



## Common Oceans - Sustainable utilization and conservation of biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction

### Part I: Program Information

**GEF ID**

**Program Type**

PFD

**Type of Trust Fund**

GET

**CBIT/NGI**

☐ CBIT

☐ NGI

**Program Title**

Common Oceans - Sustainable utilization and conservation of biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction

**Countries**

Global

**Agency(ies)**

FAO, UNEP, UNDP

**Other Executing Partner(s)**

WWF-US and ISSF

**Executing Partner Type**

Others

**GEF Focal Area**

International Waters

**Taxonomy**

Least Developed Countries, Climate Change Adaptation, Climate Change, Focal Areas, Private sector, Small Island Developing States, Ecosystem-based Adaptation, Innovation, Mainstreaming adaptation, Plastics, Chemicals and Waste, International Waters, SIDS : Small Island Dev States, Large Marine Ecosystems, Pollution, Fisheries, Marine Protected Area, Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis, Learning, Strategic Action Plan Implementation, Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction, Species, Biodiversity, Threatened Species, Mainstreaming, Protected Areas and Landscapes, Coastal and Marine Protected Areas, Strengthen institutional capacity and decision-making, Influencing models, Convene multi-stakeholder alliances, Deploy innovative financial instruments, Demonstrate innovative approaches, Transform policy and regulatory environments, Private Sector, Stakeholders, Individuals/Entrepreneurs, Large corporations, SMEs, Consultation, Type of Engagement, Information Dissemination, Partnership, Awareness Raising, Communications, Education, Behavior change, Strategic Communications, Non-Governmental Organization, Civil Society, Community Based Organization, Academia, Gender results areas, Gender Equality, Capacity Development, Gender Mainstreaming, Sex-disaggregated indicators, Targeted Research, Capacity, Knowledge and Research, Enabling Activities, Indicators to measure change, Adaptive management, Theory of change

**Rio Markers****Climate Change Mitigation**

Climate Change Mitigation 0

**Climate Change Adaptation**

Climate Change Adaptation 1

**Duration**

60 In Months

**Agency Fee(\$)**

2,404,776

**Program Commitment Deadline****Submission Date**

3/23/2020

**Impact Program**

IP-Food-Land-Restoration **No**

IP-Sustainable Cities **No**

IP-Sustainable Forest Management Amazon **No**

IP-Sustainable Forest Management Congo **No**

IP-Sustainable Forest Management Drylands **No**

Other Program **Yes**

**A. Indicative Focal/Non-Focal Area Elements**

<b>Programming Directions</b>	<b>Expected Outcomes</b>	<b>Trust Fund</b>	<b>GEF Amount(\$)</b>	<b>Co-Fin Amount(\$)</b>
IW-2-4	ABNJ sustainably managed	GET	26,719,744	264,246,227
<b>Total Program Cost (\$)</b>			<b>26,719,744</b>	<b>264,246,227</b>

## B. Indicative Project description summary

### Program Objective

To promote sustainable use of ABNJ living natural resources and strengthened biodiversity conservation in the face of a changing environment.

Program Component	Financing Type	Program Outcomes	Trust Fund	GEF Amount(\$)	Co-Fin Amount(\$)
Component 1 - Strengthening frameworks, processes and incentives for more effective fisheries governance and management in ABNJ	Technical Assistance	<div><div>1. Policy and legal frameworks, incorporating obligations and good practices to support sustainable use of ABNJ resources harmonized, integrated and implemented.</div><div>2. Fisheries management processes to enhance responsiveness to uncertainty under changing conditions strengthened.</div><div>3. Incentives and deterrents to promote compliance with existing regulations further developed, strengthened and adopted.</div></div>	GET	5,347,587	55,004,524

Program Component	Financing Type	Program Outcomes	Trust Fund	GEF Amount(\$)	Co-Fin Amount(\$)
Component 2. Improving capacity to manage fisheries sustainably in ABNJ	Technical Assistance	<p>1. Institutional and individual knowledge, skills and tools to apply EAFM in ABNJ strengthened.</p> <p>2. Quality and availability of technical/scientific information to support evidence-based decision-making on fisheries governance, investment and management in ABNJ strengthened.</p> <p>3. Capacity built to develop and enforce management measures related to ABNJ living resources to help reduce IUU fishing.</p> <p>Innovative technological solutions for sustainable use of ABNJ living resources further developed, promoted and deployed.</p>	GET	10,368,122	127,102,180

Program Component	Financing Type	Program Outcomes	Trust Fund	GEF Amount(\$)	Co-Fin Amount(\$)
Component 3 - Improving stakeholder coordination and engagement in multi-sectoral processes addressing governance and management of ABNJ		1. Sector mandates, roles and responsibilities related to ABNJ clarified and promoted (awareness raised) and sector-specific impacts and ecological connections better understood  2. Cross-sectoral technical knowledge sharing and coordination improved	GET	6,145,148	50,475,395
Component 4 - Improving knowledge and Knowledge Management and lesson learning for more informed decision-making among stakeholders to support sustainable utilization of ABNJ	Technical Assistance	1. Quality and availability of information on ABNJ (challenges and solutions) for decision-makers, civil society and private sector investors improved.  2. Information exchange mechanisms and new knowledge management systems developed or strengthened to support awareness-raising and more transparent coherent decision-making.  3. Effective on-going Program Monitoring and Evaluation.	GET	3,583,331	22,608,133
Sub Total (\$)				25,444,188	255,190,232

**Program Management Cost (PMC)**

GET	1,275,556	9,055,995
Sub Total(\$)	1,275,556	9,055,995
Total Program Cost(\$)	26,719,744	264,246,227

**Please provide justification**  
According to our calculations 1,275,556 is within the 5% threshold



C. Co-Financing for the Program by Source, by Name and by Type

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount(\$)
GEF Agency	FAO	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	5,000,000
GEF Agency	FAO	Grant	Investment mobilized	3,000,000
CSO	ACAP, CCSBT, IATTC, ICCAT, IOTC, IWC, FFA, WCPFC	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	9,280,000
Private Sector	ISSA, OPAGAC, TunaCons, Transmarina	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	45,000,000
Government	NOAA, European Commission	Grant	Investment mobilized	5,000,000
Government	NOAA, European Commission	In-kind	Investment mobilized	53,000,000
CSO	BirdLife International, Conservation International, International Pole and Line Foundation , ISSF, Ocean Outcomes, MSC, Pew, WWF	In-kind	Investment mobilized	23,500,000
CSO	BirdLife International, Conservation International, International Pole and Line Foundation , ISSF, Ocean Outcomes, MSC, Pew, WWF	Grant	Investment mobilized	3,000,000
GEF Agency	FAO	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	4,000,000

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount(\$)
GEF Agency	FAO	Grant	Investment mobilized	3,000,000
Others	RFMOs: GFCM, NAFO, NEAFC, NPFC, SEAFO, SIOFA, SPRFMO	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	6,900,000
Private Sector	Fishing industry: SIODFA, Sealord, ICFA	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	39,000,000
Government	NOAA	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	6,500,000
GEF Agency	UNEP	Grant	Recurrent expenditures	1,500,000
CSO	WCMC	Grant	Investment mobilized	1,000,000
CSO	GRID ARENDAL	Grant	Recurrent expenditures	2,500,000
CSO	Global Ocean Forum	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	1,500,000
Others	Governments of France New Zealand Portugal Netherlands Singapore European Commission Norway Sweden	Grant	Recurrent expenditures	8,000,000

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount(\$)
CSO	OPRI, Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Japan Nippon Foundation, Japan Oceano Azul Foundation, Portugal Pew Charitable Trusts STRONG High Seas Project Nausicaa National Sea Center, France World Ocean Network IUCN World Maritime University WWF GOBI Wollongong University, Australia Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association University of South Pacific University of West Indies University of Cape Town Xiamen University, China	Unknown at this stage	Recurrent expenditures	4,450,000
Private Sector	International Cable Protection Committee International Chamber of Shipping International Coalition of Fisheries Associations Google Facebook	Grant	Investment mobilized	750,000
Others	UNDOALOS IOC/UNESCO CBD Secretariat IMO UNDP World Tourism Organization Pacific Islands Forum Abidjan Convention Nairobi Convention OSPAR IOTC SIOFA CARICOM CPPS NEAFC SPRFMO WCPFC Benguela Commission LME Sargasso Sea Commission iAtlantic	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	1,850,000
Donor Agency	Worl Maritime University	Grant	Investment mobilized	400,000
Others	Bermuda Institute of Science	Grant	Investment mobilized	17,220,000
Others	NASA	Grant	Investment mobilized	1,500,000
Others	NOAA	Grant	Investment mobilized	500,000
Others	AFB (Agence Française de Biodiversité)	Grant	Investment mobilized	115,000

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount(\$)
Others	Duke University	Grant	Investment mobilized	2,300,000
Others	Imperial College London	Grant	Investment mobilized	200,000
Others	Global Fishing Watch	Grant	Investment mobilized	1,250,000
Donor Agency	FFEM	Grant	Investment mobilized	3,270,695
CSO	Sargasso Sea Commission	Grant	Recurrent expenditures	1,000,000
CSO	Sargasso Sea Commission	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	600,000
CSO	MarViva	Grant	Investment mobilized	1,610,162
Others	Université de Bretagne Occidental	Grant	Investment mobilized	150,370
GEF Agency	FAO	Grant	Recurrent expenditures	3,400,000

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount(\$)
CSO	Conservation International	Grant	Recurrent expenditures	1,500,000
CSO	WWF-US	Grant	Recurrent expenditures	1,500,000
Total Program Cost(\$)				264,246,227

**Describe how any "Investment Mobilized" was identified**

Investment mobilized corresponds to: • Non-recurrent expenditures associated with FAO projects directly related to the activities of this Project (e.g. activities under the Blue Growth Initiative, Port-State Measures Agreement support or Coastal Fisheries Initiative for straddling stocks) • Non-recurrent expenditures associated with projects financed by NOAA (extra-budgetary activities in support of stock assessments in ICCAT/IATTC) or the EU (e.g. Large-Scale Tagging Project in ICCAT, Support to Science and Compliance in IOTC), mostly with RFMO Secretariats, that are directly related to the activities of this Project • Investment mobilized corresponds to non-recurrent expenditures associated with projects directly related to the activities of this Project (e.g. Pew Charitable Trusts projects for the coming biennium), or portions of the project activities that are directly financed by the partner (e.g. ISSF work on mitigation of bycatch in purse-seine fleet) and by other investors from the private sector.

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

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Trust Fund</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Focal Area</b>	<b>Programming of Funds</b>	<b>Amount(\$)</b>	<b>Fee(\$)</b>	<b>Total(\$)</b>
FAO	GET	Global	International Waters	International Waters	21,567,450	1,941,070	23,508,520
UNEP	GET	Global	International Waters	International Waters	2,500,000	225,000	2,725,000
UNDP	GET	Global	International Waters	International Waters	2,652,294	238,706	2,891,000
<b>Total GEF Resources(\$)</b>					<b>26,719,744</b>	<b>2,404,776</b>	<b>29,124,520</b>

Core Indicators

Indicator 2 Marine protected areas created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
12,000,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Indicator 2.1 Marine Protected Areas Newly created

Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Name of the Protected Area	WDPA ID	IUCN Category	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
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Indicator 2.2 Marine Protected Areas Under improved management effectiveness

Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
12,000,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Name of the Protected Area	WDPA ID	IUCN Category	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)	METT score (Baseline at CEO Endorsement)	METT score (Achieved at MTR)	METT score (Achieved at TE)
Akula National Park VMEs	125689	SelectOthers	12,000,000.00						

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

Metric Tons (Expected at PIF)	Metric Tons (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Metric Tons (Achieved at MTR)	Metric Tons (Achieved at TE)
943,000.00			

Fishery Details

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

	Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
Female	8,718			
Male	8,942			
Total	17660	0	0	0



## Part II. Programmatic Justification

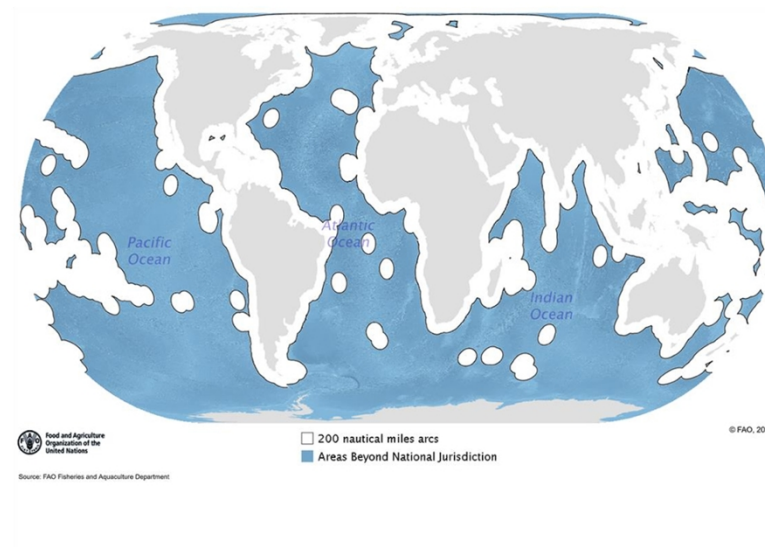
### 1a. Program Description

#### *Introduction*

1. The marine Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ), including the commonly called High Seas<sup>[1]</sup>, are those areas of ocean for which no one nation has the specific or sole responsibility for management, this responsibility being shared by all interested States through a number of intergovernmental organizations. The ABNJ make up 40% of the surface of our planet, 64% of the surface of the oceans and nearly 95% of its volume. They also abut or even encompass sections of most of the world's Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs) that extend beyond national jurisdictions. Their complex ecosystems, which include the water column and seabed, seamounts, hydrothermal vents, deep-sea trenches and submarine canyons, and oceanic ridges, support high biodiversity in some places, particularly the benthic environment. They are often a great distance from coasts making sustainable management of their natural resources and biodiversity conservation especially challenging.

