GEF-7 PROJECT IDENTIFICATION FORM (PIF)

PROJECT TYPE: FSP
TYPE OF TRUST FUND: GEFTF

PART I: PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Title:	Blue Nature Alliance to expand and improve conservation of 1.25 billion hectares of ocean ecosystems		
Country(ies):	Global	GEF Project ID:	10375
GEF Agency(ies):	Conservation International (CI)	GEF Agency Project ID:	
Project Executing Entity(s):	Blue Nature Alliance	Submission Date:	
GEF Focal Area(s):	International Waters (IW)	Project Duration (Months)	60

A. INDICATIVE FOCAL/NON-FOCAL AREA ELEMENTS

Programming Directions	Trust Fund	(in $)	
		GEF Project Financing	Co-financing
International Waters			
Total Project Cost	**GEFTF**	**$25,000,000**	**$100,000,000**

B. INDICATIVE PROJECT DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

Project Objective: To catalyze the conservation of 1.25 billion hectares of ocean ecosystems, to help build resilience, enhance ecosystem connectivity and function, and safeguard biodiversity.

Project Components	Component Type	Project Outcomes	Project Outputs	Trust Fund	(in $)	
					GEF Project Financing	Co-financing
Component 1: New Protection of Key Ocean Geographies *Investments from the Blue Nature Alliance and leveraged co-investment will result in the establishment of 750 million hectares of new ocean conservation areas, as measured by legal recognition*	TA	**Outcome 1.1:** 750 million hectares of new ocean conservation area or expansion of pre-existing conservation area legally recognized **Indicator:** -Total area (hectares) of new designated ocean conservation area that received financial and/or technical investment from the Blue Nature Alliance (target = 750 million hectares)	**Output 1.1.1:** Participatory and gender-sensitive engagement frameworks for potential new and/or expanded ocean conservation areas developed **Indicator:** -Number of site-based engagement frameworks developed (target = 20) **Output 1.1.2:** For each proposed engagement site, a written commitment from Governments (or jurisdictions), including financial co-investment is obtained and approval of the engagement framework by the	GEFTF	$11,468,484 (Component 1 Budget consists of 90% grants and 10% technical assistance to sites)	$48,000,000

| | | | Blue Nature Alliance is secured

Indicators:
-Number of engagement sites approved for investment (target: = 15)

-Percent of engagement sites approved for investment that have written commitments from relevant authorities (target = 100%)

Output 1.1.3: For each approved engagement site, support (financial and/or technical) for the legal recognition of a new and/or expanded ocean conservation area is provided

Indicators:
- Percentage of engagement sites that achieve the legal recognition of a new ocean conservation area (target = 75%)

-Percentage of legally recognized sites that have a baseline management effectiveness score (target = 100%)

Output 1.1.4: Legally recognized sites that request additional support to develop effective management and long-term financing plans are supported

Indicator: | | | |

			-Percent of legally recognized sites with a plan for reaching effective management and long-term financing (target = 50%)			
Component 2: Improved Protection of Key Ocean Geographies *Investments from the Blue Nature Alliance and leveraged co-investment will result in the upgraded protection status and/or improved management of at least 500 million hectares of previously established ocean conservation areas, as measured by legal ratification for increased protection levels, and/or by a change in management effectiveness score*	TA	**Outcome 2.1:** At least 500 million hectares of previously established ocean conservation areas have upgraded protections and/or improved management, as evidenced by the legal ratification for upgraded protection level, and/or for measurably improved management, as measured by the achievement of a site-specific target score for management effectiveness **Indicators:** Total area (hectares) of existing ocean conservation areas with legally upgraded levels of protection that received financial and/or technical investment from the Blue Nature Alliance (target: 100 million hectares) Total area (hectares) of existing ocean conservation areas with improved management	**Output 2.1.1:** Participatory and gender-sensitive engagement frameworks for existing ocean conservation areas developed **Indicator**: - Number of site-based engagement frameworks developed (target: ≥ 8) **Output 2.1.2:** For each proposed engagement site, a written commitment from Governments (or jurisdictions), including financial co-investment is obtained and approval of the engagement framework by the Blue Nature Alliance is secured. **Indicators:** - Number of sites approved for investment (target = 5) -Percent of sites approved for investment with written commitments from relevant authorities (target = 100%) **Output 2.1.3:** For each approved engagement site, support (financial	**GEFTF**	$8,011,264 (Component 2 Budget consists of 86% grants and 14% technical assistance to sites)	$32,000,000

		effectiveness that received financial and/or technical investment from the Blue Nature Alliance (target: 400 million hectares)	and/or technical) for upgrading protection and/or improving management of existing ocean conservation areas is provided **Indicators:** - Percentage of engagement sites that achieve their proposed management effectiveness target and/or proposed status upgrade (target = 75%) - Percent of engagement sites with a plan for reaching effective management and long-term financing (target = 75%)			
Component 3: Supporting global enabling conditions to scale up ocean conservation. *Investments from the Blue Nature Alliance will result in new science, tools, capacity, and innovations directly related to the field of large-scale and transboundary ocean conservation, thus contributing beyond individual sites to the shared goal of protecting*	TA	**Outcome 3.1:** Collaborative scientific research that advances the field of large-scale and/or transboundary ocean conservation developed and implemented. **Indicator:** - Number of peer-reviewed scientific publications and/or technical reports on topics that advance the field of large-scale ocean conservation (target = 10) *(Note: Outcome 3.1 funded with co-financing)*	**Output 3.1.1:** Building upon existing research agendas (including TWAP[1]), a collaborative research agenda for large-scale ocean conservation, is developed **Indicator**: - Number of collaborative research agendas (target = 1) **Output 3.1.2:** With Blue Nature Alliance financial and/or technical support, research projects that advance the field of large-scale ocean conservation are completed. **Indicator**: -Number of research projects that advance	GEFTF	$2,078,138	$5,000,000

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[1] [Transboundary Water Assessment Program](#)

| *30% of the world's oceans* | | **Outcome 3.2:** Knowledge management and learning for the fields of large-scale and transboundary ocean conservation has been strengthened and expanded **Indicators:**
- Number of individuals with enhanced knowledge, capacity, and tools to implement ocean conservation at scale and/or transboundary ocean governance (target = 1000, of which at least 30% are women) | the field of large-scale ocean conservation (target = 5)

Output 3.2.1: Learning initiatives that advance the field of large-scale ocean conservation and/or transboundary ocean governance and that provide training and professional development for MPA practitioners supported

Indicators:
- Number of participants in learning initiatives supported by Blue Nature Alliance (target = 500, of which at least 30% are women)

Output 3.2.2: New tools, trainings, or innovative approaches for large-scale ocean conservation developed and disseminated, including via regional entities

Indicator:
- Number of new tools, trainings, and innovations developed and disseminated (target = 5)

Output 3.2.3: Collaboration and coordination of NGOs, funders, and other implementors, working to advance MPAs, regional collaboration, and ocean conservation at scale increased | | | |

| | | | **Indicator**:
- Number of organizations and agencies participating in partner convenings and meetings hosted by the Blue Nature Alliance (target = 20)

Output 3.2.4: Data/knowledge management platforms for site and portfolio-level analyses created

Indicator:
- Percent of engagement sites utilizing a data management platform (target = 50%)

Output 3.2.5: Results of and lessons from Blue Nature Alliance investments shared at international conferences, with the IW:LEARN and LME:LEARN communities of practitioners and with regional entities

Indicator:
- Number of presentations given by Blue Nature Alliance partners on results and lessons (target = 100)

- Number of experience notes produced by the Alliance and shared with IW:LEARN (target = 2)

- Number of results notes produced by the Alliance and shared with | | | |

			IW:LEARN (target = 2)				

		Subtotal	GEFTF	$21,557,886	$85,000,000
		Project Management Cost (PMC)	GEFTF	$1,077894	$15,000,000
		Total Project Cost		$22,635,780	$100,000,000

C. INDICATIVE SOURCES OF CO-FINANCING FOR THE PROJECT BY NAME AND BY TYPE, IF AVAILABLE

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount ($)
Civil Society Organization	Conservation International Foundation (to co-fund all project activities)	Grant	Investment Mobilized	$25,000,000
Civil Society Organization	Pew Charitable Trust (to co-fund all project activities)	Grant	Investment Mobilized	$25,000,000
Other	Rob and Melani Walton Foundation (to co-fund all project activities)	Grant	Investment Mobilized	$25,000,000
Other	Prospective Private Foundation[2] (to co-fund all project activities)	Grant	Investment Mobilized	$25,000,000
Total Co-financing				$100,000,000

Project Management Costs include the annual project audit; 20% of a financial management specialist to lead overall financial management, including budget, reporting, audit, ensure efficient and effective use of resources, and serve as liaison on procurement and sub-grantee management; 100% of a grants coordinator to administer grants and contracts and ensure compliance with donor provisions on procurement, bidding, disbursements, and financial reporting review of subgrant partner submissions; and 50% of a GEF project manager for overall project management duties (the remaining 50% of the position is dedicated to technical assistance, and monitoring and reporting).

The Project will secure at least $200,000,000 in leveraged co-investments at the site-level from recipient country governments, private sector, civil society organizations, beneficiaries and/or others. Leverage co-investments will be defined as funding that directly contributes to a shared engagement strategy for a site (or for a global activity as outlined in component 3) that is not recorded on the books of the Blue Nature Alliance. Examples include increased government funding allocations, fees generated from systems put in place by the Blue Nature Alliance, and co-investment by multilateral/bilateral agencies, private foundations, and the private sector. The Alliance will seek a minimum of a 2:1 ratio of leveraged funds to Alliance capital deployed at the portfolio level. These co-investors will be identified throughout the life of the project as each engagement site is selected.

D. INDICATIVE TRUST FUND RESOURCES REQUESTED BY AGENCY(IES), COUNTRY(IES), FOCAL AREA AND THE PROGRAMMING OF FUNDS

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/ Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	(in $)		
					GEF Project Financing (a)	Agency Fee (b)	Total (c)=a+b
CI	GEFTF	Global	International Waters	(select as applicable)	$22,635,780	$2,037,220	$24,673,000
Total GEF Resources					$22,635,780	$2,037,220	$24,673,000

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[2] The fourth prospective founding partner has verbally committed $25 million to the Alliance, but contract negotiations are still underway and thus they are still considered prospective and not yet publicly named.

E. PROJECT PREPARATION GRANT (PPG)

Is Project Preparation Grant requested? Yes ☒   No ☐ If no, skip item E

PPG AMOUNT REQUESTED BY AGENCY(IES), TRUST FUND, COUNTRY(IES) AND THE PROGRAMMING OF FUNDS

GEF Agency	Trust Fund	Country/ Regional/Global	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	(in $)		
					PPG (a)	Agency Fee (b)	Total c = a + b
CI	GEF TF	Global	International Waters	(select as applicable)	$300,000	$27,000	$327,000
Total PPG Amount					$300,000	$27,000	$327,000

F. PROJECT'S TARGET CONTRIBUTIONS TO GEF 7 CORE INDICATORS

Provide the relevant sub-indicator values for this project using the methodologies indicated in the Core Indicator Worksheet provided in Annex B and aggregating them in the table below. Progress in programming against these targets is updated at the time of CEO endorsement, at midterm evaluation, and at terminal evaluation. Achieved targets will be aggregated and reported at any time during the replenishment period. There is no need to complete this table for climate adaptation projects financed solely through LDCF and SCCF.

	Project Core Indicators	Expected at PIF
1	**Terrestrial protected areas** created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use (Million Hectares)	
2	**Marine protected areas** created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use (Million Hectares)	1,250,000,000 (1.25 billion)
3	Area of **land restored** (Million Hectares)	
4	Area of **landscapes under improved practices** (excluding protected areas)(Million Hectares)	
5	Area of **marine habitat under improved practices** (excluding protected areas) (Million Hectares)	
	Total area under improved management (Million Hectares)	1,250,000,000 (1.25 billion)
6	**Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated** (million metric tons of CO2e)	
7	**Number of shared water ecosystems** (fresh or marine) under new or improved cooperative management	1 (level of engagement in IW:LEARN)
8	Globally over-exploited **marine fisheries** moved to more sustainable levels (thousand metric tons)(Percent of fisheries, by volume)	
9	**Reduction**, disposal/destruction, phase out, **elimination** and avoidance of **chemicals of global concern** and their waste in the environment and in processes, materials and products (thousand metric tons of toxic chemicals reduced)	
10	Reduction, avoidance of emissions of **POPs to air** from point and non-point sources (grams of toxic equivalent gTEQ)	
11	Number of **direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender** as co-benefit of GEF investment	~ 2,400,000 direct beneficiaries (~ 47% women; ~ 53% men)

The Blue Nature Alliance will catalyze the conservation of 1.25 billion hectares of ocean. This will include:

1) 750 million hectares of new or expanded ocean conservation areas legally recognized

2) 500 million hectares of previously established ocean conservation areas with upgraded protections and/or improved management made up of:
   a. 100 million hectares of upgraded protection: the portion of a site that is legally upgraded (i.e. designated) to a higher level of protection will be counted; and
   b. 400 million hectares of existing conservation areas under improved management: the site must have an improved MPA management effectiveness score to be counted.

This will help deliver 35% of the Aichi target and SDG14 target 5 (10 percent of the global ocean protected) and represent a significant contribution to the emerging global target of protecting 30 percent of the global ocean.

G. PROJECT TAXONOMY

See annex C.

PART II: PROJECT JUSTIFICATION
1a. *Project Description.* Briefly describe:
1) the global environmental and/or adaptation problems, root causes and barriers that need to be addressed (systems description); 2) the baseline scenario and any associated baseline projects, 3) the proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project; 4) alignment with GEF focal area and/or Impact Program strategies; 5) incremental/additional cost reasoning and expected contributions from the baseline, the GEFTF, LDCF, SCCF, and co-financing; 6) global environmental benefits (GEFTF) and/or adaptation benefits (LDCF/SCCF); and 7) innovation, sustainability and potential for scaling up.

1a. Project Description

The ocean is the origin and engine of all life on this earth. It regulates the climate, produces the oxygen we breath and determines our weather cycles. It contains the largest animals and the most diverse ecosystems on our planet. The ocean is also intrinsically linked with human development, providing food and economic opportunities for billions of people. Maintaining a healthy ocean is critical to achieving most of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including most notably the goals related to eliminating poverty (1), eliminating hunger (2), climate action (13), and the dedicated ocean goal on life below water (14). And yet, anthropogenic pressures and threats to ocean health are unprecedented and mounting. Habitat loss, fishing pressure, climate change, and pollution are leading threats to ocean health globally. These pressures—like the marine living resources they threaten—ignore national borders, further complicating potential responses. To protect our ocean and ensure it can provide the resources we need for 7 – 11 billion people, we must imagine and act at a scale larger than we ever have before and we must integrate knowledge and approaches across sectors, across cultures and across nations.

