Plan (2010-2014) and supporting the initial operation of the Trust Fund, starting from 2011. In another early development, invasive species (rat) eradication work under the atoll restoration sub component was undertaken prior to the actual formal approval of the project although verification of results occurred after approval and the PMG agreed to include both the activity and the associated co-financing as project elements.

## 2.8 Reconstructed Theory of Change of the Project

52. The Theory of Change (ToC) is a review process adopted by UNEP to help understand the rationale of the project and the achievement of results, especially project impacts, through analysis of the causal flow of progress from activities through outputs and outcomes to actual or potential impacts. The ToC recognises the fact that the feasibility of assessing impacts soon after the conclusion of a project is often poor due to the incremental, long term and cumulative nature of the impact effect of project related outcomes which are more easily understood. The difficulty of measuring or assessing impact can also be exacerbated by a lack of objective baseline information or poor monitoring effort, or both. This is often the case with biodiversity conservation projects such as the PIPA where establishing baselines and then regularly monitoring change is extremely expensive and beyond the scope of most annual management budgets.

53. In the application of ToC, analysing the progress pathway also requires identification of external factors which will influence the change process. These include "assumptions" (external circumstances which can influence results and are presumed to be present but which are beyond the influence of the project), and "drivers" (factors which can be employed or influenced to some extent by the project, to enhance the project outcomes and move the process towards impact). The ToC is depicted in diagrammatic form and accompanied by a narrative and has particular value in an evaluation as it helps define which project elements (outcomes, assumptions, drivers etc.) should be focussed on to assess project impact, sustainability and effectiveness. The RTOC is a particularly useful tool to guide group discussions during project evaluation.

## 2.9 PIPA Project Reconstructed Theory of Change

54. The Phoenix Island Protected Area (PIPA) project document does not include a ToC as this was not a GEF/UNEP requirement for GEF 4 funded projects. However, the ProDoc has a Results Framework

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<sup>6</sup> The UN Environment Task Manager advised that the delay was also due partly to changes in GEF Secretariat policy which meant that the project "pipeline" had to be revisited from scratch.

(project logframe) which is derived from and harmonises with, priorities within the approved PIPA Management Plan (2010-2014). The project is the primary source of funding for initial implementation of the management plan. The Results Framework identifies the project components, anticipated outputs and outcomes including mid-term and end of project targets, and has guided this Reconstructed ToC. Re-constructing the ToC from the design information in the ProDoc has required some manipulation of the ProDoc outputs and outcomes in order to match these with the definitions common to the UNEP Evaluation process (see Table 1 below). Similarly, identification of intermediate states and impact descriptors has required logical extrapolation of the project outputs mid and end of project targets and outcomes. The identification of the project "drivers" and "assumptions" underlying the results chain logic has also required extrapolation from the Results Framework, component descriptors and the summary of risks and associated management measures.

55. The PIPA project was developed as a GEFPAS intervention to support the implementation of the PIPA Management Plan 2010-2014. The project is a tangible reflection of one of the key **Drivers** behind PIPA which is *the global, regional and national support and resource mobilisation which encouraged and strengthened the Government of Kiribati commitment to the establishment and effective management of the PIPA supported by the establishment of an operational sustainable financing mechanism*. A measure of the strength of this international support is the commitment of co-financing from two of the project's international NGO partners, Conservation International and the New England Aquarium which, with the help of the Packard Foundation, pledged US\$1,019,600 in cash which represents 38.3% of the total project financing or 54% of the cash contributions.
56. In its final ProDoc iteration, the project is designed to strengthen PIPA core management operations (development of capacity/staff and infrastructure), achieve effective management through the implementation of the PIPA Management Plan priorities; information management and outreach, and tourism development and sustainable community resource use at Kanton Island). The project also aims to initiate action on several key strategic outcomes related to the goals and objectives of the PIPA, these being atoll restoration (rat and rabbit eradication) and bio security, offshore fisheries sustainability and climate change vulnerability and adaptation measures. Finally, the project aims to support PIPA Trust Fund operations including fundraising until the PIPA Conservation Trust Fund endowment is capitalised and a sustainable revenue stream to support PIPA management is secured.
57. The PIPA project's broad **Goal** is *"to build capacity in Kiribati to more effectively manage a large protected area in the form of PIPA and to create a sustainable financing system for such large sites that could be used as a model for application elsewhere"*. The project **Objective** is *"to advance implementation of the PIPA Management Plan 2010-2014 through a twin focus on i) Core Operations (capacity, infrastructure, zonation, enforcement, monitoring evaluation) and Strategic Outcomes (atoll restoration, reverse fishing license, World Heritage site management, tourism initiatives, climate change adaptation), and to support the operation of PIPA's sustainable financing system, the PIPA Conservation Trust"*.
58. The project Goal and Objective are harmonised with the PIPA Management Plan **Vision** *"to conserve the natural and cultural heritage of the Phoenix Islands Protected Area for the sustained benefit of the peoples of the Republic of Kiribati and the world"* and its **Mission**, *"to implement effective integrated and adaptive management that ensures the natural and cultural heritage values of PIPA are maintained and where necessary, restored, to achieve PIPA's vision"*.

### 2.9.1 Project Components, Outputs and Outcomes

59. The project consists of four components of which Component 3, Project Evaluation and Monitoring and Component 4, Project Management and Coordination comprise the standard requirements for GEF/UNEP Medium Sized Projects. The focus of this narrative is on the results chains and impact generated by the activities, outputs and outcomes of Components 1 and 2. Component 1 consists of two sub-components; **1.1. PIPA Management Plan implementation - core operations** and **1.2 PIPA Strategic Outcomes**, represent the project's focus on improving PIPA management capability and implementing key priorities in the Management Plan and **Component 2 PIPA Sustainable Financing**, addresses the operations and investment strategy of the PIPA Trust Fund.
60. Each of the components are inter-related and mutually supportive of the overall project objective to advance the implementation of the PIPA Management Plan. In this regard, **Component 1.1** addresses the most basic need for improved management infrastructure in the form of office space and

equipment needed to support future operations in both Tarawa (the Kiribati capital and location of the PIPA Implementation Office) and on Kanton Island where a field base is deemed necessary to support field operations. It also provides for additional PIPA management/operations staff and training which is crucial to strengthening the protected area management capacity in Kiribati and successfully implementing the management plan.

61. When considering the intent of Component 1.1, it is apparent the initial enthusiasm and emphasis on legally establishing the mega marine PIPA and building its international profile as a World Heritage site and possible model for further large scale oceanic MPA's, overshadowed the immediate realities of dealing with the lack of capacity and experience needed to ensure effective long term management. Early investment in capacity building activities is critical to achieving the end project target of ensuring the Management Plan implementation is well advanced with core management capacity and capability in place with offices and trained staff secured and fully functioning post-project. In terms of a project outcome, this investment in capacity building and awareness activities should lead to significantly improved (above the baseline) Kiribati Government management capacity resulting in an effectively managed PIPA, secured financially through sustainable funding from PIPA Trust Fund. A key underlying assumption behind this outcome is that staff turnover will be minimal and where it does occur, re-training and further technical support will be available to readdress the capacity gap. This can be a major management issue and needs to be managed through contractual arrangements and ongoing training built into the project design (see Lesson 1).
62. A second but related set of activities and outputs under Component 1.1 addresses the need for progress with core operational aspects of the Management Plan. These include the need for a PIPA education and outreach programme, undertaking and reporting on MPA surveillance and enforcement activities and working to address priority community development issues affecting the Kanton Island community, the only populated atoll within the PIPA. In addressing these issues, the project supported the preparation of a tourism development plan, infrastructure assessment, and a natural resource use assessment and sustainable development plan.
63. Collectively the Component 1 initiatives involved project investment in planning activities, community consultations and awareness, technical assessment reports and field based activities including surveys and invasive alien species operations. Many of the activities are technical and beyond the capacity of the current PIPA management team and the RTOC notes the associated logistical difficulties and high financial cost associated with the remoteness of PIPA and the Kanton field station. Achieving the related end of project targets therefore assumes that the project can command and deploy the financial resources and external technical expertise needed to successfully undertake these activities and that the results will lead to a project outcome which will demonstrate the potential economic and social benefits attributable to an effectively managed PIPA. While sub Component 1.1 directly addresses core operational issues associated with PIPA Management Plan implementation, sub Component 1.2 addresses three strategically important priorities in the plan which affect the long term environmental viability and ecological integrity of the PIPA. These are:
  - atoll restoration and associated biosecurity, principally to eradicate invasive alien species and put in place biosecurity controls to guard against re-introductions;
  - addressing climate change vulnerability and resilience in these atoll environments; and
  - improving offshore fishing and tuna sustainability.
64. Each priority strategy reflects the global interest and support for conservation of vulnerable island biodiversity which is a driver behind the international support for the project. They also align with the Government of Kiribati commitment and obligations under various MEA's, including the CBD IBPOW, to restore atoll ecosystems, halt the loss of threatened bird species, sustain its offshore fishing industry and test approaches to mitigate climate change impacts.
65. Project Outputs<sup>7</sup> relating to atoll restoration and biosecurity are aimed to eventually result in design of a restoration programme for all eight PIPA atolls and the establishment of a PIPA Biosecurity

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- <sup>7</sup> Project outputs: PIPA Atoll Restoration Programme designed for PIPA 8 atolls and implemented in at least 4 atolls under PIPA Management Plan.
  - Design and establishment of a PIPA Biosecurity Programme to prevent further invasions.



Programme. The implementation of the programme under the project will result in eradication and the biosecurity measures completed for four of the eight atolls and identification of new eradication and restoration priorities for inclusion in the next PIPA Management Plan. Successful achievement of the targets will lead to project outcome 1.2.1.1 whereby the status of globally important and threatened bird species will have been improved on at least four atolls. Linked together with the biosecurity measures and invasive species management capacity developed under the project, it is expected this will ensure no further invasive species introductions to the PIPA islands.

66. Another of the PIPA Management Plans strategies supported by the project reflects the threat climate change presents to the future of Kiribati, a country which consists entirely of low lying atolls and is highly vulnerable to sea level rise, increased storm events and other climatic impacts. Responsible planning for the management of a World Heritage site such as PIPA dictates that climate change vulnerability and resilience be assessed and addressed in all planning documents. In this case the project will support this work and in doing so, increase the understanding of climate change adaptation modes applicable for large scale MPA's.
67. One of the benefits of PIPA identified early in the establishment process was the role a well-managed mega marine protected area could play in promoting the sustainable management of offshore fisheries, principally tuna stocks which provide the main source of revenue for the Kiribati government through licensing arrangements. The PIPA Management Plan focuses on actions to reduce fishing effort by 25% on a closed area closure basis through "no take" zonation. This in turn is linked to financial compensation from the PIPA Conservation Trust (under a contract between the Trust and the Government). The contract (also known as the "reverse fishing licence") compensates the government for lost revenue arising from the closure and is a key output of the project. Other related outputs include a tuna catch recording and monitoring programme and research into the PIPA contribution to tuna spawning ground conservation.
68. This important strategy has direct linkage with **Component 2** of the project which provides for the establishment and operation of the PIPA Conservation Trust including agreement on the Conservation Contract and its implementation and the PIPA endowment established and capitalised at US\$13.5 million. While the project does not directly contribute funding to the endowment it does put the building blocks in place through its funding of the initial Trust Fund operations including the staff and office set up costs, development of the fundraising plan and support for the Executive Director's fundraising efforts. Clearly any delays or a failure to secure the desired level of endowment funding and thus secure a satisfactory revenue stream to provide compensation for lost fishing revenue has the potential to negatively impact on the offshore fishing outcomes of the project. By the same token, the financial sustainability of the core PIPA management and operations structure which are planned to be met and sustained from the Conservation Trust post project will also be placed in serious jeopardy.

### 2.9.2 Intermediate States and Impact

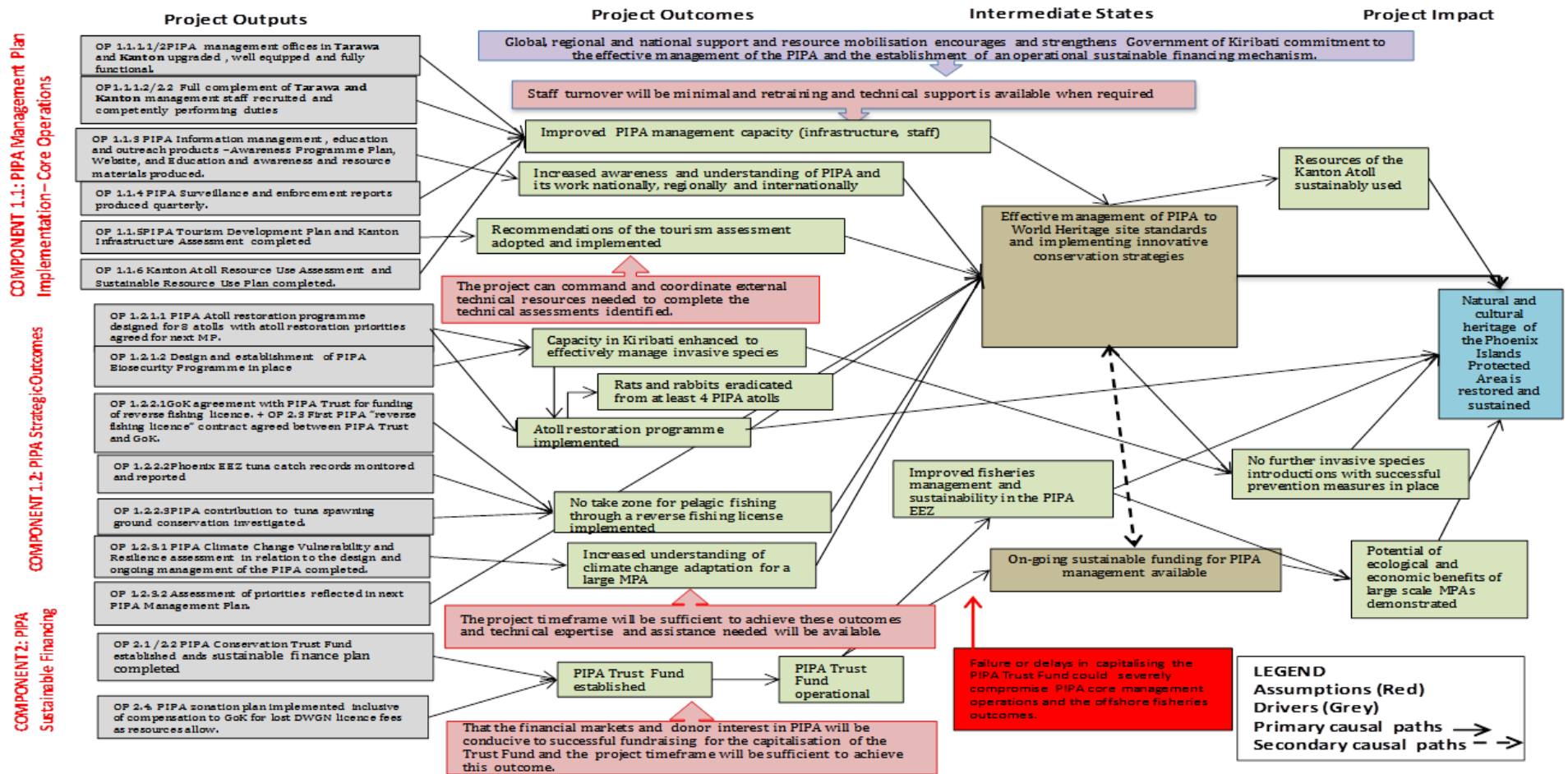
69. Assuming the outcomes predicted for each of the components are achieved, the project will have significantly helped lay the foundation for the long term effective management and sustainable financing of the PIPA. This will strengthen its credentials as an innovative World Heritage area and a shining example of a large scale oceanic marine protected area, protecting world heritage quality biodiversity and ecosystems, including globally threatened bird and marine species and their habitat. Taken together, the project outcomes pave the way for the Kiribati government to work in partnership with the PIPA Conservation Trust Fund to commit to the ongoing support of the PIPA management structure and the successful implementation of current and future management plans. The project will have built the foundation for a successful and innovative conservation initiative which will demonstrate the environmental and economic value of effective "at scale" marine conservation area management while also acting as a catalyst for building public pride in PIPA and awareness of the importance of biodiversity conservation and ecosystem management to a sustainable future for Kiribati people.
70. Achieving the above Intermediate State is heavily dependent on the ability of the project partners to fully operationalise the PIPA Conservation Trust Fund as a sustainable financing mechanism. It also assumes that the trust fund endowment of US\$13.5 million is adequately capitalised and sufficient to meet the financial disbursement obligations of the Trust. Further it assumes that the global financial

conditions under which the capitalisation was calculated will remain constant and the revenue will be capable of sustaining PIPA management into the future while at the same time ensuring a flow of compensatory revenue to the government of Kiribati to support a more sustainable national tuna fishery and the project's contribution to a reduction of fishing pressure on the Pacific region's heavily exploited tuna stocks.

71. When considered in the context of the strong global interest in the PIPA and its performance as a large scale oceanic MPA, the demonstration and international articulation of its success and benefits should become a powerful driver to further the project's impact over time. Thus, the GEF and partner investment in improving the effective management of the PIPA through strengthened conservation management capacity in Kiribati and the creation and capitalisation of the Trust Fund, may well impact at marine conservation at global scale in the form of the establishment of similar MPA's by other Pacific governments and elsewhere in the world.



Figure 2: Theory of Change (TOC) – Outputs to Impact Analysis



**Table 1; Project components, expected outcomes and outputs as per ProDoc and Reconstructed ToC**

Components	Project Document Outcome(s)	Project Document Output(s)	Reconstructed ToC Outcome - Immediate	Reconstructed ToC Outcome – higher level	Intermediate states
<b>Component 1.</b>					Effective management of PIPA to World Heritage site standards and implementing innovative conservation strategies
<b>PIPA Management Plan Implementation.</b>					
<b>Sub-component 1.1 PIPA Core Management</b>					
<b>1.1.1 PIPA Operations Tarawa</b>	Fully Operational PIPA Office in Tarawa with 4 staff.	1. Office operational 2. Trained and capable PIPA office staff.	Improved PIPA management capacity (infrastructure, staff)		
1.1.1.1 (office) 1.1.1.2(staff)					
<b>1.1.2 PIPA Operations Kanton</b>	Fully Operational PIPA Office on Kanton Atoll with 4 staff.	1. Office operational including staff housing 2. Trained and capable PIPA Kanton Field Station staff.			
1.1.2.1 (office) 1.1.2.2(staff)					
<b>1.1.3 PIPA Information Management, Education and Outreach</b>	Increased awareness and understanding of PIPA and its work nationally, regionally and internationally	1. PIPA Awareness Programme Plan 2. PIPA website updated regularly 3. A range of PIPA Education, Awareness and resource materials.	Increased awareness and understanding of PIPA and its work nationally, regionally and internationally		
<b>1.1.4 PIPA Surveillance and enforcement</b>	Improved fisheries management in the PIPA EEZ.	1. Surveillance and Enforcement Reports (quarterly).		Improved fisheries management in the PIPA EEZ.	
<b>1.1.5 PIPA Tourism Development</b>	Potential for tourism assessed	1. PIPA Tourism Development Plan	Recommendations of the tourism		

Components	Project Document Outcome(s)	Project Document Output(s)	Reconstructed ToC Outcome - Immediate	Reconstructed ToC Outcome – higher level	Intermediate states
	And recommendations under implementation.	2. Kanton Infrastructure Assessment.	assessment adopted and implemented		
<b>1. 1.6 PIPA Kanton Atoll Sustainable Development Plan</b>	Resource Use needs by Kanton community understood and ongoing resource use is sustainable.	1. Kanton Resource Use Assessment 2. Kanton Sustainable Resource Use Plan.		Resources of the Kanton Atoll sustainably used	
<b>Sub-component 1.2 PIPA Strategic Outcomes</b>					
<b>1.2.1 Atoll and reef island restoration and bio-security</b>	1. Successful eradication of rats and rabbits from at least 4 PIPA atolls completed and success for globally important and threatened seabirds and overall atoll restoration assessed. 2. No further invasive species introductions with successful prevention measures in place. 3. Development of core capacity in Kiribati to effectively manage invasive species.	1. PIPA Atoll Restoration Programme designed for PIPA 8 atolls and implemented in at least 4 atolls under PIPA Management Plan.  2. Design and establishment of a PIPA Biosecurity Programme to prevent further invasions. Atoll restoration priorities determined agreed for the next PIPA MP.	Capacity in Kiribati enhanced to effectively manage invasive species  Atoll restoration programme implemented	Rats and rabbits eradicated from at least 4 PIPA atolls  No further invasive species introductions with successful prevention measures in place.	Potential of ecological and economic benefits of large scale MPAs demonstrated  Ecological sustainability and resilience of PIPA improved
<b>1.2.2 Offshore Fisheries</b>	No take zone for pelagic (tuna) fishing through a reverse fishing license designed and implemented for not less than 25 % of PIPA's offshore ecosystems by the end of 2013.	1. GoK agreement with the PIPA Trust on a Conservation Contract ("reverse fishing license") for lost DWFN license revenue commensurate with an increase in no take zone areas of 25%.	No take zone for pelagic fishing through a reverse fishing license implemented	.	

Components	Project Document Outcome(s)	Project Document Output(s)	Reconstructed ToC Outcome - Immediate	Reconstructed ToC Outcome – higher level	Intermediate states
		<p>2. Phoenix EEZ tuna catch records monitored and reported.</p> <p>3. PIPA contribution to tuna spawning ground conservation investigated.</p>			
<b>1.2.3 Climate Change</b>	<p>1. Climate change scenarios in the design and ongoing management of the PIPA.</p> <p>2. Pilot project to increase understanding of climate change adaptation for a large MPA.</p>	<p>1. PIPA Climate Change Vulnerability and Resilience assessment in relation to the design and ongoing management of the PIPA.</p> <p>2. Assessment of priorities reflected in the next PIPA Management Plan.</p>	Increased understanding of climate change adaptation for a large MPA??	Climate change scenarios incorporated in the management of the PIPA.	
<b>Component 2. PIPA Sustainable Financing</b>	PIPA Financing Vehicle is operational.	<p>1. Finance Plan (including fund raising) completed.</p> <p>2. First PIPA Conservation Contract (“reverse fishing license”) is agreed between the Trust Board and GoK.</p> <p>3. PIPA Conservation Trust Fund established.</p> <p>4. PIPA Zonation plan implemented inclusive of compensation to GoK for lost DWFN license fees as resources allow.</p>		PIPA Financing Vehicle is operational.	On-going sustainable funding for PIPA management available through the PIPA Trust Fund.

## 3 EVALUATION FINDINGS

### 3.1 Strategic Relevance

#### 3.1.1 Alignment with UNEP's strategy, policies and mandate

##### Alignment with the UNEP Medium-term Strategy 2010–2013

72. This identifies six cross-cutting thematic priorities as climate change, disasters and conflicts, ecosystem management, environmental governance, harmful substances and hazardous waste, resource efficiency – sustainable consumption and production. The PIPA project is particularly relevant to and consistent with the Medium Term Strategy Sub-Programme 3 on ecosystem management through its focus on building capacity and strengthening the management and financial sustainability of one of the world's largest marine protected areas (which is also designated as a World Heritage Site and Key Biodiversity Area<sup>8</sup>). Among other things Sub-programme 3 aims to "build the capacities of regional, sub regional national and local entities to assess and minimise impacts on ecosystems and to reverse their decline and build resilience to maximise the delivery of ecosystem services". The project is also consistent with the Medium-term Strategy Sub-program 1 on climate change which aims to strengthen the ability of countries to integrate climate change responses into national development processes, the project also addresses climate change as it impacts on atoll environments, which is a source of great national (and international) concern for the government and people of Kiribati. The project sought to assess climate change issues and adaptive responses in PIPA, including research on coral bleaching and the resilience of reef systems.