2. The GEF-7 ABNJ Program (hereafter referred to as the Program) has been developed to demonstrate and promote more comprehensive processes and integrated approaches to the sustainable use and management of the ABNJ, building on the results and lessons of the GEF-5 *Global sustainable fisheries management and biodiversity conservation in the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ)* Program and complementing the efforts of various partners and parallel initiatives including the GEF multi-country Large-Marine Ecosystem (LME) approach and Regional Seas Programs.

*Figure 1. Global areas beyond national jurisdiction, estimated on the basis of 200 nm arcs.*



3. The Program consists of five child projects – two global projects that will promote more sustainable management of tuna and deep-sea fisheries (fisheries sector focus), a third project that seeks to build capacity to improve cross-sectoral collaboration and coordination on key ABNJ issues at global level (thematic focus), and a fourth project that examines multi-sectoral governance (stewardship) in a pilot area, the Sargasso Sea (geographical focus). A fifth child project will ensure effective coordination, communication, partnerships, lesson learning and knowledge management between the other child projects and support innovative financing initiatives for sustainable use of ABNJ resources across the Program (program level focus).

4. The Program was developed through collaboration between three GEF Agencies that will also jointly implement the Program – FAO, UNDP, UNEP – and the GEF Secretariat, in addition to other GEF Agencies such as World Wildlife Fund (WWF-US), Conservation International, and a wide array of interested partners. Initial work consisted of a review and analysis of the current situation facing ABNJ, and development of the framework for a new Program to address sustainable use of ABNJ. These were captured in a Theory of Change for the Program, followed by development of concepts/proposals to address the key challenges identified as facing ABNJ and actions needed to deliver sustainable management of ABNJ resources.

5. The Program focuses on four areas: (i) strengthening governance and management including frameworks, processes and incentives; (ii) increasing capacity for more sustainable fisheries through greater implementation of the ecosystem approach; (iii) building capacity to better coordinate and engage in multi-sectoral processes; and (iv) improving knowledge and information sharing for better decision-making. The overall objective of the Program to ‘*promote sustainable use of ABNJ living natural resources and strengthened biodiversity conservation in face of a changing environment*’. In doing so the Program will deliver both GEF objectives and contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal targets.

Section 1.a 1) The global environmental and/or adaptation problems, root causes and barriers that need to be addressed (systems description)

### ***Use and value of ABNJ***

6. The oceans make significant contributions to commerce, employment and nutrition and food security, as well as a range of other essential ecosystem services, including climate regulation and carbon sequestration.

7. Collectively, it is estimated that ocean-based industries and activities contribute hundreds of millions of jobs and approximately US\$2.5 trillion to the global economy each year, making it the world’s seventh-largest economy when compared with national gross domestic products<sup>[2]</sup><sup>2</sup>. In addition, the nonmarket services and benefits provided by

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the global ocean are significant and may in fact far exceed the value added by market-based goods and services[3]<sup>3</sup>. Even though detailed information for specific regions is usually not available, the economic contribution from ABNJ can be substantial[4]<sup>4</sup>.

8. Wild capture fisheries produce approximately 79.3 million metric tons (mmt) of landings annually, representing 46.4% of global seafood production (170.9 mmt) and US\$130 billion in first sale value[5]<sup>5</sup>, and the fisheries sector is the dominant sector economically in ABNJ. More than 200 species and species groups of highly migratory, oceanic and deep-water fish and invertebrate species are caught in the ABNJ. Total catches of these species increased from about 1.3 million tons, or 8% of the global marine catch in 1950 to an average of over 10 million tons per year, equal to 12% of the global marine catch, between 2000 and 2009.

9. Tuna fisheries (Box 1) are by far the most important fisheries particularly to developing economies, especially in the tropical western and central Pacific Ocean which is the most important tuna fishing area in the world. The tuna catch in the West Pacific Ocean is greater than that of the Atlantic, Indian and East Pacific Oceans combined (FAO, 2010a) and the economies of the island countries in the region depend heavily on tuna fisheries (see Box 2).

#### **Box 1: Tuna and deep sea fisheries – basic information**

The tuna fishing industry is characterized by large, diversified global fleets composed of vessels able to deploy all gear types and target all commercial tuna species and capable of fishing in every ocean basin. It is a global, multi-gear and multispecies fishery. Some of these vessels can fish in three oceans in any given year and, with the assistance of support vessels can stay out of port for a year or more. The three main fishing gears used in commercial tuna fisheries are purse seines, longlines and bait boats [pole and line]. It is estimated that purse-seines take about 62% of the world production of tunas followed by longline (14 %) and pole and line (11%) and a variety of other gears the remainder (PEW, 2016a). In 2017, the catch of major commercial tunas was 4.8 million tons, 58% of which was skipjack tuna, followed by yellowfin (28%), bigeye (8%) and albacore (5%). Bluefin tunas accounted for only 1% of the global catch.

Deep-sea fisheries operating in ABNJ are conducted at depths below 200 meters on continental slopes or isolated oceanic topographic structures such as seamounts, ridge systems and banks. Annual global DSF harvest was around 226 000 tonnes in 2016. High seas DSF are valued at about USD 390 million at first sale and are an important source of employment, livelihoods and nutrition.

As DSF rapidly developed in the latter half of the twentieth century with the advent of large trawlers and subsidized fleets assisted by technological advances in positioning systems, the impact of deep-sea fisheries activities on fish stocks, habitat and biodiversity emerged as an issue. Many deep-sea stocks became over-exploited, yields quickly diminished, and many fisheries ceased operation. Some of the fisheries continued at lower levels, and some new ones developed.

### **Box 2 – Economic, livelihood and food security value of tuna fisheries**

Species of tuna are a particularly valuable marine resource. More than 85 countries harvest tuna in commercial quantities and their yearly exports represent around 8% of the internationally traded seafood. The tuna fisheries industry is dependent on the management of 23 stocks of 7 tuna species across the world's oceans (6 albacore, 4 bigeye, 4 bluefin, 5 skipjack and 4 yellowfin stocks; (Restrepo, et.al., 2017). The global annual catch of the seven principal market species of highly migratory tunas found in the ABNJ is estimated to be worth around USD 6.4 billion and USD 42 billion for dockside and end use, respectively. As an industry, fishing, processing and distribution of the main commercial tuna species provide both direct and indirect benefits to a large number of people and their families. Countries can also derive significant revenue from fishing through licensing offshore foreign-based fishing for tuna.

Tuna fisheries can be particularly important for Small Island Developing States. In the small island nations of the Pacific and Indian Oceans, tuna plays a key role as provider of food and employer in the tuna-canning sector. In the Maldives, for instance, tuna is considered to be essential for food security and supports livelihoods in many of the islands' communities. It also represents the single most important export commodity in the country earning about US\$ 140 million in 2014 (Ahusan et al., 2017). In Seychelles, canned tuna accounts for 90 percent of total national export value, and direct and indirect employment in fisheries and related sectors was estimated to be between 5,000 to 6,000 people in 2014, representing around ten percent of total formal employment in the country (SFA, 2014). One study estimated that tuna vessels and processing plants account for some 10,000 jobs for Pacific Islanders with total direct and indirect related jobs accounting for 5-8% of all wage employment in the region. While no global figure appears to exist that disaggregates tuna from other fish stocks as a source of protein, subsistence fisheries (fish caught for local consumption rather than market sale) are thought to provide 50-90% of the animal protein diet of the populations living in rural settings and in remote islands of Pacific Small Island Developing Nations (Hilmi, et al., 2016). Source DuBois (2019).

10. ABNJ provide significant contribution to food security with fish from ABNJ a particularly important source of animal protein in many people's diets, and again is especially important for Small Island Developing Nations[6]<sup>6</sup>. Again, the catch of tuna is particularly important. For example it is estimated that at least 2.5 million tons of global tuna caught annually is destined for the canning industry and globally around 256 million cases are consumed (3.2 million tons whole round equivalent), valued at US\$ 7.5 billion (Hamilton et al., 2011). Therefore, ensuring the long-term sustainability of ABNJ fisheries is inherently linked to providing food security, as well as vital livelihoods, revenue and employment, economic development and other social and cultural benefits in many regions of the world.

11. Other significant economic and socially important uses of ABNJ include its value for maritime transport (around 90% of world trade is transported by sea) and the oceans are crisscrossed by submarine cables that provide much of the backbone for the world's telecommunications and internet connections. In addition, the deep seas contain significant hydrocarbon and mineral resources such as rare earth metals of high strategic and potentially economic value. With the development of new technologies, bio-prospecting of marine organisms and the potentially very valuable exploration of marine genetic resources is also becoming of increasing interest and attracting new investment by the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries[7]<sup>7</sup>. For example sponges, which are often found on seamounts, have been a source of medically active compounds[8]<sup>8</sup>.

12. In terms of other essential ecosystem services, the oceans are a regulator of climate, estimated to produce over half of the world's oxygen, and act as a buffer to increasing greenhouse gases, capturing an estimated 57% of atmospheric carbon and storing 50 times more carbon dioxide than the atmosphere, so are critical element in addressing the climate crisis.

### ***Threats to ABNJ***

13. The biodiversity and ecosystems of ABNJ are subject to multiple anthropogenic threats, including overfishing, IUU fishing, pollution, habitat loss and degradation, and climate change impacts, which can be widespread and cumulative.

14. **Overfishing of species, causing declines in abundance of target species below their optimal level**, particularly of iconic pelagic highly migratory species such as tuna, has received perhaps the most attention historically. Globally, it is estimated that 33 % of marine fish stocks are currently overexploited and 60 % are considered fully-utilized, meaning that 93 % of stocks have limited or no potential for increasing production (FAO, 2018). For major commercial tuna stocks, recent stock assessments estimate that globally 65% of stocks are at a healthy level of abundance, 13% are overfished and 22% are at an intermediate level (ISSF, 2019a). From a socio-economic point of view, fish stocks that are at low levels of abundance threaten people's livelihoods and food security, with reduced contributions to national economies.

15. **High levels of Illegal, Underreported and Unregulated (IUU)[9]<sup>9</sup> fishing** further compromise sustainable utilization. IUU fishing also deprives legal fishers of their livelihoods and is linked to slavery, human rights violations and transnational organized crime. At the global level, estimates for IUU fishing across all marine fisheries range between 11 and 26 million tonnes per year (around 15% of global catch), leading to an estimated loss of between US\$ 10 to US\$ 23.5 billion annually[10]<sup>10</sup>. This is thought to represent between 12 and 28.5 % of global capture fisheries production (FAO 2014). For instance, a study conducted in 2016 on tuna fisheries in the Pacific estimated the total volume of tuna[11]<sup>11</sup> catches taken through IUU fishing at 306,440 tonnes with a value of US\$ 616.1 million (MRAG Asia Pacific, 2016). Overall, across ABNJ, such losses not only have a profound socio-economic impact (jobs, livelihoods, food supplies and regional security) but represent a serious threat to managing fisheries sustainably and threatens the marine environment.

16. Overfishing has led to several species of tuna becoming globally threatened (notably Southern Bluefin Tuna *Thunnus maccoyii* and Atlantic Bluefin Tuna *Thunnus thynnus*, which are recovering from Critically Endangered and Endangered status respectively). Large amounts of fishing effort have contributed to the risks faced by several other internationally protected species such as marine turtles seabirds, and whale sharks. Large amounts of fishing effort have also resulted in excessive catches of non-target species of sharks and other fish species, as well as small, often juvenile, tuna (<10 kg), particularly yellowfin and bigeye tuna, caught as bycatch. **Bycatch[12]<sup>12</sup> has been estimated to be of**

**a global magnitude of 38.5 million tonnes representing over 40 percent of total catches. Indeed, an estimated 25 percent of sharks, rays, and chimeras are threatened as a result of overfishing, which along with other bycatch disrupts marine food webs and reduces marine ecosystem functioning and resilience.**

17. New technologies and approaches have led to increases in fishing efficiencies. For instance, Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs), which are largely man-made floating structures made of wood that attract fish and other marine life, can considerably increase catch rates<sup>[13]</sup><sup>13</sup>. They have been increasingly used in tuna fisheries since the 1990s, and almost 65% of purse seine catches are currently carried out using FADs. Worldwide, it is estimated that nearly 91,000 FADs are deployed annually (Lopez and Scott, 2014). However, FAD fishing results in a significant level of unwanted by-catch: 4–5% of catches per set comprise non-targeted species. In addition, estimated 10% of FADs are lost each year contributing to “ghost-fishing” (and marine pollution) (Maufroy, 2016).