Effective place-based conservation and management safeguards biodiversity, replenishes fisheries, provides for the safety and security of people, and enables ecosystems to function as they should. Building ocean resilience is also a critical hedge against climate change. A longitudinal study conducted by Conservation International directly links marine managed areas with increased local incomes, food stability, and quality of life.[3] Areas with adequate capacity and funding are found to deliver almost three times the ecological benefits.[4] And a well-managed area reduces stress from unsustainable human activities making the ocean system more resilient and better able to cope with climate impacts.[5] Because this approach works, a target of effectively protecting 10 percent of the ocean by 2020 has been internationally adopted through the Aichi targets set by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and through SDG14 target 5. The latest scientific consensus however, indicates that the 10 percent target is insufficient to maintain ocean health, leading the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to call for at least 30 percent of the ocean to be placed in marine protected areas (MPAs).[6]

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[3] Kaufman, Orbach. 2010. Marine Managed Area Science Project Synthesis: Report to the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation. Conservation International.

[4] Gill et al. 2017. Capacity shortfalls hinder the performance of marine protected areas globally. Nature 543: 665-679.

[5] Roberts et al. 2017. Marine Reserves can mitigate and promote adaptation to climate change. National Academy of Sciences 114: 6167-6175.

[6] IUCN World Conservation Congress. 2016. Increasing marine protected area coverage for effective marine biodiversity conservation. WCC-2016-Res-053-EN.

The Global Environment Facility's (GEF) International Waters Focal Area Strategy similarly recognizes the need to establish and support existing MPAs in key biodiversity hotspots and coastal habitats in order to rebuild and protect essential habitats.

Globally, momentum is growing for MPAs and other forms of effective place-based ocean conservation, with a particular trend in the establishment of increasingly large ocean areas. An increasing number of coastal and island countries are taking steps to conserve vast stretches of ocean area, recognizing the tremendous benefits such action yields both for nature and their citizenry who depend on it culturally, socially and economically. People—from local communities to heads of state—are interested in designing and implementing area-based strategies to protect and sustainably manage the ocean. They are also increasingly understanding the interconnectedness of their ocean resources with that of their neighbors, including shared threats such as Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fisheries, and are seeking more opportunities for regional cooperation.

However, the community of ocean NGOs and private funders has not kept pace with this shift in attitudes toward, and growing interest in, protecting the ocean. For example, a 2017 report commissioned by the Packard Foundation[7] found that only a small number of foundations give approximately $40 million annually to placed-based conservation, and to sites primarily located in the developed world. While this study did not factor in public funding sources, it none-the-less highlights the fact that a significant increase in funding and support is needed to maintain the hard-won momentum for ocean conservation globally.

In response, Conservation International (CI), the Pew Charitable Trusts (Pew), and two private foundations have joined together to form the Blue Nature Alliance (the Alliance) with the objective to catalyze the effective conservation of at least 1.25 billion hectares of ocean in order to safeguard global ocean biodiversity, build resilience to climate change, promote human wellbeing, and enhance ecosystem connectivity and function. By directly supporting the conservation of at least 1.25 billion hectares of ocean ecosystems (approximately 3.5 percent of the global ocean), the Blue Nature Alliance will help deliver 35% of the Aichi target and SDG14 target 5 of 10 percent of the global ocean protected and build momentum towards to greater target of 30 percent of the global ocean protected.

Catalyzing the effective conservation of ocean at this scale will require a significant scaling of efforts by governments, communities, and NGOs to advance existing models of marine protection as well as developing innovative new models, including new multisectoral solutions and new models for transboundary ocean governance. It will also require significantly increased levels of investment and a new degree of collaboration—between NGOs, funders, and governments, including new levels of regional cooperation. The Blue Nature Alliance aims to raise and deploy at least USD $125 million, which will be leveraged at least two times with additional sources of funding, into ocean conservation areas worldwide. CI, Pew, and the Rob and Melani Walton Foundation have each committed USD $25 million to the Alliance. An additional private foundation has verbally committed to contributing USD $25 million and joining as a core partner. Through a USD $25 million investment in this project, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) would become the fifth core partner in the Alliance.

For this project, the general approach of the Alliance is to:
- Invest resources (grant-funding and technical support) to catalyze the establishment of at least 750 million hectares of new or expanded ocean conservation areas, as measured by legal recognition;

- Invest resources (grant-funding and technical support) to support the strengthening of at least 500 million hectares of previously established ocean conservation areas through upgraded protection levels as measured by legal recognition and/or through measurable improvement to management effectiveness, as measured by a change in management effectiveness score;

- Invest resources (grant-funding and technical support) in new science, tools, capacity, and innovations directly related to the fields of large-scale and transboundary ocean conservation in order to establish the global enabling conditions necessary to reach the global goal of protecting 30 percent of the world's oceans.

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[7] California Environmental Associates. 2017. Our Shared Seas: A 2017 Overview of Ocean Threats and Conservation Funding. Prepared with support of the David and Lucile Packard Foundation.

The Alliance aims to deploy the vast majority of project capital directly into the creation, expansion, or improved management of ocean conservation areas, inclusive of key biodiversity hotspots, coastal habitats, such as coral reefs, mangroves, and kelp forests, and open ocean ecosystems, including highly productive seamounts and essential fish habitat for ocean health and food security. To complement existing GEF interventions within the International Waters Focal Area Strategy, the Alliance will give special consideration to investing within [multi-country Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs)](#) as well as opportunities in [Small Island Developing States (SIDS).](#)

In addition to directly investing in new and existing ocean conservation areas, the Blue Nature Alliance will invest a small portion of project capital to cultivate the global enabling conditions that are needed to reach the ambitious goal of protecting 30 percent of the ocean. This investment will include scientific research (funded with co-financing), and knowledge management and learning initiatives to advance the fields of large-scale and transboundary ocean conservation.

1) The global environmental problems, root causes and barriers that need to be addressed

The following four anthropogenic pressures are among the key threats driving a decline in global ocean health:

- *Habitat Loss:* Approximately twenty per cent of total global mangrove area was lost between 1980 and 2005 with declines continuing at an estimated one percent per year.[8] Drivers of this habitat loss include coastal development, pollution, aquaculture, and logging for timber and fuel. By 2030, half of all coral reefs are projected to be at 'high' to 'critical' risk, increasing to eighty percent by 2050.[9] In addition to the direct impacts of fishing, certain fishing gears cause permanent and irreversible damage to benthic marine habitats, including seamounts and coral reefs.[10,11,12] Discarded fishing gear, including fish aggregating devices and nets, may remain in the open ocean or wash up onto coral reefs and beaches, where they cause physical damage to habitats and entangle species[13,14]. Deep sea mineral mining, which is currently being considered by a number of countries both on the high seas and within EEZs, is a future threat that will need to be managed to reduce its impact on marine habitats.[15] Additionally, mobile marine organisms, species including whales, sharks, tuna, and billfish, provide the structure-forming biomass that constitute habitat in the open ocean.[16] Overexploitation of these species is a type of habitat loss.

- *Fishing Pressure:* Despite increasing effort, an expanding global fisheries footprint, and new technologies, catch from global marine fisheries has not increased significantly since the late 1980s. The proportion of stocks that are within biologically sustainable levels have decreased drastically from 90 percent in 1974 to 66 percent in 2015.[17] Fisheries in developing countries appear to be significantly overexploited; and maintaining productivity increasingly comes at the expense of ecosystem and habitat health and preservation of non-target species. Within LMEs globally, almost 50% of fish stocks are overexploited or collapsed.[18] Illegal,

[8] IOC-UNESCO and UNEP (2016). Large Marine Ecosystems: Status and Trends. United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Nairobi

[9] IOC-UNESCO and UNEP (2016). Large Marine Ecosystems: Status and Trends. United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Nairobi

[10] Jones, J. B. "Environmental impact of trawling on the seabed: a review." *New Zealand Journal of Marine and Freshwater Research* 26, no. 1 (1992): 59-67.

[11] Hall–Spencer, Jason, Valerie Allain, and Jan Helge Fosså. "Trawling damage to Northeast Atlantic ancient coral reefs." *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London. Series B: Biological Sciences* 269, no. 1490 (2002): 507-511.

[12] Baco, Amy R., E. Brendan Roark, and Nicole B. Morgan. "Amid fields of rubble, scars, and lost gear, signs of recovery observed on seamounts on 30-to 40-year time scales." *Science advances* 5, no. 8 (2019): eaaw4513.

[13] Stelfox, Martin, Jillian Hudgins, and Michael Sweet. "A review of ghost gear entanglement amongst marine mammals, reptiles and elasmobranchs." *Marine pollution bulletin* 111, no. 1-2 (2016): 6-17.

[14] Donohue, Mary J., Raymond C. Boland, Carolyn M. Sramek, and George A. Antonelis. "Derelict fishing gear in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands: diving surveys and debris removal in 1999 confirm threat to coral reef ecosystems." *Marine pollution bulletin* 42, no. 12 (2001): 1301-1312.

[15] Wedding, L. M., S. M. Reiter, C. R. Smith, K. M. Gjerde, J. N. Kittinger, A. M. Friedlander, S. D. Gaines et al. "Managing mining of the deep seabed." *Science* 349, no. 6244 (2015): 144-145.

[16] O'Leary, Bethan C., and Callum M. Roberts. "The structuring role of marine life in open ocean habitat: importance to international policy." *Frontiers in Marine Science* 4 (2017): 268.

[17] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations: The State of the World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2018

[18] IOC-UNESCO and UNEP (2016). Large Marine Ecosystems: Status and Trends. United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Nairobi

underreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing further exacerbates these threats and is driving economic losses of up to 25 billion per year.[19]

- *Climate Change:* The ocean is disproportionately harmed by the increasing carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere from human activities. It is altering the temperature and chemical composition of our ocean, leading to changes in ocean temperature and circulation, rising sea levels, coral bleaching, and changes in the behaviors of species that call it home. By 2100, primary production in the ocean is expected to decline by 6 percent globally and by 11 percent in tropical zones.[20] The Transboundary Waters Assessment Programme calls for precautionary management actions in LMEs, including the establishment of MPAs, to build ecosystem resilience in light of the uncertainties that climate change presents.[21]

- *Pollution:* The majority of pollutants going into the ocean come from activities on land. Excess nutrients, often a result of agricultural runoff, can result in hypoxic/dead zones. Source-to-sea management approaches are necessary to manage these land-based pollutants. Ocean noise pollution from military sonar, industrial shipping, and exploration for oil, gas, and minerals is altering the underwater acoustic landscape, harming and in some cases killing marine species. Momentum and the technology for seabed mining is growing, and so is the alarm that such mining could have long lasting and unforeseen impacts on ocean health. While little is known about these deep-sea environments, potential impacts may include the physical destruction of habitats, large underwater sediment plumes and noise, and chemical and light pollution resulting from mining operations.

To address these and other threats, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the scientific community has called for 30 percent of the ocean to be placed in marine protected areas (MPAs). Yet most states are unlikely to meet their CBD target and SDG14 target 5 of 10 percent protected by 2020, let alone the more ambitious call for 30 percent. Even when there is strong political will for conservation action, there is often insufficient financial resources, capacity and knowledge to deliver enduring conservation outcomes. Achieving equitable, effective and sustainable management is a long journey requiring significant investment and capacity.[22]

The following four institutional barriers are limiting the expansion and effectiveness of ocean protection:

- *Insufficient financial resources:* Philanthropic and public financing for area-based ocean conservation has failed to keep pace with the dramatic increase in understanding of the threats facing our ocean and the need for conservation, especially in less developed countries that face even greater pressure on their resources. Without a significant increase in funding and the design of innovative and blended financing mechanisms, the hard-won momentum for ocean conservation will dissipate.

- *Insufficient management capacity and cost-effective tools:* The footprint of declared or designated large-scale MPAs (LSPMAs) is growing quickly, but the number of experienced LSMPA managers remains extremely limited. Capacity development for LSMPAs is needed. Technologies to surveil and enforce large remote ocean areas are burgeoning, but the large ocean states that most need these technologies have limited access.

- *Insufficient cross-sectoral collaboration and scientific evidence on human benefits:* Long-standing tensions between MPA and fisheries practitioners has also generated siloed programs and projects, whereas communication and collaboration between these two groups could generate win-win solutions that truly benefit both biodiversity and people. The true value of healthy ocean ecosystems to culture, resilience and food security are not fully understood or recognized in evaluating economic tradeoffs. There is a need for additional evaluation and scientific evidence on the human dimensions of ocean protection, which can drive increased collaboration and political will.

- *Insufficient regional cooperation and transboundary governance:* Many species do not recognize maritime borders and during their migrations swim through different countries' EEZs and the high seas. There are

[19] Agnew, et al. 2009. Estimating the Worldwide Extent of Illegal Fishing. PLoS ONE 4(2): e4570.

[20] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations: The State of the World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2018

[21] IOC-UNESCO and UNEP (2016). Large Marine Ecosystems: Status and Trends. United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Nairobi

[22] Gill, et al. 2017. Capacity shortfalls hinder the performance of marine protected areas globally. Nature 543:665-669

different and sometimes competing international and regional bodies for managing tuna, whale, shark, turtle, and seabird species, including a number of regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), and the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment in the Wider Caribbean Region (SPAW Protocol). Many of the species with transboundary migrations are unmanaged, for example, none of the tuna RFMOs have set catch limits for sharks and management has only been put in place when species are on the brink of extinction. There are many other regional and global agreements that are in place, but do not necessarily speak to one another to support integrated ocean governance, for example, Voluntary Small Scale Fisheries Guidelines, the Global Program of Action for Land based Sources of Marine Pollution, Regional Fisheries Management Organizations, Port State Measurement Agreement, Large Marine Ecosystems Strategic Action Programs and regional conventions and commissions, such as the Abijan Convention and the Benguela Current Commission. Finally, there is also the regional economic commissions, some of which has strategies for management of marine resources and habitats. To complicate matters, the interests of these inter-governmental bodies are not always aligned and have different goals related to trade, fisheries, and conservation of biodiversity.

2) The baseline scenario and any associated baseline project

Measuring how much of the ocean is currently protected is controversial. There are broad definitions (and wide-ranging application of the definitions) of what constitutes an MPA[23] or Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECM),[24] which has resulted in disparity between claims of protection and actual protection on the water.

The World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA)[25], a joint project of United Nations Environment World Conservation Monitoring Centre and the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas, is the global authority on reported protected area coverage. As of May 2019, based on data submitted by governments, WDPA reported 14,880 MPAs around the globe, representing global ocean coverage of 7.6 percent. The Atlas of Marine Protection (MPAtlas)[26], a project of the Marine Conservation Institute provides a more conservative picture of global marine protection. MPAtlas builds upon WDPA data by examining certain regions in depth, replacing WDPA records with national or regional databases that are more up-to-date or provide greater detail. As of May 2019, MPAtlas reports that 4.8 percent of the ocean is contained within MPAs.

The Blue Nature Alliance recognizes the differences in how the respective databases define protections and baseline calculations and choses to accept the range in the current baseline for protection levels globally. Regardless of the baseline used, it is clear that too little of our oceans is protected and significant effort is necessary to reach 30 percent of our oceans effectively protected.