##### Alignment with the Bali Strategic Plan (BSP)<sup>9</sup>

73. Through its focus on environment -related technology support and capacity building, it also directly addresses and is consistent with, the Objectives of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building in developing countries. As such the project represents an opportunity for advancing the environmental, social and economic importance of marine protected area interventions in the fight to conserve biodiversity and ecosystem functions in island and oceanic settings. In this regard, the project's main components are designed to help build capacity, skills, experience and institutional frameworks at national level and in direct response to a clearly identified national need.

##### Gender balance and Human rights based approach (HRBA)

74. The project document did not specifically address issues of gender balance or identify strategies to enhance the contribution of women. However it did assess the need for environmental and social safeguards and concluded that there were no significant negative social or environmental impacts associated with the project. It further noted (correctly) that there were no indigenous people to the Phoenix Islands. The people of Kiribati are the sovereign owners of the islands and exercise their rights through representation in a democratically elected government.

##### South-South Cooperation

75. Through its linkages with other GEFPAS biodiversity projects notably the IAS project, the PIPA project has benefited from exchanges and participation in other Pacific Island conservation initiatives such as the Pacific Island Invasive Learning Network (PILN) meeting held in Samoa in August 2016. Other opportunities such as a visit to the successful Micronesia Conservation Trust headquarters by the Director of the PIPA Trust are currently under consideration and should be encouraged (see recommendation 2 S3.2.2).

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<sup>8</sup> Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) is a term used under the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund to identify areas of outstanding biological value, in this case in the Polynesia/Micronesia Biodiversity Hotspot

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.unep.org/GC/GC23/documents/GC23-6-add-1.pdf>

### 3.1.2 Alignment with GEF focal areas and strategic priorities

76. The PIPA project has direct synergies with GEF 4 objectives for the focal areas of biodiversity and climate change. The GEF Biodiversity Objectives are (i) to catalyse sustainability of protected area systems, (ii) to mainstream biodiversity in production landscapes/seascapes and (iii) to safeguard biodiversity and are accompanied by 7 Strategic Programmes (SP) six of which are addressed in some form in the range of PIPA project activities, outputs and outcomes. The one programme not directly addressed is SP6 "building capacity for the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. The Project also delivered outcomes under the GEF-4 Climate Change Strategic long-term Objective 8 through its activities in relation to supporting pilot and demonstration projects for adaptation to climate change including the completion of the Phoenix Islands Protected Area Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment and Management.<sup>10</sup>

### 3.1.3 Relevance to global, regional and national environmental issues and needs

77. The Phoenix Islands Protected Area is currently the world's second largest Marine Protected Area and is the largest in the Pacific Ocean. It contributes and estimated 9.8% by area of the global MPA estate and its unique global biological values have been recognised by its declaration as a UNESCO World Heritage Site as well as its identification as a Key Biological Area within the CEPF Polynesia/Micronesia Hotspot programme and designation of six of its eight islands as Important Bird Areas by Birdlife International. It was the world's first large truly deep mid ocean MPA and as an essentially uninhabited and remote "mega marine area" it is a natural phenomenon of global importance. Importantly, the PIPA also offer opportunities to explore conservation and science issues of global and regional importance. These include monitoring and assessing the processes of sea level and temperature change, growth and recovery rates of coral reefs and the evaluation of other climate related effects. Other potential values include improved understanding of marine ecosystem connectivity at scales previously not considered possible, protection of globally important species, especially seabirds and turtles, and improved understanding of the pathways of migratory species, especially whales.

78. From a management perspective, the PIPA offers the opportunity to address global conservation issues related to the sustainability of tuna fishing and in particular illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing and the role large oceanic MPA's in the sustainable development and management of internationally and nationally important industrial fishing. The PIPA project strategies for the control of invasive species, especially rats, on its eight constituent atolls is of particular relevance to the issue of invasive species control and biodiversity protection on the many small islands of the Pacific region. In this regard, the PIPA project also represents a contribution by the Government of Kiribati to the implementation of the CBD Island Biodiversity Programme of Work (IBPOW) which is aimed at fostering the ecosystem management approaches needed to address the problem of island biodiversity loss. The work of the project to support and help operationalise the PIPA Trust Fund addresses the long standing and globally recognised problem of financial sustainability for conservation area management and provides a valuable model for possible replication in support of similar large scale conservation areas. In fact the PIPA Trust fund model is understood to now be under consideration as a mechanism to provide for the sustainable funding of the newly established 1.1 million Km<sup>2</sup> Marae Moana MPA in the Cook Islands.

79. Regionally the critical importance of biodiversity and ecosystem protection to the environmental, social and economic well-being of Pacific island countries and the Pacific way of life has long been recognised. Regional forums including the long running sequence of Pacific Conferences on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas and their associated five yearly Action Strategies for Nature Conservation and Protected Areas in the region and the Framework for Nature Conservation and Protected Areas 2014-2020 which incorporates Aichi Targets for biodiversity, have provided guidance to countries to help them meet their national (as represented in NBSAPs) and international

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.phoenixislands.org/pdf/PIPA-CC-scoping-study-Jan-18-2016.pdf>

biodiversity conservation priorities. In consultation with its member countries SPREP has developed a range of conservation action plans for coastal management, marine mammals, marine turtles, birds and sharks. In this regard, the PIPA project is a significant contribution by the Government of Kiribati (and GEF, UNEP and the Government of Kiribati the CI and NEAq partners) to contribute to these regional initiatives. The project also helps the Government of Kiribati to contribute to other regional agreement including the important Nauru Agreement which governs the sustainable management of tuna in the region and the Pacific Oceanscape concept of integrated conservation management of island ecosystems in the region which was led by Kiribati.

80. At a national level the PIPA project is designed to implement the PIPA Management Plan which in turn is reflection of the national conservation needs and priorities as reflected in the Kiribati Development Plan 2008-2011 and the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP).

**The overall evaluation rating for project strategic relevance is “Highly Satisfactory”**

## 3.2 Achievement of outputs

### 3.2.1 Component 1: PIPA Management Plan Implementation

81. Component 1 of the project consists of two sub-components; **1.1 PIPA Core Operation** and **1.2 Strategic Outcomes**. Activities and related outputs under Sub Components 1.1.1 and 1.1.2 address the need for support to upgrade the capacity, operational infrastructure staffing and equipment for implementing the PIPA management plan both Tarawa, the capital of Kiribati and on Kanton Island in the PIPA itself. In Tarawa the project has been successful in establishing an independent PIPA Implementation Office (PIO) within the MELAD building and recruiting the four staff identified as needed to successfully operationalise the core functions of PIPA and provide the national level support needed to achieve multiple management objectives including liaison with MELAD and other Government agencies, liaison with the PIPA Trust Fund, communication and awareness, logistical support for the Kanton field office and international donor relations.
82. The Kanton field station has been physically established and photographic and video evidence was verified by the evaluator. This consists of a stand-alone pre-fabricated building with accommodation together with storage facilities for equipment and other items such as poison baits for rat control activities. At the time of the evaluator's visit to Tarawa the Kanton facility was still incomplete, with further work such as tiling and plumbing required. This work was on hold awaiting a suitable charter vessel to Kanton which was secured in December 2016 and most outstanding work completed, with the notable exception of a satisfactory satellite communication/internet system. Two field Officers have been recruited to provide a permanent PIPA presence on Kanton with duties ranging from surveys of biodiversity to permitting of yachts and other vessels transiting PIPA. It should be noted that the community on Kanton is very small consisting of a few families and no more than 30 persons which together with the extreme remoteness and isolation of the island, makes this a hardship post with associated recruitment difficulties and it is likely that recruiting, training and retaining suitable personnel will be an ongoing issue for the project for many years to come. Project performance in relation to these subcomponents is considered to be moderately satisfactory.
83. Sub Component 1.1.3 aims to increase awareness and understanding of PIPA and its work nationally, regionally and internationally and has been a very successful component of the project. In this regard communications support from the international partners CI and NEAq has greatly contributed to the strong international and regional profile the project enjoys. An informative and up to date PIPA website with related social media links is in place. The work of the PIPA Education, Media and Outreach Officer (PEMO) with youth, schools and other community groups in Tarawa and nearby islands has been very successful in ensuring the people of Kiribati, especially the youth, understand the purpose of PIPA but also see the achievement of its establishment as a source of national pride. This is now being reflected in the informal national conservation campaign known as "Bring PIPA Home" whereby the vision of PIPA and its underlying conservation concepts are used to raise awareness amongst Kiribati people and to build a foundation for further conservation initiatives in other less remote islands. Performance in relation to this sub component is considered to be highly satisfactory.

84. Activities and related outputs under Sub Component 1.1.4 calls for improved fisheries management in the PIPA EEZ with project outputs in the form of Surveillance and Enforcement Reports. Although not verified by the evaluator as the Fisheries and Maritime Police officers responsible for this function were not available, it is understood that the Kiribati Police Maritime Unit (KPMU) has been active in providing surveillance and enforcement in PIPA waters in collaboration with the Kiribati Fisheries Licensing and Enforcement Unit (KFLEU). Surveillance has improved with support from the Australian Government and the regional surveillance center of the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) using high tech Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) and a related Automatic Identification System (AIS). It is noted that this subcomponent is closely linked to Sub component 1.2.2 PIPA Offshore Fisheries. In 2015 a vessel was fined \$2.2 million after being detected illegally in the no take zone and satellite data shows the PIPA EEZ waters to be remarkably clear of vessels whereas prior to closure in January 2015 the area was littered with vessels. A PIPA Surveillance and Advisory Committee has been established to assist in providing coordination and policy guidance to this work.
85. Activities and related outputs under Sub Components 1.1.5 and 1.1.6 seek to assess and guide the tourism and development potential of PIPA and the island of Kanton in an effort to identify the economic benefits which might rise from the protected area and World Heritage status. Preparation of a tourism strategic plan was undertaken by a consultant (who was unable to travel to Kanton) which is now part of the Kanton Atoll Infrastructure report. While the plan was accepted by the PIPA Management Committee it was rejected by the PIPA Trust Board. Instead it was considered the tourism element of PIPA should be integrated into a broader Line Islands Tourism Plan. Overall, the PIPA is recognised as potentially an important long term option for eco-tourism development in the Kiribati National Tourism Strategy which even describes it, perhaps prematurely given the remote location and lack of infrastructure, as the "jewel in the crown of the Kiribati national tourism strategy". The project was unable to achieve the desired outcome of at least one form of PIPA tourism activity being developed and operational by project's end. In 2013 under sub component 1.1.6 a multi- agency/multi- disciplinary mission to Kanton resulted in the Kanton Sustainable Resource Use Plan being produced which identified development zones (e.g. for housing communities, recreational and subsistence fishing, diving etc) and will act as a blueprint for the future development and use of Kanton's resources including infrastructure improvements to the wharf and airstrip. Overall, the project's performance in relation to these two sub components was moderately satisfactory although in relation to the tourism development plan, it can be argued that the requirement for at least one form of PIPA Tourism being developed and operational in the project time frame was overly ambitious given the logistics and costs involved and the lack of supporting infrastructure.

#### Component 1.2 PIPA Strategic Outcomes.

86. This collection of sub-components embrace activities aimed at achieving long term strategic outcomes in relation to atoll reef islands restoration and biosecurity (sub component 1.2.1) PIPA offshore fisheries (sub-component 1.2.2) and climate change adaptation (sub-component 1.2.3). Each of these relate to strategic priorities identified in the PIPA Management Plan and were chosen for support by the project on the basis of need and in the case of the PIPA offshore fishery, an outcome linked to the establishment and purpose of the PIPA Conservation Trust Fund a s funding source for any financial compensation to be paid to the GoK under the reverse fishing license.
87. Sub -component 1.2.1 PIPA atoll reef island restoration and biosecurity programme sought to successfully eradicate rats and rabbits from at least four of the eight PIPA atolls, with no further invasive species introductions and core capacity developed in Kiribati to effectively manage invasive species. This work is critical to the maintenance of the seabird biota of the islands and its integrity as a World Heritage Area. A PIPA atoll restoration programme was developed by an invasive alien species expert with Eco-Oceania and work carried out following intensive assessment and planning in 2011. Although this was undertaken just prior to the commencement of the project in December 2011 it was still in the design window for implementation. The work was subsequently successful on three of the atolls (Rawaki (rabbits), McKean and Birnie) with monitoring in 2013 indicating that eradication had not been fully achieved on the fourth atoll (Enderbury). Although the work was carried out before formal project commencement and paid for from co-financing provided to NEAq/CI by the Packard Foundation, the project partners agreed to include the work as a project outcome and to count the cost against the project co-financing budget. It is planned to follow up eradication of the remaining four atolls under the 2014-2020 PIPA Management Plan. A second output for this component was the development of a PIPA Biosecurity Programme to prevent further



invasions and this was produced as Biosecurity Guidelines for the Phoenix Islands 2011. Overall project performance in achieving the outputs under sub-component 1.2.1 was considered to be satisfactory, especially in the context of the extremely challenging logistical and operational environment in which the field work took place.

**Recommendation 1.** This evaluation strongly recommends that the PIPA Implementation Office seek the assistance of the SPREP Invasive Alien Species programme to implement a plan for the completion of the eradication of rats and other mammalian invasive species on Enderby (where the initial eradication project was not deemed successful) and the four remaining untreated atolls (Manra, Orona, Nukumaroro and Kanton). Further, given the national and international importance of restoring the ecological integrity of these atolls, that the Government of Kiribati, PIPA Trust, the Oceans 5 and Waite Foundations and Islands Conservation (an international NGO specialising in island IAS eradications) be approached to assist with securing the considerable funding and technical assistance needed to complete the eradication programme and that the Government of Kiribati applies future GEF biodiversity conservation funding to this task.

88. Sub-component 1.2.2 PIPA Offshore Fisheries ("reverse fishing license"), focused on actions to increase the "no take" zonation coverage of PIPA's offshore areas. The sub component required the establishment of an agreement between the Government of Kiribati and the PIPA Trust on a Conservation Contract to embody a "reverse fishing licence"<sup>11</sup> under which the GoK would be compensated for lost Distant Water Fishing Nations commercial tuna licence revenue commensurate with an increase in no take zone areas of 25%. Associated outputs were the monitoring and reporting of Phoenix EEZ tuna catch records and a PIPA contribution towards investigations into tuna spawning ground conservation. The PIPA Trust Fund was envisaged as the funding mechanism for the compensatory payments. The project contributed to the drawing up of the Conservation Contract which was subsequently revised and agreed to as a Conservation Agreement. In 2015 in a highly significant development for the future of PIPA and conservation of tuna stocks in Kiribati, the Kiribati Government Cabinet decreed that 99.4% (405,755 km<sup>2</sup>) of PIPA would be "no-take" thus negating the negotiations on zonations required under the original 25% target. The remaining ~0.6% remains a restricted use zone around Kanton Island to accommodate subsistence fishing for a small caretaker population. Also, in a subsequent development a Technical Working Group has been established to monitor fishing effort and arrive at a formula and agreement regarding the appropriate level of compensation, if any, which may have to be paid under the Conservation Agreement. Performance in terms of achieving outputs under this sub-component is considered to be highly satisfactory.

89. Sub-component 1.2.3 PIPA Climate Change, seeks to ensure the incorporation of climate change scenarios into PIPA planning and management with outputs requiring a PIPA Climate Change Vulnerability and Resilience assessment and an assessment of priorities for the 2014-2020 management plan. In January 2012 the Phoenix Islands Protected Area Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment and Management report was completed by the project partners NEAq and CI. This is considered to be a "living" document and in this regard it was further revised and updated in January 2016. The report will serve to inform climate change priorities in the next version of the PIPA Management Plan which in turn addresses the overall project outcome of improved understanding of climate change impacts and adaptation requirements for a large MPA. The achievement of outputs under this sub-component is highly satisfactory.

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<sup>11</sup> In simple terms a "reverse fishing licence" involves the buying out of a commercial fishing licence or fishing quota with the intention of retiring that licence or quota to lessen the impact of fishing on the fishery and improve its sustainability.

### 3.2.2 Component 2. PIPA Sustainable Financing System

90. This component is focused on assisting the formal establishment of the PIPA Trust Fund with the stated Outcome of ensuring the PIPA financing vehicle is developed and operational. It required the project to support a range of Outputs including the development of a PIPA sustainable finance plan, the establishment of the PIPA Conservation Trust Fund and the finalisation of the Conservation Contract and its agreement between the Trust and the Government of Kiribati (see 1.2.2. above). The final output was the development and implementation of a zonation plan (now redundant due to the entire area being declared a 'no take' zone) to guide the assessment of lost DWFN licence fees for eventual compensation to the Government of Kiribati. Work on assessing potential compensation has been delegated to a PIPA Tuna Working Group which has five years in which no compensation will be paid to undertake studies and develop a formula for future calculation of compensation.
91. At the completion of the project the core output of establishing the PIPA Trust Fund with the important US 501 3c tax exemption status (allowing tax deductible donations to charities/non-profit organisations by US citizens) has been achieved and the evaluator was able to visit the well-appointed office and meet with the Trust Director and staff members. The recently appointed Director has a strong financial management background and was a Minister of Finance for the GoK with investment responsibility for the national Kiribati Endowment Fund. He described a strong vision for the future of the PIPA Trust linked to the "Bring PIPA Home" concept for improving conservation awareness in the main islands and strengthened public and political support for PIPA. Although a PIPA Trust Fundraising Plan was developed in 2012 this is now considered out of date and is due to be revised by the Board.
92. The role of the Conservation Contract and the zonation plan in relation to the financial sustainability of PIPA and the role of the PIPA Trust is complex. Both were conditions of the original agreement with the GoK to establish PIPA and the Contract was finalised and the zonation plan drafted early in the project term. However, as explained above under sub -component 1.2.2, the need for the zonation plan was essentially negated by the Presidential decree declaring 99.4% of the PIPA offshore area a "no take" zone which resulted in a simplification of a complex management concept and a highly significant gain for conservation. Also as noted under sub component 1.2.2 above, much work still needs to be done to define the baseline data and negotiate the conditions of compensation for the loss of revenue from displaced DWFN licence fees. However, this is not strictly an output of this project which had as its focus the formal establishment of the instruments and a fully operational structure behind the Trust, all of which were successfully achieved. Collectively these outputs are at the heart of the PIPA project's focus on securing endowment funding to provide long term sustainable financing for PIPA's on-going management and it is noteworthy that the Micronesia Conservation Trust which acts as a sustainable financing mechanism and catalyst for biodiversity conservation in the neighbouring member States of the Micronesia Challenge (Palau, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands), has been highly successful in its efforts to build an endowment to support implementation of the Micronesia Challenge and has also received core operational funding from a GEFPAS GEF 4 Micronesia Challenge Project.

**Recommendation 2.** That given the widely acknowledged success of the Micronesian Conservation Trust which acts as a sustainable financing mechanism and catalyst for biodiversity conservation in the neighbouring member States of the Micronesia Challenge (Palau, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands), and noting the commonalities of vision and purpose between the two trusts, it is recommended that a learning and knowledge exchange visit to the MCT Headquarters in Pohnpei, FSM be professionally facilitated with UNEP assistance (as the Implementing Agency for both the MCT and PIPA GEFPAS projects). The PIPA delegation could include the PIPA Trust Fund Director, the Grants Manager and the Chairman of the Board and the visit would be focussed on maximising the benefits from sharing information including the lessons learned from the Terminal Evaluation of the recently completed Micronesian Challenge GEFPAS project. Other areas of focus would include assessing operating procedures, fundraising and marketing, assessing operating procedures, fundraising, fund capitalisation and capital management protocols, the role of trust funds in catalysing conservation and supporting socio-cultural and community development aspects of biodiversity conservation, and fund monitoring and evaluation results.

### 3.2.3 Component 3 Project Evaluation and Monitoring

93. The M&E plan was designed according to UNEP’s standard monitoring and evaluation procedures as current at the time of ProDoc approval. These called for deliverables of an inception workshop, and M&E tracking tool mid-term review and terminal evaluation, and annual audits. The project log frame included objectively verifiable mid-term and end of project targets including an assessment of risks and assumptions and a costed M&E plan was developed during design and included in the Prodoc. The inception workshop was held in Tarawa following project approval in November 2011 and was well attended by representatives of numerous government agencies. The MTR was completed in June 2014 with numerous recommendations for the improvement of project management and implementation.
94. Audit reports for the project finances for the years ended 31 December 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015 have been sighted by the evaluator. It is noted that the report for 2015 cites a number of items requiring clarification including reconciliation irregularities between MELAD and Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, issues with the reconciliation and verification of co-financing and issues with procurement processes and expenditure control. An extensive and pragmatic management response accompanies this report. This provides explanations for most of the Audit preliminary findings but also highlights a major bone of contention between the project management unit and co-financing partners CI and NEAq which are commented on further in section 3.6.6, as are issues relating to inconsistent reporting and irregular funding flows that have been experienced throughout the project's history.

### 3.2.4. Component 4 PIPA Project Management

95. This component required the establishment and operation of the PIPA Project Management Group (PMG) and the effective and timely quarterly financial and project reporting. The PMG was established as the primary project management unit and consisted of a representative of MELAD (nominally the Secretary of MELAD), the UNEP Task Manager, and representatives of the two main partners, Conservation International and New England Aquarium who were designated Project Executing Partners (within the Project Cooperation Agreement) to provide independence with regard to meeting co-financing obligations. The PIPA Director attends the PMG as the PMG secretary. In addition, the project was also instrumental in helping support the PIPA Management Committee (PMC) which is broader in its structure and includes representatives from GoK agencies, the project partners and the key individuals and institutions. The PMC has the broader strategic oversight of PIPA management and the linkages to the "whole of government" approach to conservation it aspires to encourage.
96. From the outset, timely quarterly financial and project reporting has been an on-going issue with the project although this has improved since the appointment of an experienced financial manager in July 2015. Nevertheless, consistent comment by interviewees indicates the difficulties with reporting have created or contributed to tensions and frustration between the project management partners and have been instrumental in delaying project implementation. These issues are further commented on in section 3.6.2 and 3.6.6 below.