18. In the case of deep-sea fisheries, the depth limit of commercial fishing is about 2,000 m which restricts fishing to only about 3% of the high seas area. However, even though the number of vessels and the tonnages of demersal species caught in the high seas is relatively low (certainly compared to tuna fisheries), the relatively small areas available for fishing and the uniqueness and fragility of these areas e.g. seamounts and hydrothermal vents, mean that impacts to stocks and biodiversity can be significant (more so in the past) and must be actively monitored and managed.

19. Pollution, such as from hydrocarbons and plastics (from both marine and terrestrial sources) also presents a threat, and impacts multiple levels of the marine food web. It has been estimated that 8 million tonnes of plastic ends up in the marine environment every year, which makes up 80% of all marine debris found from surface waters to deep-sea sediments (IUCN, 2018). Although most plastic waste comes from land-based sources, abandoned, lost and discarded shipping and fishing gear also adds to marine pollution (the latter also creating additional deaths of marine species through entanglement - so-called ‘ghost fishing’).

20. Plastic pollution in the marine environment also has significant social and economic impacts with growing evidence that human health may also be impacted through ingestion of microplastics in water and food and related concerns about ingestion of toxins that can be absorbed by plastics and bio-accumulate in top-level predators such as tuna<sup>[14]</sup><sup>14</sup>.

21. Many regions of ABNJ, e.g. Sargasso Sea, are within international shipping areas and crossed by a large number of vessels each year. Shipping presents a risk to marine life in ABNJ from disturbance from underwater noise and physical injuries, particularly vessel strikes on marine mammals but also from pollution from discharges, introduction of alien species through ballast water, and (in the case of the Sargasso Sea) physical damage to upper water marine vegetation (Sargassum mats).

22. Damage from submarine telecommunication cables and seabed exploration and mining can also pose a risk of pollution and direct damage to fragile seabed habitats, especially at species-rich hydrothermal vents and sea mounts. Whilst large scale commercial extraction of deep sea deposits is still some way off, potential impacts from future seabed mining are a growing concern given the rapid development of technology, increasing interest and investment in this industry, and a significant number of exploratory licenses that have already been issued by the International Seabed Authority (ISA). In addition to the direct physical destruction of deep sea biodiversity, waste plumes from

seabed mineral extraction could constitute a risk and spread damage over a much larger area. The impact of bottom trawling on vulnerable marine ecosystems, which was previously highlighted as significant cause of damage to deep sea ecosystems, appears to be mitigated due to recent measures introduced by the Regional Fisheries Management Organizations.

23. The above threats are all exacerbated by adverse human-induced climate change impacts on the ecosystems and biodiversity of the ABNJ. These include increased ocean warming, ocean acidification (due to absorption of carbon dioxide), changed ocean circulation patterns and currents and alterations in the vertical stratification of the water column, increasing hypoxic waters and oxygen-depleted dead zones, and there is some evidence of changes in nutrient cycling, primary production and changes in the distribution and abundance of marine life (IPPC, 2019). These changes are affecting marine ecosystems and organisms at multiple trophic levels, impacting fisheries with implications for food production and human communities. Climate change is expected to lead to a decrease in primary productivity in the tropics but a likely increase at higher latitudes. A recent study on the potential impacts of climate change forecast marine animal biomass to decline by 15–30% in the North/ South Atlantic, North/South Pacific and Indian Ocean basins by 2100 while increasing by 20–80% in the polar Arctic and Southern Ocean basins[15]<sup>15</sup> with major changes in the distribution of fish stocks. Such changes would have important consequences for fisheries management and economics of fisheries (see Box 3).

24. The predicted redistribution of tuna from EEZs to high seas areas is also likely to result in a larger proportion of the catch being made in international waters (FAME, 2018), which could economic and social consequences for some states, e.g. the economies of some Pacific island states which derive substantial revenue from tuna fishing license fees may be affected. These predicted impacts have implications for existing ABNJ governance and management, including monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) activities by the RFMOs, and management measures need to be updated to address the need for climate change mitigation and adaptation responses[16]<sup>16</sup>.

### **Box 3 - Predicted impacts of climate change on tuna and their fisheries in the Pacific**

Modelling of the impacts of climate change on skipjack tuna, the most widely consumed tuna, in the tropical oceans suggests that the spatial distribution and abundance of the species may change substantially with habitat suitability in the tropics deteriorating but improving at higher latitudes (Dueri, 2017). Significant shifts are also likely to occur within regions and could have profound socio-economic and potential political consequences. For instance, in the Western and Central Pacific studies suggest that the distribution of skipjack, yellowfin and bigeye tuna may move further east across the region (to differing degrees) before 2050s as a result of climate change impacts. This eastward movement could benefit some nations by increasing their access to tuna resources but adversely affect other nations which would lose access to optimum tuna fishing grounds (Bell et al., 2013).

In addition to changes in the distribution of a resource, climate change might affect the processes that determine the productivity of the resource, as key processes such as growth, mortality and reproductive success are likely to be closely related to environmental conditions such as water temperature. Such changes might result in the historical data collected in the past will no longer being representative of the current productivity of the resource and, therefore, new data may have to be discarded to replace the older data, increasing the uncertainty in the status of the resource.



25. In some cases climate change-induced shifts in fronts and currents may alter the biodiversity of an entire marine ecosystem. For instance, climate change is pushing the warm sub-tropical convergence in the south of the Sargasso Sea further north, which could impact the possible spread of Sargassum *S. natans VIII*, (a variant of Sargassum that supports less associated biodiversity than more common forms found in the Sargasso Sea[\[17\]](#)<sup>17</sup> leading to changes in the composition and richness of biodiversity associated with the Sargasso Sea.

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26. All the above threats to ABNJ have adverse socio-economic impacts, including potentially loss of livelihoods, growing inequalities, reduced contributions to national economies and GDP, as well as negative impacts on food security and human health. An additional concern is that climate change impacts could increase conflict between different ABNJ resource users (across and within sectors) as resources and their habitats decline and the potential for competition between States and sectors increases.

#### ***Root causes/drivers and barriers***

27. Many of the threats outlined above have interrelated root causes and drivers. Some of these operate at the macro level, e.g. climate change, while others are more explicitly linked to specific sectors that can be addressed by the Program.

28. Expanding human populations (and increasing numbers of wealthier people) are driving increasing global, regional and national demand for living and non-living resources from the ABNJ, leading to high market prices for (and potential profit from) some ABNJ commodities, particularly fish. This, together with the open access nature of the high seas (under UNCLOS), has driven increased investment in commercial activities in ABNJ. In the fishing industry, this has resulted in adoption of more efficient harvesting technologies and over-capacity of fishing fleets in relation to some fish stocks which has contributed to overfishing and unsustainable fisheries in tuna RFMO convention areas (FAO 2010a; FAO 2010b). Further factors, such as inadequate postharvest infrastructure leads to quality deterioration and reduced revenues, exacerbating overfishing. Moreover, some commercial ABNJ fisheries may benefit from perverse incentives from their flag States that encourage overfishing and overinvestment (over 80% of fisheries subsidies<sup>[18]</sup> went in the past to large scale industrial fisheries such as for fuel and new vessel construction which just enhance fishing capacity). Unfortunately, once overcapacity develops it is difficult to reduce because the fishing industry will continue to operate as long as profits exceed costs, and restrictive and difficult-to-implement quotas need to be agreed by RFMO member States to prevent overfishing.

29. Global demand, the advent of new technologies, new commercial opportunities and geo-political considerations are also driving recent interest and investment in the exploitation of new non-food resources from ABNJ, particularly marine genetic resources and biopharmaceuticals, along with mining of rare earth and other metals from the deep seas deposits for consumer electronics and ‘green technologies’.

30. There are a number of **key barriers** that prevent the above threats, root causes and drivers from being addressed effectively and hinder progress towards sustainable use of ABNJ resources<sup>[19]</sup>. These can be grouped into four thematic areas:

#### ***Thematic Area a): Inadequate policies, processes and incentives for effective governance and management in ABNJ (focus on fisheries)***

31. There has been a lack of an effective enabling policy and legal environment to transition to sustainable use of ABNJ resources. In some sectors, and especially fisheries, policies and incentives have tended to promote largely short-term economic development and investment planning, favoring unsustainable practices in the exploitation of ABNJ, and a low rate of implementation of regulations managing the sustainable harvesting of ABNJ resources.

32. Managing the oceans requires a strong international legal framework that is incorporated into national regulations but not all RFMO member countries have fully integrated international obligations and best practices into their legislation.
33. Despite improvements in recent years, including through the actions of the GEF-5 ABNJ Program, the situation remains characterised by weak fisheries governance, including in many cases unclear national fisheries policy and obsolete fisheries legislation that do not reflect current international obligations and need updating and existing regulations that do not fully incorporate modern tools for fisheries management.
34. The legal framework for fisheries management in the ABNJ is provided primarily by Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs). These are inter-governmental organizations that, following UNCLOS guidance, represent countries with a real interest in managing resources that are entirely in the ABNJ or that straddle ABNJ and national waters. RFMO member States, following scientific advice, adopt joint conservation and management binding measures to manage resources and to mitigate any collateral environmental damage arising from the fishing operations. However, RFMOs tend to be dominated by just a few (usually the larger) member States and there is a need for many coastal and flag States to play a more active role within the RFMOs, particularly in the decision-making processes, for which capacity of the national authorities needs to be strengthened.
35. There is sometimes a lack of harmonization of fisheries regulations between neighbouring countries or between EEZ fisheries and those in ABNJ which makes management of straddling or migratory stocks (such as tuna) less effective. In addition, there is often weak integration between fisheries and environmental policies at the national level that generates diverging positions in global forums over ABNJ issues in some countries.
36. Although the performance of RFMOs (measured, for instance, in terms of compliance, transparency of data, adoption of Conservation Management Measures), has been improving in recent years (as evidenced in RFMO Performance Reviews), there are still weaknesses in regional fisheries management. These include incomplete processes for, and implementation of, the precautionary approach (as described in UN Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA) and Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF)) through the use of harvest strategies/management procedures in management actions (expressed for instance through the adoption of harvest control rules) or uneven levels of compliance with the RFMO adopted measures, especially among developing States.
37. Frameworks that create incentives that promote overfishing also represent a barrier and need to be addressed. The same applies to incentives to deter illegal activities or encourage compliant behaviour in ABNJ, encourage greater private sector investment in seeking solutions to mitigate fisheries impacts, uptake of technological innovation or link with new market arrangements that could reward sustainable management and biodiversity conservation in the ABNJ. Together these contribute to weak political engagement in encouraging effecting sustainable fishing.
38. There is a particular shortage of innovative financing arrangements, such as non-grant instruments, impact bonds, etc, that could either attract new investment to finance large-scale uptake of best practices to transition to sustainable use and management of ABNJ. Fisheries value chains are also poorly understood in some cases (especially for deep-sea fisheries) and are not efficient at promoting sustainable ABNJ products. Efforts to improve sustainability and benefits tend to focus on only one part of the market chain, e.g. the fishing/harvesting, postharvest activities or markets, meaning that opportunities to create added value are not sufficiently seized. At the global scale, although there

have been improvements, poor traceability and transparency continue to allow illegally caught fish to enter the market and therefore there are hence limited incentives to deter such activities. Whilst there are some market platforms/institutions to bring key actors, including businesses, together to encourage them to transition to sustainable practices, such as the International Sustainable Seafood Foundation (ISSF) for tuna fisheries, more need to be developed and promoted.

***Thematic area b): Insufficient capacity – systems, mechanisms, tools, knowledge, human and financial resources - for effective management and sustainable utilization of ABNJ resources (focus on fisheries)***

39. While there has been some improvement in fisheries management capacity in recent years, there is still insufficient institutional and individual capacity in some of the countries participating in the fisheries to effectively implement sustainable fisheries management measures. These include a lack of capacity in fisheries research, inadequate collective/coordinated MCS systems that result in a continuing lack of compliance with adopted regulations and poor capacity to strengthen value chains to prevent penetration of IUU fishery products. There is also insufficient capacity to effectively and consistently apply an ecosystem approach to fisheries management (EAFM – see Box 4)[20]<sup>20</sup> in ABNJ, and limited capacity to respond to changing environmental conditions at national level, in particular, for developing coastal States. For instance, climate change is not yet in most of the RFMO agendas and there is insufficient monitoring and support for adaptation strategies in developing countries, despite concerns that this is likely to significantly impact the economics and management of fisheries in the long term.

40. There is no clear consensus about what constitutes an effective implementation of the ecosystem approach in the supra-national management context of RFMOs. While there have been steps taken to protect some of the most vulnerable species of seabirds, marine turtles and sharks from fisheries related impacts, there are technical questions as to the effectiveness of managing on the basis of ecosystem models. On the social and economic dimensions, RFMO member States have multiple and at times divergent policy goals, so no single policy can be adopted. However, information can be provided to the member States about the consequences of proposed management actions so that they can project the impact on their domestic communities.