In 1998, there were 4,500 MPAs globally, including the Great Barrier Reef, covering approximately 0.1 percent of the global ocean (equivalent to the size of the Red Sea). Over the next 20 years, the global total of marine protected areas increased to over 15,000 MPAs, covering nearly 5-8 percent of the ocean. The most recent dramatic increases in MPA coverage have been significantly driven by the proliferation of large-scale MPAs (LSMPAs), defined by the IUCN as larger than 15 million hectares (150,000 square km^2).

The growth of MPAs inside LMEs has mirrored the global trend. Between 1983 and 2014 there was a 15-fold increase in global MPA coverage, with the largest increase occurring between 2002 and 2012. LMEs that have seen the largest growth in MPAs are three Australian Shelf LMEs, Gulf of California, and Red Sea. LMEs with the lowest growth of MPAs include the Arctic LMEs: Beaufort Sea, Canadian High Arctic-North Greenland, and Northern Bering-Chukchi Seas. The only LMEs with no MPAs are the Faroe Plateau and Central Arctic Ocean.

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[23] IUCN defines a protected area as: a clearly defined geographical space, recognized, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values.

[24] A geographically defined space, not recognized as a protected area, which is governed and managed over the long-term in ways that deliver the effective in-situ conservation of biodiversity, with associated ecosystem services and cultural and spiritual values.

[25] https://www.protectedplanet.net/marine

[26] http://www.mpatlas.org/

Over the next several years, the area of ocean protected is expected to continue to grow at a similar rate as countries push to meet their CBD Aichi Target and SDG14 Target 5 commitments. However, this growth may taper off once commitments to protect 10 percent of national waters are reached. This will fall far short of protecting the needed 30 percent of the global ocean, and many of the established MPAs may never reach a state of active and effective management without significant additional investment.

There are numerous organizations and programs working to support the expansion of ocean protection globally—including CI and Pew (in combination, CI and Pew have helped to facilitate the establishment of more than half, by area, of the world's current marine protected areas under either baseline scenario). A 2017 review of Strategic Action Plans produced though GEF's Large Marine Ecosystem Program showed that while 89% of SAPs included strategies for the identification and adoption of management areas for maintenance of biodiversity and related goods and services, only 56% incorporated strategies to develop regional networks of connected MPAs.[27] Twelve of the UNDP Ecosystems and Biodiversity (EBD) Programme projects target MPAs, providing $40 million in grants from GEF and other donors with $97 million in co-financing to support creation and strengthening of 81 MPAs covering a total of 9.9 million hectares.[28]

In the past few years several major initiatives to create new MPAs have been launched, including The Blue Action Fund which was established December 2016 the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) with the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and The Agence Française de Développement (AFD) joining the effort in 2017 and 2018 respectively; the Waitt Foundation's Blue Prosperity Coalition; and the Wyss Foundation's $1 billion campaign to protect 30% of the planet (including but not focused on MPAs) by 2030 launched in 2018.

Each of these programs is playing an important role to expand ocean protection and have contributed to the current momentum for MPAs globally, which saw a 15-fold increase in global MPA extent from 1983 to 2016.[29] However, these initiatives, including the recent influx of additional funds, have been insufficient and significant barriers remain to getting to 10 percent of the ocean effectively protected, let along the 30 percent target.

3. The proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project

The Blue Nature Alliance aims to work in collaboration with other existing initiatives, including GEF's LME program, to raise the level of ambition and build momentum for ocean conservation while systematically addressing many of the underlying barriers that are holding back the expansion and effectiveness of ocean protection. The Alliance's objective is to catalyze the effective conservation of at least 1.25 billion hectares of ocean in order to safeguard global ocean biodiversity, build resilience to climate change, promote human wellbeing, and enhance ecosystem connectivity and function. By directly supporting the conservation of at least 1.25 billion hectares of ocean ecosystems (approximately 3.5 percent of the global ocean), the Alliance will help deliver 35% of the Aichi target and SDG14 target 5 of 10 percent of the global ocean protected and build momentum towards the scientifically agreed target of 30 percent of the global ocean protected.

The project theory of change is illustrated below (Figure 1A, 1B, and 1C).

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[27] GEF LME:LEARN, 2018. Large Marine Ecosystems Strategic Approach Toolkit. Paris, France.
[28] GEF LME:LEARN, 2018. Large Marine Ecosystems Strategic Approach Toolkit. Paris, France.
[29] IOC-UNESCO and UNEP (2016). Large Marine Ecosystems: Status and Trends, Summary for Policy Makers. United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Nairobi.
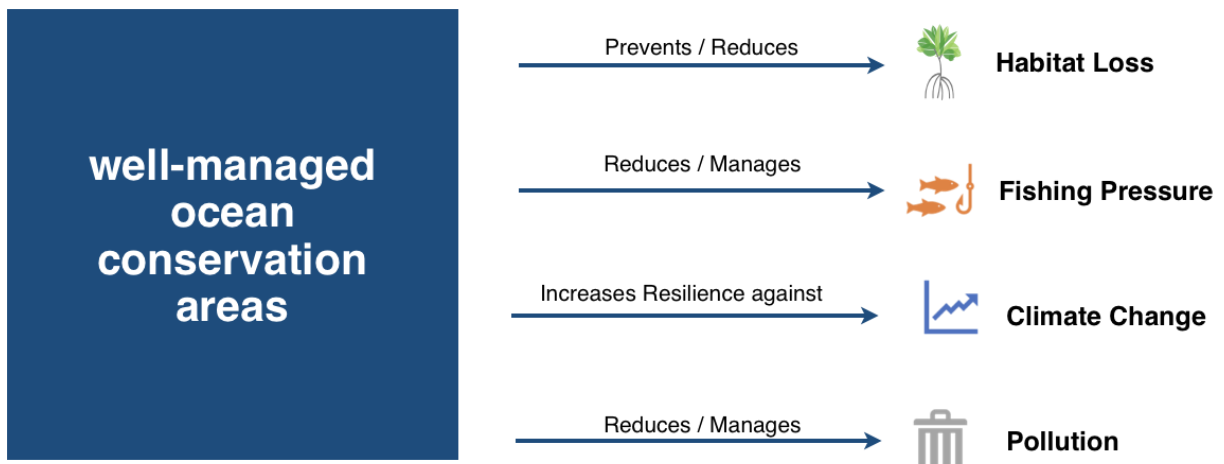
Figure 1A—Theory of Change Part I: Well-managed ocean conservation areas reduce key threats to the ocean and increase ocean resilience.

Figure 1B—Theory of Change Part II: This project will significantly increase the coverage of well-managed ocean conservation areas. The project will directly support ocean conservation areas covering 3.5% of the ocean, representing 35% of the global Aichi Target and SDG14 Target 5. This significant contribution will build additional momentum towards the emerging global goal of protecting 30% of the ocean by 2030.

BARRIERS TO BE ADDRESSED	STRATEGIES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES

Within countries and globally there are insufficient:

- financial resources for place-based ocean conservation

- management capacity and cost-effective tools for large-scale MPAs

- cross-sectoral collaboration and scientific evidence on human benefits

- Regional cooperation and transboundary governance

Site investments:

Provide grant funding and/or technical assistance to sites working towards declaring new protected areas and improving management:

- Advocacy and Coalition Building

- Capacity Building

- Management Planning

- Knowledge generation and sharing

- Business Planning and Designing Mechanisms for Long-Term Financing

- Regional Cooperation

Global Investments:

- Evidence Base: Science & Research

- Communities of Practice: Learning & Sharing

Countries/jurisdictions have a plan and increased resources and capacity to:

- Designate new ocean conservation areas

- Develop management plans & systems

- Actively manage ocean conservation areas

- Sustainably finance ocean conservation areas

- Coordinate on transboundary governance of shared ocean resources

Globally Large Scale Ocean Conservation Practitioners have:

- New science, tools, & innovations

- New learning initiatives, and professional development opportunities

750 MILLION HECTARES
new / expanded ocean conservation areas

500 MILLION HECTARES
improved management / upgraded protections

INCREASED ENABLING CONDITIONS FOR LARGE SCALE OCEAN CONSERVATION

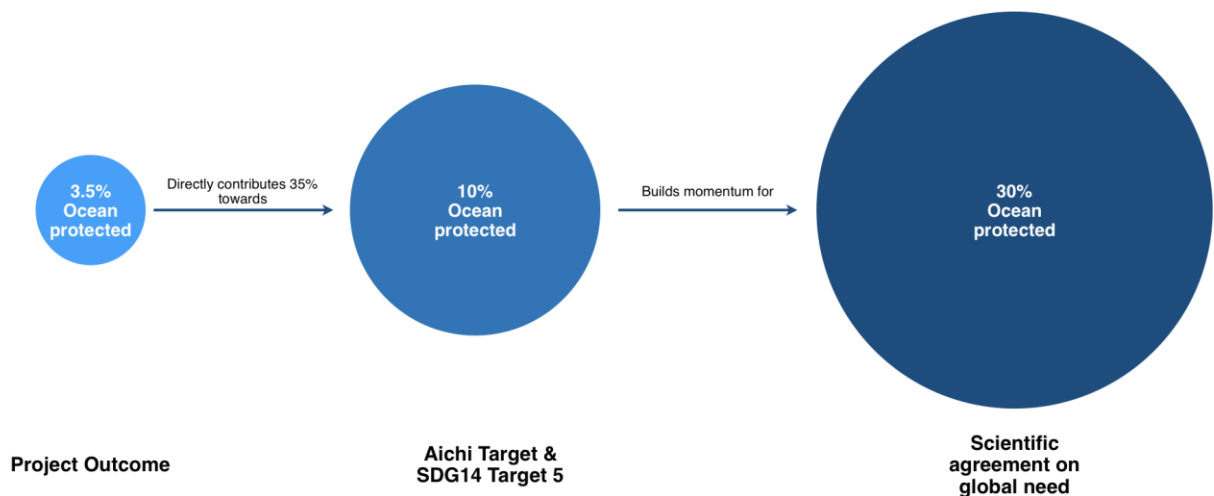Figure 1C—Theory of Change Part III: This project will address key barriers to ocean conservation through site-based and global investments in order to generate 1.25 billion hectares of new and improved ocean conservation areas and increased enabling conditions globally for large scale ocean conservation

The project's objective to catalyze the effective conservation of 1.25 billion hectares of ocean will be achieved through three project components, each with underpinning outcomes and outputs: component 1 focuses on the establishment of new ocean conservation; component 2 focuses on improving the management and/or strengthening the protection level of existing ocean conservation areas; and component 3 focuses on global investments. While the specific type of support provided to new versus existing conservation areas will vary, the Alliance will follow a standardized process for site selection and engagement. Described here is the overarching model for site-based engagement, including site selection criteria, followed by a summary of each of the specific project components.

Model for Site Selection and Engagement

The Alliance aims to deploy the vast majority of project capital directly into the creation, expansion, or improved management of ocean conservation areas, inclusive of key biodiversity hotspots, coastal habitats, such as coral reefs, mangroves, and kelp forests, and open ocean ecosystems (within national waters), including highly productive seamounts and essential fish habitat for ocean health and food security. To complement existing GEF interventions within the International Waters Program, the Alliance will give special consideration to investing within multi-country LMEs supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) as well as opportunities in SIDS.

The Alliance believes a multisectoral approach that brings together protection, sustainable production, governance and sustainable finance is required to effectively conserve any area for the long-term. The Alliance will support the design and effective management of ocean conservation areas, while ensuring the full engagement of local users of fisheries and other ocean resources and respecting cultural heritage and traditional tenure and resource rights of indigenous peoples, applying principles such as Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC).

The Alliance's site-based engagements will take the form of grants to partners on the ground in each site (via a dedicated grant mechanism) and direct technical assistance by Alliance technical experts. Through this project, the Alliance will

invest in at least 20 sites (upwards of 50 sites is possible). While the Alliance does not expect to do everything in any site, it does expect to advance sites along their conservation journey in a significant way (Figure 2).
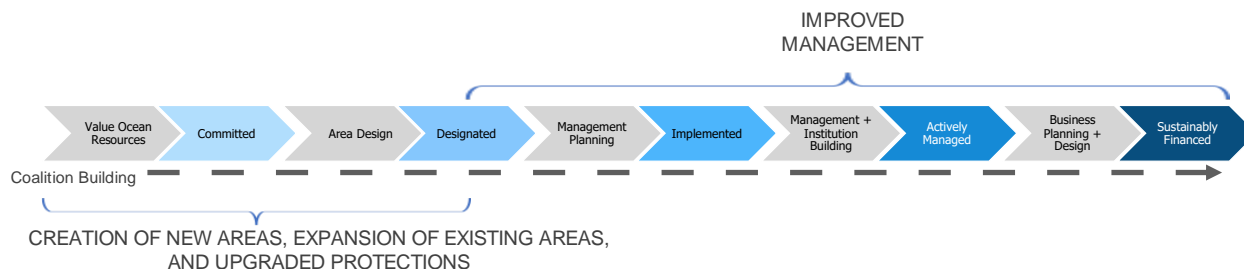

Figure 2. The Alliance approach to supporting sites along the conservation journey. Blue arrows represent stages of establishment, adapted from the forthcoming MPA Guide,[30] with the addition of "sustainably financed." The gray arrows are indicative activities that the Alliance could invest in to advance a site along the next stage of the journey.

At each engagement site the Alliance will invest in the targeted activities that it determines will have a catalytic impact to advance the ocean conservation area. The Blue Nature Alliance will support coalition building, governance, capacity building, science and knowledge, management planning and implementation, business planning and the design of mechanisms for long-term financial sustainability.

While investment can occur during any stage of establishment, the Alliance will work with sites to develop a plan for how they will ultimately achieve effective management and sustainable financing. A core focus will be on developing business plans and designing long-term financing solutions for those sites that are ready. The Alliance will work to crowd in private investment, including from impact funds with ocean mandates.

Site Selection

The Alliance will use the following six criteria to evaluate potential sites:
- *Significance* – The site has local, regional, and global significance for nature (i.e., global biodiversity significance, including concentrations of endemic or threatened species as well as particularly healthy, productive, connected, and representative ecosystems vital for ocean health and food security). Significance for people (i.e., economically, socially, culturally), either locally or globally, will be additionally factored in, although investment will not be restricted to places with human populations.
- *Political Will* - There is a stated interest, ideally a written commitment, by decision-making authority of a national, sub-national, or indigenous community leadership. In addition, we will look for an expressed commitment to match or co-support the project — this can be achieved through government revenues, tourism fees, landing fees, local staffing, etc.
- *Leverage* - Investment by the Alliance incentivizes additional resources targeted at >2x the Alliance investment. Based upon past experience (i.e., the Global Conservation Fund) and receptivity from governments, the Alliance is confident that it can achieve this target.
- *Local Engagement* – There is a local champion to drive the process forward in a participatory way, and community organizations, local leaders and/or coalitions are engaged in conservation and have requested support. In the case of indigenous-led initiatives, this particular criterion will be more important than explicit government support. And, in the case of the high seas, the Alliance anticipates engaging with Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) and other regional bodies, as applicable.
- *Achievable* - The intended project outcome has a high probability of success not only for the immediate policy or management action, but for that action to lead to sustainable protection including the resources (human and financial) needed to achieve the conservation goal(s) for the long-term.
- *Catalytic* - Outcomes catalyze momentum for durable protections, innovative approaches or unprecedented new scales of conservation in that region.