**Table 6: Summary of the Project’s success in producing programmed outputs**

Component	Expected Outcome	Outputs	Status at the end of the project
1.PIPA Management Plan Implementation	1.1 Increased management effectiveness for PIPA and for protected areas more widely in Kiribati.	PIPA Implementation Office in Tarawa established and fully operational, with four permanent staff	Completed
		PIPA Field Station on Kanton established and fully operational with two full time staff	Field station is largely completed but satellite connection for communications is unresolved.
		Well established ongoing	Programme in place and

		education and awareness programme.	implemented very effectively by the PIPA Education, Information and Media Office with a focus on schools, communities and church groups and the outer islands through the Outer Islands Mayor's workshops. A school curriculum was introduced using PIPA materials, a bi-monthly newsletter produced and the PIPA website expanded to include information in the I Kiribati language.
		Increased surveillance and enforcement programme operational	Surveillance programme operating successfully with the Kiribati Police Maritime Unit working in conjunction with Kiribati Fisheries Licensing and Enforcement Unit monitoring vessel movements inside PIPA. Surveillance has been further improved with the introduction of the Vessel Monitoring System and Automatic Identification System which detects the types of vessels present and has shown a significant reduction in vessel movements in PIPA since full closure on 1 January 2015.
		Draft tourism plan developed for discussion and at least one form of PIPA tourism developed and operational	Draft tourism plan for Kanton was completed identifying possible eco-tourism options. Some small scale tourist activity has reportedly taken place and it is planned to upgrade the Kanton wharf and airstrip. The PIPA Trust Board has pointed out the need to integrate PIPA tourism options into broader Kiribati tourism strategic plan.
		Kanton Atoll Sustainable Resource Use plan developed and reflected in Phase II PIPA Management Plan.	Sustainable Resource Use Plan including assessment of existing infrastructure was completed by a multi-agency team of government experts in 2013. It included a zoning plan for Kanton (tourism sites, bird sanctuaries, subsistence fishing areas etc.). The special case of Kanton as the only inhabited atoll in PIPA is being addressed in post 2014 management plan.
	1.2 Delivery of selected PIPA Strategic	Successful eradication of rats on 4 PIPA atolls and core capacity developed in Kiribati	Eradication successful in 3 of 4 atolls and local capacity strengthened through PIPA and

	Outcomes (atoll restoration and bio-security, offshore fisheries management and climate change adaptation)	to effectively management IAS	IAS GEF projects. PIPA Biosecurity Guidelines for the Phoenix Islands developed and resulted in PIPA entry permit requirements including biosecurity protocols.
		PIPA offshore fisheries 25% "no take" zone established and Conservation Contract in place	Conservation contract in place and 'No take" zone extended by the Kiribati Government Cabinet decision in January 2015 to embrace 99.4 % of PIPA EEZ waters. Conservation Contract providing for possible compensation to be paid to GoK for lost fishing revenue was signed by PIPA Trust Board in April 2014. Contract provides for moratorium on compensation for five years "trial" period to be utilised for research into the development of a compensation formula by the multi-agency PIPA Tuna Working Group.
		PIPA Climate Change Vulnerability and Resilience assessment report completed and climate change scenarios addressed in Phase II management plan.	The assessment and report were completed and published in 2016. Some management actions have already been undertaken such as the zoning of Kanton for specific uses. Further work is needed to interpret the results and inform the Phase II management plan.
Component 2 PIPA Sustainable Finance System.	PIPA financing vehicle is operational as the long term financing vehicle for PIPA	PIPA Conservation Trust and Board established, office established and Executive Director and staff in place.	PIPA Trust established (in 2010) and operational with first Executive Director recruited in 2011 PIPA Fundraising Strategy framework was developed in 2012.
		PIPA endowment (\$13.5million) in place	Initial endowment of 5 million (\$2.5 GoK and \$2.5million CI and NEAq) raised. This is less than the planned 13.5 million although a further "sinking fund of \$5 million/5 years has been committed by donors -the Waite and Ocean 5 Foundations.
Component 3 PIPA Evaluation and Monitoring.	Project integrity and accountability for deliverables is maintained and UNEP standards of transparency and accountability and success	Inception workshop undertaken Mid Term review undertaken Annual Audits undertaken Terminal Evaluation of project completed	All outputs will have been met with the completion of this Terminal Evaluation. These include audit reports for 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015 together with management responses on audit findings.

	metrics are objectively assessed.		
Component 4 PIPA Project Management.	Project Management Group established and operating with project deliverables produced on time and within budget and quarterly financial and project reporting completed effectively with support from the PIPA Tarawa office and staff.	Project Management Group established  Regular PIPA Project reporting completed	PMG was established and met virtually.  Timely project and financial reporting has been inconsistent over the term of the project leading to delays with cash advances and project activities.

97. In summary, the two year extension of the project has enabled the overall satisfactory delivery of its outputs. The delays with recruitment of PIO staff and with the establishment of the PIPA Implementation Office, together with the logistical issues associated with establishing Kanton Field Office have been largely overcome during the extension period. It is notable that those outputs which have involved direct external partner assistance, such as the establishment of the PIPA Trust Fund Office, the eradication of feral pigs and rabbits on three of four important atolls, the climate change vulnerability and adaptation assessment and the establishment of the Conservation Agreement and the increase of the "No Take" zone to include virtually all of the PIPA EEZ, all represent important and timely achievements. Less impressive have been the outputs related to project monitoring and evaluation and project management and performance over the course of the project which have influenced the overall rating.

**The overall evaluation rating on the delivery of outputs related to the project is "Satisfactory"**

### 3.3 Effectiveness: Attainment of objectives and planned results

#### 3.3.1 Achievement of direct outcomes as defined in the reconstructed ToC

98. As discussed in section 2.8 (Reconstructed TOC), the project sought to achieve outcomes that would advance its overall goal of "building capacity in Kiribati to more effectively manage a large protected area in the form of the PIPA (to World Heritage standards) and to create a sustainable financing system for such large sites that could be used as a model for application elsewhere". The RToC identified a number of outcomes leading to two Intermediate States and project impact in the form of ensuring the natural and cultural heritage of the Phoenix Islands Protected Area is restored and sustained. The Intermediate States were i) the effective management of PIPA to World Heritage site standards and implementation of innovative conservation strategies and ii) the ongoing sustainable funding for PIPA management. The ROTC also identified the importance of continued global and regional support and resource mobilisation as a key driver in encouraging and strengthening the Government of Kiribati commitment to the effective management of PIPA and the establishment of an operational sustainable financing mechanism and ensuring that both technical and financial resources are adequate and available in the future to achieve full impact of the project.

99. To achieve the Intermediate State relating to effective management the project aimed to provide the resources needed to secure the following key outcomes: i) advance the implementation of the PIPA Management plan 2010-2014 through a twin focus on building PIPA management capacity by strengthening infrastructure and staff needed for core operations (zonation, enforcement, tourism development, monitoring and evaluation) and working on Strategic Outcomes relating to atoll restoration, reverse fishing licences and compensation and climate change resilience and adaptation); ii) provide the start-up resources needed to operationalise the PIPA Conservation Trust ( Board, staff and office) and iii) provide resources and capacity strengthening needed to effectively manage the project.

100. The evaluation of the achievement of these Outcomes is based on the success of the project in completing its outputs, the views of the stakeholders interviewed for the evaluation and the observations and of the evaluator during his visit to Tarawa. It is also cognizant of the context under which the project was implemented including:

- the fact that the project is part of an on-going continuum of work to establish the PIPA which started before the GEF project and will continue beyond its term;
- the multiple management and technical capacity challenges and logistical and cost issues especially the distance, isolation and travel issues affecting effective project implementation in Kiribati;
- the high level of in-kind involvement and cash co-finance committed by the key NGO partners CI and NEAq which require strong collaborative relationships built on transparency and communication;
- the strong influence of high level political support and goodwill for PIPA and the vision which sees biodiversity conservation as a cornerstone for a sustainable future and improved livelihoods.

101. These factors have all contributed both positively and negatively to the achievement of outcomes and are reflected in the following assessments.

### **Intermediate State/Outcome 1. Effective Management of PIPA**

102. There is no doubt the capacity to effectively manage the PIPA has been improved as a result of the project although as noted below, this needs to be reinforced by additional professional development. In terms of the ROTC and the achievement of the desired intermediate state and overall project impact, it is **assumed** the capacity related outcomes will be maintained through minimal staff turnover, and that retraining and technical support will be available when required. The establishment of the PIPA Implementation Office in Tarawa which includes the office equipment and most importantly, an effective internet connection, coupled with the expansion of staff to include not only the PIPA Director but also the Financial, Administrative/Operations, Education/Outreach and Administrative Assistant officers has resulted in the core team needed for Management Plan implementation. This team has received some basic training in project and conservation management but would benefit from further exposure to professional protected area management training. This would include invasive alien species assessment and control work where, external technical assistance will still be needed for assessment and control activities on the remaining untreated PIPA atolls despite the improved capacity in Kiribati resulting from the work of the project together with that of the related GEFPAS "Prevention, control and management of invasive alien species in the Pacific". Similarly, although the project has led to improved protected area management capacity in the PIO, external technical assistance will still be needed across a range of activities particularly in relation to biodiversity management (surveys, monitoring, IAS control), strategic and management planning etc., for some time to come. In this respect it is important to maintain the interest and commitment of the PIO and Kanton staff and, there is a need for a professional development programme to be developed and implemented.

103. It is noted that a capacity needs assessment survey form has been developed in the past but it appears no formal training programme has been developed or implemented. It is also noted that options have been placed in front of the Government of Kiribati and MELAD which would help achieve these needs, most notably the opportunity to engage PIPA capacity building in regional GEF 5 (Ridges to Reef) and GEF 6 (Invasive Alien Species) which, for reasons best known to the government, have not been acted upon. This is a pity as both programmes offered a real opportunity to continue the good work of the PIPA project and consolidate and strengthen the capacity to manage PIPA



effectively. The need for strengthened capacity remains and every effort must be made by the GEF, UNEP and regional agencies like SPREP to encourage the Kiribati government to ensure that opportunities to build on the investment in the PIPA project through engagement in future biodiversity conservation related regional programmes are embraced.

**Recommendation 3** In view of the need to continue to strengthen the PIPA and protected area management capacity in Kiribati generally, it is recommended that the Government of Kiribati working with SPREP and the World Heritage Centre, undertake a further capacity needs assessment as the basis for implementing a professional development programme for PIPA and MELAD protected area management staff. The development of the programme in cooperation with SPREP and the World Heritage Centre should maximise the options to link staff with other Pacific regional protected area training initiatives such those supported by BIOPAMA, and training activities associated with GEF projects such as the GEF 5 Ridges to Reef Programme. Additional international funding and training opportunities available through the World Heritage Commission must also be assessed for inclusion in the implementation programme. In addition, the Government of Kiribati is strongly encouraged to ensure that capacity development components identified in the needs assessment are built into and funded in all future Kiribati GEF biodiversity conservation projects.

104. The Tarawa based team is supplemented by the Kanton Field Station Coordinator and the Assistant Coordinator who provide an essential PIPA management presence in the field and will man the Kanton Field Station constructed with the support of the project. In most remote protected area management situations, this two person team would be considered the bare minimum to undertake this role and this is even more so in the case of Kanton Atoll PIPA which is 1,700 Km from Tarawa and requires the staff to live in a very small community for long periods of time. This situation has attendant risks should unforeseen circumstances such as an accident or personal issues require the evacuation of one of the officers and a third officer on standby in Tarawa would go some way towards alleviating this potential problem. It is also noted that the emergency evacuation and replacement of field staff on Kanton atoll is a highly expensive operation entailing air charters and as such, it is prudent to ensure a contingency fund to cover these unforeseen costs is included in every future PIPA annual budget.

105. The evaluator is also aware that a the MELAD Division of Conservation and Environment supports a group of trained protected area management staff on Kiritimati (Christmas) Island in the northern Phoenix Group. These staff are members of the Wildlife Conservation Unit and have roles and responsibilities and perform duties very similar to those of the PIPA field staff on Kanton atoll. Given that protected area management capacity for both these remote locations need strengthening, it seems logical that the potential for integrating the field management staff of WCU and PIO into one combined unit be investigated. This would lead to improved capacity and management flexibility through the planned rotation and rostering of the larger staff group and improved staff capability through the skill sharing and peer learning experiences which would inevitably occur. As both the PIO and WCU are components of MELAD the proposed integration should be institutionally feasible.

**Recommendation 4.** In view of the remoteness of Kanton atoll and the potential for accident and emergency situations to impact on the PIPA field management presence should one or both officers be forced to return to Tarawa, it is recommended the GoK together with the PIPA Trust Fund provide the funding needed to bolster the Kanton field staff by at least one further conservation officer and that annual budget provision is made to cover the cost of an emergency evacuation and the re-location of replacement staff. Further it is recommended that the Government of Kiribati strongly consider the integration of PIPA and Kirrimati Island field staff based on the potential for improved staff capacity and management flexibility through planned rotation and rostering of the integrated staff group and the potential for improved staff capability through skill sharing and other peer learning experiences.

106. The establishment of the PIPA Management Committee to engage other government agencies, NGO's (particularly CI and NEAq) and other key stakeholders in the strategic management process is an important step towards collaborative management and shared "ownership" of PIPA. It was to be an important mechanism for achieving the "whole of government" management approach underlying



the 2010-2014 management plan. However, while the Management Committee functioned very effectively in the initial stages of the project it appears from interviewee comments that its effectiveness as a collaborative forum has waned in the past two years reflecting an increased "centralisation" of PIPA management on the PIO and mutual frustration between the NGO partners and PIPA management over management issues including co-financing and delays with project implementation. Further, it was clear to the evaluator that there is institutional tension between the PIPA Management Committee and PIO and the PIPA Trust Board with the latter being seen to heavily influence PIPA management strategy through its control of operational funding now the GEF project has drawn to a close. At the very least, the immense challenges of maintaining the high international profile of PIPA, its status as one of the largest ever UNESCO World Heritage sites ever listed and its importance as the national and international "flag bearer" for biodiversity conservation and sustainable resource (fisheries) management, requires all the key stakeholders to be "pulling" collaboratively and cooperatively in the same direction. It is therefore incumbent on these parties to resolve their differences, respect the management structures and roles and responsibilities which have been agreed and collectively commit to a common vision for the future of PIPA.

107. While strengthening the PIPA management staff was critical to improved management effectiveness, so too was the need to progress the implementation of management plan priorities, particularly the restoration of the PIPA atolls, and address innovative strategies. The restoration (and biosecurity) of the atolls is important to the maintenance of PIPA status as a World Heritage site. Due to remoteness and associated logistical challenges, this necessitates substantial financial and technical resources. While the project has successfully advanced this work in three of four atolls treated to date (the eradication work on Enderbury island was not considered successful) and in conjunction with the GEFPAS IAS project, helped build local capacity in biosecurity and rat eradication, more is required and completing this work on the remaining atolls should be a major management priority in the future. The development and implementation of a biosecurity plan for the PIPA atolls together with formal regulations and visitor permitting processes is a positive outcome designed to maintain the gains from the atoll restoration work and minimise the possibility new introductions in the future. Other management plan priorities and outcomes which were addressed with project support and with the assistance from the NGO partners include the development of a sustainable resources use plan to guide the management of Kanton atoll, a tourism assessment), the completion of the Conservation Contract between the PIPA Trust and GoK on reverse fishing licences and potential compensation for forgone fishing revenue, and a Climate Change vulnerability and adaptation assessment.
108. The Kanton Atoll Resource Use Assessment and Sustainable Resource Use plan atoll is being implemented through the inter-agency missions undertaken in 2013 and 2016. It is focused on identifying appropriate land and resource use zones including zones for the protection of key bird areas, subsistence fishing by the small group of Government personnel living on the atoll and infrastructure development for the port, airport, tourist accommodation and connecting roads. The plan anticipates that Kanton will eventually become more intensely occupied once and if tourism to PIPA develops and aims to ensure the Kanton environment and its infrastructure is improved and maintained, which in time will be an important contribution to the overall impact of the project
109. Closely linked to the Kanton sustainable use plan was the PIPA Tourism Strategic Development Plan which included an infrastructure assessment and identified a range of potential tourism activities. The plan received a mixed reception from governing stakeholders (endorsed by the PMC but rejected by the PIPA Trust Board) and while there has been occasional visits by yachts, no significant tourism activity has taken place. This suggests the economic benefits of PIPA of which tourism is perhaps the strongest option, will be difficult to demonstrate to the government.
110. Another project outcome identified in the ROTC as an input to the effective management of PIPA and contributor to the effective management of PIPA and the overall project impact, was the need for a better understanding of the impacts of climate change on PIPA ecosystems, particularly the coral reef and atoll systems. With the technical assistance of the New England Aquarium and Conservation International a comprehensive vulnerability and adaptation study was completed the findings of which will be integrated into future PIA Management Plans. In assessing the path to the long term project impact, the ROTC makes the assumption that the project timeframe is sufficient to achieve outcomes such as the climate change study and that the technical expertise and assistance will be available when needed. This has been the case in relation to the climate change assessment but also

for atoll restoration. It is for this reason amongst others, that cooperative partnerships with organisations and institutions well suited to provide or identify technical support and training are vital for the effective future management of PIPA.

111. Another key outcome was the completion of the Conservation Contract. This was a critical requirement for the extension of the PIPA "no take" zone beyond the territorial waters of the atolls. The contract provided the guidelines for determining the proposed 25% no take zone and other conditions on which potential compensation might be determined. In one of the most significant outcomes for the future of PIPA during the term of the project, the President and Cabinet at the time dispensed with the 25% criterion and decided that virtually all of the PIPA EEZ waters (99.4%) would be "no take" thus simplifying the issues surrounding zonation and greatly strengthening the conservation integrity of PIPA and its World Heritage status. This is an outstanding outcome representing the strength of the political will and commitment of the then President and GoK Cabinet to the future of PIPA. However, in terms of this evaluation, it is also recognised that the GEF project was only one supporting element behind this decision which was a culmination of the international recognition of the ecological importance of PIPA, interest in innovative conservation management measures such as the reverse fishing licence and the significance of a small, economically challenged country like Kiribati declaring such large and important MPA, and finally the consultations and representations to the GoK by stakeholders and in particular the project's NGO partners.

**Immediate State/Outcome 2: Ongoing sustainable funding for PIPA management is available.**

112. This outcome and the achievement of the Intermediate State relies on establishing the PIPA Trust Fund as a viable, sustainable financing vehicle for the future management of PIPA. The ROTC identifies failure or delays in capitalizing the Fund to adequate levels could severely compromise the future management and the offshore fisheries benefits, both of which are dependent on the Trust Fund endowment income for funding. The project's direct contribution to this outcome was to finance the establishment of the Trust Fund office and recruitment of staff (Executive Director, Grants Specialist and Administration Officer), and to assist the ED in his efforts to raise the \$13.5 million endowment capital which was assessed as the figure needed to generate the income needed to support PIPA management and provide compensation for possible foregone DWFN fishing revenue to the GoK. In this regard, the project has helped achieve the specific outcome of a fully operational PIPA Trust Fund.
113. However, at the time of the evaluation country visit, it is understood the PIPA Trust endowment capital was \$5.0 million with \$2.5 million of that amount contributed each by the GoK and by the project's NGO partners CI and NEAq. In terms of the RToC (and the project Results Framework) desired outcome, this figure is well short of the \$13.5 million target which was set in 2010/2011 which in today's global financial climate of historically low returns on investment, is perhaps unrealistic as a capitalisation goal. This situation casts significant doubt on the ability of the PIPA Trust Fund to sustain both itself and the full management operations of PIPA. Indeed the situation would have been dire by project's end (December 2016) but for the timely commitment in 2015 of a further \$1 million per year for 5 years by the US private Waite and Oceans Five Foundations. This fortuitous funding has bought a further five years in which the management operations of the PIPA Implementation Office and the PIPA Trust will be supported as will the efforts of the recently appointed Trust Fund Director to raise the endowment capital needed to sustain PIPA management and the Trust operations.
114. In this latter respect, it is suggested by the evaluator that a much more aspirational endowment goal should be adopted based on a realistic assessment of core operational costs for both entities, the costs of management plan implementation and the likely additional costs to the Trust arising from the conservation contract and funding for the expansion of conservation activities to other Kiribati regions under the "Bring PIPA Home" theme. The development of an up to date Strategic Plan which addresses the vision, mission, operations and funding for the Trust including a sustainable financing plan should be a high priority. In this regard the Micronesian Conservation Trust provides a "gold standard" example of both strategic planning and a diversified and a strong fundraising plan based on an endowment target of \$56 million. It is strongly recommended that consideration be given to acknowledge sharing visit between the PIPA Trust staff and their Micronesia Conservation Trust counterparts (see Recommendation 2). The shadow of uncertainty over the sustainability of PIPA

funding beyond 2020 is further lengthened by the uncertainty surrounding the commitment of the current GoK to PIPA. The current government has been reported to have questioned the economic and social benefits of the government's investment in the protected area. This has implications for the longer-term management of PIPA as committed annual government funding can be the most reliable and sustainable source of revenue available for conservation management and in the Pacific island context, is often a marker for financial sustainability for protected areas. In the case of PIPA, if ongoing donor support is not available and the endowment is insufficient to cover costs, the GoK would be the logical source of funding to continue operations. In this regard it would be encouraging to all PIPA stakeholders if the government was to formally endorse the 2015 - 2020 PIPA Management Plan and in doing so, indicate its willingness to commit future GEF funding to its implementation. This would both strengthen the overall perception of national ownership of this globally important MPA and serve to help ensure the continuity and sustainability of the PIPA management. Additionally, to further the potential sustainability of PIPA and the PIPA Trust Fund, the government could consider applying future GEF funding to the capitalisation of the PIPA Trust in a similar manner to that which has been achieved by the member countries of the MCT. It is commendable that to help reinforce the non-conservation values of PIPA to the Kiribati government and community, the Trust has recently strategically supported activities within the framework of the 'Bring PIPA Home' programme such as scholarships for students. This is also aimed at countering or deflecting any negative perceptions of the value of the government's investment in PIPA.

**Recommendation 5.** It is recommended that the Government of Kiribati formally adopt or endorse at Executive level, the 2015 - 2020 PIPA Management Plan. In doing so, it is further recommended the Government indicate a commitment to allocate future GEF funding towards its implementation including giving consideration to negotiating the allocation of GEF funds towards the further capitalisation of the PIPA Trust Fund and related activities under the "Bring PIPA Home" campaign.

115. Based on these considerations, particularly the uncertainty of long term funding (beyond 2020), the evaluation assesses the overall achievement of outcomes as being moderately satisfactory.

**The evaluation rating for overall achievement of outcomes is “Moderately Satisfactory”**

### 3.3.2 Likelihood of impact

116. The ROTI approach is used to assess the likelihood of impact by building upon the concepts of Theory of Change (Section 3.9). The ROTI approach requires ratings to be determined for the outcomes achieved by the project and the progress made towards the 'intermediate states' at the time of the evaluation. The rating system is presented in Table 7 below and the assessment of the project's progress towards achieving its intended impacts is presented in Table 8.

**Table 7: Rating Scale for Outcomes and Progress towards Intermediate States**

Outcome Rating	Rating on progress toward Intermediate States
D: The project's intended outcomes were not delivered	D: No measures taken to move towards intermediate states.
C: The project's intended outcomes were delivered, but were not designed to feed into a continuing process after project funding	C: The measures designed to move towards intermediate states have started, but have not produced results.
B: The project's intended outcomes were delivered, and were designed to feed into a continuing process, but with no prior allocation of responsibilities after project funding	B: The measures designed to move towards intermediate states have started and have produced results, which give no indication that they can progress towards the intended long term impact.
A: The project's intended outcomes were delivered,	A: The measures designed to move towards

and were designed to feed into a continuing process, with specific allocation of responsibilities after project funding.	intermediate states have started and have produced results, which clearly indicate that they can progress towards the intended long term impact.
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**Table 8: Overall Likelihood of Achieving Impact**

Results rating of project entitled: Phoenix Islands Protected Area (PIPA)							
Outputs	Outcomes	Rating (D - A)	Intermediate states	Rating (D - A)	Impact (GEB)	Rating (+)	Overall
<p>PIPA management offices in Tarawa and Kanton established and full complement of planned Tarawa and Kanton staff recruited.</p> <p>Atoll restoration activities for priority atolls completed and largely (at least 75%) successful with biosecurity programme and restoration priorities for next management plan in place.</p> <p>Information management, education and outreach activities undertaken with considerable success amongst youth schools and communities. Other operational activities (surveillance and enforcement, sustainable resource use assessment on Kanton together with a tourism assessment) completed. PIPA Management Plan Strategic Priorities (Climate Change resilience and adaptation options, addressed, Conservation Contract in place and Task Force to review fishing data and "reverse fishing licence" obligations.</p> <p>The PIPA Trust Fund is fully operational with a charter, Board, Executive Director, core staff and an established office in</p>	<p>Improved PIPA management capacity and infrastructure leading to improved core management operations, heightened public awareness of PIPA and biodiversity conservation, ecological restoration of priority atolls and assessments of strategic issues to be addressed in Phase II management plan.</p>	B	<p>Effectiveness of PIPA management enhanced (towards World Heritage site standards) and innovative conservation strategies under development for inclusion in next phase management plan.</p>	C	<p>Natural and cultural heritage of the PIPA is restored and it management sustained.</p>	+	BC+

place.						
	Initial fundraising and investments by GoK, CI and NEAq have built endowment fund to \$5million but projected \$13.5 has not been achieved. \$5 million/5 years 'sinking fund" supporting Trust and PIPA management to 2020.		Ongoing funding to 2020 has been secured but the endowment target has not been reached.			
	Justification for rating:		Justification for rating:		Justification for rating:	
	The project's intended outcomes were partially delivered, and were designed to feed into a continuing process after project funding.		The measures designed to move towards intermediate states have started, but have not all produced the desired results.		Project has achieved documented changes in environmental status during the project's lifetime.	

117. As was pointed out earlier, the project is one component of a continuum of work to establish effective management of PIPA which began prior to and will continue beyond the project timeframe. In this sense the project rates highly in terms of the criteria in that it is "designed to feed into a continuing process, with specific allocation of responsibilities after project funding". However, not all the outcomes were fully achieved, hence the **rating of progress towards Outcomes of "B"**.