41. There is also a particular need to improve the capacity to enforce existing regulations in ABNJ as well as greater efforts to tackle IUU fishing in some countries and regions. Although efforts to address IUU fishing, notably of tuna, have had some success in recent years, including through major efforts under the GEF-5 program, there is a clear need for stronger compliance verification mechanisms and Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) systems and improved capacity to use them to improve control of fishing activities, including port State controls to prevent entry of IUU products into the supply chain and markets.

42. Another major barrier to effective fisheries management is limited knowledge of key scientific and technical issues to feed into management decision-making. For instance, there are limited data on some key fish stocks and the quality of some of the data reported to FAO is not judged satisfactory; social and economic aspects of ABNJ resource use are poorly known; and there are significant gaps in knowledge on ABNJ ecosystems (including resident, endemic and migratory species, biodiversity and habitat interactions). The cumulative impacts of human activities on deep sea ecosystems and ecological connectivity between coastal waters and ABNJ are particularly poorly understood, which underlines the need for complementary actions in both spaces. Poorly understood fish stocks present a particular problem in deep sea fisheries - a 2016 survey

of 51 targeted and fished deep-sea stocks in the high seas classified the status of 50% of them as “unknown”[21]<sup>21</sup>. Consequently, there is still a need to improve the collection and availability of information with more innovative data collection methods to improve monitoring and assessment, and support more effective science-based decision-making. It is particularly important to reduce existing uncertainties, although these should not be an impediment to make management decisions based on a precautionary approach.

43. In terms of other efforts to apply EAFM, management measures to reduce bycatch and waste and direct damage to fishing habitats have been introduced in some cases, although the extent of fishing impacts on some bycatch species are still largely unknown, particularly for slow-growing bycatch species, such as deepwater sharks[22]<sup>22</sup>. Even when responsible fishing measures are identified there may be insufficient capacity to properly implement them. For instance, Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (VMEs), which are areas closed to bottom fisheries to eliminate impacts, have been identified in some deep sea areas, but these are much better developed and enforced in some regions than others.

44. Similarly, whilst there has been some uptake of innovative technologies and best practices to support management for sustainable utilization of ABNJ resources in recent years, such as deployment of electronic monitoring systems (EMS), use of biodegradable materials in Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs) in tuna fisheries, and other technological research to reduce bycatch by the fisheries sector, adoption is still far from complete and needs further promotion and upscaling.

***Thematic area c): Weak multi-sector coordination and communication to support sustainable use of ABNJ***

45. At the global level, no State, organization or institution has the overall management responsibility for ABNJ. Also, at present there is no internationally agreed coordinating mechanism to agree and implement collaborative and coherent multi-sector governance for sustainable utilization of resources and conservation of biodiversity in ABNJ among users from multiple sectors in the ABNJ environment, and a lack of appropriate shared forums and frameworks to discuss common issues.

46. Current approaches to combating overuse and degradation in ABNJ are fragmented, with no common prioritization and limited collaboration or coordination on management actions, which are usually addressed on a narrow, single-sector basis with little communication between sectors. This creates ‘silos’ with the different sectors, actors and initiatives, e.g. Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs), International Seabed Authority (ISA), RFMOs, International Maritime Organization (IMO), Regional Seas Programs (RSPs) and Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs) projects, generally operate in isolation. Moreover, there is no capacity among these global and regional bodies and their respective member countries for cooperation and coordination. Consequently, resource governance and management in ABNJ is not integrated and tends to be ineffective with little if any multi-sectoral planning. For example, the lack of cross-sectoral coordination in the context of marine spatial planning (MSP) means there is limited bridging of biodiversity conservation, fisheries management and extractive industry (minerals, hydrocarbons) objectives, and little if any consideration of cumulative impacts.

47. The situation is compounded by poor knowledge of ecosystem elements and processes in ABNJ and poor understanding of the impacts of one sector’s activities on other sectors or the needs and challenges faced by individual sectors. To further complicate matters, the mandates, roles and responsibilities of the various sectoral management bodies and initiatives involved in the governance of ABNJ are, in some cases, unclear or overlap or poorly understood by other actors operating in ABNJ.

48. This division between sectors is also reflected at the national scale where government development, fisheries and environment agencies tend to have different priorities and approaches in relation to ABNJ and often lack a common, coordinated position in international policy making forums.

49. Together these contribute to a lack of multi-sector thinking and a lack of overall integrated, coordinated cross-sectoral adaptive management for ABNJ. The current situation argues for a clear need for institutional processes and arrangements that allow for and support cross-sectoral collaboration and coordination for sustainable use of ABNJ (including building capacity to support these).

50. The ongoing negotiations under the auspices of the UN General Assembly to elaborate an international legally binding instrument under UNCLOS on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (also known as the BBNJ process), once finalized, will play a key role in regulating the sustainable use of BBNJ and addressing these concerns. However, some States will be challenged in participating in this process or in fulfilling their role in the management of the BBNJ and will require additional capacity to become effective players under the new agreement.

***Thematic area d): Poor awareness and understanding (and, in some cases, misunderstanding) and limited support among civil society and decision-makers on issues affecting ABNJ***

51. The ABNJ is remote and, as a consequence, it has with low public and political awareness. Few people have direct experience of the high seas. Consequently, the general public has limited knowledge and understanding of the economic, social and environmental values of the biodiversity and ecosystem services provided by ABNJ and the challenges these areas face. Even in coastal States where the economic and ecological connectivity between coastal waters and high seas regions demands joint policies and actions in some cases (e.g. to address straddling fish stocks and migratory species) awareness is generally poor. If individuals are informed, they tend to be familiar with some of the threats facing the ABNJ e.g. marine plastics (largely due to recent television documentaries highlighting ocean threats and wildlife) but have less knowledge of potential solutions to address the threats or how to support them, or even sustainably sourced ABNJ products. Consequently, direct public support for coordinated, integrated actions to address the myriad threats facing ABNJ and move towards sustainable use of ABNJ resources is generally weak and has little influence on political decision-makers. Similarly, potential private sector investors are poorly informed of investment opportunities to promote more responsible use of ABNJ.

52. In addition, although the values of the ABNJ can be substantial, especially for tuna fisheries (see above), political decision makers at national, regional and global levels often do not recognize these resources as an economic asset or the potential of the sector as a contributor to livelihoods, food security and environmental health. Consequently, there is a clear need to improve political interest to ensure greater support for measures to move towards sustainability in ABNJ.

53. Outreach and awareness-raising is not helped by the lack of effective ‘stories’ to communicate the challenges and solutions to sustainable utilization in the ABNJ, certainly when compared with similar challenges and responses to threats facing terrestrial systems (e.g. ‘save the rainforest’ narratives).

54. Knowledge management generally is a challenge due to limited availability of information (often held by different bodies which do not readily share or communicate information), lack of effective knowledge management platforms and e-learning opportunities, and weak knowledge management systems and mechanisms. There is a need to encourage active exchange of lessons learned and success stories across regional management initiatives, and the identification and dissemination of positive experiences that

could be replicated and upscaled across the ABNJ space. This has been some of the lessons learned during the GEF-5 Common Oceans ABNJ Program, in which experiences at the regional level were to achieve global changes.

Section 1.a. 2) the baseline scenario and any associated baseline program/ projects,

55. The baseline situation governing the use and management of living natural resources in the ABNJ has shifted over the intervening six years since the GEF-5 Program was approved although the same international frameworks currently still hold.

### ***1. Baseline in frameworks, processes and incentives for more effective fisheries governance and management in ABNJ***

56. Human activities in ABNJ are governed under the framework of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS, 1982), to which 168 countries are a party (around 86% of countries in the world), together with specialized international agreements related to particular activities, such as fisheries and shipping. UNCLOS require States to cooperate for the conservation and management of living resources in the high seas. In addition, 90 countries, representing 46% of countries in the world, are party to the UN Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA, 1995), which provides the framework for the conservation and management of fisheries resources. Some sectoral uses of ABNJ are governed at the global scale by UN specialized UN agencies, such as shipping (governed by the International Maritime Organization or IMO) or deep-sea mining (the International Seabed Authority or ISA). Fisheries are governed, in practice, at the regional scale by States cooperatively managing the high seas fishery and resources through Regional Fishery Management Organizations (RFMOs) which serve as a forum for scientific exchange and decision making.

57. There are ongoing negotiations at the UN to develop an implementing agreement under UNCLOS that would address gaps in use and conservation of biodiversity in the ABNJ, as well as the lack of coordination among sectoral initiatives to address cumulative anthropogenic impacts. The final text of the agreement is expected to be completed, and open for accession by State parties, in the near future.

58. Five ‘tuna’ RFMOs<sup>[23]</sup> regulate 98% of the catches of tuna and tuna-like species covering all oceans, and seven general RFMOs (plus CCAMLR<sup>[24]</sup>) regulate deep-sea bottom fisheries covering 77% of the ABNJ area. Under UNCLOS and UNFSA, States are required to maintain or restore harvested species to levels that can produce the maximum sustainable yield and ensure that the reproductive potential of associated and dependent species is not seriously threatened. RFMO member States, following scientific advice, adopt conservation and management measures to manage resources and to mitigate any collateral environmental damage arising from the fishing operations. Membership of these bodies is from coastal States and fishing States and market States with an interest in the fishery; and it is these States that provide the resources and expertise to manage the fisheries.

59. Many of RFMOs, due to the dates of their establishment, do not fully reflect recent priorities in their conventions related to global legally binding instruments that seek to promote sustainability, such as the UNFSA and FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF, 1995) and related instruments such as the International Plans of

Action (IPOA) for Seabirds, Sharks and Management of Fishing Capacity (1999) and the IPOA for Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (2001), the FAO Compliance Agreement (2003), and the FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (2016). Many member states still need support to integrate relevant priorities into their national legislation, and also suffer from low capacity to implement these.

60. RFMO member States managing high seas fisheries adopt measures that are, in general, consistent with the obligations established by binding and voluntary international fisheries instruments, and support is needed to fill legal and regulatory gaps and the uptake of these obligations to promote sustainable fisheries. Similarly, support is needed for the uptake of regional fisheries measures by States to ensure that the international obligations are incorporated into national law, such as capacity building to draft legislation at the national level, and to ensure that measures adopted in their national waters are compatible with those adopted at the regional level.

61. In terms of processes, a recent review of progress in implementing EAFM in the five tuna RFMOs undertaken through the GEF-5 program showed that many elements required for EAF and EBFM implementation are already in place, but may not be in the way of a formalized implementation plan. Some of the main challenges that have been identified include: reaching a common definition and understanding of how to operationalize EAF and EBFM in the context of tuna RFMOs; limited resources available; the need for discussions and consultations to take place at the national level; and better ways to communicate between scientists, managers and commissioners on EAF and EAFM concepts and to support the process subject to the needs of the managers. All of these aspects will be addressed through the GEF-7 program, particularly through activities associated with Program Component 2.

62. Catch limits, or comparable technical measures, for the main species of tuna have been established, a workplan for preparation of harvest strategies/management procedures for all 23 major stocks has been agreed (and as a result the number of major commercial tuna stocks experiencing overfishing decreased from 13 in 2013 to 5 in 2019), and there is a movement towards the development and adoption of an implementation plan to lead to a full adoption of the Ecosystem-based Approach to Fisheries (EAF) for tuna fisheries. However, despite these gains, successful approaches still need to be further developed and scaled up for truly transformative change across the ABNJ.

63. As far as incentives are concerned, there are still relatively few private/market initiatives that seek to promote sustainable use of ABNJ although several have been established in the last 5-10 years that seek to create market incentives and to attract private sector investment. Under the GEF-5 Program, the companies participating in the International Seafood Sustainability Foundation have supported and championed designs of Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs) with biodegradable materials to address the problem of pollution represented by lost FADs. Several of the partners of the Program, including Conservation International (Blue Abadi Fund) and WWF (Marine Stewardship Council) along with FAO (AquaInvest) have piloted, and in some cases scaled up, innovative solutions for the private sector to finance biodiversity outcomes. However, generally there have been few investments in issues that are common or cross-cutting in ABNJ especially by the private sector. To date public-private partnerships are limited and only a few private sector partnerships are attempting to invest in some of the broader issues facing the unsustainable use of the ABNJ such as biodiversity loss, overfishing, marine debris, etc. Consequently there are opportunities through the GEF-7 program.

64. There is perhaps most interest and experience with the use of market-based mechanisms to change practices and encourage behaviors to move towards sustainable fisheries with improving post-harvest measures such as reducing wastage, and adding value to fish generally seen as the priority objectives. Among these are the Seafood Business



for Ocean Stewardship (SeaBOS)<sup>[25]</sup><sup>25</sup> initiative, under which a number of large seafood companies have committed to advancing sustainability across the seafood industry, including a specific focus on addressing IUU fishing, and the Global Dialogue on Seafood Traceability (GDST)<sup>[26]</sup><sup>26</sup> which is an international, business-to-business platform that aims to produce practical, commercially relevant solutions in four key areas for a new global framework for interoperable seafood traceability, covering Data Elements, Data Verification, Data Sharing and Regulatory Alignment, and which together have a combined membership of more than 60 companies (many market leaders) across the world.