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[30] Lubchenco, et al. 2019. The MPA Guide (publication forthcoming)

As a first step towards selecting sites, the Alliance has conducted a desktop scoping of global EEZs, from which it has identified an initial list of sites, each with a specific and tangible opportunity, that could potentially benefit from Alliance investment (Figure 3). This list will continue to be revisited and strengthened over the course of the project. The Alliance will engage in advanced scoping, including participatory and gender-sensitive diagnostic assessment, and coalition building for sites with promising opportunities (more details on this process is described in component 1 and 2). Based on the advanced scoping and stakeholder consultation process, the alliance will develop a proposed engagement framework for the site.

There will be two steps to approve a proposed engagement site. In the first step, the Blue Nature Alliance Management Team, which is comprised of senior technical staff from both CI and Pew, will review the detailed engagement framework for the proposed site. The Blue Nature Alliance Management Team will ensure the engagement framework provides a clear opportunity to advance the site towards designation and/or improved management and will evaluate it against the six selection criteria. The decision to recommend investment, will be dependent upon having strong local endorsement, including financial leverage where feasible.

Sites recommended by the Blue Nature Alliance Management will go to the Blue Nature Alliance Steering Council for approval. The Steering Council will consist of those donors who have donated $25 million or more to the Alliance. As a core $25 million partner, the GEF would have a seat on the Steering Council. On a six month basis, the Steering Council will review and approve new sites for investments. Once the site is approved, the Alliance will support the implementation of the engagement framework through grants to implementing partners on the ground and by deploying technical experts to the site. The full site engagement process is illustrated in Figure 4. (More details on the Blue Nature Alliance Management Team and the Steering Council can be found in the Governance and Alliance Framework in *section 6—coordination)*.

The Alliance will prioritize investments in Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs) supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and sites that enhance transboundary management consistent with the GEF's International Waters Focal Area Strategy. Any investment from the GEF can be managed in a segregated account and be exclusively used to invest in GEF eligible states. The Blue Nature Alliance will not invest any project capital in areas sanctioned by the U.S. Department of State.[31]

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[31] https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Programs/Pages/Programs.aspx
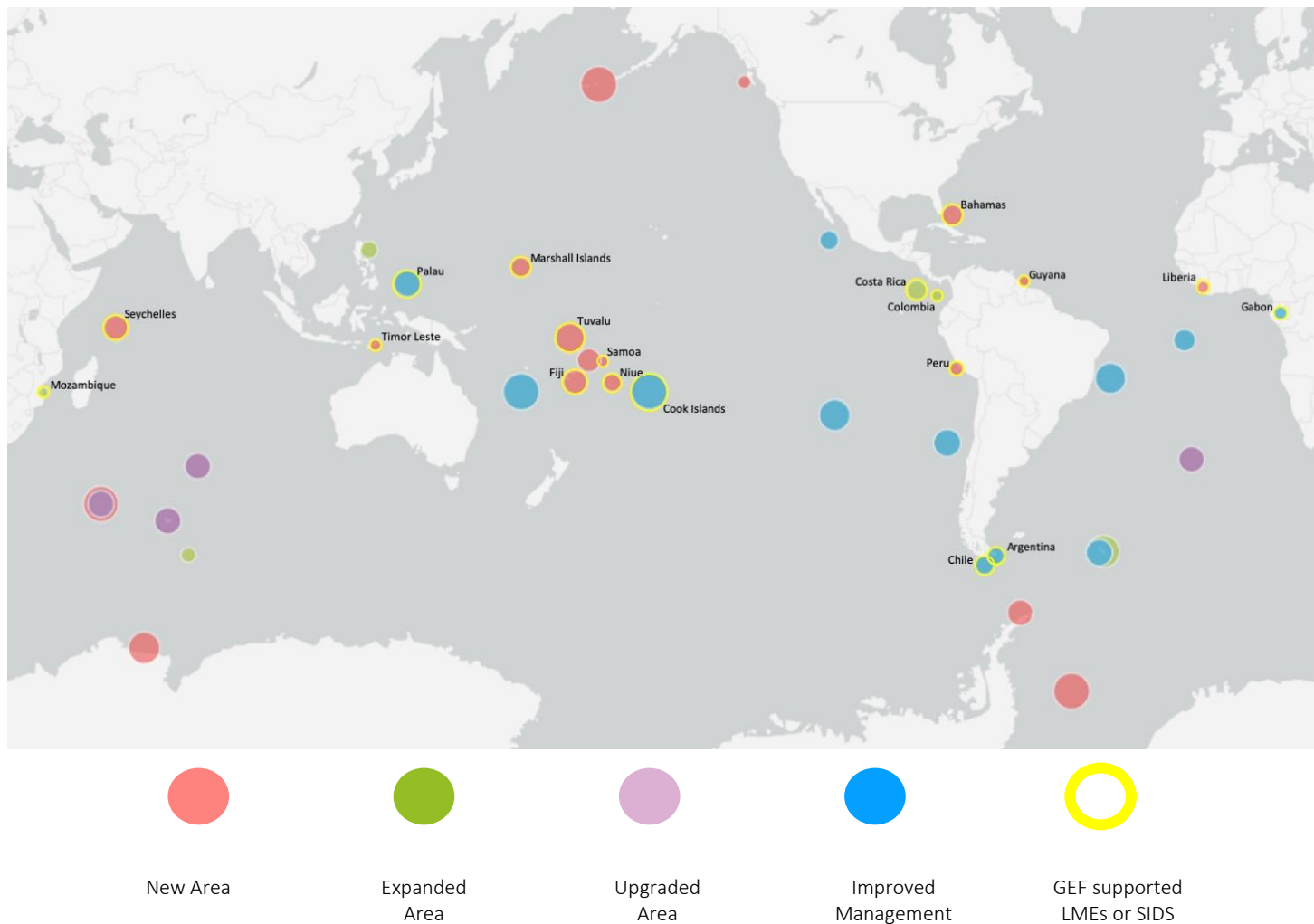
Figure 3: Map of initial opportunities identified during the desk-top scoping exercise. The size of the circle represents the potential size of the ocean conservation area. Potential GEF-eligible engagement sites that are within GEF supported LMEs, SIDs, and/or have potential for transboundary collaboration are highlighted with a yellow ring and named. This list is preliminary and does not reflect a commitment to invest in any of these sites. Additional sites are currently being scoped including in the Coral Triangle, Indian Ocean, Africa, and Meso America Barrier Reef. New sites will be scoped and added throughout the project period.

Figure 4. Process for assessing, scoping, and investing in a site

Types of Eligible Ocean Conservation Areas

For the purpose of this project, the Blue Nature Alliance defines ocean conservation areas to be inclusive of all IUCN categories of marine protected areas (MPAs), other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs), and other innovative place-based interventions designed to achieve biodiversity conservation outcomes. A significant, but not exclusive, focus of the Alliance will be on large scale marine protected areas (LSMPAs) as defined by the IUCN to be at least 15 million hectares (150,000 km^2) in size.[32]

The Alliance has aligned its site classification with a soon to be published MPA Guide[33], authored by Jane Lubchenco and partners, that puts forth simple language with which to classify MPAs in terms of their level of protection[34] and their stage of establishment. The Alliance has adapted the model to illustrate the types of outcomes its investments seek to achieve— from securing the legal designation of a new or expanded area, to upgraded protections and/or improved management of existing areas (Figure 5).

The Alliance will invest in MPAs that provide any of the four levels of protection defined in the MPA Guide—from minimally protected to fully protected—with the aim to maximize the total area under higher levels of protection, while recognizing the rights and needs of indigenous peoples and local communities and ensuring engagement of local resource users.

The Alliance will also invest in the creation and improved management of areas that have recognized benefits to marine biodiversity but are not legally designated as MPAs. These are known as "Other Effective Conservation Measures" (OECM) and are currently being defined by the IUCN and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).
The Alliance will also pursue innovative mechanisms for achieving area-based ocean conservation at scale beyond traditional MPAs and OECMs, where selection criteria are met (Figure 6). For example, we will work to advance Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas and may pilot new ideas such as dynamic measures that move spatially and temporally based on water temperature and wildlife migrations. Where opportunities exist, the Alliance will support transboundary models for protection, including transboundary peace parks and coordinated management of networks of ecologically connected MPAs within transboundary LMEs.

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[32] https://www.iucn.org/commissions/world-commission-protected-areas/our-work/large-scale-marine-protected-areas

[33] Lubchenco, et al. 2019. The MPA Guide (publication forthcoming)

[34] The Alliance is using consistent language with The MPA Guide (Lubchenco, et al. 2019.), a soon to be published guide from preeminent MPA leaders with the goal of creating a common shared language to understand, celebrate, and track achievements and provide clarity about the science-based goal to protect 30 percent of the ocean. The MPA Guide provides the following definitions:

    a) FULLY PROTECTED: no extractive or destructive activities are allowed, and all impacts are minimized.

    b) HIGHLY PROTECTED: only light extractive activities are allowed, and other impacts are minimized to the extent possible.

    c) LIGHTLY PROTECTED: some protection exists but moderate to significant extraction and impacts are allowed.

    d) MINIMALLY PROTECTED: extensive extraction and other impacts are allowed while still providing some conservation benefit to the area.
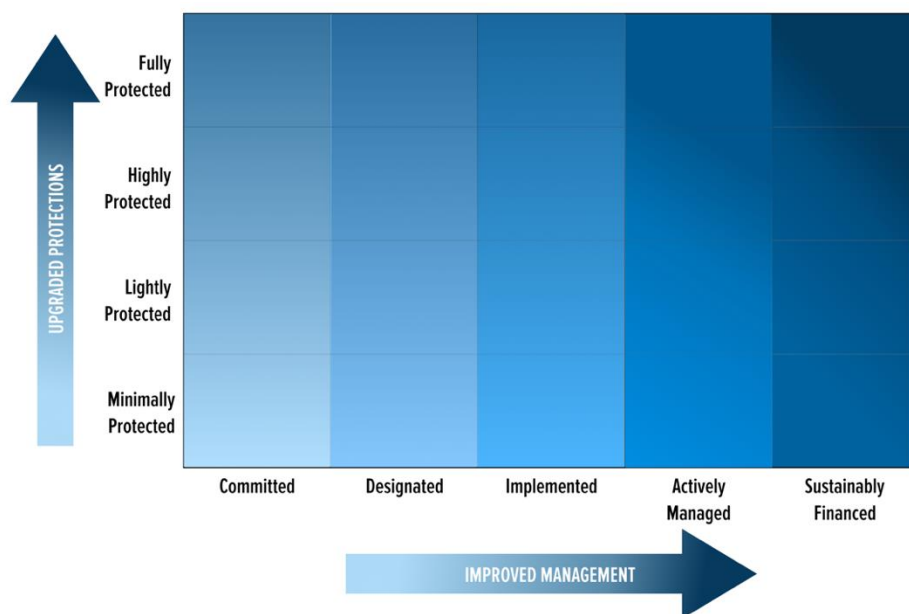
Figure 5. Adapted from The MPA Guide. A fifth column was added to include "sustainably financed" as the Alliance views it as a key stage in MPA effectiveness. The Alliance will seek to move sites upward towards higher levels of protection and to the right with improved management.
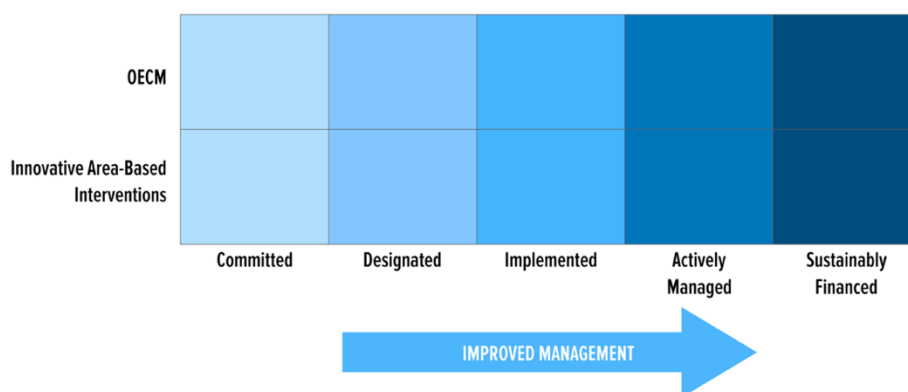
Figure 6. Further adapted figure from the MPA Guide to apply to OECMs and new innovations in area-based conservation.

Component 1: New Protection of Key Ocean Geographies

Under Component 1 of this project, the Blue Nature Alliance will partner with governments, communities, NGOs and other partners to co-invest in the design and designation of new ocean conservation areas and the expansion of pre-existing conservation areas. Alliance investments (financial and/or technical support) will contribute toward the designation of 750 million hectares of ocean under protection

Outcome	Indicator	Target

Outcome 1.1: By 2025, 750 million hectares of new ocean conservation area or expansion of pre-existing conservation area legally recognized	Total area (hectares) of new designated ocean conservation area that received financial and/or technical investment from the Blue Nature Alliance	750 million hectares
Outputs	**Indicator**	**Target**
Output 1.1.1: Participatory and gender-sensitive engagement frameworks for potential new and/or expanded ocean conservation areas developed	Number of site-based engagement frameworks developed	20
Output 1.1.2: For each proposed engagement site, a written commitment from Governments (or jurisdictions), including financial co-investment is obtained and approval of the engagement framework by the Blue Nature Alliance is secured	Number of engagement sites approved for investment	15
	Percent of engagement sites approved for investment with written commitments from relevant authorities	100%
Output 1.1.3: For each approved engagement site, support (financial and/or technical) for the legal recognition of a new and/or expanded ocean conservation area is provided	Percentage of engagement sites that achieve the legal recognition of a new ocean conservation area	75%
	Percentage of legally recognized sites that have a baseline management effectiveness score	100%
Output 1.1.4: Legally recognized sites that request additional support to develop effective management and long-term financing plans are supported	Percent of legally recognized sites with a plan for reaching effective management and long-term financing	50%

Once an opportunity has been identified and a site has been selected for advancing scoping, the Blue Nature Alliance Delivery Team will conduct a participatory and gender-sensitive diagnostic assessment, using an adapted version of the "Capacity Development Assessment and Planning Guide for Large-scale Marine Area Ecosystem-based Management" developed under the LME:LEARN program. The assessment will include a site visit by a small technical team to fully understand the political, tactical, and strategic opportunity and assess viability, including the social, economic, and ecosystem values of the site, and the level of government and/or indigenous commitment. As part of the diagnostic, the team will check if the site has a Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis/Strategic Action Programme (TDA/SAP) and will incorporate any findings into the site diagnostic as applicable. The team will work to build a coalition of partners and to identify the key activities needed to advance the site and broader regional cooperation within broader transboundary LMEs and between SIDS.