118. There is no question that the project has contributed significantly to progress towards the intermediate states, including the improved effectiveness of PIPA management. However, the status of the endowment fund and the prospect of funding shortfalls after the current \$5 million/5 years commitment of the Waite and Oceans Five Foundations is completed raises serious questions about the sustainability of funding and by implication the future ability of PIPA management to continue to managed to the standards required by the management plan. For these reasons the **Rating of progress towards the Intermediate States is rated "C"**.

119. According to this methodology, the rating obtained is translated onto the usual 6-point rating scale used in UNEP project evaluations, as shown in Table 9 below.

**Table 9: 'Overall likelihood of impact achievement' on a six point scale.**

Highly Likely	Likely	Moderately Likely	Moderately Unlikely	Unlikely	Highly Unlikely
AA AB BA CA BB+ CB+ DA+ DB+	BB CB DA DB AC+ BC+	AC BC CC+ DC+	CC DC AD+ BD+	AD BD CD+ DD+	CD DD

NB: projects that achieve documented changes in environmental status during the project's lifetime receive a positive impact rating, indicated by a "+".

120. The aggregate rating is "BC". Considering the range of activities associated with the delivery of operational and strategic management priorities including the excellent technical reports available on the atoll restoration, sustainable resource use and climate change resilience and adaptation components the notation "+" is also attributed, producing a final rating "BC+". The Project, with an aggregated rating of BC+ can therefore be rated as "Likely" to achieve the expected Impact over time especially if the NGO and private foundation partners maintain an on-going commitment.

**The evaluation rating for the likelihood of impact is "Likely"**

### 3.3.3 Achievement of the formal project objectives as presented in the Project Document

121. The overall goal of the project was to "build capacity in Kiribati to more effectively manage a mega-large marine protected area and to create a sustainable financing system that could be replicated as a model elsewhere". Reaching the Goal is an on-going process (especially in relation to the capacity building component) which extends beyond the limited term of the GEPAS project. In this context it is fair to say the project has been partially successful in advancing the core elements of the goal (capacity improvement, establishment of the financing system and the possible use of the model elsewhere). With regard to the latter point relating to replication, it was explained to the evaluator that the establishment of the similarly large scale Cook Islands Marine Park/Marae Moana MPA by the Cook Islands has been influenced by the relative success of the PIPA model. Marae Moana has a similar vision and objectives to PIPA and is aimed at protecting the marine biodiversity and natural heritage of the Cook Islands while providing for sustainable resource use<sup>12</sup> Similar comments were forthcoming from staff at the Cook Islands National Environment Service during the evaluator's visit to that country to undertake interviews for the GEPAS Integrated Island Biodiversity project.

122. Similarly the project has been largely successful in its work towards the project objective " to advance implementation of the PIPA Management Plan 2010-2014 through a twin focus on (i) Core Operations (capacity, infrastructure, zonation, enforcement and monitoring and evaluation) and Strategic Outcomes (atoll restoration, reverse fishing licence, World Heritage site management, tourism initiatives and climate change adaptation) and (ii) to support the operation of the PIPA sustainable financing system (the PIPA Trust)".

123. Looking at the objective with the benefit of hindsight, the project was overly ambitious in terms of the prospect of achieving its core operations and strategic outcome elements within the original 3 year term, especially when the high logistical costs of field operations and capacity constraints are taken into account. Some elements (infrastructure, capacity, atoll restoration and climate change assessment were more successfully undertaken than others (e.g. tourism development and monitoring and evaluation) and it may have been more realistic and beneficial (in terms of the long term management of PIPA) to have pared some elements back in favour of a stronger focus on providing more protected area management capacity and related training, together with the completion of the atoll restoration programme which is fundamental to the ecological integrity of PIPA and its status as a World Heritage site.

124. Comment has been made in 3.3.1 above on the project's support for the PIPA Trust and the failure to achieve the targeted endowment capitalisation of \$13.5 million has been noted. However, in terms of its formal outputs and objective, the project was simply required to support the operation of the Trust and it did so through the provision of office infrastructure and support for the Executive Director, including that officer's international fundraising efforts. Despite these reservations, overall and on balance, the project was able to deliver substantially on its goal and the formal objectives.

**The overall evaluation rating for the achievement of project goals and objectives is "Satisfactory"**

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<sup>12</sup> Ms Sue Tai, Conservation International Pacific Conservation Advisor pers.com

### 3.4 Sustainability of Outcomes

125. Sustainability is understood to mean the probability of continued long-term project-derived results and impacts after the project funding and assistance has ended. As has been pointed out in preceding sections the project and its outcomes represent important foundational components in the continuum of the life of the PIPA. As a government established initiative with World Heritage site status, it is reasonable to assume that PIPA will be maintained or sustained in one form or another as will the supporting PIPA Trust. The real issue in relation to the project outcomes is how well they will continue to serve and support the on-going development and management of PIPA. To a large extent the answer depends on the continued availability of financial resources but sustainability is also a function of other considerations such as socio-political support, institutional continuity and environmental integrity. These parameters including financial sustainability are briefly commented on below but suffice to say experience in the region (and globally) suggests that if there is continuity of political support then the other parameters will flourish. Overall, the general assessment of the sustainability of outcomes is likely based on the understanding that the government is committed to maintain PIPA (and by implication the outcomes of the project) but is tempered by the understanding that the level of commitment and standards of management will be heavily dependent on the future availability of financial resources, external technical and capacity building assistance and continued support from the traditional NGO partners (CI and NEAq), development agencies (UNEP/GEF) and donors such as the Packard, Waite and Oceans Five foundations, all of which are tempered by an element of uncertainty perhaps arising from the sense of variable Government institutional support of the PIPA concept.

**The overall evaluation rating for Sustainability of Outcomes is “Likely”**

#### 3.4.1 Socio-political sustainability

126. Even prior to the project inception as the then world's largest declared marine protected area, PIPA had established an international and regional profile which is reflected in its World Heritage site status. PIPA was recognised as an unprecedented commitment by a relatively poor small island developing state to the protection of its biodiversity and sustainable use of its marine resources. Although interviews conducted for the evaluation suggested that the change of government has led to a questioning of the benefits of the investment PIPA, the recent decision by government to expand the boundary of PIPA to include the previously excluded Winslow Reef as requested by the World Heritage Commission, suggests that the fundamental political commitment to PIPA remains intact. The project's support of the PIPA information and outreach programme has been instrumental in raising the national profile of PIPA and in exposing Kiribati communities to the cultural and natural heritage elements behind its vision and objectives. This programme was developed and delivered by the PIPA Information and Outreach Officer who has done an outstandingly effective job in engaging youth, schools and communities, particularly in Tarawa and nearby islands by using innovative techniques including music and theatre to help "Bring PIPA Home". The result of these initiatives has been a high level of awareness and general public support for PIPA within Kiribati which when considered alongside the international and regional profile of the MPA, suggests its socio- political sustainability is likely.

**The evaluation rating for socio-political sustainability is “Likely”**

#### 3.4.2 Sustainability of Financial Resources

127. The PIPA Trust Fund has been established to provide a sustainable flow of funding to support management of the protected area, provide for possible compensation to the GoK for lost fishing revenue arising from restricted fishing access for DWFN and to assist with conservation awareness and the expansion of protected areas to other regions within Kiribati. As discussed in section 3.3.1 above, an initial projection indicated an endowment fund capitalised at \$13.5 million would generate the revenue required to support these functions. This was calculated in a more favourable global investment climate than exists today and most likely would be revised upwards if the exercise was repeated today. To date, \$5 million has been raised for the endowment and a further \$5 million has



been committed for the five years 2015 - 2020 as a "sinking" fund (funding to be expended over the five years) by the Waite and Ocean 5 Foundations. While the current annual costs of the PIPA Implementation Office and management operations and the PIPA Trust are not available to the evaluator, it has been suggested that these are in the order of \$500,000 - \$700,000 per year or more which will require a substantial return on the proposed \$13.5 million endowment capital to sustain. Neither has there been any agreement on possible compensatory funding for reverse fishing licences or an estimate of the cost of additional conservation activities under the "Bring PIPA Home" banner. Taken together, these factors strongly suggest that unless the Trust achieves significant fundraising success in the next four years or there is a renewal of donor funding, current levels of funding will not be sustainable. There will however, always remain some level of funding to support core operations hence the assessment that at this point in time financial sustainability is moderately likely.

**The evaluation rating for the financial sustainability is "Moderately Likely"**

### 3.4.3 Sustainability of Institutional Frameworks

128. This section assesses the likelihood that institutional and government structures underpinning the project and its outcomes will be sustained. The goal and objective of the project was to establish and strengthen these structures (PIPA Implementation Office, PIPA Management Committee and PIPA Trust Fund) to achieve the effective management of PIPA. These are now well established and it is highly likely that along with PIPA itself, they will be sustained in one form or another into the future. That is not to say that the structures might not be modified should current levels of funding for PIPA decrease significantly, such as for example, a merger of the Implementation and Trust offices, but the essential implementation and governance framework for PIPA will remain intact.

**The evaluation rating for the institutional sustainability is "Likely"**

### 3.4.4 Environmental sustainability

129. The environmental sustainability of PIPA is at the heart of the project which has addressed the two strongest threats to the environmental and ecological integrity of the protected area: invasive alien species (rats and rabbits) and climate change, especially sea level rise. The project was successful in eradicating or controlling rats from 2 of the 4 priority atolls (McKean and Birnie) and rabbits from Rawaki. The programme to eradicate rats from Enderbury was not successful and although a high level control was achieved, subsequent monitoring showed rats were still present, possibly due to the abundance of alternative feed during poisoning for eradication leading to unsuitable baiting conditions. Overall the eradication work to date, together with the biosecurity programme, will have a significant and positive impact on sea bird populations and other native species. The biosecurity programme for PIPA (Biosecurity Guidelines for the Phoenix Islands) is being implemented through portside shipping inspections and rat baiting together with permit control over visitation to atolls and strict landing procedures. However, to fully restore the ecological integrity of the PIPA atolls the eradication programme must be extended to the other atolls within PIPA under the Phase II Management Plan and supported by regular monitoring of the results. However the status of invasive species on all atolls must also be subject to regular monitoring. (see Recommendation 1)

130. The assessment of PIPA vulnerability and adaptation options carried out in 2016 provides valuable information to help address the impact of climate change on the PIPA environment and is intended to inform the Phase II management plan and provide a basis for future management action to help mitigate climate change impacts. If invasive species control and atoll restoration is treated as an ongoing management priority and climate change issues are addressed in the next management phase the rating for environmental sustainability would be likely. However, under the scenario where some atolls remain vulnerable to invasive species and global climate change impacts (ocean temperatures and sea levels) have the potential to significantly impact the vulnerable marine and coastal environments of PIPA (e.g coral bleaching) , the rating for environmental sustainability is considered moderately likely.

**The evaluation rating for the environmental sustainability element is "Moderately Likely"**



### 3.4.5 Catalytic Role and Replication

#### Catalysed behavioural changes

131. From a practical operational perspective, the project can point to having a catalytic role in the development of awareness of the threat to biodiversity posed by the presence of invasive alien species on the ecologically vulnerable and remote atolls of PIPA. The synergy with the Kiribati component of the GEFPAS Prevention, Control and Management of Invasive Alien Species in the Pacific (IAS Project) a 'sister' GEFPAS project has helped catalyse increased awareness of the need for biosecurity in PIPA and intra - island within Kiribati. In this regard, PIPA protected area management staff, working with the staff from the Agricultural Department have acquired the capacity to undertake basic rat control and to implement the PIPA biosecurity guidelines. Overall the project has assisted in catalysing improved understanding and awareness within the broader Kiribati community of the international status and global importance of PIPA and the role it plays in the conservation of Kiribati biodiversity and indirectly, in maintaining cultural connections to the environment and Kiribati natural heritage.

#### Incentives

132. The project attempted to identify economic and development incentives in the form of tourism options and possible development opportunities but this work was not widely accepted and tourism remains an unknown and undeveloped option. At another level, the PIPA Trust offered a series of tertiary scholarships to students with aspirations in the environmental and conservation fields. These had a two-fold purpose. On the one hand they provided an incentive for young people to follow an environmental management path in their future careers and on the other, they demonstrated that PIPA could have benefits which reached beyond the remote Phoenix islands and had a positive impact closer to home in Tarawa and nearby islands. This was one element of the "Bring PIPA Home" programme which is designed to catalyse positive attitudes towards PIPA and provide a framework for a broader conservation ethic across all of Kiribati.

133. At another level the reverse fishing licence concept is a high level form of incentive aimed at catalysing and encouraging government action to promote sustainable resource use, in this case to improve the sustainability of the global tuna fishery, while at the same time providing for the protection of oceanic features and species at risk as by-catch such as marine mammals and turtles.

#### Institutional changes

134. The PIPA project has supported the PIPA Management Committee which is aimed at providing a forum for encouraging/catalysing cooperation and coordination between GoK agencies, the Primary NGO partners and other key stakeholders. It has also been instrumental in helping to establish the PIPA Trust which can be viewed as an innovative mechanism and useful model to provide for the sustainable financing of a large and globally significant marine protected area.

#### Policy changes

135. The project has been instrumental in supporting significant developments in fisheries policy in Kiribati through the introduction of the reverse fishing licence concept embodied in the Conservation Contract. The cabinet decision to extend the no fishing zone to include virtually all of the PIPA and to link this with the work of the PIPA Tuna Working Group to evaluate the economic opportunity cost of the decision for potential compensation over the ensuing five years, has major policy implications not just for the GoK but possibly for other small island countries in the Pacific should the model prove replicable. Other policy /regulatory changes relate to the introduction of the biosecurity management provisions for PIPA and related permitting regulations.

#### Catalytic financing

136. In addition to the UNEP/GEF funds the project mobilized significant funding from additional sources; the Packard Foundation (through CI and NEAq) and directly from CI and the NEAq. The NZ Government contributed funds to assist with the implementation of the atoll restoration and rat control programme. Although the PIPA Trust is the recipient of the \$5 million commitment from the Waite and Ocean5 Foundations, it is difficult to attribute this significant investment directly to the project. However it is also fair to say that, without the GEF funded component of the PIPA project and the assistance provided in support of the operations of the Trust, it may not have survived the

intervening years between 2009 and about 2016 when the Waite and Oceans 5 funding materialised and the latter commitment may never have been made. 3Champions to catalyse change

137. The PIPA was created through the vision and commitment of the former President Tong of Kiribati, who received very strong support and encouragement from the two principal international NGO partners, CI (Dr.Greg Stone and Ms. Sue Taei) and NEAq (and (Ms. Regan Milan) and from individuals within the GoK including the current PIPA Director Mr. Tukabu Teroko and his staff. The UNEP/GEFPAS project has served to reinforce the work of these champions and to open the door for new champions who share the PIPA vision and are committed to its realisation in coming years. These include those who are dedicated to the "Bring PIPA Home" education and awareness vision and understand the power of PIPA and the PIPA Trust to help deliver social, cultural, environmental and economic benefits across the whole of Kiribati.

#### Replication

138. The PIPA vision and model represents the one of the largest mega scale oceanic MPA's established in the world and demonstrates a strategically derived approach to address fundamental conservation issues including the need to invest at scales which achieve national, regional and global benefits. As such it has created global interest in how MPA's can perform successfully as oceanic (pelagic) fisheries management mechanisms,<sup>13</sup> how they can act as a tool for effective management of EEZ's through the application of marine spatial planning principles inclusive of coastal, offshore, deep-sea/sea mounts and oceanic habitats and their connectivity and how they can address critical biodiversity issues such as invasive species on small islands/atolls and conserve globally important and threatened species such as marine mammals, turtles and seabirds<sup>14</sup>. In addition, the Trust Fund model for sustainable funding adds a further dimension for potential replication.

139. The PIPA model and its advocacy by Kiribati leaders in global and Pacific regional environmental and ocean policy forums has, with the encouragement and support of the same NGO and donor partners (CI, NEAq, Oceans Five and Waite Foundations) who have so ably supported PIPA, influenced the decision of the Cook Islands government to establish a similar MPA. The Cook Islands Marine Park known as Marae Moana (1.1 million square kilometres) was established in 2012 and promotes sustainable development by balancing economic growth interests such as tourism, fishing and deep sea mining against conserving core biodiversity and natural assets in the ocean, reefs and island environs. Both PIPA and the Cook Islands Marine Park/Marae Moana are important national contributions to the Pacific Regional Ocean Policy and the associated implementing framework, the Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Framework for Integrated Strategic Action.

**The evaluation rating for project's catalytic role and replication is "Satisfactory"**

## 3.5 Efficiency

### 3.5.1 Cost efficiencies

140. Cost-saving measures were implemented, sometimes out of necessity. For example, the high cost of transport and travel to Kanton required the project to coordinate with shipping providers to seek diversion of existing services to Kiritimati Island to include a side trip to Kanton, as opposed to chartering a vessel for a specific journey to Kanton. While more cost effective this approach also added to the delays experienced by this project. At another level, use was made of Skype for teleconferences between the members of the Project Management Group in deference to the cost of bringing this group together for face to face meetings.

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<sup>13</sup> [http://usa.oceana.org/sites/default/files/pipa\\_report\\_final\\_low\\_res\\_3\\_7\\_16.pdf](http://usa.oceana.org/sites/default/files/pipa_report_final_low_res_3_7_16.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.cnn.com/2012/09/03/opinion/eco-solutions-pacific-ocean-opinion/index.html>

### 3.5.2 Timeliness

141. As has been pointed out in earlier sections of the report, the PIPA project was part of a continuum of activities to establish and develop PIPA as a fully functioning, effective and sustainable oceanic MPA. As such, the project activities and outputs were carefully selected to build upon and support initial foundational work and substantial effort went into the design process to reflect this strategic objective. Despite this and the fact the project was not 'starting from scratch' delays in implementation resulted in several extensions and what was planned as a project of three years duration became one of five and a half years and possibly longer if a further recent request for a no cost extension to 30 September 2017 is approved. Part of the reason for the delay is no doubt attributable to the remoteness of PIPA and the logistical/cost difficulties this represents for project implementation and this aspect appears to have been under-estimated by the project planners. However, it is also evident that the delays are attributable to management issues including the slow recruitment of PIPA Implementation Office staff and delayed financial and project reporting which slowed up cash advances and thus impacted on project continuity and efficiency.

**The overall evaluation rating for efficiency is “Moderately Unsatisfactory”**

## 3.6 Factors affecting performance

### 3.6.1 Preparation and readiness

142. The Project preparation phase was hampered by the original design consultant not completing the work to the standards required resulting in a significant delay to the completion of the project design. This task was then taken over by the representative of the NGO partner Conservation International and New England Aquarium and the UNEP Task Manager all three of whom worked closely with MELAD and representatives of other GoK Ministry's and departments. Consultation was also undertaken with external stakeholders including the NZ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Department of Conservation and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment (SPREP). Commendably, this team worked long and hard under difficult circumstances to produce a very good Prodoc and Results Framework which met a tight deadline for submission. The Prodoc was both logical and strategic in its aim to support PIPA Management Plan implementation by building the institutional, capacity and financing foundations needed to ensure PIPA sustainability while at the same time demonstrating progress on the operational and strategic priorities of the Phase I Management Plan. It proceeded to approval by the UNEP Project Approval Group with no adverse findings or comment. However, the evaluator considers the project may have been overly ambitious in relation to the number of operational and strategic priorities identified for action within the original three year time frame but notes that most outputs have been achieved or at least addressed over the eventual five and half year project duration.

143. The fact that the work of formally establishing PIPA and the Trust Fund had been completed prior to project commencement coupled with the Government's strong commitment at the highest level, the presence of committed partners with capacity to provide financial and technical assistance (CI, NEAQ, UNEP) and significant donor funds were committed (Packard Foundation, GEF), all suggest that readiness to implement should not have been an issue. However, following approval, readiness again became an issue as the appointment of the project team by MELAD, which as the project Executing Agency was fully responsible for all project personnel matters including recruitment, took considerably longer than anticipated. Subsequently, it became clear that the MELAD project team would also require further training in order to meet the reporting requirements and standards expected of a GEF EA, a task that fell to the UNEP Task Manager who undertook at least two trips to Tarawa for this purpose supplemented by extensive back up by email, telephone and Skype. Notwithstanding the highly commendable work of the UNEP Task Manager and CI representative in rewriting and recalibrating the Prodoc in order to meet the submission deadline, overall the preparation and readiness phase of the project did not proceed efficiently or in a timely fashion and is judged to have been unsatisfactory.

**Lesson 1.** The lesson here is that where a GEF project is to be executed by a national agency, both the IA and the EA need to undertake an honest and realistic assessment of the project administration needs, available capacity and experience of the EA to meet UNEP/GEF reporting and administrative requirements and standards. Where this appraisal indicates capacity shortfalls, consideration should be given to hiring an external project manager for up to 12 months of the initial year of implementation (or longer if deemed necessary) to assist with initial systems setup and training and ensure the project gets off to a strong start. The role and position of the advisor would be regularly assessed from the perspective of phasing it out as local capacity and capabilities are strengthened and a further dimension of the TOR could be periodic returns to undertake training in the event of staff turnovers.

**The overall evaluation rating for project preparation and readiness is “Unsatisfactory”**

### 3.6.2 Project implementation and management

144. Following project approval the core project management structure of the Project Management Group with linkages to the PIPA Management Committee was established to help guide implementation. The PMG was particularly important in the context of this project with its high ratio of external cash and in-kind financing committed by the NGO partners and the need to maintain close cooperation and good communications with these partners. However, despite the oversight of the PMG and the intensive oversight and training efforts of the UNEP Task Manager, project implementation was inconsistent and fell well behind that anticipated in the Work Plan. From the interviews conducted and supported by the findings of the MTR, it was clear that there was room for improvement in the administrative, managerial and financial aspects of the project, all of which were affected by the challenge of building the project management skills and capability of the management team. In this regard, the MTR offered a series of practical recommendations aimed at improving the communications and co-ordination underlying project management some of which were acted upon ( e.g. establishing topic specific sub- committees of the PMC) and some which were not (e.g. facilitated resolution of issues between the PMG partners).
145. A key issue affecting early implementation efforts were delays in reporting and financial reconciliations which led to delayed cash advances frustrating progress with work plan implementation. This was certainly the case in the years leading up to 2015 and this and other financial management issues were noted in the 2015 preliminary Audit report. However, in July 2015 the PIO appointed a new Finance Officer who used his extensive project accounting experience to fully review the project finances. Since his appointment the Finance Officer has worked with great diligence and commitment to review the entire history of project finances and complete accurate reconciliations for 2015 and 2016, together with a the provision of explanatory management notes covering the 2015 audit findings.
146. This evaluation notes the unusual practice of designating the NGO partners as co executors (for activities co-financed with their funding). This has resulted in the mis-understanding and difficulties with the reconciliation of co-financed activities within overall project financial reporting commented on under section 3.6.6. However the evaluator also notes that the implementation of the activities led by the NGO partners (e.g. island restoration, conservation contract, offshore fishing and the PIPA Trust Fund establishment) have tended to proceed more efficiently than others.
147. During the course of the evaluation it became apparent that there has been a deterioration of communications and goodwill between the key government and NGO stakeholders and a weakening of the coordination and engagement with other GoK agencies which is needed to build ownership through the "whole of government " management approach. The steps taken by project management to address these issues are not obvious and they persist today. However, it has to be acknowledged that the project achieved most of its outputs, albeit across a much longer time frame than anticipated, and this is reflected in the assessment of Implementation and management as being moderately unsatisfactory.