#### Box 4. GEF-5 Common Oceans Program impacts

The GEF-5 financed ‘*Global Sustainable fisheries management and biodiversity conservation in the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ) Program*’ was implemented in 2014 and closed in 2020. The GEF-5 Program was coordinated by FAO in close collaboration with two other GEF agencies, the UN Environment Programme and the World Bank, and a wide range of partners. The Program consisted of four projects that brought together an innovative and comprehensive partnership comprising of governments, regional management bodies, civil society, the private sector, academia and industry that worked towards the sustainable use of ABNJ resources and achieve global targets.

##### Key results include:

##### Improving tuna fisheries

- Consensus on developing harvest strategies— a pre-agreed way to determine catch limits for all major commercial tuna stocks – is making tuna fisheries more sustainable and transparent in all five tuna RFMOs
- Harvest strategies completed for six tuna stocks, eight more underway
- Major commercial tuna stocks experiencing overfishing down from 13 to five

##### Raising awareness on ocean issues

- 44 Representatives from 34 countries received training on the BBNJ Process through the Regional Leaders Program, connecting fisheries and environmental communities
- Eight side events, one media workshop and two cross-sectoral workshops organized for stakeholders to exchange information, and to profile ABNJ issues to a wider audience

##### Protecting marine life

- Adjustments to fishing gear lowered the mortality of marine mammals caught by Pakistani gillnet fisheries in the Indian Ocean by an estimated 98 percent
- Turtle mortality is expected to go down by ~12 percent in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean, thanks to the mandatory use of circle hooks and other mitigation measures
- First global estimate on seabird bycatch in tuna longline fishing in the Southern Hemisphere
- Bycatch and marine pollution reduced through the use of non-entangling and biodegradable fish aggregating devices (FADs)
- Groundbreaking assessments of vulnerable shark populations resulted in management actions in the Pacific Ocean

##### Safeguarding vulnerable ecosystems

- New protocols enabled all eight deep-sea RFMOs to do fishing impact assessments on potential Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (VMEs)
- More deep-sea habitats and species, such as corals and sponges, now protected following the designation of 18 new VME sites

##### Tools for tackling illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing

- First-ever, university-certified training course in fisheries enforcement and compliance for Fisheries Officers from Pacific Island countries
- Electronic Monitoring Systems (EMS) trialed in Fiji and Ghana for better monitoring, compliance and data collection in tuna fishing
- Legal guide to facilitate implementation of the FAO Port State Measures Agreement
- First global Tuna Compliance Network for tuna RFMO officials
- Global comprehensive, web-based list of authorized vessels updated in real-time

##### Championing the ecosystem approach

- All eight deep-sea RFMOs now comply with the ecological pillar of the EAF





65. Indeed, eco-labelling has become increasingly important and even necessary to access some markets. Among the best known labels certifying fisheries are the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) and Friend of the Sea (FOS) which are world leaders in capture fisheries certification, while Dolphin Safe and Dolphin Friendly specifically cover the tuna industry (the Dolphin Safe label is found on close to 90% of the world's canned tuna), and the Fair Trade label is the leading standard for capture fisheries fair trade. However, a WWF assessment indicates that only 20 percent of the world's capture fisheries could comply with MSC type certification standards. For the remaining 80 percent of the fisheries, including many small-scale data-poor multispecies fisheries, such as many species targeted by deep sea fisheries (see above) other approaches will be needed. Alternative 'recognition schemes', such as the Fisheries Improvement Project (FIP) concept, launched by the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership (SFP) and the WWF, may be appropriate in some cases and will be investigated during the GEF-7 program for some of the deep sea fisheries stocks (with pilot ideas developed during the PPG phase). Currently 22% of global tuna catches are certified by the MSC, 8% are under assessment for MSC certification and 22% are in a Fishery Improvement Project (MSC, 2019)[27]<sup>27</sup>.

66. On the whole, tuna markets and value chains are reasonably well studied, but market chains and opportunities to add value to deep sea fisheries are much less understood and will be the target for some activities under the GEF-7 program.

## ***2. Baseline on capacity to manage fisheries sustainably in ABNJ***

67. There has been growing political will within the RFMOs to address fisheries sustainability issues with measurable improvements in the management of commercially harvested fish stocks in ABNJ[28]<sup>28</sup> in recent years (in part due to the contributions of the GEF-5 Program). This has been reflected in: (i) increased attention to provision of scientific advice to inform management decisions which consider uncertainty in stock status and productivity including adoption of harvest strategies/management procedures in line with the guidelines of United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA) and Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF); (ii) implementation of enforcement and compliance systems to ensure that the rules set for these fisheries are followed with improvements in RFMO member States' abilities to monitor fisheries (electronic monitoring/reporting, at-sea observation systems, etc.); (iii) increased focus on reduction of impacts of fishing operations on the environment (e.g. bycatch in tuna fisheries) and promoting protection for vulnerable species and critical habitats affected by these fisheries (e.g. VMEs in deep sea fisheries); iv) enhanced collaboration through exchange of information and experiences across RFMOs on technical issues of common interest (e.g., international MCS network in tuna fisheries); and (v) the development and incorporation of recommendations stemming from systematic performance reviews.

68. For deep-sea fisheries, FAO has developed the International Guidelines for the Management of Deep-sea Fisheries in the High Seas, in collaboration with over 70 countries, and some deep sea fish stocks are now managed more sustainably and with less impact on biodiversity. However, the management of low-yielding stocks, typically from long-lived slow-growing species still face challenges in assessment and tend to be data-limited and there is limited capacity to address this.

69. In terms of baseline measures to tackle IUU fishing, it should be noted that under the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 (Life Below Water or the ‘Ocean Goal’) governments are committed to ending IUU fishing by 2020. The combat against IUU fishing and to improve compliance with existing regulations remains high on the agenda of the RFMO member states and RFMOs have adopted an increasing number of measures against IUU fishing in the past decades. In addition to their own measures, many RFMO member States have become signatories of the Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (PSMA), the first international binding agreement to strengthen control by port States, that entered into force in June 2016. RFMOs have implemented the fight against IUU fishing mainly through the adoption of monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) measures which include: i) the adoption of transparent registries of vessels authorized to fish; ii) the identification of vessels that conduct IUU fishing and the public sharing of the lists of IUU vessels; iii) adoption of observer programs for better data collection; iv) implementing and increasing innovative pilots on electronic monitoring system based on image capture during fishing operations; v) banning of transshipment-at-sea except for vessels that transship in the presence of observers in the carrier vessels; vi) the adoption of trade (TDS) and catch documentation schemes (CDSs) for better traceability of fish and fish products in the value chain (including unilateral programs such as the EU catch documentation system); vii) provisions for port inspection schemes as one for the port State controls; viii) continuous tracking of the activities of authorized fishing vessels via tamper-proof Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS).

70. Compliance has been improving through better training (at individual and country levels) and a reinforcement of compliance verification processes and tools in all RFMOs (again supported by the GEF-5 program), including the establishment of a sustainable global network for compliance officials across tuna RFMOs. However, the extent to which RFMO member States have successfully implemented MCS measures varies greatly and uptake has been constrained by the availability of financial and human resources. Current measures and tools still require further development to ensure IUU fishing can be eliminated, and the identification of MCS best practices and incentives to promote best practices will be further addressed through the GEF-7 program.

71. Some actors in the commercial sector have been particularly important in promoting adoption of measures to eliminate IUU fishing and introduce EAF measures (such as reducing bycatch) and move fisheries management in ABNJ towards sustainable practices, including International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF), whose member companies comprise 85% of the canned tuna sector, through its many initiatives including the ProActive Vessel Register (PVR).

72. Attitudes in the fisheries sector towards reducing the environmental impact of fishing activities have also changed over the last 5-10 years with the identification and piloting of effective measures to reduce incidental mortality of species (a focus for the GEF-5 program), such as seabirds, marine turtles, and small tuna (such as the at-sea piloting of innovative non-entangling and bio-degradable designs for FADs, or promotion of changes in fishing gear e.g., alternatives to gillnets), with the adoption of best practice guidelines and measures in some tuna RFMOs (WCPFC, IATTC, ICCAT and IOTC) for monitoring, quantifying and mitigating incidental by-catch, and measures to promote and facilitate access to information on bycatch mitigation techniques through the establishment of a global online portal and modifying fishing gear technology. However, again, these efforts need to be more strategically and comprehensively scaled up across the industry if they are to have truly transformational impact.

73. Deep sea RFMOs still face particular challenges. Although management of deep sea fisheries has improved in recent years (in part through the efforts of the GEF-5 program), many of the stocks remain poorly known, making decisions on sustainable management problematic and there remain concerns in the international community about potential damage to the ecosystems targeted, particularly the possible damaging impact of bottom-contact fishing methods on the most vulnerable species, such as cold-water

corals and hydroids, some sponge dominated communities and seep or vent communities composed of unique invertebrates. Deep sea RFMOs have increased efforts to mitigate against negative impacts on biodiversity in recent years, with, for example, measures to protect seabirds and Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (VMEs)[29]<sup>29</sup>, of which there are now 182 covering 1,2 million sq. km. These “bottom fishing measures” have been adopted by all deep-sea regional bodies, although those established after 2000 are, in some cases, only just adopting such measures. There is still limited knowledge on the existing Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (VMEs), particularly concerning the best methodologies for identifying and protecting them on a sustainable basis (although VMEs are designated to protect sensitive biodiversity and ecosystems they are not monitored regularly and restrictions only apply to fisheries). Other approaches to the identification of areas requiring special attention include the Ecologically or Biologically Marine Significant Areas (EBSAs) according to criteria formulated by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) or the Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSAs), identified by the International Maritime Organization (IMO). Identifying, monitoring and managing these areas requires expensive data collection programs and more cost-effective mechanisms to protect benthic biodiversity are needed.

74. In general, scientific understanding of deep sea ecosystems is still limited and the impacts (particularly cumulative) on high seas fish stocks or protected areas such as VMEs from cross-sectoral activities such as deep-sea mining, especially in the face of climate change impacts, remain poorly understood[30]<sup>30</sup> and require the development of new science-based methodologies and precautionary management regimes.

75. In an effort to better understand and improve their performance, RFMOs have introduced the requirement for performance reviews[31]<sup>31</sup>. As of 23 October 2017, 15 RFMOs had undergone performance reviews, and six of them (CCSBT, ICCAT, IOTC, NASCO, NEAFC, SEAFO) had also conducted a second performance review, with more planned by others (FAO, 2015b). The performance reviews make clear that RFMOs continue to need support to address (among other things) IUU fishing, the adoption of ecosystem-based approaches in their decision-making processes, both of which are targets for activities under the GEF-7 Program.

76. The baseline and needs vary between RFMO member states but many developing RFMO member States (both for tuna and deep sea fisheries) lack the experience and, in some cases, the extensive science-management frameworks and networks available to developed and wealthy fishing nations and consequently need greater support to enable their effective participation in RFMO decision-making.

77. In terms of capacity for research and ability to collect information for effective decision-making, States, often through their fisheries departments, undertake both fisheries and more recently biodiversity surveys, mostly in EEZs but occasionally in the high seas, such as documented by International Council for exploration of the Seas (ICES)[32]<sup>32</sup> and in RFMO science committee reports. A number of environmental NGOs also have an interest in supporting information needs for sustainable management of ABNJ and support the work of the RFMOs, such as Global Fishing Watch[33]<sup>33</sup> which provides spatial data on apparent distribution of fishing operations and that, combined with

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data on important habitats in need of protection, can be used to identify areas that may need additional protection. In the case of the deep seas fisheries, these include the NEREIDA surveys[34]<sup>34</sup> in the northwest Atlantic and the more recent SponGES project[35]<sup>35</sup> in the north Atlantic, with the long-running EAF-Nansen surveys[36]<sup>36</sup> supported by Norway and implemented by FAO being perhaps the most extensive oceanographic surveys. Such surveys are expensive, but there is a need for them to continue, especially given the changing conditions due to climate change. Areas where baseline information is especially weak is the ecological connectivity between ABNJ and EEZs, the likely impacts of climate change on marine ecosystems and consequences for fisheries management, and impacts of fisheries on deep sea habitats and species, such as deep water sharks.

### ***3. Baseline on cross-sectoral coordination and collaboration for sustainable use of ABNJ***

78. Improved coordination and cooperation between organizations with interests in ABNJ could help combat degradation of ecosystems and loss of biodiversity of the open oceans. However, at present, at the global level, there is no agency, body or forum responsible for addressing the mix of uses/issues in ABNJ on a multiple-use and cross-sectoral basis. Instead, there are various governance arrangements in different regions for different resources and purposes with many intergovernmental and international organizations managing and governing relevant activities in the ABNJ essentially operating under mandates that consider only one sector (e.g., fisheries, shipping, or mining).