The Alliance will seek strong local support before investing in any site, including a formal invitation from the government and/or local community with jurisdiction over the site as well as a financial commitment whenever possible, with the target of having a 2:1 financial leverage across the portfolio of sites.[35]

Upon securing a commitment from the relevant decision-making authority or community leader, the Alliance will co-design an engagement framework for each site in partnership with local champions and/or government leaders.

Once an engagement framework is approved, the Delivery Team will invite proposals from implementing partners best positioned to deliver activities outlined in the framework. In addition to providing grants, the Alliance can deploy technical experts to directly support activities outlined in the engagement framework. For example, technical experts in

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[35] Leverage funding will be defined as funding that directly contributes to a shared engagement strategy for a site (or for a global activity as outlined in component 3) that is not recorded on the books of the Blue Nature Alliance. Examples include increased government funding allocations, fees generated from systems put in place by the Blue Nature Alliance, and co-investment by multilateral/bilateral agencies, private foundations, and the private sector. The Alliance will seek a minimum of a 2:1 ratio of leveraged funds to Alliance capital deployed at the portfolio level.

Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) could support an EEZ-level planning process that identifies areas for protection and areas for sustainable production to meet both ecological and social goals.

Illustrative activities that could be funded under an engagement framework for a proposed new ocean conservation area include:
- Scientific, economic or political analyses to inform conservation policy decisions and/or establish a baseline for future trend monitoring;
- Stakeholder engagement to increase political will and social support for the conservation area;
- Learning exchanges with other large-scale ocean conservation sites and/or participation in learning network meetings, such as Big Ocean,[36] LME:LEARN, IW:LEARN, and other capacity development initiatives
- EEZ planning that includes increased conservation area designations;
- Private sector engagement;
- Business planning
- Creation of and participation in multi-state cooperation frameworks;
- Collaboration among LMEs, Regional Seas conventions and Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs);
- Others as appropriate.

The Blue Nature Alliance will support all approved engagement sites to complete a baseline management effectiveness assessment. Each site will choose the scorecard that is most relevant to them and will use that consistently for baseline and subsequent evaluations. One option will be the LME Management Effectiveness Scorecard developed by CI under an LME:LEARN project.

The Blue Nature Alliance will further encourage sites and support as appropriate the development of monitoring and evaluation plans for the conservation area. The Alliance will provide monitoring and evaluation guidelines and best practices, including a catalogue of available protocols appropriate for various scales, ecosystems, and social contexts (including large-scale) and new technology options available to support remote monitoring and surveillance. Whenever possible, the Alliance will negotiate a data-sharing agreement with engagement sites and make data publicly available on a data portal as well as on the GEF's One Shared Ocean data platform.

While the primary indicator for success under Component 1 is the designation of new ocean conservation areas, the Alliance aims to support each new site to develop a strategy for how the site will eventually reach effective management and long-term financing. The Alliance will also consider providing follow-on grants to establish management and build capacity. This will accomplish two things — one, inspire the country to act quickly to legally establish the conservation area, and two, ensure that they are moving the site beyond designation towards active management.

Component 2: Improved Protection of Key Ocean Geographies
Under Component 2 of this project, the Blue Nature Alliance will partner with governments, communities, NGOs and other partners to co-invest in existing ocean conservation areas with the aim to legally upgrade the protection level of the area (or zones within) and/or to measurably improve management, as measured by the achievement of a site-specific target score for management effectiveness. Alliance investments (financial and/or technical support) will advance 500 million hectares of existing ocean conservation areas, with 100 million hectares upgraded to higher levels of protection and 400 million hectares under improved management.

Expected conservation outcomes from ocean conservation areas vary significantly based on level of protection and the effectiveness of management. Fully and Highly Protected MPAs are expected to result in strong conservation returns.[37] Areas with adequate capacity and funding are found to deliver almost three times the ecological benefits.[38]

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[36] https://bigoceanmanagers.org/

[37] Lester, Sarah E., Benjamin S. Halpern, Kirsten Grorud-Colvert, Jane Lubchenco, Benjamin I. Ruttenberg, Steven D. Gaines, Satie Airamé, and Robert R. Warner. "Biological effects within no-take marine reserves: a global synthesis." *Marine Ecology Progress Series* 384 (2009): 33-46.
[38] Gill et al. 2017. Capacity shortfalls hinder the performance of marine protected areas globally. Nature 543: 665-679.

The Alliance will work with implementing partners at each site to set an ambitious but achievable site-specific target score for management effectiveness. Each site engagement will include a planning process to develop a strategy for how the site will eventually reach effective management and long-term financing.

Outcome	Indicator	Target
Outcome 2.1: By 2025, 500 million hectares of previously established ocean conservation areas have upgraded protections and/or improved management, as evidenced by the legal ratification for upgraded protection level, and/or to measurably improved management, as measured by the achievement of a site-specific target score for management effectiveness	Total area (hectares) of existing ocean conservation areas with legally upgraded levels of protection that received financial and/or technical investment from the Blue Nature Alliance	100 million hectares
	Total area (hectares) of existing ocean conservation areas with improved management effectiveness that received financial and/or technical investment from the Blue Nature Alliance	400 million hectares

Outputs	Indicator	Target
Output 2.1.1: Participatory and gender-sensitive engagement frameworks for existing ocean conservation areas developed	Number of site-based engagement frameworks developed	8
Output 2.1.2: For each proposed engagement site, a written commitment from Governments (or jurisdictions), including financial co-investment is obtained and approval of the engagement framework by the Blue Nature Alliance is secured.	Number of sites approved for investment	5
	Percent of sites approved for investment with written commitments from relevant authorities	100%
Output 2.1.3: For each approved engagement site, support (financial and/or technical) for upgrading protection and/or improving management of existing ocean conservation areas is provided	Percentage of engagement sites that achieve their proposed management effectiveness target and/or proposed status upgrade	75%
	Percent of engagement sites with a plan for reaching effective management and long-term financing	75%

Once an opportunity has been identified and an existing conservation area has been selected for advancing scoping, the Blue Nature Alliance Delivery Team will conduct a similar diagnostic process as described in Component 1 for new ocean conservation areas. As with new sites, the Alliance will incorporate any applicable TDAs/SAPs and when appropriate will seek opportunities advance broader regional cooperation within transboundary LMEs and between SIDS.

For sites supported under Component 2, the engagement framework can also serve as a strategic plan to guide the site towards active management and sustainability. The process to develop the engagement strategy may include additional planning workshops with the coalition of local partners working to advance the site.

The Alliance will seek strong local support before investing in any site, including a formal invitation from the government and/or local community with jurisdiction over the site as well as a financial commitment whenever possible, with the target of having a 2:1 financial leverage across the portfolio of sites.

Upon securing a commitment from the relevant decision-making authority or community leader, the Alliance will co-design an engagement framework for each site in partnership with local champions and/or government leaders.

Once an engagement framework is approved, the Delivery Team will invite proposals from implementing partners best positioned to deliver activities outlined in the framework. During the proposal process, each investment site will set management effectiveness score targets to be achieved as a result of the Blue Nature Alliance investment. As proposals are evaluated the target score increase will be evaluated to ensure it is sufficiently ambitious and achievable given the level of investment provided by the Blue Nature Alliance. We will seek significant increases in management effectiveness.

In addition to providing grants, the Alliance can deploy technical experts to directly support activities outlined in the engagement framework. For example, technical experts in sustainable financing can support business planning and the design of long-term financing mechanisms.

Illustrative activities that could be funded under an engagement framework for an existing conservation area include:
- Management capacity building through targeted training;
- Learning exchanges with other large-scale ocean conservation sites and/or participation in learning network meetings, such as Big Ocean, LME:LEARN, IW:LEARN, and other capacity development initiatives;
- Participatory development of management plans;
- Research to inform spatial planning/zonation;
- Design of ecological, economic and social monitoring protocols and/or conduct baseline;
- Design of enforcement systems;
- Design of co-management governance systems that integrate indigenous peoples in MPA management;
- Business planning and design of sustainable finance mechanisms;
- Private sector engagement and sustainable livelihoods development;
- Creation of and participation in multi-state cooperation frameworks;
- Collaboration among LMEs, Regional Seas conventions and Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs); and
- Others as appropriate.

The Blue Nature Alliance will require all existing ocean conservation areas supported by the Alliance to complete a pre-investment and post-investment management effectiveness assessment. Each site will choose the scorecard that is most relevant to them and will use that consistently for baseline and subsequent evaluations. One option will be the LME Management Effectiveness Scorecard developed by CI under an LME:LEARN project.

As with new sites, the Blue Nature Alliance will support existing sites as needed with the development and implementation of monitoring and evaluation plans as part of their management plan. The Alliance will provide monitoring and evaluation guidelines and best practices, including a catalogue of available protocols appropriate for various scales, ecosystems, and social contexts (including large-scale) and new technology options available to support remote monitoring and surveillance. Whenever possible, the Alliance will negotiate a data-sharing agreement with engagement sites and make data publicly available on a data portal as well as on the GEF's One Shared Ocean data platform.

Component 3: Global Enabling Conditions to Scale Up Ocean Conservation
In addition to directly investing in new and existing ocean conservation areas, the Blue Nature Alliance will invest in the global enabling conditions that are necessary to reach the ambitious goal of protecting 30 percent of the world's ocean. This investment will include two outcomes—one on science and research (using only co-financing) and the other on learning and sharing.

Science and Research
Using only co-financing, the Alliance will support scientific research to enhance the evidence base for large-scale ocean conservation, including LSMPAs, and to amplify the collective impact of ocean conservation areas globally. The field of large-scale ocean conservation needs to make continued progress in management effectiveness and sustainability and build the evidence base for MPAs' contributions to human well-being outcomes to overcome the zero-sum argument that MPAs and fisheries management are incompatible solutions. The field must also evaluate which policy instruments are most useful to reaching our global target for ocean protection.

The Alliance will collaborate on a scientific research agenda that advances the field of large-scale ocean conservation. Potential topics include but are not limited to:
- Blue water MPAs
- Synergies between LSMPAs and fisheries management
- LSMPAs role in climate change mitigation and increasing global resilience
- Climate dynamic MPAs
- Social dimension of LSMPAs
- Global review of efficacy of different marine area-based management and spatial tools

Outcome	Indicator	Target
Outcome 3.1: By 2025, collaborative scientific research that advances the field of large-scale ocean conservation developed and implemented, thus advancing the shared goal of protecting 30% of the world's oceans. *(Note: Outcome 3.1 will be funded with co-financing)*	Number of peer-reviewed scientific publications and/or technical reports published on topics that advance the field of large-scale ocean conservation	10

Outputs	Indicator	Target
Output 3.1.1: Building upon existing research agendas (including the TWAP), a collaborative research agenda for large-scale ocean conservation, is developed	Number of collaborative research agendas	1
Output 3.1.2: With Blue Nature Alliance financial and/or technical support, research projects that advance the field of large-scale ocean conservation are completed.	Number of research projects that advance the field of large-scale ocean conservation	5

Knowledge Management and Learning

To reach the goal of this project, and more significantly the global call for 30 percent of oceans effectively protected, will require a very significant global increase in human capacity to design and manage ocean conservation areas at scale and in transboundary settings, the development of new tools and approaches fit for large-scale, and a new degree of collaboration, learning and sharing.

While the number of declared or designated large-scale MPAs (LSPMAs) is growing quickly, the number of experienced LSMPA managers remains extremely limited. Some targeted learning networks, such as the Big Ocean network of large scale MPA managers, and the IUCN Taskforce on LSMPAS exist and are working to advance the field for new practitioners, but they have insufficient bandwidth and resources, and they do not have an explicit focus on transboundary issues. Other learning networks such IW:LEARN and LME:LEARN regularly convene LME managers and practitioners generating innovations on transboundary ocean governance, however they do not yet have specific expertise on LSMPAs. And while other MPA focused learning networks exist, collectively they are insufficient to fill the growing demand for learning opportunities in the field of large-scale ocean conservation. Blue Nature Alliance will support and participate in existing learning communities, including IW:LEARN, LME:LEARN, the Big Ocean network, as well as support new learning initiatives, such as dedicated learning exchanges and training programs to elevate the capacity of the entire field of large-scale ocean conservation, reaching at least 500 ocean conservation practitioners and stakeholders, of which at least 30 percent will be women.

Getting to scale will require developing innovative new models, including multisectoral solutions and models of transboundary governance, and innovative new tools, such as cost-effective methods and technologies for enforcement of large ocean areas. Across its portfolio of sites and via dedicated projects, the Alliance will produce at least five new tools and publications that advance the field of large-scale ocean conservation. Specific opportunities for investment will be identified with partners and end-users to maximize the utility of any new models and tools.

Achieving the global goal will also require unprecedented levels of collaboration between NGOs, between funders, and between governments, including new levels of regional cooperation. The very nature of the Blue Nature Alliance promotes partnership. The Alliance will seek to build greater alignment and cooperation between the various actors supporting large-scale ocean conservation through a series of regular partner convenings and through the formation of advisory groups and technical task forces. At least 20 organizations will participate in Alliance-led partner convenings.

The Alliance will further create and share a data management platform for portfolio and global level analyses. Whenever allowed by data providers, data will be made available for inclusion on GEF's One Shared Ocean data platform. The new tools, models and other lessons generated through the project will be shared across all engagement sites, via the learning networks and partner convenings mentioned above, at international conferences and at regional entities and forums. The

Alliance anticipates that project partners will deliver at least 100 presentations on the results and lessons generated from the project.

The Alliance will actively participate in the GEF IW:LEARN network to disseminate best practices and lessons learned generated from the project. It will also use the reach of IW:LEARN and LME:LEARN to train MPA and LME practitioners on the use of the new tools developed as part of the project and to learn about other innovations that could be adopted by Alliance engagement sites. As the alliance will be investing in a wide variety of geographies around the world, this project anticipates generating significant amounts of new knowledge and information. The alliance thus will be able to serve as a knowledge donor and promote twining of projects through IW:LEARN to build capacity and improve project implementation. The project will develop an IW:LEARN compliant website, produce and disseminate at least two Experience Notes, two Results Notes and participate in regional and Global IW:LEARN Conferences, such as the biennial GEF IW Conference and Regional workshops.