**The evaluation rating for project's performance in implementation and management is "Moderately Unsatisfactory"**

### 3.6.3 Stakeholder participation, cooperation and partnerships

148. The project was conceived as a cooperative venture between the Government of Kiribati (MELAD), UNEP/GEF, the two main NGO stakeholders, Conservation International and the New England Aquarium and the PIPA Trust Board (once it was established). Its success was highly dependent on the trust and goodwill between these stakeholders with communication and engagement strategies being vitally important elements of all project activities. The primary mechanism for ensuring effective engagement, communication between these stakeholders was the Project Management Group which provided a logical forum for ensuring the alignment of the various stakeholder agendas and smooth, effective project implementation. The PMG was also expected to work closely with the PIPA Management Committee which included representation of multiple government agencies with an interest in PIPA although it appears from comments by the project team that this relationship was largely undeveloped.
149. Throughout the evaluation the attention of the evaluator was drawn to the critically important role played by the NGO partners, New England Aquarium and Conservation International and their representatives, Ms Regen Milani and Ms Sue Taei. These partner organisations and the individuals mentioned have been consistently praised for their commitment to the success of PIPA including their financial, technical and personal commitments to the PIPA project which exceeded the norms of reasonable participation to help make the project work. Another partner, NOAA also participated actively by providing training in the form of a protected area management courses for the i-Kiribati in MELAD with a focus on upskilling the PIO staff which represented a considerable in-kind contribution from NOAA.
150. Over the course of the project it is apparent that for a variety of reasons, communications and coordination deteriorated within the PMG leading to frustration and a degree of some tension between the members. For example, it was reported to the evaluator that there was a critical period of approximately nine months when the PIO failed to respond to repeated communications including meeting its reporting requirements making it very difficult to resolve any management issues. This unfortunate and very complex situation was recognised as early as the MTR and still persisted at the time of this evaluation. The MTR offered a series of recommendations aimed at improving the situation but it is apparent from TE interviews that these were not acted upon. These have been further exacerbated by misunderstandings over the conditions determining the provision of cash co-financing by the NGO partners. At termination, the tensions and misunderstandings between key stakeholders were still evident to the evaluator. Needless to say, this does not auger well for the long term future of PIPA which has been built by the collective efforts of many stakeholders including individuals and organisations whose on-going support and commitment will be needed in the potentially difficult period beyond 2020 when the current funding commitments cease. It is incumbent on the PIPA stakeholders to work together to resolve the issues which have led to this situation and they might do well to revisit the recommendations of the MTR to assist this process.
151. At another level, the project was able to link and cooperate with a related GEFPAS project in Kiribati, the Prevention, control and management of alien invasive species in the Pacific (IAS) project which was focussed on strengthening IAS management capacity in Kiribati, including the development of a national bio-security programme. This latter activity included intra-island biosecurity which had as one focus, the prevention of rat introductions to PIPA via shipping services to Kanton. Another GEFPAS project partnership which had the potential to assist with the establishment and development of the PIPA Trust Fund was the Micronesia Challenge project which supported the development of the similarly focussed Micronesia Trust Fund. This potentially helpful learning and knowledge sharing linkage was not developed and is the subject of Recommendation 2 of this report. Commendably, a formal partnership with the Papahānaumokuākea National Monument in Hawaii for co-operative exchanges and recognition as sister MPA's was established but it is not apparent that the partnership has had any benefit in terms of capacity building activity. A range of other potential partnerships where learning and sharing opportunities might have helped the capacity building focus of the project were either not considered or were not developed. These included linkages with the Micronesia Conservation Trust, other large MPA's such as the, the Great Barrier Reef in Australia and



closer ties and training with the NZ Department of Conservation (invasive species management), although the latter did provide support to the island restoration activities early in the project.

152. The sheer remoteness and uninhabited status of the PIPA atolls (with the exception of the approximately 30 government service staff on Kanton) means that gender and human rights issues which are often associated with protected area management in populated areas, user rights, ownership, equality of participation in decision making, economic and social empowerment) are not relevant in the PIPA context. The possible exception is the impact on the families of the Kanton Conservation Officers who are expected to serve long spells away from home. The Project Manager is sensitive to this issue and has demonstrated willingness to act if issues arise and this evaluation has included a recommendation aimed at addressing the issue.

153. Other stakeholders include the people of Tarawa who have been touched by the project through its outreach and education programme (see 3.6.4.below) and are generally supportive of the PIPA. Finally, the Distant Water Fishing fleets which have now been shut out of the PIPA EEZ zone thanks to the "no take" zone being extended are stakeholders with a commercial interest impacted by the project. These fishers appear to have accepted the restrictions and their effort has been redirected to other fishing zones within the vast waters of Kiribati or elsewhere in the Pacific.

**Evaluation rating for stakeholder participation, cooperation and partnerships is "Satisfactory"**

### 3.6.4 Communication and public awareness

154. Communication and public awareness activities were one of the stronger outputs of the project with the outreach programmes conducted by the Education, Media Outreach Officer being well received and clearly raising the PIPA profile and awareness within Kiribati. A wide range of activities were undertaken including visits to schools and tertiary/vocational institutions, road shows with specific PIPA orientated songs and visits to churches. These have been instrumental in creating a sense of pride in PIPA, particularly amongst younger people in Tarawa. An addition to the school curriculum was developed using PIPA materials and a newsletter is regularly produced. With the assistance of NEAq, the PIPA website was updated and expanded to include an updated range of PIPA technical publications. Internationally, the NGO partners supported the former President of Kiribati in his highly successful efforts to publicise the global benefits of PIPA and encourage other SIDS to adopt MPA's as a management tool for sustainable marine and coastal management. In this regard, the designation of PIPA as a UNESCO World Heritage site has also significantly raised national, regional and international interest and awareness in PIPA. Similarly, the NGO partners and the project supported the Trust Fund Director to attend fundraising and associated awareness events which have contributed to PIPA's international profile.

**The evaluation rating for project's performance in ensuring communication and public awareness is "Highly Satisfactory"**

### 3.6.5 Country ownership and driven-ness

155. The Government showed commitment to the establishment of the PIPA Management Committee, the PIPA Implementation Office and the PIPA Trust Fund. All of these will be critical institutions in ensuring the long term sustainability of PIPA as a national icon and World Heritage listed site and reflects a strong sense of national ownership and national government support. The co-operation between government agencies is evident in the 2013 multi- agency/multi-disciplinary Kanton mission which was a demonstration of the "whole of government " management approach which underpinned the project and is embodied in the PMC membership. However, based on comments during TE interviews, there is room to improve the integration and cooperation between the PIPA management institutions and other government agencies which have a stake in PIPA management. It has been suggested to the evaluator that this has been diluted rather than strengthened as the PIO has become more influential over the term of the project. If correct, this is of concern and is an issue that needs to be addressed by PIPA and MELAD leadership in the interests of strengthening co-operative management and broad government ownership in the future.

The evaluation rating for country ownership and driven-ness is “Satisfactory”

### 3.6.6 Financial planning and management

156. The project was approved with a total budget of \$2,663,100 comprising cash contributions of \$870,000 (32.7%) from GEF and \$1,019,600 (38.3%) from CI/NEAq. Addition in-kind support from Kiribati Government (\$357,500 13.4%), CI/NEAq (\$360,000 13.5%) and New Zealand Aid (\$56,000 2.1%) totalled \$773,500 (29.0%).

157. Estimated and actual costs as well as the expenditure ratio (actual/planned) of the project are summarized in Table 10 below. As one can observe from the table, the actual project costs to 31 December 2016 were approximately 14% less than the estimated cost at design. The project was under-spent in the Personnel Component (19%) due primarily to a significant (\$48,000) shortfall in spending on PIPA administration support. Similar significant under-expenditure occurred in the Sub Contract component where the actual spending amounted to only a 1/3rd of the original estimated budget. In contrast expenditure on the Education and Training component was nearly four and a half times the estimated cost with most of that funding being spent on PIPA Information and Awareness activities which is reflected in the successful outcomes of this work. The estimated Equipment and Premises component budget of \$147,200 was overspent by a third with the funding applied to the Kanton Field Station (\$152,261) being nearly twice the estimated \$80,000. This reflects the degree to which the high logistical costs of construction on Kanton were originally under-estimated and the failure of other government agencies to share costs as was originally envisaged would be the case. Even at the end of December 2016 and following a working mission to complete the Kanton Station earlier in the month, satellite connection for communications had still not been installed and further work is required on the nearly completed buildings. It is understood that a further request for a no cost project extension to allow the use of these remaining funds has been submitted to UNEP.

158. In summary, the GEF funding for project is under-spent by \$123,275 or approximately 14% although this would decrease to \$100,275 or 12% if the full \$23,000 budget for the MTR and TE evaluations was factored in. Over the course of the project, adjustments have been made to the budget estimates and funds re-allocated to accommodate unforeseen costs in critical components. As was noted in section 3.6.2 the recruitment of the PIPA Financial Officer in July 2015 marked a significant and much needed improvement in the project's financial management leading to tighter accounting and more accurate reconciliations without which the compilation of the figures in Table 10 would have been considerably more difficult.

**Table 10: Summary of project expenditures**

Component/ Sub-component/Output	Estimated cost at design	Actual cost	Expenditure ratio (actual/planned)
<b>Personnel</b>			
Project Personnel	240,000	212,987	0.89
Consultants	120,000	109,083	0.91
Admin Support	72,000	24,002	0.33
Travel	24,000	24,424	1.0
Personnel TOTAL	456,000	370,496	0.81
<b>Sub Contracts</b>			
C1.1.4 PIPA Surveillance/Enforcement	67,000	20,000	0.30
C1.2.2 PIPA Offshore Fisheries	45,000	9,855	0.22
C1.1.5 PIPA Tourism Development	40,000	24,997	0.62
Subcontracts TOTAL	152,000	54,852	0.36
<b>Education and Training</b>			

Group Training				
Project Management		3,000	1,252	0.42
C1.1.3 PIPA Information		6,000	47,889	7.98
PIPA Management Committee Meetings		6,000	17,422	2.90
Education and Training TOTAL		15,000	66,563	4.44
Equipment and Premises				
Expendable Tarawa/Kanton	Equipment	12,000	11,698	0.97
Non Expendable Equipment		35,200	25,071	0.71
Buildings- PIPA Tarawa		20,000	2,339	0.12
Buildings - PIPA Kanton		80,000	152,261	1.90
Equipment and Premises TOTAL		147,200	191,369	1.30
Miscellaneous				
Operation and Equip Maintenance		10,000	3,923	0.39
Reporting - Audits		4,800	419	0.09
PIPA Conservation Trust Fund Ops.		60,000	57,099	0.95
Inception - workshop		2,000	2,000	1.00
Evaluation - MTR		11,000	UNEP Direct Cost	
Evaluation - TE		12,000	UNEP Direct Cost	
Miscellaneous - TOTAL		99,800	63,441	0.64
PROJECT GRAND TOTAL		870,000	746,721	0.86
PIPA Implementation Office figures		(870,200)	(746,725)*	0.86

\*Difference due to rounding. Indicates unspent GEF funding of \$123,275 as at 31 December 2016 based on original Prodoc budget total of US\$ 870,000.

#### Project co-financing

159. In terms of project co-financing a total of US\$1,019,600 in cash was confirmed as being available from the NGO partners CI and NEAq of which US\$500,000 was donated by the Packard Foundation for application to the Atoll Restoration sub-component. This work was undertaken prior to the project's final approval official start date but the PMG agreed to include as a co-financing component as the work was programmed to commence after the original proposed start date. This decision was based on the understanding of all partners that the co-financing was negotiated and approved under the first version of the PIF which was subsequently cancelled through changes in GEF Secretariat policy. The cash co-financing represented 38.3% of the total budget (see additional comments below).

#### In-kind contributions

160. In addition to the cash contributions, a further US\$ 773,500 (29.0% of the budget) was committed as in kind co-financing by the Government of Kiribati (\$357,500) CI and NEAq (\$360,000) and NZ Aid (\$56,000). These commitments lifted the total co-financing (cash and in-kind) for the project to \$1,793,100 or 67.3% of the project budget. With respect to the in-kind contributions, the considerable amount of time contributed by UNEP Task Manager who provided critical project oversight, maintained dialogue with colleagues in UNEP CEP, provided on the job project



management training and facilitated the sourcing of experts and logistics needed for components such as atoll restoration, was not factored into project costs.

161. Accounting for co-financing (both cash and in-kind) can be difficult where there are several agencies and partner organisations involved and this has proved to be the case with the PIPA Project. Unfortunately, mis-communication and mis-understanding of the nature of the co-financing arrangements and associated accounting have led to a degree of tension between the PIPA Implementation Office/ MELAD and the NGO partners. This is largely due to the status of CI and NEAq as PIPA Project Co-Executing Partners which enabled these organisations to execute their co-financing obligations independently of the project and for which apparently inadequate accounting and verification has been shared with the PIO. This places PIO/MELAD in a difficult position as the Project Cooperation Agreement assigns responsibility of all financial accounting and reporting to MELAD as the Executing Agency. Without access to verifiable accounting of the co-financing contributions, it is unreasonable to expect PIO/MELAD to meet this requirement and accordingly, it should not be held responsible for any apparent short-fall in co-financing.
162. The situation has not been helped by the insistence of the PIO/MELAD that the co-financing agreement obligated these partners to contribute the total amount of their unaccounted cash commitment to the project, and the counter-claim by the NGO partners that no documentation has been produced to warrant additional payment, especially as it appears the co-financed activities and outputs have been satisfactorily completed without the need for the additional funding. However, the evaluator has also been advised that there was a reluctance by the NGO partners to commit large amounts of funding through the project financial system while it was largely under-spent and while there were questions over the timeliness and accuracy of the project accounting as was the case until early 2015.
163. The CI/NEAq cash co-financing figure of \$311,513 is from the GEF Financial Overview of PIPA Grant spreadsheet provided by the PIPA Finance Officer. The PIO compiled NEAq cash co-finance report of 31 December 2015 shows a total actual cash co-finance contribution from CI/NEAq of \$107,241 so it is assumed the remaining \$204,142 was contributed directly to PIPA Trust Fund (not through MELAD Accounts) resulting in an outstanding cash co-financing balance of \$708,087 (\$1,019,600 - \$311,513). However, to add to the confused picture relating to the accounting for co-financing the end of 2015 co-financing report submitted to the Kiribati Audit Office based on figures supplied by the NGO partners included notes rejecting a number of contributions claimed by CI/NEAq including \$490,000 for support to the Atoll restoration sub component which took place before formal approval of the project but was subsequently agreed by the PMG for inclusion as a co-finance contribution. As discussed above, these co-financing verification and reconciliation issues need to be resolved by the project partners in the interests of a mutually agreed and satisfactory termination of the project.

**Lesson 2** To avoid future misunderstanding and provide a sound foundation for effective project financial management and accounting it is important to address the subject of co-financing with all partners contributing funds or expertise to the project at the inception stage. A working session should be dedicated to the subject to ensure a common understanding of the nature of co-financing, how it is to be accounted for and practice in the use of the accounting/reporting systems established for that purpose. Furthermore, it is important that the process of accounting for co-financing be monitored throughout the project cycle and specifically during the annual Project Implementation Reviews and through the Mid Term Review process.

164. It is also deeply concerning that this and related events have led to tension in the relationships between the PIO/MELAD and CI and NEAq, given the high level of co-operation and support which has existed in the past. This partnership has been absolutely instrumental in establishing PIPA and bringing it to the stage it is now as a globally acclaimed MPA and World Heritage site. Experience in the Pacific region has shown that partnerships between government and international NGO's are one of the most consistent factors behind the long term sustainability of protected areas and the PIPA project has been a good example of the mutual benefits of such partnerships. It is to be hoped the parties can reconcile their differences and find a way to continue the mutually beneficial relationship they have enjoyed in the past.

**Recommendation 6.** It is strongly recommended that the PMG (which is representative of the partners concerned MELAD, PIO, CI and NEAq) agree to meet to try to resolve their differences and ensure the financial integrity of the project is resolved to their mutual satisfaction. Given UNEP's role as Implementing Agency it is suggested that an appropriate representative with project financial expertise attend the meeting to provide advice and guidance and that if considered helpful by all parties, an independent consultant be contracted to help facilitate a

**Table 11: Summary of project co-financing**

Co-financing Source	Amount (USD)	
	Planned	Actual
Cash		
Conservation International/New England Aquarium	1,019,600	
Cash Total	1,019,600	311,513
In Kind		
Government of Kiribati	357,500	383,500
CI/NEAq	360,000	382,465
NZAID	56,000	56,000*
IN Kind Total	773,500	821,965
Total Co-financing	1,793,100	1,133,478

\*This was an in-kind contribution supporting the costs of the Atoll restoration (rat eradication) work of Dr. R Pierce (logistics, bait etc.).

165. Overall the financial planning and management of the project was unsatisfactory with tardy financial reporting and inaccurate reconciliations in the early stages of the project. Frequently, disbursements could not be made because reporting was consistently late and or erroneous and this affected cash flow badly and outputs seriously. Much time was spent by the TM and the partner organisation CI especially trying to coach project staff. The problems were compounded with distance and poor options for communicating well. Staff turnover and a reluctance to accept advice and change practices despite face to face training in project management being provided by the UNEP TM on at least two occasions in Tarawa to try to redress this issue. The number of issues noted in the 2105 Audit preliminary and final reports and the confusion which remains around the verification and reporting of co-financing also contributed to this assessment. However, as noted above, the quality and accuracy of the project's financial management improved significantly with the appointment of the current Finance Officer in July 2015 and this assessment is not a reflection of the quality of his work subsequent to appointment. In terms of financial planning it is noted that some costs e.g. establishing the Kanton Field Office were significantly underestimated although this is understandable given the uncertainty surrounding the logistics of construction in such a remote location.

**The evaluation rating for project financial planning and management is "Unsatisfactory"**

### 3.6.7 Supervision, guidance and technical backstopping

166. The Project Management Group provided overall project supervision and guidance. Interviewees commended the contributions of the UNEP Task Manager who was based in Samoa and had many years of experience working with UNEP and GEF projects in the Pacific region. He was highly regarded for his efforts in providing training and guidance to the Project Manager and MELAD staff in the initial stages of the project. The Task Manager's efforts were supported by a strong co-operative relationship with the representatives of the NGO partners who supported the Task Manager by also

providing regular individual guidance and technical expertise to project management. Further valuable support was received from UNEP's Nairobi office, especially with financial reporting and budgetary matters. Despite this support, the project suffered from operational and financial reporting delays and on-going management issues and it is noted that the UNEP Task Manager was called on to provide level of intensive and direct support and supervision not usually required of a GEF project Executing Agency. His ability to do so was hampered by cost, difficulty of travel to Kiribati and his workload as the sole UNEP representative in the region for much of the project term.

**The evaluation rating for UNEP supervision and backstopping is “Satisfactory”**

### 3.6.8 Monitoring and evaluation

#### M&E design

167. The M&E was designed according to UNEP's standard monitoring and evaluation procedure. The ProDoc included a Full Monitoring and Evaluation plan with baseline conditions, mid and end of project targets and objectively verifiable indicators of achievements and means of verification. These matched the indicators used in the results framework which were measurable and relevant to the project outputs and outcomes. The M&E Plan was compiled with input from the key NGO partners, CI and NEAQ who worked with the UNEP Task Manager to revise the original Prodoc. The time frame to achieve the project objective and outputs was reasonable given it was tied to the PIPA 2010-2014 Management Plan but the number of project activities and the expected outcomes were in hindsight, overly ambitious for that time frame.

**The evaluation rating for M&E design is “Satisfactory”**

#### M&E plan implementation

168. Project Implementation Reviews (PIR's) undertaken for 2013, 2014 and 2015 and were made available to the evaluator. These were completed to a high standard with pertinent comments and assessments provided by the Task Manager. The 2015 PIR (1 July 2014 - 30 June 2015) was the last produced and rated many of the project outputs as satisfactory and some as highly satisfactory. Overall the 2015 PIR rated project implementation as being moderately satisfactory, which is in line with the rating of this evaluation. It should also be noted that the due to the recent extension request the project is still ongoing at the time of this evaluation. The MTR was undertaken in a timely manner and highlighted a number of areas relating to project implementation where improvement was needed together with recommendations for future action. Some of these were acted upon (e.g. formation of PMC sub-committees) but others relating to improved communications were not. Audit reports were produced which highlighted issues relating to financial management, procurement and co-financing (discussed in 3.6. above) all of which drew detailed management responses and modifications to the final audit findings. These were used to improve PIPA Implementation Office financial management. No action has been taken to complete the Tracking Tool for Biodiversity Projects.

**The evaluation rating for M&E plan implementation is “Satisfactory”**

## 4 CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS & LESSONS LEARNED

### 4.1 Conclusions

169. The evaluator concludes that the project did well in meeting its primary objective to advance the implementation of the PIPA Management Plan through enhancement of core PIPA operational capacity and progress on strategic outcomes while also helping build the operational capacity of the PIPA Trust Fund. This was particularly so in the context of the weak baseline protected area and project management capacity levels which existed at project outset and the delays which hindered project implementation, particularly in its early stages. Additionally, it has to be remembered that

the PIPA is a remote MPA of extraordinarily large size and is actively managed unlike other MPA's of this size which exist on "paper" only and don't have programmes for improvement, threat mitigation and monitoring and evaluation, or support from partnerships between Government, the UN/GEF, regional organisations and international NGO's.

170. Despite a number of implementation issues, project outcomes in terms of improved management capacity and effectiveness for PIPA, progress on atoll restoration, the outstanding expansion of the PIPA "no take" zone to include virtually the whole of the PIPA EEZ and the establishment of the "no take" zone over EEZ waters and the "reverse fishing license" concept as a tool to assist sustainable commercial fishing, together with the improved understanding of climate change vulnerability and climate change impacts and adaptation needs on PIPA were notable achievements.<sup>15</sup> They are examples of the project's important contribution to the implementation of the 2010-2014 PIPA Management Plan and to its future as a globally important "mega" marine protected area and World Heritage site.

171. A large measure of the success of the project in achieving these outcomes has been due to the strength of the partnership between the Government of Kiribati and the two NGO partners, New England Aquarium and Conservation International. Much of what has been achieved under the project has been a result of the cooperation between the Government and the NGO's who have provided valuable co-finance and perhaps more importantly, strong technical expertise and management support which has been strategically delivered by staff dedicated and committed to seeing PIPA succeed. While the project has improved the technical and human capacity for PIPA management the effective management of PIPA remains a complex task and there is an on-going need for external technical and protected area management expertise for the implementation of the 2015 - 2020 PIPA Management Plan and maintenance of World Heritage Site management standards. In this regard, it is of concern that the state of the previously strong co-operative relationship between the PIO /MELAD and the two key NGO partners CI and NEAq has seemingly deteriorated born out of differences of opinion on financial reporting and issues relating to their respective roles in PIPA Management Plan implementation. It is to be hoped these can be resolved, perhaps with UNEP support, as the partnership of these organisations with the Government has been of critical importance in establishing PIPA and achieving the project successes outlined above. The need to maintain the GoK, NEAq and CI partnership is reinforced by the regional experience with protected area establishment and management which strongly indicates that effective Government/ NGO / community partnerships are a critical factor in the sustainability of protected areas in the Pacific. The project's contribution to the establishment and early operations of the PIPA Trust Fund<sup>16</sup> as a sustainable financing mechanism for future PIPA management was very strategic and timely. It has provided the institutional foundation the Trust needs to build an appropriate endowment and secure the confidence of donors. However, much work still needs to be done to build on the project intervention particularly in relation to the increasingly urgent need to reach and if possible exceed, the current rather modest endowment target of USD 13.5 million. The window of opportunity provided by the Waite and Oceans Five funding must be fully utilised for this purpose if even basic levels of PIPA management are to be sustained, let alone have the Trust provide potential compensation to the Government for lost fishing revenue under the reverse fishing license.

172. Despite these achievements the project has suffered from persistent problems with aspects of project management and unfortunately, deteriorating working relationships between the key partners, PIO /MELAD and the two key NGO partners CI and NEAq. Slow recruitment and the poor timeliness and quality of project reporting hindered efficient and effective management and although improvements were evident later in the project term, significant delays had occurred by then.

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<sup>15</sup> These refer to the following outcomes in the project log frame: 1.2.2.1 No take zone for pelagic fishing implemented for not less than 25% additional of PIPA off shore area to Phase 1, 1.2.3.1 Incorporation of climate change scenarios in the design and ongoing management of PIPA, 1. 2.3.2 Pilot project to increase understanding of climate change adaptation for a large MPA.

<sup>16</sup> This refers to project outcome: 2.1.1 PIPA financing vehicle is operational for Phase 1 and developed and operational for Phase 2 by project end.