79. There are some very limited levels of cooperation and coordination between and among specific groups although it varies from one region to another. For example, in the Northeast Atlantic, the Collective Agreement between OSPAR and NEAFC addresses the management of human activities in ABNJ in the North-East Atlantic. There are also a few initiatives that seek to provide a platform and support for dialogue including the STRONG High Seas Project[37]<sup>37</sup>, which aims to (among other things) support regional cooperation and coordination in ABNJ by providing regional level decision-makers with improved knowledge and understanding about the gaps, challenges and opportunities in the legal and governance framework. The Global Ocean Forum (GOF)[38]<sup>38</sup> is also active in trying to promote international consensus building on ocean issues, including fostering a global network of ocean policy leaders, and was a lead partner for the GEF-5 Capacity Project which supported the participation of regional leaders in global ABNJ processes, particularly the BBNJ process, and supported global and regional cross-sectoral dialogues to share information and build common understanding on key ABNJ issues.

80. However, where collaborative mechanisms exist, they are generally weak, with limited information exchange and capacity at the individual and institutional levels to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate cross-sectoral cooperation and coordination is usually lacking among these regional organizations and their member states. More importantly, with the exception of the OSPAR/NEAFC agreement, collaboration does not include the regional or global bodies with a mandate to adopt binding management actions.

81. The weak multi-sector cooperation and collaboration on ABNJ issues and inadequate capacity to facilitate these have a particular bearing in relation to the ongoing BBNJ process (see Box 5) which seeks to develop an International Legally Binding Instrument (ILBI) under UNCLOS on the conservation and sustainable use of biological

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diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction. Once finalized (expected late 2020/early 2021), the BBNJ instrument will provide for new global policies/legal frameworks to enable cross-sectoral approaches to ABNJ management and play a key role in regulating the sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems in ABNJ. The current draft of the ILBI highlights the following issues: (i) regulation of the exploitation of marine genetic resources (MGRs), including questions on benefit-sharing; (ii) application of area-based management tools (ABMTs), including marine protected areas (MPAs); (iii) environmental impact assessments (EIAs) procedures; and (iv) guidance on and implementation of capacity building and marine technology transfer. The new agreement will address the impacts of all sectors, including fisheries, on marine biodiversity, in some cases through provisions for area based management tools if necessary. However, some States will be challenged in participating in this process or in fulfilling their role in the implementation of the BBNJ due to capacity limitations, which the GEF-7 Program seeks to address under Component 3 building on work undertaken by the GEF-5 ABNJ Capacity project.

#### ***4. Baseline in knowledge management, understanding and support for sustainable use of ABNJ***

82. All the main partners in the GEF-7 ABNJ Program including FAO and UNEP and its collaborating centers (WCMC and GRID Arendal), the Global Ocean Forum, WWF-US and others maintain knowledge hubs at global scales for a range of ocean data including marine protected areas, seabed mapping and other relevant data sets. In addition, all RFMOs have regional knowledge management systems and knowledge sharing hubs for fisheries management, e.g. for data on stock assessments, and active mechanisms to collect and process data for assistance in science-based decision making. In addition, Regional Fishery Bodies (RFB, more than 50 exist), the Regional Secretariats Network (RSN) and the Regional Seas (RS) Conventions and Action Plans (RSCAPs, 18 exist) and LMEs facilitate information exchange and collaborate on common issues. A number of other groups are currently working on fisheries data and monitoring, including the More Foundation Group (stock assessment methods), the Vulcan (Paul Allen Foundation, for fisheries data improvement), and the Science for Nature and People.

83. There are a number of evaluation systems and methodologies for assessing the status and performance of fisheries. FAO has particularly important data sets on fisheries which it has been monitoring the state of the world's marine fish stocks since 1974, and produces the most authoritative report on the subject – The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture – every two years. Other information sources relevant to the use and management of oceans include the World Bank's Fisheries Performance Indicators system, and the Ocean Health Index ([www.oceanhealthindex.org](http://www.oceanhealthindex.org)) developed by Conservation International in partnership with National Geographic and the New England Aquarium.

Section 1.a 3): the proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the program;

84. Although, as described above, concrete steps have been taken to address key barriers to sustainable management and biodiversity conservation in the ABNJ under the GEF-5 Program, it has not been possible to achieve all objectives in the five years of the GEF-5 Program (2014-2019) and the baseline is still weak in many areas. A more comprehensive, integrated and programmatic approach with additional catalytic GEF investment is required to consolidate, amplify and upscale the results and impacts delivered so far, particularly in relation to policy and processes, capacity, inter-sectoral collaboration, knowledge management and awareness. In addition, some issues have become more prominent in recent years and need to be integrated into governance and management of ABNJ, notably climate change adaptation.

85. The long-term vision for the new program is an ABNJ with a healthy ecosystem structure and function, with coordinated multi-sectoral processes providing support to address cumulative impacts and ensure a sustainable supply of ecosystem goods and services including long-term socio-economic benefits (both use and non-use values) to human populations. The Program's objective to which the new GEF-7 Common Oceans ABNJ Program seeks to contribute is '*the sustainable use of ABNJ natural living resources and strengthened biodiversity conservation in the face of a changing environment*'. The steps to achieve this goal and how the GEF-7 Common Oceans ABNJ Program expects to contribute to these, are set out in a simplified Theory of Change (ToC) graphic (see Figure 2).

86. The proposed Program framework and key areas for action are based on in-depth assessment of the results and lessons learned from the GEF-5 Program and key barriers still to be overcome to achieve sustainable use of ABNJ (identified above). It reflects the priority actions needed for transformational change identified through the FAO-led expert program design workshops held in December 2018 and April 2019 and subsequent discussions and reviews with program partners and GEF Secretariat staff, and considers changes in ABNJ and new initiatives and opportunities that have occurred over the last few years. It also reflects the findings, conclusions and recommendations identified in the independent terminal Evaluation of the GEF-5 common Oceans ABNJ Program and its constituent child projects[39]<sup>39</sup>.

87. The overall strategic approach to the proposed GEF-7 program is to build on consolidating the gains, experiences, and lessons learned from the GEF-5 program, complemented by the upscaling and/or diversification of approaches and technologies that demonstrated their cost-effectiveness in the earlier phase and in some cases, extended to include new and promising technologies as well as addressing issues of growing importance in ABNJ notably climate change impacts.

88. The GEF-7 Common Oceans ABNJ Program aims to:

- (i) Strengthen frameworks, processes and incentives for more effective governance and adaptive management, particularly of fisheries, in ABNJ;
- (ii) Improve the capacity for participating States to more effectively implement integrated management, based on the ecosystem approach in the ABNJ (and considering their connectivity to coastal waters), including addressing science-based decision-making, compliance and enforcement issues, and mitigation of environmental impacts;
- (iii) Support better coordination, collaboration and partnerships between the fisheries sector and other stakeholders and relevant initiatives with interests in ABNJ to promote more coherent integrated multi-sectoral action on ABNJ issues;
- (iv) Improve awareness and understanding of the challenges and solutions to sustainable use of ABNJ, and encourage wider support and increased investment to address threats to, and sustainable management of, the ABNJ.

89. The Program recognizes that threats to marine life and natural systems in ABNJ come from multiple sectors, but the focus is on addressing fisheries management challenges, taking into account, as necessary, cumulative multi-sector impacts, connections with neighboring EEZ regions (including LMEs), and the need for better understanding of ABNJ issues and for cross-sectoral coordination. This acknowledges that the distribution and impacts of fisheries activities are more widespread and extensive than those of other sectors operating in ABNJ (e.g. seabed mining, which tends to be more localized), and there is a higher chance of fisheries interacting with users from other

sectors (e.g, cabling, shipping, seabed mining), directly or via cumulative effects. This warrants a Program focus on fisheries but also the need for an integrated cross-sectoral approach. Tackling these issues requires a combination of program components addressing fisheries management issues, as well as others with a multi-sector focus.

### ***Theory of Change***

90. The Program focuses on the creation of enabling environment to deliver a series of transformative changes that will lead to more sustainable and integrated use and management of ABNJ resources. The Program's Theory of Change (Figure 2) illustrates the logic and sequencing of the steps required for achieving sustainable use of ABNJ resources, a healthy and productive ABNJ and longer-term impacts and benefits, with improvements in improving environmental, economic and social conditions including contributions to meeting Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets and GEF Core Indicator Targets. The Program elements of the causal pathway are described in the Results Framework. The Theory of Change will be further developed during a Program Stakeholder Consultation workshop to be held immediately prior to commencing detailed child project development. The four components presented in the Results Framework constitute the Program's alternative scenario, addressing the barriers and building on the baselines described above. Each of the Program's child projects, all of which contribute to several Program-level outcomes, is briefly described in Box 5.

91. The key logic in the Theory of Change is that by further developing enabling policy and legal frameworks, developing capacities, systems and incentives/disincentives for management of sustainable fisheries at global, regional, national and industry levels, promoting cross-sectoral collaboration and coordination of efforts, and improvement in the quality and exchange of knowledge for decision-making (for management and for investments), it will be possible to move to the situation sought in ABNJ, one where the threats to the ABNJ and their globally important environmental values and barriers preventing effective governance and management for sustainable use of ABNJ are effectively addressed.

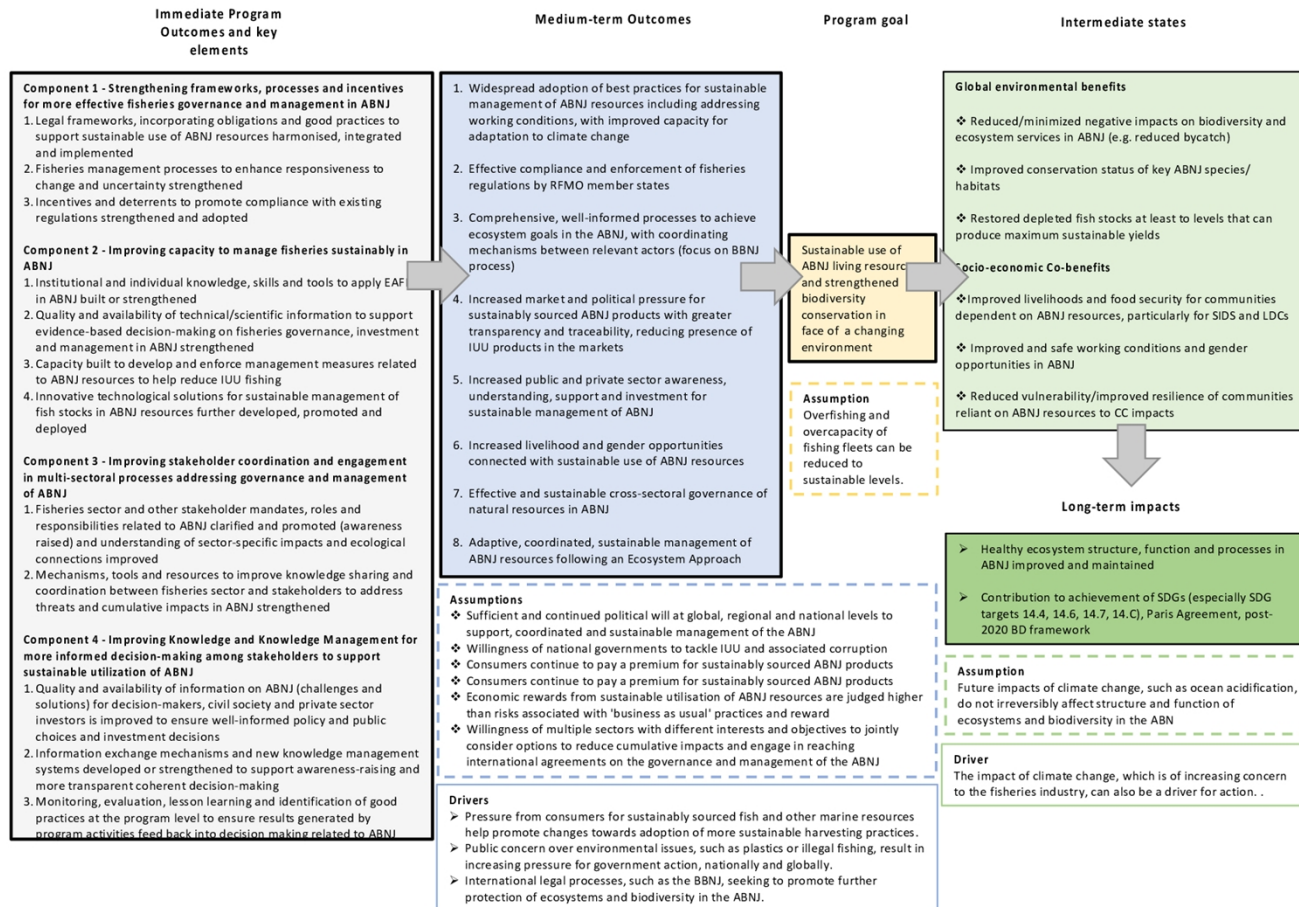
92. However, there are a number of assumptions that need to be met for progress to occur and the Program to achieve its desired longer-term results and impacts, including:

- § Sufficient, continued political will at global, regional and national levels to agree and support (including committing financial resources) coordinated, sustainable management of ABNJ in the face of other development priorities (particularly applies to RFMO member developing countries);
- § Willingness of national governments to tackle IUU and associated corruption;
- § Willingness of multiple sectors operating across ABNJ with different interests and aims to jointly address options to reduce cumulative impacts and engage in reaching international agreement on the governance and management of ABNJ, including the oil and gas, mining, shipping, and fisheries sectors;
- § Consumers continue to pay a premium for sustainably sourced ABNJ products even in face of future economic shocks;
- § Economic returns from sustainable utilization of ABNJ resources are judged higher than risks associated with 'business as usual' practices and rewards (short-term corporate profit not seen as more important than sustainability);

§ Overfishing and overcapacity of fishing fleets can be reduced to sustainable levels;

§ Future climate change impacts e.g. ocean acidification, do not irreversibly damage ecosystems structure and function and biodiversity in the ABNJ.