Outcome	Indicator	Target
Outcome 3.2: Knowledge management and learning for the fields of large-scale and transboundary ocean conservation has been strengthened and expanded	Number of individuals with enhanced knowledge, capacity, and tools to implement ocean conservation at scale and/or transboundary ocean governance	1000, of which at least 30% are women
Outputs	**Indicator**	**Target**
Output 3.2.1: Learning initiatives that advance the field of large-scale ocean conservation and/or transboundary ocean governance and that provide training and professional development for MPA practitioners supported	Number of participants in learning initiatives supported by Blue Nature Alliance	500, of which at least 30% are women
Output 3.2.2: New tools, trainings, or innovative approaches for large-scale ocean conservation developed and disseminated, including via regional entities	Number of new tools, trainings, and innovations developed and disseminated	5
Output 3.2.3: Collaboration and coordination of NGOs, funders, and other implementors, working to advance MPAs, regional collaboration, and ocean conservation at scale increased.	Number of organizations and agencies participating in partner convenings and meetings hosted by the Blue Nature Alliance	20
Output 3.2.4: Data/knowledge management platforms for site and portfolio-level analyses created	Percent of engagement sites utilizing a data management platform	50%
Output 3.2.5: Results of and lessons from Blue Nature Alliance investments shared at international conferences, with the IW:LEARN and LME:LEARN communities of practitioners and with regional entities	Number of presentations given by Blue Nature Alliance partners on results and lessons	100
	Number of experience notes produced by the Alliance and shared with IW:LEARN	2
	Number of results notes produced by the Alliance and shared with IW:LEARN	2

4) Alignment with GEF focal area and/or Impact Program strategies:

This project aligns with the GEF's International Waters Focal Area Strategy (IW). It will directly support the "Sustaining health coastal and marine ecosystems" area of strategic action within the first IW objective "Strengthening Blue Economy Opportunities." The Blue Nature Alliance and the IW strategy similarly recognize the critical importance of key coastal and marine habitats for many nations' economic development and for local and global ocean health. Both have identified the key threats to these habitats—climate change, acidification, habitat loss, pollution, fishing, seabed mining—and have identified MPAs as a critical tool to help protect and restore these essential coastal and marine ecosystems.

This project will establish 750 million hectares of new MPAs and support 500 million hectares of existing MPAs in key biodiversity hotspots and coastal habitats. To complement existing GEF interventions within the International Waters Focal Area Strategy, the Alliance will give special consideration to investing within multi-country Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs) supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), as well as opportunities in Small Island Developing States (SIDS). The Alliance will incorporate any relevant TDAs/SAPs into its site-based engagement strategies. Whenever feasible, the project will identify opportunities to advance regional cooperation and transboundary governance frameworks.

The project will further work to innovate and mainstream marine area-based management and spatial tools, such as LSMPAs, into LMEs, regional entities and other communities of practice. It will support analysis of which policy and management instruments are most useful in reaching the Aichi target and the more ambitious call to protect 30 percent of the ocean. The Alliance will work at the site and regional level to stimulate private sector engagement in sustainable marine resources management (see section on Private Sector Engagement for more details).

The project may secondarily contribute to the "Catalyze sustainable fisheries management" and "Addressing pollution reduction in marine environments" areas of strategic action also under the first IW objective "Strengthening Blue Economy Opportunities." The Alliance will work with the fishing sector and local fishers in the design of each ocean conservation area supported by the project, working to ensure both biodiversity conservation and sustainable economic development. In many of the engagement sites, IUU fishing is a primary concern for governments and stakeholders and thus as the Alliance engages in site and regional level work, it will likely engage in policy reforms to end IUU, overfishing and to sustainably manage marine capture fisheries. The Alliance will also seek opportunities to link site-based conservation efforts supported by the Alliance to other initiatives led by Alliance members (and others) that implement market mechanisms to support sustainable fisheries value chains (see section on Private Sector Engagement for more details). By designing integrated source-to-sea approaches, the Alliance will help reduce land-based pollution, thus contributing indirectly to the goals under the "Addressing pollution reduction in marine environments" area for strategic action.

If international negotiations for a high seas treaty advance, then the Alliance may utilize co-financing to pilot ocean conservation models in the high seas, thus contributing to IW's second objective "Improve management in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ)."

Lastly, the Blue Nature Alliance would welcome the opportunity to be an active participant in the IW:LEARN and LME:LEARN learning communities to learn, exchange knowledge, and ensure integration of this project with other GEF investments.

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

There has been a significant increase in the declaration of MPAs in the last decade. Still, depending on which measure is used (MPAtlas[39] or WDPA[40]), only 4.8-7.6 percent of the world's ocean is under some form of protection, taking us only part of the way to the Aichi target and SDG14 target 5 of 10% by 2020. Of those areas declared for protection, a significant portion do not have sufficient financial or technical resources to achieve effective management, thus seriously undermining their ability to generate the desired biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services for human wellbeing.[41]

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[39] http://www.mpatlas.org/
[40] https://www.protectedplanet.net/marine
[41] Gill et al. 2017. Capacity shortfalls hinder the performance of marine protected areas globally. Nature 543: 665-679.

A GEF/UNDP report on "catalyzing ocean finance" estimated a cost of $28 billion to establish MPAs to achieve the 10% target.[42] Financing of MPAs is nowhere near sufficient to meet this need. For example, a 2017 report commissioned by the Packard Foundation[43] found that only a small number of foundations give approximately $40 million annually to placed-based conservation, and to sites primarily located in the developed world. While this study did not factor in public funding sources, it none-the-less highlights the fact that a significant increase in funding and support is needed.

Protecting 10% of the ocean and working towards the even more ambitious and target of protecting 30% of oceans cannot be realized without a strategic and consolidated investment and a coalition among key partners that can leverage each other's strength. The Blue Nature Alliance is bringing GEF, CI and Pew together with other private donors and encouraging co-investment from governments and private sector to spur much needed attention and investment at a scale necessary to move the needle in global ocean conservation.

Fortunately, the proliferation of LSMPAs has provided opportunities for economies of scale, bringing down the average costs of MPA designation and management.[44] This project explicitly works to build momentum for these more cost-effective large-scale models while focusing on innovation to further bring down costs. The Alliance will further build from the experience of its members to develop innovative financing models that will encourage public and private sector investment in MPAs.

By focusing on large-scale and investing in the most catalytic activities to advance sites, while seeking co-investment and long-term financing solutions early in the process, the Alliance will achieve ocean conservation results at a fraction of the cost of traditional MPA investments. Recent interventions by Pew, CI, and other civil society and philanthropic partners to support the legal gazettement of LSMPAs required an average of $5.12 per km^2 ($0.05 per hectare), in addition to the government's direct contributions to the gazettement process. The Alliance anticipates to be able to deliver results at similar costs per hectare. While ongoing management costs can be substantial, past experience has illustrated that it is possible to catalyze better management through key investments in strategic activities—such as the development of a management plan or a business plan for the site. The Alliance aims to invest a similar dollar per hectare ratio in specific interventions to help stand up management of new sites or to improve management of existing sites.

The GEF funding is crucial to achieve the Global Environmental Benefits (GEBs) of an additional 750 million hectares of new marine protected areas and 500 million hectares with improved or upgraded management (35% of the Aichi Target/SDG14 target 5), as compared to the baseline scenario. To be able to achieve the project goal, and the associated GEBs, the Alliance requires a minimum of $125,000,000 in project capital, which will be leveraged with an additional $200,000,000 in leveraged co-investments. Without the $25,000,000 contribution from the GEF, the investment from the other four core partners (totaling $100,000,000) will be insufficient to meet the project goal. Without the GEF contribution, the Alliance will be able to finance some activities, but will not be able to achieve the proposed legal recognition of new conservation areas or improved management effectiveness of existing areas at the scale required to meet the target GEBs. The Alliance will also have insufficient funding to address the fundamental barriers that are holding back the expansion of ocean protection.

In addition to $25,000,000 in direct project funding, the GEF will provide significant additional benefits to the Blue Nature Alliance. To meet the full financial needs of ocean conservation areas globally will require unlocking new and substantial funding flows. With its global reach and deep connections to national governments, bilateral and multilateral funders, and private sector investors, having the GEF as a core partner will open up significant opportunities for leverage funding, allowing the Alliance to meet its goal of securing at least $200,000,000 in leveraged co-investments.

Partnering with the GEF and the International Waters Program, will further incentivize and support the Alliance to focus on transboundary governance and regional cooperation. Without GEF funding, the additional costs associated with transboundary and regional work would be prohibitively expensive, resulting in a sole focus on interventions contained within national jurisdictions. Participation in the IW:LEARN community will further enable the Alliance to effectively engage beyond national jurisdictions.

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[42]Andrew Hudson and Yannick Glemarec, UNDP-GEF. 2012 Catalysing Ocean Finance Volume I Transforming Markets to Restore and Protect the Global Ocean

[43]California Environmental Associates. 2017. Our Shared Seas: A 2017 Overview of Ocean Threats and Conservation Funding. Prepared with support of the David and Lucile Packard Foundation.

[44] Andrew Hudson and Yannick Glemarec, UNDP-GEF. 2012

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

The Blue Nature Alliance will catalyze the conservation of 1.25 billion hectares of ocean, to help build resilience, promote human wellbeing, enhance ecosystem connectivity and function, and safeguard biodiversity. This will include:

3) 750 million hectares of new or expanded ocean conservation areas legally recognized
4) 500 million hectares of previously established ocean conservation areas with upgraded protections and/or improved management made up of:
      c. 100 million hectares of upgraded protection: the portion of a site that is legally upgraded (i.e. designated) to a higher level of protection will be counted; and
      d. 400 million hectares of existing conservation areas under improved management: the site must have an improved MPA management effectiveness score to be counted.

This will greatly exceed the GEF-7 target and will represent a significant contribution to the global target of protecting 30 percent of the global ocean.

Through this project, the Blue Nature Alliance anticipates directly benefiting 40,000 people, including local community members within each site whose livelihoods are directly tied to fisheries or tourism. It aims to benefit significantly more through the preservation of natural and cultural heritage and via the indirect benefits provided by ecosystems services. The Alliance will refine this estimate, including gender disaggregation during the PPG phase of the project if approved.

7) Innovativeness, sustainability and potential for scaling up

This project will directly contribute to the Blue Nature Alliance, which is an unprecedented partnership to achieve impact on a scale that is urgently needed. The project will convene multiple conservation and management actors in a given site to employ a holistic approach that brings together protection, production, governance and sustainable finance to effectively conserve the area for the long-term.

The project will pursue innovative mechanisms for achieving area-based ocean conservation at scale beyond traditional MPAs and OECMs, where selection criteria are met. For example, we will work to advance Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas and may pilot new ideas such as dynamic measures that move spatially and temporally based on water temperature and wildlife migrations. Where opportunities exist, the Alliance will support transboundary models for protection, including transboundary peace parks and coordinated management of networks of ecologically connected MPAs within transboundary LMEs. The project will provide a platform to trial new surveillance and enforcement tools and innovative ecological monitoring approaches across multiple sites to enhance utility and efficiency globally.

While the project will not do everything in every site, targeted investments will be designed to advance sites along their conservation journey in a significant way and leverage significant partner investments to do the same. The Alliance will work with all sites to develop a plan to ensure the site ultimately achieves effective and enduring management.

The project will support the development of business plans and long-term financing solutions for those sites that need support in this phase of their MPA journey. It will work to crowd in aligned private and public capital, including from impact funds with ocean mandates, to sustainably finance MPA management. Where appropriate the Alliance will deploy both technical and financial resources to design, support and execute conservation finance interventions that leverage long-term financing (i.e., design of user fee systems, payments for ecosystem service schemes, finance instruments such as blue bonds or debt swaps, etc.).

Innovative area-based conservation solutions, blended sustainable financing models and lessons learned will be documented and readily shared with various audiences, including IW:LEARN, LME:LEARN, the Big Ocean network of large scale MPA managers, the broader conservation community, and governments and communities pursuing large scale ocean conservation efforts.

1b. *Project Map and Coordinates.* Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.

See Annex A

2. STAKEHOLDERS. SELECT THE STAKEHOLDERS THAT HAVE PARTICIPATED IN CONSULTATIONS DURING THE PROJECT IDENTIFICATION PHASE:

☐ INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES;
☒ CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS;
☐ PRIVATE SECTOR ENTITIES;
☐ IF NONE OF THE ABOVE, PLEASE EXPLAIN WHY.

In addition, provide indicative information on how stakeholders, including civil society and indigenous peoples, will be engaged in the project preparation, and their respective roles and means of engagement.

To begin building and strengthening relationships, the Alliance has spent the last year, conducting a listening tour with leaders at the top ocean-focused foundations and organizations, to seek their input and advise on targets, timelines and their potential commitment to serve in a more formal capacity under the Alliance. The organizations with whom it engaged include:

- Agence Française de Dévelopement
- Asian Development Bank
- Big Ocean Network
- Bloomberg Philanthropies
- Blue Action Fund
- Ellison Foundation
- German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development
- Global Island Partnership (GLISPA)
- Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation
- Mindaroo Foundation
- Monterey Bay Aquarium
- Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation
- National Geographic Society
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
- Oak Foundation
- Oceana
- Oceans 5
- Packard Foundation
- Paradise Foundation
- Tiffany Foundation
- The University of California at Santa Barbara
- Waitt Foundation
- Walton Family Foundation
- WildAid
- Wildlife Conservation Society
- Wyss Foundation

This project will continue to engage these and other partners during the PPG phase and during project implementation to build alignment across this community as much as possible.

In addition, during project implementation the Blue Nature Alliance plans to conduct the following types of stakeholder engagement at each engagement site:

Stakeholder	Means of consultation/involvement during project execution	The means and timing of engagement	The means of information dissemination
Government— National and Local Agencies	Government agencies will be key partners at each site and will co-design engagement frameworks with the Alliance. Government can be a recipient of grant funding but will also often be co-investors in the investment framework.	The Alliance will seek the invitation of government before engaging in a diagnostic assessment and making any investments.	In person meetings and workshops as well as written materials

Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLC)	IPLC, including both women and men in the community, will be key partners at each site and will co-design engagement frameworks with the Alliance. Community groups can be recipients of grant funding to implement the investment framework. In some cases, the original invitation to engage in a site will come from IPLCs rather than from the Government.	The Alliance will engage IPLCs during the diagnostic assessment and throughout the life of the project.	In person meetings and workshops as well as written materials where appropriate
Resources Users	Resources users, including both women and men, will be engaged throughout the project as key stakeholders.	The Alliance will engage resource users during the diagnostic assessment and throughout the life of the project.	In person meetings and workshops as well as written materials where appropriate
Private Sector (including fishing sector)	The private sector will be engaged as a key stakeholder as well as a potential co-investor in long-term financing for ocean protection via blended finance models.	The Alliance will engage the private sector during the diagnostic assessment and throughout the life of the project.	In person meetings and workshops as well as written materials where appropriate
Conservation partners	Conservation partners will be key partners at each site and will co-design investment frameworks with the Alliance. They will also be recipients of grant funding to implement the investment framework (and sometimes co-investors in it).	The Alliance will engage local conservation partners during the diagnostic assessment and throughout the life of the project.	In person meetings and workshops as well as written materials where appropriate
Others (TBD)			

3. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. Briefly include below any gender dimensions relevant to the project, and any plans to address gender in project design (e.g. gender analysis). Does the project expect to include any gender-responsive measures to address gender gaps or promote gender equality and women empowerment? yes ☒ /no ☐ / tbd ☐ ; If possible, indicate in which results area(s) the project is expected to contribute to gender equality:
☒ closing gender gaps in access to and control over natural resources;
☒ improving women's participation and decision-making; and/or
☒ generating socio-economic benefits or services for women.
Will the project's results framework or logical framework include gender-sensitive indicators? yes☒ /no ☐ / tbd ☐

The project will include a streamlined social and environmental safeguards system based strongly on the safeguards system employed under the CI-GEF agency and adapted to fit the unique attributes of the Alliance. The safeguards system will be developed in the initial design stage of the Blue Nature Alliance in conjunction with the overall design of the granting mechanism and before the launch of the Alliance, which will facilitate the complete integration of safeguards into the Alliance operations, diagnostic process, monitoring protocols, etc. Once the Blue Nature Alliance begins operations, a

designated gender and safeguard specialist will play an active role reviewing all safeguards plans as well as monitoring the implementation of those plans.