173. Overall, the PIPA project has proved to be a timely, significant and largely successful intervention in the on-going development of PIPA and has contributed to the establishment of the institutional, operational and financing foundations on which its future success can be built.

**Table 12: Summary of Evaluation criteria, assessment and ratings**

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Ref.	Rating
A. Strategic relevance	The project responded to the need to support the management of second largest MPA in the world incorporating internationally important biodiversity and unique oceanic ecosystems. The project was highly consistent with UN Environment MTS 2010-2013 and GEFPAS (GEF4) strategic objectives and represents a contribution by the Government of Kiribati to the implementation of the CBD Island Biodiversity Programme of Work (IBPOW). It supports regional policies and frameworks such as the Action Strategy for Nature Conservation and Protected Areas and the Framework for Nature Conservation and Protected Areas 2015-2020 which incorporates Aichi Targets for biodiversity and the Framework for Implementation of Pacific Oceanscape.	3.1	HS
B. Achievement of outputs	At the time of this evaluation the project most outputs had been addressed but not all outputs had been fully completed. The evaluation assessed that the extensions granted the project had assisted in the completion of outputs.	3.2	MS
C. Effectiveness: Attainment of objectives and planned results	The project's intended objective of advancing the implementation of the PIPA Management Plan 2010-2014 with a twin focus on core operational capacity and strategic outcomes and the design and operationalization of the PIPA Trust Fund was predominantly achieved. The project has strengthened the operational capacity of PIPA improved facilities and staffing and demonstrated progress with key management strategies. Similarly, the project has been responsible for the institutional improvement of the PIPA Trust Fund through funding of the Trust Fund offices and Executive Director.	3.3	S

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Ref.	Rating
1. Achievement of direct outcomes as defined in the reconstructed TOC	The RTOC identified outcomes that would advance its overall goal of "building capacity in Kiribati to more effectively manage a large protected area in the form of the PIPA (to World Heritage standards) and to create a sustainable financing system for such large sites that could be used as a model for application elsewhere". Key outcomes were the effective management of PIPA to World Heritage site standards and implementation of innovative conservation strategies and ii) the ongoing sustainable funding for PIPA management. In this regard the assessment acknowledges the improved PIPA management capacity but identifies the need for further strengthening and training if management standards are to be of a consistently high standard. The assessment notes the progress made with PIPA Trust and the adequate financial commitments to 2020 but expresses concern about the uncertainty of funding levels on the expiry of current commitments	3.3.1	MS
2. Likelihood of impact using RTOC approach	Using the RTOC methodology the evaluation led to an assessment that despite not all outcomes being achieved as planned and questions over long term financial sustainability, the project was likely to achieve impact of restoring, protecting and sustaining the natural and cultural heritage of the Phoenix Islands.	3.3.2	L
3. Achievement of formal project objectives as presented in the Project Document.	The project's intended objective of advancing the implementation of the PIPA Management Plan 2010-2014 with a twin focus on core operational capacity and strategic outcomes and the design and operationalization of the PIPA Trust Fund was predominantly achieved.	3.3.3	S
D. Sustainability of Outcomes			L
1. Socio-political sustainability	Despite the government apparently questioning the value of its investment in PIPA, the recent decision by government to expand the boundary of PIPA to include the previously excluded Winslow Reef as requested by the World Heritage Commission, suggests that the fundamental political commitment to PIPA remains intact. The project's support of the PIPA information and outreach programme in Tarawa and the outer islands has been instrumental in raising the national profile of PIPA and the PIPA Trust investment in education scholarships is aimed at helping to reinforce public support.	3.4.1	L

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Ref.	Rating
2. Financial resources	The evaluation notes that a US\$5 million endowment has been established to cover the cost of PIPA management and any potential compensation to the GoK for lost fishing revenue but this falls well short of the planned \$13.5 million to be raised during the project period. In addition the evaluation notes that another US\$1million per year for 5 years has been committed to 2020 by donors which will support PIPA management and associated research activities. However, the funding picture beyond 2020 is very uncertain as the current \$5 million endowment is unlikely to generate sufficient revenue to meet PIPA Trust obligations especially if compensation for lost fishing revenue is required under the Conservation Agreement.	3.4.2	ML
3. Institutional framework	The institutional framework supporting PIPA and the PIPA Trust Fund is strong and unlikely to be amended. Regulations are in place to support PIPA management activities such as permit processes for visitation to atolls and to maintain biosecurity. Laws governing illegal fishing in the "no take" zone are comprehensive and the zone is policed through patrols and by satellite positioning systems.	3.4.3	L
4. Environmental sustainability	The evaluation notes that some work towards successful atoll restoration (invasive species eradication, prevention and control) has been successful but more needs to be done and follow up assessments are required if environmental sustainability is to be enhanced. Similarly, the PIPA tolls and marine ecosystems are highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, particularly changes in sea temperature and sea levels. The project has assisted research aimed at better understanding and planning for the impacts of climate change events.	3.4.4	ML
5. Catalytic role and replication	The project has assisted in catalysing improved understanding and awareness within the broader Kiribati community of the international status and global importance of PIPA and the role it plays in the conservation of Kiribati biodiversity. The PIPA model has also influenced the establishment of the Cook Islands Marine Park/Marae Moana.	3.4.5	S
E. Efficiency	Cost-saving measures were implemented, sometimes out of necessity. Project activities and outputs were carefully selected to build upon and support initial foundational work.	3.5	MU



Criterion	Summary Assessment	Ref.	Rating
	However, delays in implementation resulted in several extensions.		
F. Factors affecting project performance			
1. Preparation and readiness		3.6.1	U
2. Project implementation and management		3.6.2	MU
3. Stakeholders participation, cooperation and partnerships		3.6.3	S
4. Communication and public awareness		3.6.4	HS
5. Country ownership and driven-ness		3.6.5	S
6. Financial planning and management		3.6.6	U
7. Supervision, guidance and technical backstopping		3.6.7	S
8. Monitoring and evaluation		3.6.8	MS
i. M&E design		3.6.8	S
ii. M&E plan implementation		3.6.8	S
Overall project rating			MS

## 4.2 Recommendations

174. The following is a presentation of the main recommendations that have been generated from the evaluation findings:

Context:

The 8 atolls within the PIPA are known to harbour some of the most important sea bird breeding sites in the world and certainly in the tropical Pacific. Their protection is central to the vision and purpose of PIPA which enjoys World Heritage status based largely on its biodiversity and the pristine nature of its ecosystems. The presence of rats and other invasive alien species including rabbits poses a major threat not only to the seabird breeding colony but also to other native fauna and flora. The project has supported the successful eradication of rats from three of the four atolls treated but there remains an urgent need to achieve similar results on the remaining five atolls in order to improve their ecological stability (section 3.2.1)

Recommendation #1

This evaluation strongly recommends that the PIPA Implementation Office seek the assistance of the SPREP Invasive Alien Species programme to implement a plan for the completion of the eradication of rats and other mammalian invasive species on Enderby (where the initial eradication project was not deemed successful) and the four remaining untreated atolls (Manra, Orona, Nukumaroro and Kanton). Further, that given the national and international importance of securing the ecological restoration of these atolls, the Government of Kiribati, the PIPA Trust and the Oceans 5 and Waite Foundations and Islands Conservation (an





<p>Recommendation 3</p> <p>Responsibility:</p> <p>Time Frame:</p>	<p>In view of the need to continue to strengthen the PIPA and Kiribati protected area management capacity generally, it is recommended that the Government of Kiribati, working with SPREP and the World Heritage Centre undertake a further capacity needs assessment as a basis for implementing a professional development programme for PIPA and MELAD protected area management staff. The development of the programme in cooperation with SPREP and the World Heritage Centre will maximise options to link staff with other Pacific regional protected area training initiatives such those supported by BIOPAMA, and training activities associated with GEF projects such as the GEF 5 Ridges to Reef Programme and the GEF 6 IAS Phase 2 project. Additional international funding and training opportunities available through the World Heritage Centre must also be assessed for inclusion in the implementation programme. In addition, the Government of Kiribati is strongly encouraged to ensure that capacity development components identified in the needs assessment are built into and funded in all future Kiribati GEF biodiversity conservation projects.</p> <p>Government of Kiribati working with SPREP and the World Heritage Centre.</p> <p>Needs Assessment and implementation programme developed by the end of 2017 for implementation in 2015 - 2020 PIPA Management Plan period.</p>
<p>Context:</p>	<p>In most remote protected area management situations as is the case with the PIPA, a two person field management team would be considered inadequate for management purposes. Kanton Atoll which is 1,700 Km from Tarawa requires the staff to live in a very small community for long periods of time. This situation has attendant risks including accident or personal issues which could require the evacuation of one (or both) of the conservation officers. As a minimum, a third conservation officer on standby in Tarawa is necessary to help alleviate these potential problem of inadequate staffing in the field. Furthermore the high cost of evacuation warrants an annual budget provision for emergency evacuation and the re-location of replacement staff. s (3.3.1). It is also noted that MELAD Department of Conservation and Environment staff are engaged with protected area management on Kiritimati (Christmas) island (the Wildlife Conservation Unit) and there exists obvious potential to strengthen the staff resources of both PIPA and Kiritimati through integration and rotation through the two locations. In addition to improving overall capacity this would lead to improved capabilities through skill sharing, peer learning, broadened experience, better back up and preparedness and a sense of broader "ownership" and support for PIPA.</p>
<p>Recommendation 4:</p> <p>Responsibility:</p> <p>Timing:</p>	<p>In view of the remoteness of Kanton atoll and the potential for accident and emergency situations to impact on the PIPA field management presence, should one or both officers be forced to return to Tarawa, it is recommended the GoK together with the PIPA Trust Fund provide the funding needed to bolster the Kanton field staff by at least one further conservation officer and that annual budget provision is made to cover the cost of an emergency evacuation and the re-location of replacement staff. Further it is recommended that the Government of Kiribati strongly consider the integration of PIPA and Kirrimati Island field staff based on the potential for improved staff capacity and management flexibility through planned rotation and rostering of the integrated staff group and the potential for improved staff capability through skill sharing and other peer learning experiences.</p> <p>Government of Kiribati (MELAD/PIO) with PIPA Trust Fund</p> <p>2017/2018.</p>

<p>Context:</p> <p>Recommendation 5.</p> <p>Responsibility:</p> <p>Timing:</p>	<p>In the Pacific island context government funding can be the most reliable and sustainable source of revenue available for conservation management and is often a marker for financial sustainability for protected areas. In the case of PIPA, if ongoing donor support is not available and the endowment is insufficient to cover costs, the GoK would be the logical source of funding to continue operations. In this regard it would be encouraging to all PIPA stakeholders if the government was to formally endorse the 2015 - 2020 PIPA Management Plan and in doing so, indicate its willingness to commit future GEF funding to its implementation. This would both strengthen the overall perception of national ownership of this globally important MPA and serve to help ensure the continuity and sustainability of the PIPA management. Additionally, to further the potential sustainability of PIPA and the PIPA Trust Fund, the government could consider applying future GEF funding to the capitalisation of the PIPA Trust in a similar manner to that which has been achieved by the member countries of the MCT.</p> <p>It is recommended that the Government of Kiribati formally adopt or endorse at Executive level, the 2015 - 2020 PIPA Management Plan. In doing so, it is further recommended the Government indicate a commitment to allocate future GEF funding towards its implementation including giving consideration to negotiating the allocation of GEF funds towards the further capitalisation of the PIPA Trust Fund and related activities under the "Bring PIPA Home" campaign.</p> <p>Government of Kiribati/MELAD and PIPA Trust Fund 2017 - 2020</p>
<p>Context:</p> <p>Recommendation 6.</p> <p>Responsibility:</p>	<p>Accounting for co-financing (both cash and in-kind) can be difficult where there are several agencies and partner organisations involved and this has proved to be the case with the PIPA Project. Unfortunately, mis-communication and misunderstanding of the nature of the co-financing arrangements and associated accounting and project management issues the issue of co-financing has been the catalyst leading to a degree of tension between the PIPA Implementation Office/the Ministry of Environment, Lands &amp; Agricultural Development (MELAD) and the international NGO partners. (3.6.6.) Given the previously strong partnership and working relationship between the Government of Kiribati and these NGO partners, and because disputes of this nature can also have undesirable consequences in terms of the long term future and sustainability of a project it is important to try to resolve these issues. This is particularly so in the Pacific where history shows that partnerships between diverse stakeholders e.g. Government agencies, NGO's, research institutions and communities are often at the heart of successful (sustainable) protected area conservation projects.</p> <p>It is recommended that the Project Management Group (which is representative of the partners concerned MELAD, PIPA Implementation Office (PIO), Conservation International (CI) and New England Aquarium (NEAq) agree to meet to try to resolve their differences in the interests ensuring the financial integrity of the project is resolved to their mutual satisfaction. Given UN Environment's role as Implementing Agency, it is suggested that an appropriate UN Environment representative with project financial expertise also attend the meeting to provide advice and guidance and that if considered appropriate by all parties, an independent consultant be contracted to help facilitate a mutually satisfactory outcome. It is suggested the meeting be convened either in Nadi Fiji or at SPREP in Apia to reduce travel costs.</p>

Timing:	MELAD/PIO and the project's international NGO partners. By the end of 2017
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### 4.3 Lessons Learned

175. The following is a summary of the main lessons that have been learned from some of the project's successes as well challenges:

Context:	The desire of the Government of Kiribati to execute the PIPA project was commendable as it provided an opportunity to further the development of project management skills within the relevant government agency. However, there is a risk that inexperience and/ or insufficient capacity can lead to delays in project implementation and the need for intensive training, supervision and guidance which should be factored into the project at Inception.(S3.6.1)
Lesson # 1:	Where a GEF project is to be executed by a national agency, both the Implementing Agency (IA) and the Executing Agency (EA) need to undertake an honest and realistic assessment of the project administration needs, available capacity and experience of the EA to meet UN Environment/GEF reporting and administrative requirements and standards. Where this appraisal indicates capacity shortfalls, consideration should be given to hiring an external project manager for up to 12 months of the initial year of implementation to assist with initial systems setup and training and ensure the project gets off to a strong start.
Application:	Prior to the Inception Phase during negotiation of the Project Cooperative Agreement.

Context:	Accounting for co-financing (both cash and in-kind) can be difficult where there are several agencies and partner organisations involved and as with many other Pacific GEF projects, this has proved to be the case with the PIPA Project. Unfortunately, mis-communication and mis-understanding of the nature of the co-financing arrangements and associated accounting can lead to tension between the implementing partners and stakeholders which can undermine project efficiency and effectiveness. Because disputes of this nature can also affect previously strong working partnerships, they may have undesirable consequences in terms of the long term future and sustainability of a project. This is particularly so in the Pacific where long term partnerships between diverse stakeholders e.g. Government agencies, NGO's, research institutions and communities are often at the heart of successful (sustainable) protected area conservation projects.
Lesson # 2	To avoid future misunderstanding and provide a sound foundation for effective project financial management and accounting it is important to address the subject of co-financing at the project inception stage with all the partners who are contributing funds or expertise to the project. A working session should be dedicated to the subject to ensure a common understanding of the nature of co-financing, how it is to be accounted for and practice in the use of the accounting/reporting systems established for that purpose. Furthermore, it is important that the process of accounting for co-financing be monitored closely by the IA throughout the project cycle and specifically during the annual Project Implementation Reviews and through the Mid Term Review process.

Application

At the Inception meeting, during annual PIR and through the MTR.

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## ANNEX I. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE EVALUATION

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### TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE EVALUATION

#### Objective and Scope of the Evaluation

41. In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy<sup>17</sup> and the UNEP Programme Manual<sup>18</sup>, the Terminal Evaluation is undertaken at completion of the project to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The evaluation has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote operational improvement, learning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP and the Government of Kiribati, Ministry of Environment, Lands and Agricultural Development (MELAD) as the Executing Agency (EA) for the project, with co-executors including Conservation International (CI) and the New England Aquarium (NEAq). Therefore, the evaluation will identify lessons of operational relevance for future project formulation and implementation.

42. It will focus on the following sets of **key questions**, based on the project's intended outcomes, which may be expanded by the consultants as deemed appropriate:

- (a) How and to what extent did the Phoenix project succeed in developing and implementing the PIPA Management Plan (2010-2014)? To what extent this is leading to the strengthening of core management capacities, achieving of strategic outcomes and development of conservation trust for the government of Kiribati? Does PIPA Management Plan have allocated sufficient resources to support its future implementation?
- (b) To what extent and how the financial systems and policies made a difference in Micronesia by providing better management funding capacities and increasing resources in FSM, Palau and RMI? To what extent these systems were used as a management and planning tool?
- (c) How and to what extent did the projects built national capacities on strategic planning, national planning, decision-making and international understanding on biodiversity protection and climate change? To what extent did the project increase the capacity for monitoring and evaluation? Are the current M&E systems in place able to ensure integrity and accountability?
- (d) Does the government of Kiribati has sufficient technical and human capacities available and for longer term to support the operationalization of the PIPA Management Plan? To what extent the PIPA Management Plan model could be used as a model for application elsewhere?
- (e) To what extent has the project ensured that PIPA Plan and decision-making process were based on effective and transparent processes? Has PIPA Management Plan delivered on time and in budget all intended outputs and objectives?
- (f) To what extent did the delay in implementation affected the delivery of the projects' outcomes?

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<sup>17</sup> <http://www.unep.org/eou/StandardsPolicyandPractices/UNEPEvaluationPolicy/tabid/3050/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

<sup>18</sup> [http://www.unep.org/QAS/Documents/UNEP\\_Programme\\_Manual\\_May\\_2013.pdf](http://www.unep.org/QAS/Documents/UNEP_Programme_Manual_May_2013.pdf)

- (g) Has the project helped identify a successful method(s) of planning for and facilitating Integrated Ecosystem Management (or similar) which may serve as useful models for further GEF funded projects (or other sources of funding).

## Overall Approach and Methods

43. The Terminal Evaluation of the Project will be conducted by independent consultants under the overall responsibility and management of the UNEP Evaluation Office in consultation with the UNEP Task Manager and the Sub-programme Coordinators of the Ecosystem Management Sub-Programme.

44. It will be an in-depth evaluation using a participatory approach whereby key stakeholders are kept informed and consulted throughout the evaluation process. Both quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods will be used to determine project achievements against the expected outputs, outcomes and impacts. It is highly recommended that the consultant(s) maintains close communication with the project team and promotes information exchange throughout the evaluation implementation phase in order to increase their (and other stakeholder) ownership of the evaluation findings.

45. The findings of the evaluation will be based on the following:

(a) **A desk review of:**

Relevant background documentation, inter alia;

- Relevant background documentation, inter alia UNEP and GEF-4 policies, strategies and programmes pertaining to biodiversity at the time of the project's approval;
- Documentation related to project outputs;
- Relevant material published, e.g. in journals and books

Project design documents (including minutes of the project design review meeting at approval);  
Annual Work Plans and Budgets or equivalent, revisions to the project (Project Document Supplement), the logical framework and its budget;

Project reports such as six-monthly progress and financial reports, progress reports from collaborating partners, meeting minutes, relevant correspondence etc.;

Project documents, monitoring reports (such as progress and financial reports to UNEP and GEF annual Project Implementation Review reports.

Notes from the Steering Group meetings.

Other project-related material produced by the project staff or partners.

Relevant material published on the project web-site.

Project sustainability plan

PAN legislation

The MPA management effectiveness tool

Sustainable finance plans at regional and national levels

Regional communication strategy

Project outputs:

*Phoenix Project:*

- PIPA core operation- increased management effectiveness for PIPA and for protected areas more widely in Kiribati.
- PIPA Financing Vehicle is operational for Phase I and developed and operational for Phase 2 by project end.
- Project integrity and accountability for deliverables is maintained and UNEP standards of transparency, accountability and success metrics are objectively assessed.
- Effective PIPA Project Management established.

MTR of the projects

Evaluations/reviews of similar projects

(b) **Interviews (individual or in group) with:**

UNEP Task Manager

Project management team

UNEP Fund Management Officer

Project partners, including:

*Phoenix Project*



- Key representatives from the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Agricultural Development (MELAD);
- Project Management Group;
- Conservation International (CI);
- New England Aquarium (NEAq);
- Representatives from NGOs regional and international, including local communities to the extent possible

#### *Micronesia Challenge*

Micronesia Challenge Regional Coordination Office; Micronesia Conservation Trust Fund; Conservation International, The Nature Conservancy, Government of the Federated States of Micronesia, Government of Republic of Marshall Islands, Government of Republic of Palau. Communities of Palau, FSM and RMI, Government Agencies & NGOs, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Conservation International (CI), Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and Global Island Partnership (GLISPA), Country GEF operational focal points.

Relevant resource persons;

**Field visits:** field visits to meet with key national partners and projects' beneficiaries and to visit projects' sites. Meetings/workshop with key stakeholders, local communities and partners also are recommended.

**Other data collection tools:** information-gathering participatory methods to engage all stakeholders involved in the Project such as interviews, questionnaires face to face, by phone or skype, focus groups discussions with key stakeholders, main beneficiaries including participating countries and international bodies. Desk review analysis, etc.

#### Key Evaluation principles

46. Evaluation findings and judgements should be based on **sound evidence and analysis**, clearly documented in the evaluation report. Information will be triangulated (i.e. verified from different sources) to the extent possible, and when verification was not possible, the single source will be mentioned. Analysis leading to evaluative judgements should always be clearly spelled out.

47. The evaluation will assess the project with respect to **a minimum set of evaluation criteria** grouped in six categories: (1) Strategic Relevance; (2) Attainment of objectives and planned result, which comprises the assessment of outputs achieved, effectiveness and likelihood of impact; (3) Sustainability and replication; (4) Efficiency; (5) Factors and processes affecting project performance, including preparation and readiness, implementation and management, stakeholder participation and public awareness, country ownership and driven-ness, financial planning and management, UNEP supervision and backstopping, and project monitoring and evaluation; and (6) Complementarity with the UNEP strategies and programmes. The evaluation consultants can propose other evaluation criteria as deemed appropriate.

**48. Ratings.** All evaluation criteria will be rated on a six-point scale. However, complementarity of the project with the UNEP strategies and programmes is not rated. Annex 3 provides guidance on how the different criteria should be rated and how ratings should be aggregated for the different evaluation criterion categories.

49. In attempting to attribute any outcomes and impacts to the project intervention, the evaluators should consider the difference between *what has happened with, and what would have happened without, the project*. This implies that there should be consideration of the baseline conditions and trends in relation to the intended project outcomes and impacts. It also means that there should be plausible evidence to attribute such outcomes and impacts to the actions of the project. Sometimes, adequate information on baseline conditions and trends is lacking. In such cases this should be clearly highlighted by the evaluators, along with any simplifying assumptions that were taken to enable the evaluator to make informed judgements about project performance.

50. As this is a terminal evaluation and a follow-up project is likely [or similar interventions are envisaged for the future], particular attention should be given to learning from the experience. Therefore, the "Why?" question should be at front of the consultants' minds all through the evaluation exercise. This

means that the consultants need to go beyond the assessment of “*what*” the project performance was, and make a serious effort to provide a deeper understanding of “*why*” the performance was as it was, i.e. of processes affecting attainment of project results (criteria under category F – see below). This should provide the basis for the lessons that can be drawn from the project. In fact, the usefulness of the evaluation will be determined to a large extent by the capacity of the consultants to explain “*why things happened*” as they happened and are likely to evolve in this or that direction, which goes well beyond the mere review of “*where things stand*” at the time of evaluation.

51. A key aim of the evaluation is to encourage reflection and learning by UNEP staff and key project stakeholders. The consultant should consider how reflection and learning can be promoted, both through the evaluation process and in the communication of evaluation findings and key lessons.

Communicating evaluation results. Once the consultant(s) has obtained evaluation findings, lessons and results, the Evaluation Office will share the findings and lessons with the key stakeholders. Evaluation results should be communicated to the key stakeholders in a brief and concise manner that encapsulates the evaluation exercise in its entirety. There may, however, be several intended audiences, each with different interests and preferences regarding the report. The Evaluation Manager will plan with the consultant(s) which audiences to target and the easiest and clearest way to communicate the key evaluation findings and lessons to them. This may include some or all of the following; a webinar, conference calls with relevant stakeholders, the preparation of an evaluation brief or interactive presentation.