**Figure 2 - Theory of Change for GEF-7 Common Oceans ABNJ Program**



93. There are also a number of drivers that support the process of transformational change towards the Program's longer-term sustainable goals, which the Program (and its partners) will seek to engage with and capitalize on through targeted activities, including;

- Increasing pressure for sustainably sourced (certified) fish and other marine living resources among consumers through public awareness campaigns (not GEF program funded) that then leverage changes towards adoption of more sustainable harvesting practices;
- International legal processes, notably the BBNJ, that are seeking to promote further protection of ecosystems and constituent biodiversity in ABNJ
- Increased public concern (particularly in the developed world) over some environmental, social and economic issues, e.g. illegal fishing, plastics pollution, working conditions in some fishing fleets operating in ABNJ, which is increasing pressure for government action nationally (in some countries) and globally; and
- Increasing concern in the fisheries industry over the potential impact of climate change on the spatial distribution and productivity of target fish stocks.

94. The program has four components, each of which is described below.

***Component 1 – Strengthening frameworks, processes and incentives for more effective fisheries governance and management in ABNJ***

95. This Component focuses on changes to policy and legal frameworks and processes for more effective application of sustainable fisheries governance and management arrangements and systems in ABNJ (e.g. support for harvesting strategies), including continued support for critical processes leading to improved management of the resources at the regional and global levels (e.g. Cooperation across tuna RFMOs which has sought to address, among other things, coordination on scientific research, market issues, MCS, impact of bycatch, and support for developing countries)). It also seeks to increase use of market incentives in support of sustainable fisheries (e.g., through eco-labelling). The Component comprises three program Outcomes:

***Outcome 1.1 - Harmonized, integrated and implemented policy and legal frameworks, incorporating obligations and good practices to support sustainable use of ABNJ resources (focus on fisheries)***

96. This Outcome will develop appropriate measures to fill policy and particularly legal and regulatory gaps, especially those relating to the obligations established by binding and voluntary international fisheries instruments by regional fisheries bodies to promote sustainable fisheries. It will also address the implementation of regional fisheries measures by States to ensure that regional and international obligations are incorporated into national law, and will support their uptake by RFMOs and States.

97. GEF-eligible RFMO member States will be selected to pilot these activities with specialist advice and relevant capacity building will be provided through the Program. This capacity building will help strengthen the monitoring and enforcement efforts for existing and newly-adopted national legal/regulatory measures to reduce high seas IUU fishing through building national expertise, participation of developing countries at regional meetings of the RFMO to which they are members, and their greater involvement in the associated decision-making and science-support processes. It will also serve to promote greater harmonization of regulations and compliance mechanisms between high seas

and national waters. This Outcome will build on, deepen and upscale the results and experiences from the GEF-5 work. GEF-eligible pilot countries will be selected during the PPG stage.

***Outcome 1.2 Strengthened fisheries management processes to enhance responsiveness to change and uncertainty***

98. Efforts under this Outcome focus on promoting management processes for more sustainable fisheries, including promotion of increased attention on the use of scientific advice to inform management decisions (strengthening the ‘science-management interface’). This will include greater consideration of uncertainty in stock status and productivity through, for instance, the promotion of the application of the precautionary approach via the adoption of harvest control rules (HCR). Strengthening the science-management interface will improve the information flow allowing for stronger adaptive management and greater participation in the decision-making processes by less developed member states of RFMOs. Activities will build upon the gaps identified under GEF-5 in the implementation of the biological, human and institutional dimensions of EAF<sup>[40]</sup><sup>40</sup>. Activities will include further promotion of the use of simulation-tested (MSE) harvest strategy/management procedure approaches for management by the tuna RFMOs (building on GEF-5 experiences), giving increased attention to likely impacts of climate change on ABNJ fisheries to facilitate planning for potential management responses, and promoting activities to incentivize fisheries to follow best practices (including those identified through work undertaken in the GEF-5 program).

99. The Program will also provide continued support to various cross-RFMO processes, such as the Kobe process and RFMO working groups on management strategies, bycatch and FADs.

***Outcome 1.3 Incentives to both promote compliance with existing regulations and deter IUU fishing activity further developed, promoted and adopted/strengthened***

100. Incentives to promote compliant behavior in countries and operators, often focused on the private sector, are seen as a key mechanism to increase the effectiveness of the implementation of responsible fisheries measures adopted by the RFMO member States. Activities to address market forces and opportunities for innovative financing arrangements to promote responsible activities leading to cost-effective management and to minimize ABNJ fisheries with minimal impacts on biodiversity will form key elements of this Outcome. The opportunities for both positive incentives for fishing companies, processing and distribution plants along the supply chain (e.g. fiscal incentives, better prices or improved access to markets for products from certified sustainable fisheries, etc) as well as negative incentives (concerted actions against IUU operators, tightly regulated markets to prevent entry of IUU products) will be considered.

101. Building on the experiences of the GEF-5 Program, such as the investor marketplace and other recent initiatives such as FAO’s Blue Hope, the GEF-7 program will explore scaling/replicating previous work and innovative financing options to meaningfully target the private sector, through sound feasibility studies, outreach and knowledge sharing and to encourage their investment in sustainable management of the natural resources of ABNJ. The Program will strategically communicate and raise awareness among the private sector so they are better informed about the potential opportunities to invest in the ABNJ outside of their sector as well as to exercise corporate social responsibility.

102. Potential Program activities under this Outcome will include examination of the use of direct market incentives, innovative financing and identification of potential Fisheries Improvement projects (FIPs)<sup>[41]</sup> that promote sustainability, supported by value chain analyses to better understand the economic and social drivers of ABNJ fisheries. Potential program activities will be explored during the PPG phase but may initially include: (i) a financing gap and needs analysis for sustainable utilization of ABNJ; (ii) mapping of existing and emerging funds and investment frameworks and mechanisms (including consideration of risk) for sustainable activities in ABNJ to unlock financing particularly from the private sector; (iii) creation of a database of investment opportunities to address specific ABNJ issues and needs as a tool to inform potential investors; (iv) promotion and highlighting of economic opportunities and examples of positive returns from investments in measures that support sustainable use of the ABNJ, with a forum/platform (e.g. ABNJ ‘investor market place’) to improve investor understanding of the options, costs, risks, sustainability, impacts and financial feasibility of investment in measures to address sustainable use of ABNJ, such as improved traceability, CDS, etc. It is envisaged that a model for improved engagement of and investment by the private sector will be developed and piloted (to be explored during the PPG phase).

103. Improving value chains can generate leverage for sustainably sourced ABNJ products, the income from which has the potential to encourage sustainable use of ABNJ living resources and conservation of the ecosystems from which they are derived. It is envisaged that the Tuna and Deep Sea projects will include analysis (gender sensitive) of value chains and opportunities for their development where appropriate, along with relevant targeted capacity building (addressing aspects of post-harvest handling, processing, packaging, marketing and business skills), and working with selected value chain actors (processors and retailers) to link them to certification, verification and traceability systems as appropriate. Separately, an Ecosystem Valuation and Value-Chain Analysis will also be undertaken by the Sargasso Sea project. The program will also investigate and support opportunities for development of FIPs. These activities will include gender analyses and assessment of the societal and family benefits derived from activities related to ABNJ fisheries.

104. The Global Coordination project will largely coordinate the development and delivery of this Outcome.

### ***Component 2 – Improving capacity to manage fisheries sustainably in ABNJ***

105. Component 2 focuses on building better capacity (systems, knowledge, skills, tools and other resources) to implement effective management and sustainable utilization of natural living resources in ABNJ, including addressing science-based decision-making, compliance and enforcement issues, and mitigation of environmental impacts. The emphasis will be on measures to further operationalize the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM).

106. The Component will promote efforts to scale up activities that have proven effective in MCS work (e.g., the use of electronic monitoring (EM) systems in tuna fisheries fleets); provide support for technical measures to better manage mortality of incidental and non-target species (bycatch) including promotion of better monitoring and management systems to quantify and mitigate bycatch promoted, and best practice mitigation techniques; promote new technologies and approaches that could lead to more cost-effective management of fish stocks (e.g. blockchain technology in support of transparency and traceability); increase institutional capacity in the RFMOs to assess and formulate



management measures in response to the effects of climate change on fish stocks; develop the potential for new intelligence sharing systems; the application of Marine Spatial Planning where appropriate; and will examine opportunities to provide capacity building relating to career development of fisheries officers.

107. Interventions under this Component are expected to particularly benefit the capacity of RFMOs and their member States. The Component comprises four Program Outcomes.

***Outcome 2.1 - Strengthened institutional and individual knowledge, skills and tools to apply EAFM in ABNJ***

108. This Outcome seeks to strengthen capacity to apply EAFM in ABNJ. It will improve understanding of the impacts of incidental catch of non-target species, and gears on habitats, including lost, abandoned or discarded gear, and their contribution to marine pollution and other impacts. It will provide support to RFMOs to identify and quantify key impacts of the fishing and processing operations, and take appropriate action if needed. Activities under this Outcome will also target strengthening ability to monitor and respond to environmental changes, such as assessing the impacts of climate change and the consequences of this information on management decisions, and identifying how this information could assist countries in strengthening relevant climate change adaptation actions related to fisheries.

109. A particular focus will be given to development of measures to ensure that shark populations are utilized within sustainable limits through consistent and integrated tools and processes in fisheries management and biodiversity conservation, with for instance, shark catches quantified in selected countries through new port sampling programs.

***Outcome 2.2 - Improved quality and availability of technical/scientific information to support evidence-based decision-making on fisheries governance, management and investment in ABNJ***

110. The Outcome seeks to improve capacity for technical/scientific data collection to support evidence-based decision-making to address one of the biggest constraints in implementing EAF – the lack of information. Recent evidence<sup>[42]</sup><sup>42</sup> suggests that where stocks are assessed, management is more likely to be sustainable. Under this Outcome therefore, fisheries that lack detailed assessments and are classified as ‘data-limited’ will be targeted, with a particular focus on the Deep Sea project.

111. The Program will promote new ways to monitor catch, bycatch, discards, incidental species, and direct physical effects of fishing, such as use of SmartForms to assist on-board observers (developed under the GEF-5 project<sup>[43]</sup><sup>43</sup>) and gear-mounted camera systems to monitor impacts on benthic environments for deep-sea fisheries. In line with work started over 10 years ago by RFMOs<sup>[44]</sup><sup>44</sup>, electronic monitoring systems will be further developed in partnership with industry to better understand the responses of deep-sea fishing fleets to changing fish stock distributions resulting from, for example, climate change or spatial closures and better mitigate against impacts.

112. In addition, attention will be given to gaining a better understanding of the connectivity between ABNJ and EEZ issues, and include targeted data collection for species where little is known, notably deepwater sharks. Opportunities will also be explored for fishing vessels to provide information on the deep ocean oceanography needed for a better understanding of climate change impacts on ABNJ fisheries.

***Outcome 2.3 - Capacity built to develop and enforce management regimes related to ABNJ living resources to help reduce IUU fishing***

113. This Outcome seeks to build capacity to develop and enforce management measures to reduce IUU fishing. The Program, mostly through its Tuna and Deep Sea projects, has a heavy emphasis on strengthening MCS to improve fisheries data, compliance with CMMs and to tackle IUU fishing. Activities under this Outcome include further development and promotion of technological innovations to strengthen the ability of developing States to monitor and enforce compliance from all relevant stakeholders.

114. Specific activities likely to be supported under this Outcome (to be refined during the PPG phase) include: (i) capacity building efforts aimed at the development of new skills and knowledge sharing between officials of both Tuna and Deep Sea RFMOs to tackle IUU fishing; (ii) continued strengthening of tools for monitoring, control and surveillance and compliance (e.g., to support PSMA, CDS and automatic updating of the global record of authorized vessels shared by all tuna RFMOs); (iii) upscaling the use of video equipment to supplement compliance work in developing states with strengthening approaches to data collection and analysis for compliance monitoring and reporting, improving data platforms to increase sharing of data that is needed to detect IUU fishing; (iv) reinforcement of compliance verification processes and tools in all RFMOs; (v) promoting the adoption of agreements aimed at increasing Cooperating Non-Contracting Parties' abilities to monitor fisheries; (vi) developing systems for traceability and (vii) the continuation of efforts in the use electronic tools (e.g. EMS) and emerging technologies.