In addition to maintaining high standards, the Blue Nature Alliance will also seek to build the capacity of local organizations to comply with safeguard requirements as well as develop innovative mechanisms to mitigate social and environmental risks and encourage the inclusion of marginalized groups as stakeholders and beneficiaries. Capacity building will take place through targeted training and capacity building interventions undertaken with select grantees that are capable and committed to improving their compliance. The designated gender and safeguard specialist will lead these training and capacity building interventions. The combination of high standards and effective capacity building will ensure broad compliance and performance across the portfolio of sites.

Gender will be highlighted and focused on as a foundational social safeguard under the project. Recent studies highlight the significant role women play in the ocean sphere. Worldwide, women make up nearly half of the fisheries sector workforce and are active in each stage of the fisheries supply chain from harvesting, processing, marketing, to trading.[45] Unfortunately, due to underlying social inequalities and a lack of representation in decision-making bodies, women's important role and contributions to the management and use of ocean resources are often unrecognized. The Blue Nature Alliance will support the implementation of gender-transformative ocean conservation projects that ensure women and men have equal access to and active participation in project activities and benefits.

This will be accomplished through strong requirements for grantees coupled with support and capacity building. First, all grantee proposals will include a mandatory Gender Equity and Women's Empowerment plan. Second, grantees will be supported to fulfill this requirement through access to CI's interactive and experienced-based capacity building model and set of tools developed through CI's Gender Program. Paramount among these is CI's *Guidelines for Integrating Gender & Social Equity into Conservation Programming,* which provide step-by-step instructions and resources to guide staff and practitioners to effectively integrate gender and social equity considerations within conservation projects and programs. Furthermore, gender trainings and capacity building interventions will be undertaken using CI's hands-on and interactive methodology developed and implemented within previous CI-GEF projects. Third, grantees will be encouraged to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of their gender equity interventions through the implementation of a strong and gender disaggregated monitoring protocol.

Using these tools, members of the Alliance will be guided and supported to operationalize gender within their projects including the completion of gender analyses, gender action plans, the development of gender-responsive indicators and the setting of ambitious, yet realistic, targets for women's participation and access to benefits. The Blue Nature Alliance will address gender gaps and seek to promote women's empowerment by minimizing barriers and maximizing opportunities for women and men to be equal participants and beneficiaries. These activities are intended to result in improvement in women's participation in projects, an increase in women's confidence and decision-making, and increased socio-economic benefits for both women and men.

4. Private sector engagement. Will there be private sector engagement in the project? (yes ☒ /no ☐). Please briefly explain the rationale behind your answer.

For many MPA sites, effective engagement with private sector stakeholders at multiple scales is crucial for sustaining conservation outcomes. While the nature, scope and diversity of private sector stakeholders and the strategies for engagement will be site and context specific, the Alliance has drawn upon its prior and current MPA multi-stakeholder engagement experience to identify potential entry points and engagement strategies across a number of sectors relevant to multiple prospective MPA sites considered for inclusion in the Alliance portfolio:

Seafood Sector: Marine Fishing & Aquaculture

In some cases, MPA sites may have significant exposure to commercial fishing and aquaculture industries. In addition to promoting multi-stakeholder engagement in marine spatial planning (MSP), new MPA designation and delineation, and management actions, the Alliance seeks opportunities for direct engagement with the seafood sector. The Alliance intends

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[45] J. Siles, et al. (2019). Advancing Gender in the Environment: Gender in Fisheries - A Sea of Opportunities. IUCN and USAID. Washington, USA: USAID. 68pp.

to build upon the extensive, ongoing collaboration of CI and Pew with marine fishing and aquaculture industry stakeholders to identify market interventions that seek to achieve dual marine protection and economic development objectives.

CI has demonstrated leadership in sector and industry-wide seafood sustainability, social responsibility, and supply chain value creation initiatives at multiple scales. Pioneering the integration of environmental and social safeguards, CI is working with the world's largest multinational seafood retailers, wholesalers, and harvest operators to jointly develop standards, tools and approaches for improving the ecological sustainability and social responsibility of the world's commercial seafood supply.

For example, in the Western Central Pacific, CI, with joint support from the GEF-World Bank Common Oceans Program, Emerson Collective, the Arctic Circle Assembly, and the Government of Iceland, convened the Arctic-Pacific Fisheries Exchange. The exchange has resulted in new and continuing dialogue between Pacific Island leaders related to improved regional fisheries management regimes, technology transfer opportunities, and new models for public and private investment, including the design and launch of a prospective regional joint venture that seeks to couple enhanced large-scale ocean protection –including enhanced restrictions of industrial fishing in large High Seas pockets in the Pacific Ocean—with preferential trading arrangements with the U.S.'s largest purchaser of Pacific tuna. If successful, the joint venture arrangement will serve as a global model for effective, regional-scale integration of large-scale ocean protection and industry economic interests.

Travel, Tourism and Hospitality Industry

Tourism represents a significant source of economic activity in a number of existing and potential MPA sites. In areas with high coastal and marine tourism activity (or potential), direct linkages between biodiversity and environmental quality and industry economic performance provide strong incentives for aligning industry and marine protection and management objectives.

The Alliance intends to draw upon CI and Pew's current and prior experiences working with the Travel, Tourism and Hospitality Industry to identify industry engagement models relevant in other MPA contexts and plans to expand its engagement with the industry and other partners to identify additional joint value creation opportunities in portfolio sites. The Raja Ampat MPA network in Indonesia provides a keystone example of tourism sector engagement as part of a regional multi-stakeholder effort to support effective MPA management. CI, together with a coalition of partner organizations representing international and local NGOs, local and regional civil society organizations, and private hospitality, dive and other tourism operators worked together with the Indonesian Ministry of Tourism to promote Raja Ampat as a world-class diving destination, leading to a compound annual growth rate in visitors of 30.5% over the period 2008-2014. The Raja Ampat multi-stakeholder coalition and Ministry of Tourism designed and mobilized a Raja Ampat annual visitor pass system, enabling improved collection and monitoring of tourism activity –data critical for adaptive management of tourism impacts—while generating new revenues in excess of US $1.5 million annually in support of the Raja Ampat MPA Management Authority. The Raja Ampat case serves as an excellent blueprint for multi-stakeholder engagement and highly replicable sustainable tourism revenue models that reinforce effective, ongoing, and adaptive management of marine protected areas.

In addition to direct local and regional-level engagement approaches, Alliance members are exploring portfolio-level opportunities to engage with large, multinational travel and hotel corporates with assets in and around priority MPA sites. For example, in the hotel industry, continuing merger and acquisition activity and overall trends toward industry consolidation presents opportunities to form strategic institutional collaborations between the Alliance and multinational hotel corporations that facilitate local and regional MPA engagement across multiple sites. In 2010, CI launched a formal collaborative partnership with Starwood Hotels & Resorts (subject of a 2018 merger with Marriott International), a multinational company representing more than 1,000 properties in roughly 100 countries, with a focus on enhancing corporate-wide environmental performance related to energy and water efficiency, sustainable seafood sourcing, and stakeholder engagement.

Technology & Engineering Industry

The Alliance believes that technology and engineering solutions have the potential to create both cost savings, and new revenue generating opportunities related to MPAs. Advances in high resolution remote and in-situ sensing, and new and

cost-competitive data collection platforms (e.g. autonomous sea surface and subsea drones and camera technology) are creating opportunities to more safely, comprehensively, and cost effectively conduct MPA monitoring and surveillance. Nested within its broader workplan, the Alliance seeks to identify proven and emerging technology and engineering solutions relevant to the monitoring, surveillance and data collection and analysis needs of MPAs within (and beyond) its portfolio. Through its institutional programs, both Pew and CI have actively engaged with the world's largest technology firms (e.g. Google, Amazon, HP) and innovative start-ups and small-medium firms (OceanMind, Pelagic Data Systems, Global Fishing Watch, etc.) to address challenges inherent in large-scale ocean observation and management and intend to carry over and expand engagement with relevant technology providers. Additionally, where feasible, the Alliance will explore ways to lever the breadth of its MPA portfolio to achieve potential site-level cost savings though economies of scale and economies of scope opportunities.

Financial Sector

While having comparatively less direct impacts on marine protection than tourism or seafood, the Alliance seeks to actively engage with key segments of the financial sector in the promotion of its marine protection goals. As with engagement strategies in other sectors, the Alliance will take a strategic, multi-tiered approach that is aligned with national marine protection objectives, policy frameworks, economic characteristics, and financing requirements and capacities. Drawing upon the prior and current experience of its members, the Alliance plans to explore engagement strategies for the following industry segments:

- Investment Banking Institutions – Capitalizing on the continued market and government demand for green bonds and similar financial products, the Alliance plans to work closely with development finance institutions such as the GEF, World Bank, EIB, and private banking institutions to identify opportunities to design, structure and issue innovative financial products that promote private investment in marine protection objectives, where financially feasible. Since its establishment, CI has been a recognized leader in financial sector engagement and facilitation of the design, adaptation and structuring of financial products that increase capital available for conservation solutions by catalyzing private sector investment including, by way of example, the recent US $152 million forests bond issued by the IFC in collaboration with CI and CI corporate partner BHP Billiton. In addition to the design and structuring of financial products, the Alliance sees additional opportunities for collaboration with investment banking institutions on facilitating strategies such as debt-swaps and restructurings if and where appropriate for portfolio sites.

- Private Equity & Private Debt Funds – Particularly with respect to addressing near-and intermediate term capital requirements, the Alliance seeks to reinforce and expand its engagement with private equity and private debt funds, and other asset managers with aligned marine conservation and sustainable development investment mandates. As illustrated by CI's partnership with the GEF and Rare in facilitating investment in the sustainable fisheries-focused Meloy Fund, and the numerous examples of externally managed impact funds CI has either seeded (financially) or otherwise supported (e.g. Althelia Climate Fund I, Althelia Sustainable Ocean Fund, Clarmondial Food Securities Fund, Lightsmith Group CRAFT, Eco.Business Fund, etc.), the Alliance is well positioned to engage with asset managers around aligned private and/or public-private investment opportunities conducive to improved MPA management and economic progress. Presently, CI through Conservation International Ventures ("CI Ventures") fund is exploring a co-financing arrangement with the Althelia Sustainable Ocean Fund and Blue Finance to support the replication of innovative public-private models for MPA investment.

- Local & Regional Banking Institutions – Where relevant, the Alliance will explore strategies for engagement with local and regional banking institutions, particularly those serving small- and medium enterprise (SME) markets in portfolio sites. Leveraging CI's SME financing experience and networks in key geographies, the Alliance will seek to replicate proven collaboration with local and regional financial institutions that promote access to credit and other financial services for enterprises directly engaged in commercial activities that reinforce marine protection and conservation.

- Insurance & Reinsurance Industry – Lastly, the Alliance, through its members, has been actively engaged with the insurance and reinsurance industry to identify risk-management and insurance-linked financial product strategies for addressing climate and other material risks relevant to MPAs and ancillary

industries. CI has formed an institutional partnership with Willis Towers Watson to explore the application of both traditional and innovative risk management and insurance strategies for coastal countries and island states.

5. Risks. Indicate risks, including climate change, potential social and environmental risks that might prevent the project objectives from being achieved or may be resulting from project implementation, and, if possible, propose measures that address these risks to be further developed during the project design (table format acceptable).

Risk	Rating	Risk Mitigation Measure
Political instability in countries with site-based engagements may result in government changes, which may lead to reevaluation of government priorities and redirection of funding allocations away from ocean conservation areas	**M**	• The Alliance will require formal commitments from Governments (or groups with jurisdictional authority), including financial co-investment, for each proposed engagement site. • The Alliance may deploy resources to buffer the uncertainties that political changes may bring to specific sites, depending ongoing re-assessments of project viability. • The Alliance Management and Delivery Team will assess the political landscape and power dynamics of site-based investments in each Engagement Framework and closely follow potential changes in governments to readily design and implement risk management strategies, as needed.
Global economic and financial challenges may lead to reduced funding from international donors, and may lead to leverage targets not being achieved	**M**	• The Alliance has included conservative leverage targets in this proposal that should continue to be achievable in the event of an economic downturn. • The Alliance will also target having a 5-year plan for reaching effective management and long-term financing for most sites, and will support business planning and other long-term financing initiatives that will enable sites to achieve financial sustainability and that will account for different global and regional economic conditions.
Weak management capacities for planning, management, and governance reduce the effectiveness of individual site-based engagements	**M**	• This risk will be reduced by Alliance support for capacity building, planning, and other activities to improve or appropriately design management and governance throughout its engagement with sites. This will include support at both institutional (e.g., National PA agency) and local levels (MPA managers). • The Engagement Framework will be a robust assessment of the capacity gaps and needs for each site, and Alliance support will be directed toward addressing those needs as part of a holistic approach to improved ocean conservation outcomes. • In addition, the Alliance will dedicate resources toward research and knowledge, strengthening communities of practice and learning, which will help support research, analysis, and technological innovation as well as networking, exchanges, capacity building, and development and sharing of best-practices, in order to support improved capacity

		both in the sites targeted by the Alliance and in the ocean conservation community, generally.
Stakeholder involvement, including that of indigenous peoples and local communities, is not sufficient to ensure support for conservation actions	L	• The Alliance will implement a robust system to ensure appropriate stakeholder involvement, including the use of gender and indigenous peoples safeguards, a grievance mechanism, a code of conduct, and other tools to ensure that engagements are properly assessed for risks they could pose to community members and that appropriate safeguard instruments or risk management controls are incorporated into project design.
Global climate change impacts the MPAs negatively	M/H	• The Alliance's partnerships with ocean conservation areas, regional institutions, and local organizations will encourage sharing of experiences related to climate change adaptation programs, and the Alliance will dedicate resources toward research and knowledge and towards communities of practice and learning, which could result in improved understanding of, and tools to address, climate change impacts. • An increasing number of studies are highlighting the importance of the role of MPAs in climate change adaptation and mitigation, meaning that the Alliance efforts will be directly supporting climate change adaptation and mitigation through new and improved oceans conservation areas.
Threats to marine ecosystems grow beyond background levels and thus demand still higher investments.	L	▪ The Alliance will support the development of robust monitoring and evaluation systems for sites in which it engages, while also monitoring performance of sites at the portfolio levels. The project will maintain regular communications with implementing partners to ensure that they are monitoring and taking necessary steps to address threats to marine ecosystems.

6. Coordination. Outline the institutional structure of the project including monitoring and evaluation coordination at the project level. Describe possible coordination with other relevant GEF-financed projects and other initiatives.

The Blue Nature Alliance believes that it will only achieve its goals, at the pace and scale needed, if it collaborates, embraces, and aligns with others. The Alliance has developed a framework that creates pathways for engagement of leading NGOs, donors, and technical experts to participate in the Alliance as co-founders, implementing partners, thought-leaders, advisors, and advocates. This framework represents the Alliance's current thinking but is subject to change as additional core donors commit at least $25 million and the Steering Council forms and finalized terms of references for these groups.