#### 4. Evaluation criteria

##### Strategic relevance

53. The evaluation will assess, in retrospect, whether the project’s objectives and implementation strategies were consistent with global, regional and national environmental issues and needs.

54. The evaluation will assess whether the project was in-line with the GEF Biodiversity focal area’s strategic priorities and operational programme(s).

55. The evaluation will also assess the project’s relevance in relation to UNEP’s mandate and its alignment with UNEP’s policies and strategies at the time of project approval. UNEP’s Medium Term Strategy (MTS) is a document that guides UNEP’s programme planning over a four-year period. It identifies UNEP’s thematic priorities, known as Subprogrammes (SP), and sets out the desired outcomes [known as Expected Accomplishments (EAs)] of the SubProgrammes. The evaluation will assess whether the project makes a tangible/plausible contribution to any of the EAs specified in the MTS 2010-2013. The magnitude and extent of any contributions and the causal linkages should be fully described.

- 56. The evaluation should assess the project’s alignment / compliance with UNEP’s policies and strategies. The evaluation should provide a brief narrative of the following:

*Alignment with the Bali Strategic Plan (BSP)*<sup>19</sup>. The outcomes and achievements of the project should be briefly discussed in relation to the objectives of the UNEP BSP.

*Gender balance*. Ascertain to what extent project design, implementation and monitoring have taken into consideration: (i) possible gender inequalities in access to and the control over natural resources; (ii) specific vulnerabilities of women and children to environmental degradation or disasters; and (iii) the role of women in mitigating or adapting to environmental changes and engaging in environmental protection and rehabilitation. Are the project intended results contributing to the realization of international GE (Gender Equality) norms and agreements as reflected in the UNEP Gender Policy and Strategy, as well as to regional, national and local strategies to advance HR & GE?

*Human rights based approach (HRBA) and inclusion of indigenous peoples issues, needs and concerns*. Ascertain to what extent the project has applied the UN Common Understanding on HRBA.

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<sup>19</sup> <http://www.unep.org/GC/GC23/documents/GC23-6-add-1.pdf>

Ascertain if the project is in line with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, and pursued the concept of free, prior and informed consent.

*South-South Cooperation.* This is regarded as the exchange of resources, technology, and knowledge between developing countries. Briefly describe any aspects of the project that could be considered as examples of South-South Cooperation.

Based on an analysis of project stakeholders, the evaluation should assess the relevance of the project intervention to key stakeholder groups.

### Achievement of Outputs

The evaluation will assess, for each component, the project's success in producing the programmed outputs and milestones as presented in above, both in quantity and quality, as well as their usefulness and timeliness.

Briefly explain the reasons behind the success (or failure) of the project in producing its different outputs and meeting expected quality standards, cross-referencing as needed to more detailed explanations provided under Section F (which covers the processes affecting attainment of project results). Were key stakeholders appropriately involved in producing the programmed outputs?

### Effectiveness: Attainment of Objectives and Planned Results

The evaluation will assess the extent to which the project's objectives were effectively achieved or are expected to be achieved.

The **Theory of Change** (ToC) of a project depicts the causal pathways from project outputs (goods and services delivered by the project) through outcomes (changes resulting from the use made by key stakeholders of project outputs) towards impact (long term changes in environmental benefits and living conditions). The ToC will also depict any intermediate changes required between project outcomes and impact, called 'intermediate states'. The ToC further defines the external factors that influence change along the major pathways; i.e. factors that affect whether one result can lead to the next. These external factors are either drivers (when the project has a certain level of control) or assumptions (when the project has no control). The ToC also clearly identifies the main stakeholders involved in the change processes.

The evaluation will reconstruct the ToC of the project based on a review of project documentation and stakeholder interviews. The evaluator will be expected to discuss the reconstructed TOC with the stakeholders during evaluation missions and/or interviews in order to ascertain the causal pathways identified and the validity of impact drivers and assumptions described in the TOC. This exercise will also enable the consultant to address some of the key evaluation questions and make adjustments to the TOC as appropriate (the ToC of the intervention may have been modified / adapted from the original design during project implementation).

The assessment of effectiveness will be structured in three sub-sections:

- (a) Evaluation of the **achievement of outcomes as defined in the reconstructed ToC**. These are the first-level outcomes expected to be achieved as an immediate result of project outputs. For this project, the main question will be to what extent the project has contributed to their immediate outcomes for the Phoenix Islands and Micronesia Challenge Projects.

Additional questions:

- Did the projects enhanced as planned the capacities of stakeholders groups at all levels? If not, why, what were the limiting factors?
- To what extent were the projects able to reach out to the stakeholders identified in the design phase?
- To what extent the project management approach adopted was effective (please explain how/why)?
- To what extent has regional and national co-ordination been effective?

- (b) Assessment of the **likelihood of impact** using a Review of Outcomes to Impacts (ROtI) approach<sup>20</sup>. The evaluation will assess to what extent the project has to date contributed, and is likely in the future to further contribute, to [intermediate states], and the likelihood that those changes in turn to lead to positive changes in the natural resource base, benefits derived from the environment and human well-being.
- (c) Evaluation of the **achievement of the formal project overall objective, overall purpose, goals and component outcomes** using the project's own results statements as presented in the Project Document<sup>21</sup>. This sub-section will refer back where applicable to the preceding sub-sections (a) and (b) to avoid repetition in the report. To measure achievement, the evaluation will use as much as appropriate the indicators for achievement proposed in the Logical Framework (Logframe) of the project, adding other relevant indicators as appropriate. Briefly explain what factors affected the project's success in achieving its objectives, cross-referencing as needed to more detailed explanations provided under Section F. Most commonly, the overall objective is a higher level result to which the project is intended to contribute. The section will describe the actual or likely **contribution** of the project to the objective.
- (d) The evaluation should, where possible, disaggregate outcomes and impacts for the key project stakeholders. It should also assess the extent to which HR and GE were integrated in the Theory of Change and results framework of the intervention and to what degree participating institutions/organizations changed their policies or practices thereby leading to the fulfilment of HR and GE principles (e.g. new services, greater responsiveness, resource re-allocation, etc.)

### Sustainability and replication

Sustainability is understood as the probability of continued long-term project-derived results and impacts after the external project funding and assistance ends. The evaluation will identify and assess the key conditions or factors that are likely to undermine or contribute to the persistence of benefits. Some of these factors might be direct results of the project while others will include contextual circumstances or developments that are not under control of the project but that may condition the sustainability of benefits. The evaluation should ascertain to what extent follow-up work has been initiated and how project results will be sustained and enhanced over time. The reconstructed ToC will assist in the evaluation of sustainability, as the drivers and assumptions required to achieve higher-level results are often similar to the factors affecting sustainability of these changes.

Four aspects of sustainability will be addressed:

- (a) *Socio-political sustainability*. Are there any social or political factors that may influence positively or negatively the sustenance of project results and progress towards impacts? Is the level of ownership by the main stakeholders sufficient to allow for the project results to be sustained? Are there sufficient government and other key stakeholder awareness, interests, commitment and incentives to execute efficiently and pursue the plans, strategies, mechanisms and systems prepared under the project? Did the project conduct 'succession planning' and implement this during the life of the project? Was capacity building conducted for key stakeholders?
- (b) *Financial resources*. To what extent are the continuation of project results and the eventual impact of the project dependent on financial resources? What is the likelihood that adequate financial resources<sup>22</sup> will be or will become available to use capacities built by the project? Are there any financial risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project results and onward progress towards impact?

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<sup>20</sup> Guidance material on Theory of Change and the ROtI approach is available from the Evaluation Office.

<sup>21</sup> Or any subsequent **formally approved** revision of the project document or logical framework.

<sup>22</sup> Those resources can be from multiple sources, such as the national budget, public and private sectors, development assistance etc.

- (c) *Institutional framework*. To what extent is the sustenance of the results and onward progress towards impact dependent on issues relating to institutional frameworks and governance? How robust are the institutional achievements such as governance structures and processes, policies, sub-regional agreements, legal and accountability frameworks etc. required to sustaining project results and to lead those to impact on human behaviour and environmental resources, goods or services?
- (d) *Environmental sustainability*. Are there any environmental factors, positive or negative, that can influence the future flow of project benefits? Are there any project outputs or higher level results that are likely to affect the environment, which, in turn, might affect sustainability of project benefits? Are there any foreseeable negative environmental impacts that may occur as the project results are being up-scaled? Did the intervention activities aim to promote (and did they promote) positive sustainable changes in attitudes, behaviours and power relations between the different stakeholders? To what extent has the integration of HR and GE led to an increase in the likelihood of sustainability of project results?

**Catalytic role and replication.** The *catalytic role* of UNEP interventions is embodied in their approach of supporting the creation of an enabling environment and of investing in pilot activities which are innovative and showing how new approaches can work. UNEP also aims to support activities that upscale new approaches to a national, regional or global level, with a view to achieve sustainable global environmental benefits. The evaluation will assess the catalytic role played by this project, namely to what extent the project has:

- (a) *catalyzed behavioural changes* in terms of use and application, by the relevant stakeholders, of capacities developed;
- (b) provided *incentives* (social, economic, market based, competencies etc.) to contribute to catalyzing changes in stakeholder behaviour;
- (c) contributed to *institutional changes*, for instance institutional uptake of project-demonstrated technologies, practices or management approaches;
- (d) contributed to *policy changes* (on paper and in implementation of policy);
- (e) contributed to sustained follow-on financing (*catalytic financing*) from Governments, private sector, donors etc.;
- (f) created opportunities for particular individuals or institutions ("*champions*") to catalyze change (without which the project would not have achieved all of its results).

*Replication* is defined as lessons and experiences coming out of the project that are replicated (experiences are repeated and lessons applied in different geographic areas) or scaled up (experiences are repeated and lessons applied in the same geographic area but on a much larger scale and funded by other sources). The evaluation will assess the approach adopted by the project to promote replication effects and determine to what extent actual replication has already occurred, or is likely to occur in the near future. What are the factors that may influence replication and scaling up of project experiences and lessons?

### Efficiency

The evaluation will assess the cost-effectiveness and timeliness of project execution. It will describe any cost- or time-saving measures put in place in attempting to bring the project as far as possible in achieving its results within its (severely constrained) secured budget and (extended) time. It will also analyse how delays, if any, have affected project execution, costs and effectiveness. Wherever possible, costs and time over results ratios of the project will be compared with that of other similar interventions. Evaluations/reviews of other large assessments may provide some comparative information on efficiency. The evaluation will also assess the extent to which HR and GE were allocated specific and adequate budget in relation to the results achieved.

The evaluation will give special attention to efforts by the project teams to make use of/build upon pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. to increase project efficiency. For instance, the evaluation will consider how well other information sources (on global and regional environmental status and trends, and on the costs and benefits of different policy options) accessible to the different target audiences have been tapped, and how the project ensured the complementarity of its process and products to other assessment processes and information sources, to avoid duplication of efforts? Was

there sufficient information about the assessment capacity of collaborating institutions and experts and about other capacity building initiatives, to limit and target training and technical support to what was really needed, avoiding duplication?

### Factors and processes affecting project performance

**Preparation and readiness.** This criterion focusses on the quality of project design and preparation. Were project stakeholders<sup>23</sup> adequately identified and were they sufficiently involved in project development and ground truthing e.g. of proposed timeframe and budget? Were the project's objectives and components clear, practicable and feasible within its timeframe? Were the capacities of executing agencies properly considered when the project was designed? Was the project document clear and realistic to enable effective and efficient implementation? Were the partnership arrangements properly identified and the roles and responsibilities negotiated prior to project implementation? Were counterpart resources (funding, staff, and facilities) and enabling legislation assured? Were adequate project management arrangements in place? Were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated in the project design? What factors influenced the quality-at-entry of the project design, choice of partners, allocation of financial resources etc.? Were any design weaknesses mentioned in the Project Review Committee minutes at the time of project approval adequately addressed?

**Project implementation and management.** This includes an analysis of implementation approaches used by the project, its management framework, the project's adaptation to changing conditions, the performance of the implementation arrangements and partnerships, relevance of changes in project design, and overall performance of project management. The evaluation will:

- (a) Ascertain to what extent the project implementation mechanisms outlined in the project document have been followed and were effective in delivering project milestones, outputs and outcomes. Were pertinent adaptations made to the approaches originally proposed?
- (b) Evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of project management and how well the management was able to adapt to changes during the life of the project.
- (c) Assess the role and performance of the teams and working groups established and the project execution arrangements at all levels.
- (d) Assess the extent to which project management responded to direction and guidance provided by the UNEP Task Manager and project steering bodies including Project Management Group, PIPA Management Committee (MC), etc.
- (e) Identify operational and political / institutional problems and constraints that influenced the effective implementation of the project, and how the project tried to overcome these problems.

**Stakeholder participation, cooperation and partnerships.** The Evaluation will assess the effectiveness of mechanisms for information sharing and cooperation with other UNEP projects and programmes, external stakeholders and partners. The term stakeholder should be considered in the broadest sense, encompassing both project partners and target users of project products such as; staff of the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Agricultural Development (MELAD); Project Management Group; Conservation International (CI), New England Aquarium (NEAq). Representatives from NGOs regional and international, including local communities. The TOC and stakeholder analysis should assist the evaluators in identifying the key stakeholders and their respective roles, capabilities and motivations in each step of the causal pathways from activities to achievement of outputs, outcomes and intermediate states towards impact. The assessment will look at three related and often overlapping processes: (1) information dissemination to and between stakeholders, (2) consultation with and between stakeholders, and (3) active engagement of stakeholders in project decision making and activities. The evaluation will specifically assess:

- (a) the approach(es) and mechanisms used to identify and engage stakeholders (within and outside UNEP) in project design and at critical stages of project implementation. What were the strengths and weaknesses of these approaches with respect to the project's objectives and the stakeholders' motivations and capacities?

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<sup>23</sup> Stakeholders are the individuals, groups, institutions, or other bodies that have an interest or 'stake' in the outcome of the project. The term also applies to those potentially adversely affected by the project.

- (b) How was the overall collaboration between different functional units of UNEP involved in the project? What coordination mechanisms were in place? Were the incentives for internal collaboration in UNEP adequate?
- (c) Was the level of involvement of the Regional, Liaison and Out-posted Offices in project design, planning, decision-making and implementation of activities appropriate?
- (d) Has the project made full use of opportunities for collaboration with other projects and programmes including opportunities not mentioned in the Project Document<sup>24</sup>? Have complementarities been sought, synergies been optimized and duplications avoided?
- (e) What was the achieved degree and effectiveness of collaboration and interactions between the various project partners and stakeholders during design and implementation of the project? This should be disaggregated for the main stakeholder groups identified in the inception report.
- (f) To what extent has the project been able to take up opportunities for joint activities, pooling of resources and mutual learning with other organizations and networks? In particular, how useful are partnership mechanisms and initiatives such as the following examples to build stronger coherence and collaboration between participating organisations?

#### *Phoenix Islands Project*

- Did the EA create opportunities for communication between the different countries involved (recalling that Kiribati is not included in the Micronesia Challenge) through the existing networks operated by the EAs of the other two projects (Secretariat for the Pacific Regional Environment Programme) and supporting NGO's of the PIPA project, especially Conservation International and New England Aquarium?
- Has PIPA reduced and reversed the trend in the rate of loss and degradation of natural habitat with island restoration programme? E.g. rabbits have been eradicated on Rawaki Island and rats have been eradicated on McKean Island and Birnie Island. This is particularly notable due to the leverage of private sources of funding (e.g., Packard Foundation), a partnership approach (e.g., with US and UK governments in a shared mission for 4 islands), and in its successful delivery in one of the most remote locations in the world.
- Did the project increase the partnerships for PIPA, including the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and the World Heritage Organization (WHO)?
- Did the project create a learning network in partnership with other MPAs (e.g., Hawai'i's Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument (PMNM) and Australia's Great Barrier Reef Marine Park) and World Heritage (WH) sites?
- Did the project develop significant partnerships to support PIPA including with NZ's Department of Conservation, USA's Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument, and USA's Coastguard for surveillance and enforcement?

#### *Micronesia Challenge Project*

- Did the project collaborate with GEF Pacific Alliance for Sustainability (GEF PAS) - as a flagship initiative of the GEF PAS and aligned with its objectives? (GEF MC Project supported a coordinated sub-regional program approach to environmental concerns in the Micronesia sub-region, while attracting substantial co-financing from other sources).
- Did the project collaborate with the Global Island Partnership (GLISPA)?
- To what extent was the project complementary to the efforts of the Guam and CNMI, through the Micronesia Challenge Coordination Office?
- To what extent the project collaborated with the Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI)?

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<sup>24</sup> [If the ProDoc mentions any opportunities for collaboration with other projects and programmes, present these here in the footnote]



- To what extent has the project contributed and complemented biodiversity strategies and action plans of MC states? E.g. National Environment Management Strategies (NEMS) and National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs)
  - To what extent the project collaborated with the Govt/MCT/TNC/CI/Local NGO?
- (g) How did the relationship between the project and the collaborating partners (institutions and individual experts) develop? Which benefits stemmed from their involvement for project performance, for UNEP and for the stakeholders and partners themselves? Do the results of the project (strategic programmes and plans, monitoring and management systems, sub-regional agreements etc.) promote participation of stakeholders, including users, in environmental decision making?

**Communication and public awareness.** The evaluation will assess the effectiveness of any public awareness activities that were undertaken during the course of implementation of the project to communicate the project's objective, progress, outcomes and lessons. This should be disaggregated for the main stakeholder groups identified in the inception report. Did the project identify and make use of existing communication channels and networks used by key stakeholders? Did the project provide feedback channels?

**Country ownership and driven-ness.** The evaluation will assess the degree and effectiveness of involvement of government / public sector agencies in the project, in particular those involved in project execution and those participating in e.g. Project Management Group etc:

- (a) To what extent have Governments assumed responsibility for the project and provided adequate support to project execution, including the degree of cooperation received from the various public institutions involved in the project?
- (b) How and how well did the project stimulate country ownership of project outputs and outcomes?
- (c) To what extent has the national and regional political and institutional framework been conducive to project performance?
- (d) How responsive were the national partners to PMC coordination and guidance, and to UNEP supervision?

**Financial planning and management.** Evaluation of financial planning requires assessment of the quality and effectiveness of financial planning and control of financial resources throughout the project's lifetime. The assessment will look at actual project costs by activities compared to budget (variances), financial management (including disbursement issues), and co-financing. The evaluation will:

- (a) Verify the application of proper standards (clarity, transparency, audit etc.) and timeliness of financial planning, management and reporting to ensure that sufficient and timely financial resources were available to the project and its partners;
- (b) Assess other administrative processes such as recruitment of staff, procurement of goods and services (including consultants), preparation and negotiation of cooperation agreements etc. to the extent that these might have influenced project performance;
- (c) Present the extent to which co-financing has materialized as expected at project approval (see Table 1). Report country co-financing to the project overall, and to support project activities at the national level in particular. The evaluation will provide a breakdown of final actual costs and co-financing for the different project components (see tables in Annex 4).
- (d) Describe the resources the project has leveraged since inception and indicate how these resources are contributing to the project's ultimate objective. Leveraged resources are additional resources—beyond those committed to the project itself at the time of approval—that are mobilized later as a direct result of the project. Leveraged resources can be financial or in-kind and they may be from other donors, NGO's, foundations, governments, communities or the private sector.

Analyse the effects on project performance of any irregularities in procurement, use of financial resources and human resource management, and the measures taken UNEP to prevent such irregularities in the future. Determine whether the measures taken were adequate.

**Supervision, guidance and technical backstopping.** The purpose of supervision is to verify the quality and timeliness of project execution in terms of finances, administration and achievement of outputs and outcomes, in order to identify and recommend ways to deal with problems which arise during project execution. Such problems may be related to project management but may also involve technical/institutional substantive issues in which UNEP has a major contribution to make.

The evaluators should assess the effectiveness of supervision, guidance and technical support provided by the different supervising/supporting bodies including:

- (a) The adequacy of project supervision plans, inputs and processes;
- (b) The realism and candour of project reporting and the emphasis given to outcome monitoring (results-based project management);
- (c) How well did the different guidance and backstopping bodies play their role and how well did the guidance and backstopping mechanisms work? What were the strengths in guidance and backstopping and what were the limiting factors?

**Monitoring and evaluation.** The evaluation will include an assessment of the quality, application and effectiveness of project monitoring and evaluation plans and tools, including an assessment of risk management based on the assumptions and risks identified in the project document. The evaluation will assess how information generated by the M&E system during project implementation was used to adapt and improve project execution, achievement of outcomes and ensuring sustainability. M&E is assessed on three levels:

- (a) *M&E Design.* The evaluators should use the following questions to help assess the M&E design aspects:
  - Arrangements for monitoring: Did the project have a sound M&E plan to monitor results and track progress towards achieving project objectives? Have the responsibilities for M&E activities been clearly defined? Were the data sources and data collection instruments appropriate? Was the time frame for various M&E activities specified? Was the frequency of various monitoring activities specified and adequate?
  - How well was the project logical framework (original and possible updates) designed as a planning and monitoring instrument?
  - SMART-ness of indicators: Are there specific indicators in the logframe for each of the project objectives? Are the indicators measurable, attainable (realistic) and relevant to the objectives? Are the indicators time-bound?
  - Adequacy of baseline information: To what extent has baseline information on performance indicators been collected and presented in a clear manner? Was the methodology for the baseline data collection explicit and reliable? For instance, was there adequate baseline information on pre-existing accessible information on global and regional environmental status and trends, and on the costs and benefits of different policy options for the different target audiences? Was there sufficient information about the assessment capacity of collaborating institutions and experts etc. to determine their training and technical support needs?
  - To what extent did the project engage key stakeholders in the design and implementation of monitoring? Which stakeholders (from groups identified in the inception report) were involved? If any stakeholders were excluded, what was the reason for this?
  - Was sufficient information collected on specific indicators to measure progress on HR and GE (including sex-disaggregated data)?
  - Arrangements for evaluation: Have specific targets been specified for project outputs? Has the desired level of achievement been specified for all indicators of objectives and outcomes? Were there adequate provisions in the legal instruments binding project partners to fully collaborate in evaluations?
  - Budgeting and funding for M&E activities: Determine whether support for M&E was budgeted adequately and was funded in a timely fashion during implementation.
- (b) *M&E Plan Implementation.* The evaluation will verify that:
  - the M&E system was operational and facilitated timely tracking of results and progress towards projects objectives throughout the project implementation period;

PIR reports were prepared (the realism of the Task Manager's assessments will be reviewed)  
Half-yearly Progress & Financial Reports were complete and accurate;  
the information provided by the M&E system was used during the project to improve project performance and to adapt to changing needs.

## The Consultant

For this evaluation, the evaluation will be conducted by a Consultant. Details about the specific roles and responsibilities of the Consultant are presented in Annex 1 of these TORs. The Consultant should have extensive evaluation experience, including of large, regional or global programmes and using a Theory of Change approach; and a broad understanding of large-scale, consultative assessment processes and factors influencing use of assessments and/or scientific research for decision-making. The Consultant will have a solid environmental education and professional experience; adequate monitoring and evaluation experience; and experience in managing partnerships, knowledge management and communication.

The Consultant will coordinate data collection and analysis, and the preparation of the main reports for the evaluation to ensure that all evaluation criteria and questions are adequately covered.

By undersigning the service contract with UNEP/UNON, the consultant certify that they have not been associated with the design and implementation of the project in any way which may jeopardize their independence and impartiality towards project achievements and project partner performance. In addition, they will not have any future interests (within six months after completion of the contract) with the project's executing or implementing units.

## Evaluation Deliverables and Review Procedures

The Consultant will prepare **two inception reports** (see Annex 2(a) of TORs for Inception Report outline) containing a thorough review of the project context, project design quality, a draft reconstructed Theory of Change of the project, the evaluation framework and a tentative evaluation schedule.