Figure 8. Governance and Alliance Framework

The Steering Council will provide oversight and guidance to the Alliance Management and Delivery Team on annual work-plans, budget and operations as presented to them at regular meetings. The Steering Council will consist of those donors who have donated $25 million or more to the Alliance. As a core $25 million partner, the GEF would have a seat on the Steering Council. Each such donor will choose a senior representative to sit on the Steering Council. If a donor chooses not to occupy a seat on the Steering Council at any one time, they will nevertheless retain the option to do so at any time. The Steering Council will meet twice a year, with at least one of those meetings being in person. Nothing will prevent the Steering Council from meeting at other times during a year on due notice provided by email at least one week in advance of a meeting or on shorter notice by agreement.

The Steering Council's responsibilities shall include, but not be limited to the following[46]:

- Represent and communicate the Blue Nature Alliance's objectives, and engagement strategy as necessary to help leverage and amplify our collective impact;
- Advocate for Alliance goals;
- On an annual basis, review and approve the Alliance's annual strategic work-plan, target outcomes, and budget.
- On a six month basis, review and approve new sites for investments.[47]
- Advise on the Alliance's site scoping process to identify new site opportunities[48]
- Evaluate and provide input on operational effectiveness;
- Evaluate and provide input on progress towards goal achievement;
- Recommend new donors and support fundraising, including leverage funding;
- Resolve disputes when the Alliance Management and Delivery Team is unable to do so.

Alliance Management and Delivery Team from CI and Pew leadership will provide oversight for the design and execution of the annual portfolio-level strategic work-plan and budget, including overseeing site investments, budget, and grant-making. The Alliance Management and Delivery Team will seek guidance from the Steering Council on all major decisions materially different from the approved annual strategy. The Delivery Team will execute the annual portfolio-level strategic work-plan and budget, partnership engagements, grant management, and program activities in a highly efficient and effective manner.

Responsibilities:
- Oversee Alliance performance;

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[46] This does not supersede requirements or limitations outlined in grant agreements between core donors and Conservation International or the Pew Charitable Trusts.

[47] If new site investment opportunities emerge in between the bi-annual meetings and need rapid action, the Alliance Management and Delivery Team will have authority to make site investment decisions up to $500,000. For site investments greater than $500,000, the Steering Council will be notified by email and will have two weeks to object to the investment.

[48] As described in the site selection process, the Alliance will give special consideration to sites that are aligned with GEF's IW Focal Area Strategy. The use of GEF funds (managed in a segregated account) will be restricted to GEF-eligible countries. Other funding sources can be used to support project goals in non GEF-eligible countries. The Blue Nature Alliance will not invest resources (including co-financing) in any countries on the US State Department sanctions list.

- Engage and inform Steering Council of ongoing site engagements, key investments, and decisions;
- Annually, prepare annual strategic work-plan, target outcomes, and budget for approval by Steering Council
- Scope new sites opportunities;
- Co-design site engagement frameworks with stakeholders and relevant Alliance partners, including seeking co-investment and leveraged financing;
- Every six months, prepare site selection recommendations for the Steering Council's approval[49]
- Manage and deploy Alliance resources in accordance to best practices and Steering Council guidance;
- Provide technical guidance on sites and manage implementing partners grants and contracts;
- Manage and coordinate Alliance partners;
- Engage new partners and support fundraising;
- Measure, monitor, and report Alliance performance to the Steering Council and other partners;
- Resolve disputes where necessary;
- Direct and coordinate external strategic communications;
- Represent the Alliance on the global stage and advocate for our shared goals.

Leverage Partners will carry out projects that directly contribute to a shared investment strategy for a site (or for a global activity) that does not get recorded on the books of the Blue Nature Alliance. Examples include providing technical assistance, increased government funding allocations, fees generated from systems put in place by the Blue Nature Alliance, and co-investment by multilateral/bilateral agencies, private foundations, and the private sector. As appropriate, the Alliance may form ad hoc or standing sub-committees on specific topics or to address specific needs to help coordinate and advise the Alliance.

Responsibilities:
- Help identify potential geographies and partners for potential investment
- Co-design site investments with the Delivery Team, other key stakeholders and relevant Alliance partners;
- Coordinate non-Alliance funded activities to achieve shared goals;
- Engage and contribute to the Delivery Team as expertise is available and needed (e.g., technical guidance to sites and other Implementing Partners); and
- Align external communications on shared efforts

Strategic Advisors will provide input and feedback on technical, regional, cultural, scientific and other issues as needed. These advisors may include scientists, regional experts, government officials, industry representatives and marine conservation practitioners. As needed, advisors may form part of technical working groups or advisory councils. GEF technical staff would be welcome advisors to the Alliance.

Blue Nature Alliance Grant-making facility

Achieving these ambitious outcomes will require strategically deploying financial resources to a global network of implementing partners in a short time frame and monitoring and guiding their work to ensure efficient and effective delivery. The Alliance will build from CI's extensive grant-making experience and infrastructure to deploy funding with minimal administrative costs and overhead. Over the past 18 years, two conservation funding programs at CI, the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) and the Global Conservation Fund (GCF) have deployed a combined total of at least $350 million to more than 2,300 grantees in nearly 100 countries.

This experience ensures that the Alliance has the ability to quickly perform due diligence, assess risks, design appropriate contractual arrangements, implement and monitor safeguards, and collaborate with partners to implement projects and adaptively manage as needed.

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[49] If new site investment opportunities emerge in between the bi-annual meetings and need rapid action, the Alliance Management and Delivery Team will have authority to make site investment decisions up to $500,000. For site investments greater than $500,000, the Steering Council will be notified by email and will have two weeks to object to the investment.

The Blue Nature Alliance will establish an open mechanism to receive expressions of interest from potential implementing partners. Proposals will be invited and evaluated through a fair and transparent process. The Alliance will also establish a publicly available grievance mechanism.

Other GEF Projects

Through engagement with LME:LEARN, IW:LEARN, and directly with governments and local implementing partners at each engagement sites, the Alliance will work to understand and collaborate with all locally and regionally relevant projects. In particular, the Alliance will work to build upon recently completed or existing LME projects and coordinate with ongoing or approved GEF projects. While the list of relevant projects will evolve overtime, summarized here is an initial list (not comprehensive) of potential projects that the Alliance aims to collaborate with:

Recently completed or existing LME projects that the Alliance will aim to learn from and build from:
- Catalyzing Implementation of the Strategic Action Programme for the Sustainable Management of Shared Living Marine Resources in the Caribbean and North Brazil Shelf Large Marine Ecosystems
- Implementation of the Strategic Action Program of the Gulf of Mexico Large Marine Ecosystem
- Protection of the Canary Current Large Marine Ecosystem (LME)
- Establishment and Operation of a Regional System of Fisheries Refugia in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand
- Implementing the Strategic Action Programme for the South China Sea
- PAS Strengthening Coastal and Marine Resources Management in the Coral Triangle of the Pacific - under the Pacific Alliance for Sustainability Program
- Long-term Financial Mechanism to Enhance Mediterranean MPA Management Effectiveness
- ARCTIC: Improvement of Environmental Governance and Knowledge Management for SAP-Arctic Implementation

Ongoing or approved GEF projects that the Alliance will work to collaborate with:
- Setting the Foundations for Zero Net Loss of the Mangroves that Underpin Human Wellbeing in the North Brazil Shelf LME
- Developing Organizational Capacity for Ecosystem Stewardship and Livelihoods in Caribbean Small-Scale Fisheries (StewardFish)
- Catalyzing Implementation of a Strategic Action Programme for the Sustainable Management of Shared Living Marine Resources in the Humboldt Current System (HCS)
- Towards Sustainable Management of the Canary Current Large Marine Ecosystem (CCLME) – Initial Support to SAP Implementation
- Strengthening of the Enabling Environment, Ecosystem-based Management and Governance to Support Implementation of the Strategic Action Programme of the Guinea Current Large Marine Ecosystem

7. Consistency with National Priorities. Is the project consistent with the National strategies and plans or reports and assessments under relevant conventions? (yes ☒ /no ☐). If yes, which ones and how:

Because the nations to be invested in are not yet determined, this project does not explicitly tie to any of the below national strategies, plans or reports. As country-specific investments are committed, the Blue Nature Alliance will ensure that all grants are consistent with the appropriate national strategies, plans and reports, particularly NBSAPs and CBD National Reports.

> *8. Knowledge Management.* Outline the "Knowledge Management Approach" for the project and how it will contribute to the project's overall impact, including plans to learn from relevant projects, initiatives and evaluations.

Knowledge management is an essential and core part of this project. The Alliance recognizes that to reach the goal of this project, and more significantly the global call for 30 percent of oceans effectively protected, will require more than just a direct investment in the creation of new ocean conservation areas and in improving management of existing ones. The

Alliance must also make it easier for others to act as well. That requires ensuring that the learning, tools, and lessons generated by the Alliance are shared as widely and effectively as possible. The project's approach to knowledge management and learning is reflected in Component 3 of the project description, but given its significance is summarized again here.

Blue Nature Alliance will support and participate in existing learning communities, including IW:LEARN, LME:LEARN, the Big Ocean network, as well as support new learning initiatives, such as dedicated learning exchanges and training programs to elevate the capacity of the entire field of large-scale ocean conservation, reaching at least 500 ocean conservation practitioners and stakeholders, of which at least 30 percent will be women. Across its portfolio of sites and via dedicated projects, the Alliance will produce at least five new tools and publications that advance the field of large-scale ocean conservation. Specific opportunities for investment will be identified with partners and end-users to maximize the utility of any new models and tools.

The Alliance will seek to build greater alignment and cooperation between the various actors supporting large-scale ocean conservation through a series of regular partner convenings and through the formation of advisory groups and technical task forces. At least 20 organizations will participate in Alliance-led partner convenings.

The Alliance will further create and share a data management platform for portfolio and global level analyses. Whenever allowed by data providers, data will be made available for inclusion on GEF's One Shared Ocean data platform. The new tools, models and other lessons generated through the project will be shared across all engagement sites, via the learning networks and partner convenings mentioned above, at international conferences and at regional entities and forums. The Alliance anticipates that project partners will deliver at least 100 presentations on the results and lessons generated from the project.

The Alliance will actively participate in the GEF IW:LEARN network to disseminate best practices and lessons learned generated from the project. It will also use the reach of IW:LEARN and LME:LEARN to train MPA and LME practitioners on the use of the new tools developed as part of the project and to learn about other innovations that could be adopted by Alliance investment sites. The project will develop an IW:LEARN compliant website, produce and disseminate at least two Experience Notes, two Results Notes and participate in regional and Global IW:LEARN Conferences, such as the biennial GEF IW Conference and Regional workshops.

PART III: APPROVAL/ENDORSEMENT BY GEF OPERATIONAL FOCAL POINT(S)

A. RECORD OF ENDORSEMENT OF GEF OPERATIONAL FOCAL POINT (S) ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT(S):
   (Please attach the Operational Focal Point endorsement letter(s) with this template. For SGP, use this SGP OFP endorsement letter).

NAME	POSITION	MINISTRY	DATE *(MM/dd/yyyy)*

PROGRAM/PROJECT MAP AND GEOGRAPHIC COORDINATES

(when possible)
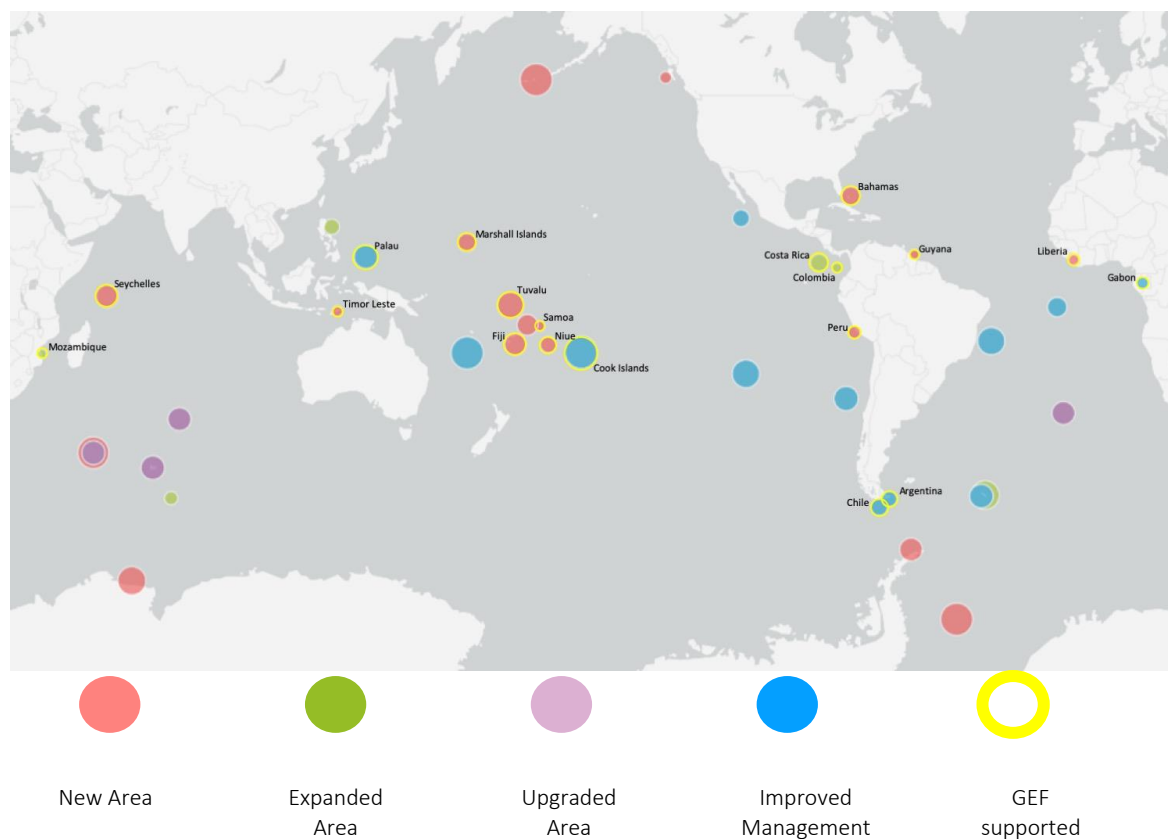
Map of initial opportunities identified during the desk-top scoping exercise. The size of the circle represents the potential size of the ocean conservation area. Potential GEF-eligible engagement sites that are within GEF supported LMEs, SIDs, and/or have potential for transboundary collaboration are highlighted with a yellow ring and named. This list is preliminary and does not reflect a commitment to invest in any of these sites. Additional sites are currently being scoped including in the Coral Triangle, Indian Ocean, Africa, and Meso America Barrier Reef. New sites will be scoped and added throughout the project period.

Annex B

GEF 7 Core Indicator Worksheet

Attached as separate file.

Project Taxonomy Worksheet

Attached as separate file.