It is expected that a large portion of the desk review will be conducted during the inception phase. It will be important to acquire a good understanding of the project context, design and process at this stage. The review of design quality will cover the following aspects (see Annex 7 for the detailed project design assessment matrix):

- Strategic relevance of the project
- Preparation and readiness;
- Financial planning;
- M&E design;
- Complementarity with UNEP strategies and programmes;
- Sustainability considerations and measures planned to promote replication and up-scaling.

The inception reports will present a draft, desk-based reconstructed Theory of Change of the project. It is vital to reconstruct the ToC *before* most of the data collection (review of progress reports, in-depth interviews, surveys etc.) is done, because the ToC will define which direct outcomes, drivers and assumptions of the project need to be assessed and measured – based on which indicators – to allow adequate data collection for the evaluation of project effectiveness, likelihood of impact and sustainability.

The inception reports will also include a stakeholder analysis identifying key stakeholders, networks and channels of communication. This information should be gathered from the Project document and discussion with the project team. See annex

The evaluation framework will present in further detail the overall evaluation approach. It will specify for each evaluation question under the various criteria what the respective indicators and data sources will be. The evaluation framework should summarize the information available from project documentation against each of the main evaluation parameters. Any gaps in information should be identified and methods for additional data collection, verification and analysis should be specified. Evaluations/reviews of other large assessments can provide ideas about the most appropriate evaluation methods to be used.

Effective communication strategies help stakeholders understand the results and use the information for organisational learning and improvement. While the evaluation is expected to result in a comprehensive document, content is not always best shared in a long and detailed report; this is best presented in a

synthesised form using any of a variety of creative and innovative methods. The evaluator is encouraged to make use of multimedia formats in the gathering of information eg. video, photos, sound recordings. Together with the full report, the evaluator will be expected to produce a 2-page summary of key findings and lessons. A template for this has been provided in Annex 10 (under construction).

The inception reports will also present a tentative schedule for the overall evaluation process, including a draft programme for the country visit and tentative list of people/institutions to be interviewed.

The inception reports will be submitted for review and approval by the Evaluation Office before the any further data collection and analysis is undertaken.

[Optional] When data collection and analysis has almost been completed, the evaluation team will prepare a short **note on preliminary findings and recommendations** for discussion with the project team and the Evaluation Reference Group. The purpose of the note is to allow the evaluation team to receive guidance on the relevance and validity of the main findings emerging from the evaluation.

**The main evaluation reports** should be brief (no longer than 40 pages – excluding the executive summary and annexes), to the point and written in plain English. The report will follow the annotated Table of Contents outlined in Annex 2. It must explain the purpose of the evaluation, exactly what was evaluated and the methods used (with their limitations). The report will present evidence-based and balanced findings, consequent conclusions, lessons and recommendations, which will be cross-referenced to each other. The report should be presented in a way that makes the information accessible and comprehensible. Any dissident views in response to evaluation findings will be appended in footnote or annex as appropriate. To avoid repetitions in the report, the authors will use numbered paragraphs and make cross-references where possible.

**Review of the draft evaluation report.** The evaluation team will submit a zero draft report to the UNEP EO and revise the draft following the comments and suggestions made by the EO. Once a draft of adequate quality has been accepted, the EO will share this first draft report with the Task Manager, who will alert the EO in case the report would contain any blatant factual errors. The Evaluation Office will then forward the first draft report to the other project stakeholders, in particular: MELAD, PIPA Management Committee, PIPA director, PIPA core operation office, co-executing NGOs for their review and comments. Stakeholders may provide feedback on any errors of fact and may highlight the significance of such errors in any conclusions. It is also very important that stakeholders provide feedback on the proposed recommendations and lessons. Comments would be expected within two weeks after the draft report has been shared. Any comments or responses to the draft report will be sent to the UNEP EO for collation. The EO will provide the comments to the evaluation team for consideration in preparing the final draft report, along with its own views.

The evaluation team will submit the final draft report no later than 2 weeks after reception of stakeholder comments. The team will prepare a **response to comments**, listing those comments not or only partially accepted by them that could therefore not or only partially be accommodated in the final report. They will explain why those comments have not or only partially been accepted, providing evidence as required. This response to comments will be shared by the EO with the interested stakeholders to ensure full transparency.

**Submission of the final evaluation reports.** The final report shall be submitted by Email to the Head of the Evaluation Office. The Evaluation Office will finalize the report and share it with the interested Divisions and Sub-programme Coordinators in UNEP. The final evaluation report will be published on the UNEP Evaluation Office web-site [www.unep.org/eou](http://www.unep.org/eou).

As per usual practice, the UNEP EO will prepare a **quality assessment** of the zero draft and final draft report, which is a tool for providing structured feedback to the evaluation consultants. The quality of the report will be assessed and rated against the criteria specified in Annex 3.

The UNEP Evaluation Office will assess the ratings in the final evaluation report based on a careful review of the evidence collated by the evaluation consultants and the internal consistency of the report. Where there are differences of opinion between the evaluator and UNEP Evaluation Office on project ratings, both viewpoints will be clearly presented in the final report. The UNEP Evaluation Office ratings will be considered the final ratings for the project.

At the end of the evaluation process, the Evaluation Office will prepare a Recommendations Implementation Plan in the format of a table to be completed and updated at regular intervals by the Task

Project Manager. After reception of the Recommendations Implementation Plan, the Task Project Manager is expected to complete it and return it to the EO within one month. (S)he is expected to update the plan every six month until the end of the tracking period. As this is a Terminal Evaluation, the tracking period for implementation of recommendations will be 18 months, unless it is agreed to make this period shorter or longer as required for realistic implementation of all evaluation recommendations. Tracking points will be every six months after completion of the implementation plan.

#### Logistical arrangements

This Terminal Evaluation will be undertaken by one independent evaluation consultant contracted by the UNEP Evaluation Office. The consultant will work under the overall responsibility of the UNEP Evaluation Office and will consult with the EO on any procedural and methodological matters related to the evaluation. It is however, the consultant' individual responsibility to arrange for their travel, visa, obtain documentary evidence, plan meetings with stakeholders, organize online surveys, and any other logistical matters related to the assignment. The UNEP Task Manager and project team will, where possible, provide logistical support (introductions, meetings etc.) allowing the consultant to conduct the evaluation as efficiently and independently as possible.

## ANNEX II. RESPONSE TO STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS

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Comments were received only from the UN Environment project team. Project partners and stakeholders did not provide comments. All comments from the project team have been discussed and an agreement has been reached between the evaluator and the project team.

### ANNEX III. EVALUATION PROGRAM

This Terminal Evaluation commenced several months in advance of the extended termination date of the PIPA project (31 December 2016) to take advantage of the presence of the UNEP Task Manager in the Pacific Regional Office in Apia, Samoa in the closing months before his retirement from his position as UNEP's Pacific Regional Advisor in July 2016. It was also seen as prudent to commence the evaluation at this time to also take advantage of the opportunity to combine the travel schedule with that for the GEFPAS Invasive Alien Species project which was also being evaluated by the author. This meant early travel to Kiribati in September 2016.

Table 1 provides a chronology of the key milestones of the Evaluation. The schedule for the country visit and associated field inspection and interviews is outlined in the table below. It should be noted that during the country visit, the opportunity was also taken to undertake interviews with individuals more closely associated with the related GEFPAS Prevention, control and management of Invasive Alien Species in the Pacific (IAS) project which shared biosecurity components with the PIPA Project.

**Table 1. Outline of Country Visits and Activities**

Date (2016)	Country	Activities
27 July - 4 August	Samoa	Met with PIPA Task Manager and SPREP regional protected area management technical staff.
9 September	Auckland N.Z.	Interviewed Ms. Sue Taei, Conservation International Pacific Advisor.
16 - 19 September	Fiji - Kiribati- Brisbane	Conducted GEFPAS PIPA project interviews and inspections in Tarawa, Kiribati.

**Table 2. List of Personnel Interviewed or Contacted**

Country	Names	Position
<b>UNEP</b>	Dr. Greg Sherley	UNEP Task Manager and regional focal point In the Pacific (retired)
	Mohamed Sessay	Substitute UNEP task Manager for Dr. Sherley's projects
	Tiina Piironen	Evaluation Officer, UNEP Evaluation Office
	Dr. Nigel Varty	Dr. Nigel Varty, Independent consultant in charge of the evaluation of a related Pacific GEF/UNEP project
<b>SPREP</b>	Ms Easter Galuvao	GEFPAS IIB Project Manager
	Mr. David Moverley	GEFPAS IAs Project Manager
<b>Conservation International</b>	Ms Sue Taei (In Auckland)	Conservation International, Pacific Advisor, Auckland
	Dr. Greg Stone: Interviewed by Skype	Executive Vice President, Chief Ocean Scientist.
	Regan Milani: Contacted by Email and responded to Questionnaire	former NEAQ representative on PMG <b>Note:</b> Regan is no longer working with NEAQ.
<b>Tarawa, Kiribati</b>	Mr. Moannata Ientaake	Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Lands and Agricultural Development (MELAD)
	Mr. Tukabu Teroroko	PIPA Director and PIPA GREF Project Manager []
	Mr Bureti Williams	PIPA Finance Officer
	Mr. Betarim Rimon	PIPA Education, Outreach and Awareness Officer
	Mr. Tuake Teema	PIPA Kanton Coordinator
	Mr. Tiare Etei	PIPA Kanton Assistant Coordinator

	Mr. Nabubi Muemberk	Executive Director, PIPA Conservation Trust Fund
	Mr. Tata Testiaua	Grants Manager, PIPA Conservation Trust Fund
	Ms. Taouea Tetaake-Reiher	Acting Director of Environment, Ministry of Environment, Lands and Agricultural Development (MELAD)
	Ms. Marii Marae	GEF IAS Project Manager and Senior Environmental Officer, Ministry of Environment, Lands and Agricultural Development (MELAD)
	Mr. George Taoaba	GEF IAS Project coordinator, Acting Head of Biodiversity Conservation Division
	Ms. Teaaro Otue	Deputy Director Agriculture and Livestock Division (responsible for Biosecurity)
<b>Pacific Invasives Initiative</b>	Dr. Souad Boudjelas	Programme Manager, Pacific Invasives Initiative (PII)



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## ANNEX IV. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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### Documents

#### Evaluation Supporting Documents

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ANNEX V. PROJECT COSTS AND CO-FINANCING TABLES

Component/ Sub-component/Output	Estimated cost at design	Actual cost	Expenditure ratio (actual/planned)
<b>Personnel</b>			
Project Personnel	240,000	212,987	0.89
Consultants	120,000	109,083	0.91
Admin Support	72,000	24,002	0.33
Travel	24,000	24,424	1.0
Personnel TOTAL	456,000	370,496	0.81
<b>Sub Contracts</b>			
C1.1.4 PIPA Surveillance/Enforcement	67,000	20,000	0.30
C1.2.2 PIPA Offshore Fisheries	45,000	9,855	0.22
C1.1.5 PIPA Tourism Development	40,000	24,997	0.62
Subcontracts TOTAL	152,000	54,852	0.36
<b>Education and Training</b>			
<b>Group Training</b>			
Project Management	3,000	1,252	0.42
C1.1.3 PIPA Information	6,000	47,889	7.98
PIPA Management Committee Meetings	6,000	17,422	2.90
Education and Training TOTAL	15,000	66,563	4.44
<b>Equipment and Premises</b>			
Expendable Equipment Tarawa/Kanton	12,000	11,698	0.97
Non Expendable Equipment	35,200	25,071	0.71
Buildings- PIPA Tarawa	20,000	2,339	0.12
Buildings - PIPA Kanton	80,000	152,261	1.90
Equipment and Premises TOTAL	147,200	191,369	1.30
<b>Miscellaneous</b>			
Operation and Equip Maintenance	10,000	3,923	0.39
Reporting - Audits	4,800	419	0.09
PIPA Conservation Trust Fund Ops.	60,000	57,099	0.95
Inception - workshop	2,000	2,000	1.00
Evaluation - MTR	11,000	UNEP Direct Cost	
Evaluation - TE	12,000	UNEP Direct Cost	
Miscellaneous - TOTAL	99,800	63,441	0.64
<b>PROJECT GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>870,000</b>	<b>746,721</b>	<b>0.86</b>

PIPA Implementation Office figures	(870,200)	(746,725)*	0.86
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\*Difference due to rounding. Indicates unspent GEF funding of \$123,275 as at 31 December 2016 based on original Prodoc budget total of US\$ 870,000.

Co-financing Source	Amount (USD)	
	Planned	Actual
Cash		
Conservation International/New England Aquarium	1,019,600	
Cash Total	1,019,600	311,513
In Kind		
Government of Kiribati	357,500	383,500
CI/NEAq	360,000	382,465
NZAID	56,000	56,000*
IN Kind Total	773,500	821,965
Total Co-financing	1,793,100	1,133,478

## ANNEX VI.PRESENTATION

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No Formal presentations were made during the Evaluation.

However, at the conclusion of each group interview and country visit, the Evaluator discussed his preliminary assessment of the results with the key individuals involved. For country visits this usually involved a meeting with members of the focal government agency. The Evaluator outlined the strengths and weaknesses of the project performance in the host country and invite comment. Often this process led to further information being forthcoming and allowed for deeper understanding of the local perceptions of the issues being discussed.

***Abbreviated Curriculum Vitae Mr. Peter Thomas***

<p>Contact</p>	<p>PO Box 8262, Woolloongabba QLD., AUSTRALIA 4102          Phone: (M)+61 (0) 410 440 377 Email: <a href="mailto:Peter@tierramar.com.au">Peter@tierramar.com.au</a></p>
<p><b>Professional Strengths and Interest</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extensive international management and professional experience in environmental program and project development, management, monitoring, evaluation and improvement with a strong professional background in biodiversity conservation.</li> <li>• Strategic and business planning, organisation design, restructuring and change management.</li> <li>• Capacity analysis, team building, leadership and knowledge management solutions to support learning and mentoring for positive and sustainable natural resource management outcomes in developing countries.</li> <li>• Development, support and analysis of innovative approaches and policy for achieving sustainable environmental and natural resource management outcomes.</li> <li>• Strategic project and programme development at regional, sub regional and national levels.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Profile</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over 35 years professional experience in government and non-government organisations focussed on natural resource management, biodiversity conservation and protected area management.</li> <li>• 25 years experience in community based engagement in marine and terrestrial conservation area establishment and management, species and habitat protection and conservation policy development, particularly in the Pacific islands.</li> <li>• 25 years experience in strategic planning, development, management and leadership in non profit and international environment and conservation organisations.</li> <li>• 25 years successful experience in fundraising from multi-lateral and bi-lateral sources, private foundations and individuals including the design and establishment of sustainable financing mechanisms.</li> <li>• 10 years experience in government natural resource management agencies engaged in environmental impact assessment, alien species control, national protected area policy development and land use and natural and cultural protected area management planning.</li> <li>• 6 years engagement in negotiation and development of international and regional conservation agreement and forums.</li> <li>• Extensive report, proposal writing and public speaking experience.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Core skills</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutional building, strategic and business planning, organisation design and capacity assessment.</li> <li>• Resource management and biodiversity conservation project/programme design,</li> </ul>

	<p>planning and implementation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable community based approaches to natural resource management in tropical island countries, particularly in the Pacific.</li> <li>• Project/programme monitoring and evaluation and improvement.</li> <li>• Policy analysis and development.</li> <li>• Knowledge management and learning network development.</li> <li>• People management, including distance management, supervision, mentoring and career development and team building.</li> <li>• Financial management, establishment of standard operating policies and associated compliance.</li> <li>• Fundraising and proposal preparation.</li> <li>• Cross-cultural working relationships and travel in developing countries and workplace adaptability.</li> </ul>
<b>International Experience.</b>	<p>Australia; Cook Islands; China; Cambodia, Fiji; Federated States of Micronesia; Indonesia; Jamaica; New Caledonia; Kiribati; Laos, Marshall Islands; New Zealand; Papua New Guinea; Palau; Samoa; Solomon Islands; Tonga; United States of America; Vanuatu; Malaysia; Philippines; Timor Leste.</p> <p>Regional/Sub-regional experience in: Pacific; Coral Triangle, Greater Mekong and Heart of Boreno.</p>
<b>Qualifications</b>	<p>Master of Science (Resource Management), Canterbury University, Christchurch, NZ. 1981</p> <p>Bachelor of Commerce and Administration, Victoria University of Wellington, NZ. 1979</p>



## ANNEX VIII. QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF THE EVALUATION REPORT

All UN Environment evaluations are subject to a quality assessment by the Evaluation Office. The quality assessment is used as a tool for providing structured feedback to the evaluation consultants.

The quality of both the draft and final evaluation report is assessed and rated against the following criteria:

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Draft Report Rating	Final Report Rating
<b>Substantive report quality criteria</b>			
<i>A.</i> Quality of the Executive Summary: Does the executive summary present the main findings of the report for each evaluation criterion and a good summary of recommendations and lessons learned? (Executive Summary not required for zero draft)	Draft report: Executive summary briefly introduces the project and the terminal evaluation, it provides a summary of all evaluation criteria and provides a summary of recommendations and lessons.  Final report: Same as above.	S	S
<i>B.</i> Project context and project description: Does the report present an up-to-date description of the socio-economic, political, institutional and environmental context of the project, including the issues that the project is trying to address, their root causes and consequences on the environment and human well-being? Are any changes since the time of project design highlighted? Is all essential information about the project clearly presented in the report (objectives, target groups, institutional arrangements, budget, changes in design since approval etc.)?	Draft report: The report provides a good overview of the project context. Some clarifications are needed.  Final report: Same as above	S	S
<i>C.</i> Strategic relevance: Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of strategic relevance of the intervention in terms of relevance of the project to global, regional and national environmental issues and needs, and UNEP strategies and programmes?	Draft report: Strategic relevance has been thoroughly assessed.  Final report: Same as above.	HS	HS
<i>D.</i> Achievement of outputs: Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of outputs delivered by the intervention (including their quality)?	Draft report: The report presents a good assessment of the achievement of outputs, however also discussing the achievement of outcomes. Quality and timeliness of output delivery could also be discussed.  Final report: The assessment on achievement of outputs has been well presented.	MS	S
<i>E.</i> Presentation of Theory of Change: Is the Theory of Change of the intervention clearly presented? Are causal pathways logical and complete (including drivers, assumptions	Draft report: The ToC has been well presented.	S	S

and key actors)?	Final report: Same as above.		
<i>F.</i> Effectiveness - Attainment of project objectives and results: Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the achievement of the relevant outcomes and project objectives?	Draft report: Achievement of the main outcomes has been well discussed, but some outcomes have been discussed under section 3.2 (outputs). A revision would be beneficial to discuss effectiveness based on the ToC, including drivers and assumptions.  Final report: Effectiveness has been well assessed.	MS	S
<i>G.</i> Sustainability and replication: Does the report present a well-reasoned and evidence-based assessment of sustainability of outcomes and replication / catalytic effects?	Draft report: Sustainability and replication have been adequately addressed, but the discussion would benefit from clarifications and clearer presentation of evidence.  Final report: Sustainability has been well assessed.	MS	S
<i>H.</i> Efficiency: Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of efficiency? Does the report present any comparison with similar interventions?	Draft report: Efficiency has been adequately discussed  Final report: Same as above.	S	S
<i>I.</i> Factors affecting project performance: Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of all factors affecting project performance? In particular, does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used; and an assessment of the quality of the project M&E system and its use for project management?	Draft report: The assessment of factors affecting performance is well presented. Some additional information would be needed e.g. on stakeholders who did not participate in the project delivery.  Final report: Same as above.	S	S
<i>J.</i> Quality of the conclusions: Do the conclusions highlight the main strengths and weaknesses of the project, and connect those in a compelling story line?	Draft report: Conclusion section is concise and captures the key strengths and shortcomings of the project. A summary assessment should be included in the ratings table and key questions should be addressed.  Final report: Same as above.	S	S
<i>K.</i> Quality and utility of the recommendations: Are recommendations based on explicit evaluation findings? Do recommendations specify the actions necessary to correct existing conditions or improve operations ('who?' 'what?' 'where?' 'when?'). Can they be implemented?	Draft report: Recommendations are derived from evaluation findings, are specific and actionable.  Final report: Same as above.	S	S
<i>L.</i> Quality and utility of the lessons: Are lessons based on explicit evaluation findings? Do they suggest prescriptive action? Do they specify in which contexts they are applicable?	Draft report: Lessons are derived from evaluation findings, are specific and actionable.  Final report: Same as above.	S	S
<b>Report structure quality criteria</b>			

<p><i>M.</i> Structure and clarity of the report: Does the report structure follow EOU guidelines? Are all requested Annexes included?</p>	<p>Draft report: The report structure follows EOU guidelines and all requested annexes are included.</p> <p>Final report: Same as above.</p>	<p>HS</p>	<p>HS</p>
<p><i>N.</i> Evaluation methods and information sources: Are evaluation methods and information sources clearly described? Are data collection methods, the triangulation / verification approach, details of stakeholder consultations provided? Are the limitations of evaluation methods and information sources described?</p>	<p>Draft report: The evaluation methods and information sources have been adequately described.</p> <p>Final report: Same as above.</p>	<p>S</p>	<p>S</p>
<p><i>O.</i> Quality of writing: Was the report well written? (clear English language and grammar)</p>	<p>Draft report: The report is well written.</p> <p>Final report: The report was very well written.</p>	<p>S</p>	<p>HS</p>
<p><i>P.</i> Report formatting: Does the report follow EOU guidelines using headings, numbered paragraphs etc.</p>	<p>Draft report: The report is well formatted.</p> <p>Final report: The report is well formatted.</p>	<p>S</p>	<p>HS</p>
<p><b>OVERALL REPORT QUALITY RATING</b></p>		<p>S</p>	<p>S</p>

The quality of the evaluation process is assessed at the end of the evaluation and rated against the following criteria:

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Rating
<b>Evaluation process quality criteria</b>		
<i>Q. Preparation: Was the evaluation budget agreed and approved by the EO? Was inception report delivered and approved prior to commencing any travel?</i>		HS
<i>R. Timeliness: Was a TE initiated within the period of six months before or after project completion? Was an MTE initiated within a six month period prior to the project's mid-point? Were all deadlines set in the ToR respected?</i>	The TE was initiated within 6 months before the expected project completion at that time. However, the project was extended once the TE was already ongoing.	MU
<i>S. Project's support: Did the project make available all required documents? Was adequate support provided to the evaluator(s) in planning and conducting evaluation missions?</i>	Some financial documents were not made available.	MU
<i>T. Recommendations: Was an implementation plan for the evaluation recommendations prepared? Was the implementation plan adequately communicated to the project?</i>	Draft recommendations were discussed with project management. Implementation plan was prepared after completion of the evaluation and shared with the project team.	HS
<i>U. Quality assurance: Was the evaluation peer-reviewed? Was the quality of the draft report checked by the evaluation manager and peer reviewer prior to dissemination to stakeholders for comments? Did EO complete an assessment of the quality of the final report?</i>	The evaluation was peer reviewed and quality assessment of the final and draft reports were prepared.	HS
<i>V. Transparency: Were the draft ToR and evaluation report circulated to all key stakeholders for comments? Was the draft evaluation report sent directly to EO? Were all comments to the draft evaluation report sent directly to the EO and did EO share all comments with the commentators? Did the evaluator(s) prepare a response to all comments?</i>	ToR and deliverables were shared with key stakeholders for comments and the draft was revised accordingly with a response to comments. Only UN Environment provided comments.	S
<i>W. Participatory approach: Was close communication to the EO and project maintained throughout the evaluation? Were evaluation findings, lessons and recommendations adequately communicated?</i>	Close communication was maintained throughout the evaluation.	S
<i>X. Independence: Was the final selection of the evaluator(s) made by EO? Were possible conflicts of interest of the selected evaluator(s) appraised?</i>	Selection of consultant was made by the Evaluation Office. There was no conflict of interest.	HS
<b>OVERALL PROCESS RATING</b>		S

#### **Rating system for quality of evaluation reports**

A number rating 1-6 is used for each criterion: Highly Satisfactory = 6, Satisfactory = 5, Moderately Satisfactory = 4, Moderately Unsatisfactory = 3, Unsatisfactory = 2, Highly Unsatisfactory = 1

The overall quality of the evaluation report is calculated by taking the mean score of all rated quality criteria.