***Outcome 2.4 - Innovative technological solutions for sustainable use of ABNJ living resources further developed, promoted and deployed***

115. A continuing focus for the GEF-7 program will be further development and take up of innovative technological solutions for sustainable management of fish stocks in ABNJ, including solutions to mitigate adverse impacts of current practices, with a particular focus given to those groups that have received relatively little attention or where mitigation measures are less developed. This will include: (i) further development and promotion of non-entangling and biodegradable designs for FADs to reduce 'ghost fishing' and other methods to reduce bycatch; (ii) continuing efforts to ensure wide uptake of mitigation techniques for sea turtles, seabirds and marine mammals through training and implementation of new technologies for monitoring; (iii) measures to support a shift towards more environmentally-friendly gear types such as alternatives (modifications and/or substitution) to gill nets, e.g. in Pakistan tuna fishery in the Northern Indian Ocean; and (iv) further development of risk assessment methodologies with a focus on incidental catches of slow growing and long-lived deep-water sharks. Efforts will be particularly focused on the member States of the newer RFMOs in the Pacific Ocean, southeast Atlantic Ocean and Indian Ocean where capacity is lower compared to other regions.

***Component 3 – Improving stakeholder coordination and engagement in multi-sectoral processes addressing governance and management of ABNJ***

116. Although fishing (more specifically over-capacity and the resulting over-fishing) continues to be seen as the most widespread and extensive threat to marine life and ecosystems in the ABNJ compared to other sectors (e.g, seabed mining, cabling, shipping), it is also recognized that future management of the ABNJ will require, at the very least, knowledge, awareness and understanding of the cumulative impacts of multiple sectors and integrated cross-sectoral approaches to effectively address overall impacts[45]<sup>45</sup>.

117. Consequently, this Component focuses on national, regional and global level activities, as well as a pilot at regional level (Sargasso Sea), to support improved knowledge sharing, collaboration, coordination and partnerships, and building the capacity to support these, between fisheries, mining, shipping and environmental sectors and different stakeholder groups (including private sector, civil society and academia and other relevant institutions with interests in ABNJ), to promote more coherent integrated multi-sectoral action on ABNJ issues and help jointly achieve positive ecosystem outcomes in the ABNJ. The Component has two program Outcomes.

***Outcome 3.1 – Sector mandates, roles and responsibilities related to ABNJ clarified and sector-specific impacts and ecological connections better understood***

118. This Outcome addresses the need to clarify and promote (raise awareness) of the mandates, roles and responsibilities of the fisheries sector and other stakeholder (government, institutions, civil society, private sector, etc.) related to uses of ABNJ. It also seeks to improve cross-sectoral dialogue on, and understanding of, cumulative impacts and ecological connections, including the linkage between ABNJ and coastal waters (EEZ and LMEs) and highlighting the ecological and economic arguments why parties involved with these areas should work together.

***Outcome 3.2 - Cross-sectoral technical knowledge sharing and coordination improved***

119. The Program will support capacity building - mechanisms, tools and resources - to facilitate information exchange and coordination between key stakeholders over ABNJ governance and management arrangements to address threats and cumulative impacts while maintaining sustainable resource utilization. Such capacity should support more transparent sector-specific impact assessments, including through development/piloting of Area Based Management Tools (ABMT) and capacity building in environmental impact assessment (EIA). It is envisaged that specific coordinating mechanisms among sectoral users will be proposed and facilitated and include links (dialogue) between RFMOs, Regional Seas Organizations (RSOs), Large Marine Ecosystems Projects (LMEs) and other relevant initiatives as necessary. Various options will be explored during the PPG period, again building on the partnerships established under the GEF-5 program (especially the Capacity and Deep Sea projects).

120. All four main child projects contribute to delivery of this Component (although in different ways and differing degrees). However, the main contributor will be the Cross-sectoral Capacity Development Project which aims to enhance the functional capacity (planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating) of national governments and relevant regional and global entities with a remit in ABNJ to cooperate, coordinate and exchange information more effectively to address issues of common concern in ABNJ.

121. The Sargasso Sea Project is also tightly connected with this Component. Governance of the Sargasso Sea is typical of most high seas areas in that human activities are regulated purely on a sectoral basis and there is no overarching co-ordination framework that can detect governance gaps or cumulative impacts of such activities. Consequently, the Sargasso Sea Project is seen as an opportunity to explore how a ‘stewardship’ agency[46]<sup>46</sup> and associated partnership can address multiple impacts in a geographically

defined region and support a healthy and sustainable ocean through a process of monitoring and stewardship that could be a potential model for other ABNJ regions. The framework for the Sargasso Sea Project is based on the well-tested Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis-Strategic Action Program (TDA-SAP) model employed for GEF LME projects but in this case a novel application to a specific ABNJ region.

122. This Component will benefit the fisheries sector (especially deep sea fisheries) through identifying interactions between fisheries and other sectors operating in ABNJ, and considering the impacts of other sectors on fisheries (e.g. deep sea mining) and vice versa. For example, the effects of deep-sea mining sediment plumes on deep-sea fish populations are largely unknown and approaches and tools to determine their impacts need to be developed. Specific activities under this Component will provide support to RFMOs to better develop mechanisms to assess, mitigate and manage impacts of other sectors on fisheries from other sectors, and conversely make relevant fisheries information available to support decision-making and governance by other sectors. This information should place RFMO member States and fishery bodies in a stronger position to contribute to multi-sector impact assessments and governance and multi-sectoral discussions on integrated management for ABNJ.

123. This Component particularly recognizes the on-going negotiations towards an international, legally binding agreement under UNCLOS on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction (the BBNJ process). It will also support better implementation of the future BBN agreement. The new agreement will require, inter alia, cooperation and coordination among existing sectoral management and regulatory arrangements, to achieve its main objectives (conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity). However, this level of coordination has only occurred partially to date. Strengthening capacity, coordination and information exchange between key stakeholders over ABNJ governance and management arrangements will be supported through this Component. The Program will provide technical information and assist multiple sectors and stakeholder groups, focusing on fisheries sector actors, to promote understanding of how existing arrangements will need to change and operate under the new framework. It will also help support more effective contributions from the fisheries sector to the BBNJ process and its implementation.

***Component 4 – Improving knowledge, Knowledge Management (KM) and lesson learning for more informed decision-making among stakeholders to support sustainable utilization of ABNJ***

124. The ABNJ is generally perceived as remote with low public and political awareness of the challenges even in coastal States where the economic and ecological connectivity between coastal water and high seas regions demands joint policies and actions in some cases (e.g. to address straddling fish stocks and migratory species). For instance, ABNJ offer potential opportunities for adjacent coastal States to expand their Blue Economies. In addition, although fisheries management in the ABNJ is an inter-governmental issue, informed non-state actors can play a crucial role as constituencies in each national delegation, and through advocacy and as facilitators in general. Increasing public awareness can help generate or increase markets for sustainably sourced products from ABNJ, and support moves towards sustainability.

125. Component 4 seeks to improve political and stakeholder awareness and knowledge, including private sector and civil society, of the complex challenges facing ABNJ and solutions for sustainable use of ABNJ. In so doing it aims to encourage wider public support and political will for increased appropriate investments (both public and private) for the sustainable management of the ABNJ.

126. Key elements of this Component will include communication and awareness-raising activities to promote solutions and successes in addressing sustainable use of ABNJ, and advocacy activities encourage greater support from decision-makers and the public for sustainable management of ABNJ natural resources. It also seeks to improve access to the best available information to enable well-informed decision-making for ABNJ management (e.g. in relation to ABMT), and activities to systematize and better manage knowledge of ABNJ sustainable management. Consequently, this Component links closely to Component 3.

127. Component 4 also addresses the management and dissemination of results and lessons learned generated by the Program. It will facilitate information exchange between Child projects and with global knowledge sources (providing up and down as well as sideways transfers), thus supporting the scaling-up of impacts at regional and global levels beyond the limits of the individual Child projects. Given the importance of the quality and availability of information to decision-making across the Program, this Component links to, and underpins, other Components to significant degrees, but the Global Coordination project will advise and lead on program-level communication and KM activities, including the development of a Program and Child project communication strategy. This Component also addresses programmatic M&E. It has three Outcomes.

***Outcome 4.1 - Quality and availability of information on ABNJ issues (challenges and solutions) improved***

128. Activities under this Outcome include measures to improve the quality and availability of information on ABNJ issues (challenges and solutions) for decision-makers, civil society and private sector investors. This aims to help deliver better-informed policy and public choices to support sustainable utilization of ABNJ including generating increased (and innovative) investment by the financial and business community.

***Outcome 4.2 - Information exchange mechanisms improved and new knowledge management systems developed to support awareness-raising and transparent decision-making***

129. This Outcome aims to improve knowledge exchange with increased sharing of technical experiences between stakeholders facing similar challenges, such as on compliance. Clear assessment and reporting system on the effectiveness of the Program's communications and outreach activities will also be developed under this Outcome<sup>[47]</sup><sup>47</sup>. The Program will also link with IW:Learn as a route for dissemination of project results, experiences, lesson learned and good practices.

***Outcome 4.3 - Effective on-going Program Monitoring and Evaluation***

130. This Outcome addresses program-level monitoring and evaluation, lesson learning and identification of good practices to ensure results generated by child Projects and program-level activities feed back into awareness-raising, knowledge management and decision making related to ABNJ.

131. Although individual communication activities will be undertaken by the four key child projects independently, the Global Coordination Project will advise, facilitate and coordinate on knowledge management, outreach and lesson learning activities across the Program.

## **Box 5 - Common Oceans ABNJ Program – project summaries**

### ***Sustainable management of tuna fisheries and biodiversity conservation in the areas beyond national jurisdiction.***

The objective of the proposed Sustainable Management of Tuna Fisheries and Biodiversity Conservation in the ABNJ Project is to achieve responsible, efficient and sustainable tuna harvests and biodiversity conservation in the ABNJ in face of a changing environment. The strategic approach to the Project will be to build on consolidating the gains from the GEF-5 project, complemented by the upscaling and/or diversification of approaches and technologies that demonstrated their cost-effectiveness in the earlier phase.

Project activities will focus on the main drivers contributing to the present status and future risks to the sustainability of these fish stocks, namely overcapacity of the fleets, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and the inter-relationships between tuna harvesting and the environment. More specifically, likely activities could be grouped into the following categories: (i) continuing to support critical processes leading to improved management of the resources at the regional and global levels (e.g., cross t-RFMO process, support for Harvesting Strategies/Management Procedures); (ii) scaling up activities that have proven effective in monitoring control and surveillance of the management of the resource (e.g., the use of electronic monitoring on fleets); (iii) promoting new technologies and approaches that lead to cost-effective management of fish stocks (e.g., technology in support of transparency and traceability); (iv) increased use of market incentives in support of sustainable fisheries (e.g., through eco-labeling); and (v) support for modified or new technologies to reduce environmental impact associated with capture of non-target species. These activities directly contribute to proposed outcomes at the Program level.

### ***Deep-sea Fisheries under the Ecosystem Approach***

The objective of the Deep Sea Project is to: *‘to ensure that deep seas fisheries in the ABNJ are managed under an ecosystem approach that maintains demersal fish stocks at levels capable of maximizing their sustainable yields and minimizing impacts on biodiversity, with a focus on data-limited stocks, deep-water sharks and vulnerable marine ecosystems.’*

The project focuses on high seas deep sea fisheries (DSF) using gears that fish on or near to the seabed and target demersal finfish and shellfish and is structured around four components.

The project will seek to strengthen DSF governance through wider adoption, enforcement and compliance of international obligations relating to sustainable fisheries management aimed at maintaining stocks and reducing impacts. It will also aim to deliver more effective management of DSF through improving knowledge, approaches and tools for the application of EAF. It will support the transition from traditional single-species assessments to multi-species ecosystem frameworks.

The project will improve the understanding, management and mitigation of the impacts from other sectors on DSF and link with other projects in the GEF-7 ABNJ program that address multi-sectoral ocean governance. The DSF project will allow RFMOs and member States to increase their capacity to work together, and with other sectors, to share experiences and cooperatively develop new and efficient tools, that will allow for improved monitoring and management of the fish stocks and impacts on biodiversity.

The project will support activities, beyond the RFMO's core role of fish stock management, which will lead to better assessments of data-limited stocks, improvements in risk assessments on non-target species including deep-water sharks and VMEs, and on improvements to monitor biodiversity and ecosystem health.

The project will also allow for increased cooperation and exchange among the RFMOs. This will build on successful initiatives started under the FAO GEF-5 Deep-Sea Project, and greatly assist the newer RFMOs and develop opportunities for those coastal States that are members of RFMOs but do not have DSF.

### ***Building and Enhancing Sectoral and Cross-Sectoral Capacity to Support Sustainable Resource Use and Biodiversity Conservation in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction***

This project will facilitate the building and strengthening of capacity for sectoral and cross-sectoral cooperation and coordination in ABNJ among national, regional and global organizations that have an ABNJ-related management remit by training their officials, managers, and technical staff in the planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating sectoral and cross-sectoral cooperation and coordination initiatives in ABNJ management, including through the use of area-based management tools (ABMTs), environmental impact assessments (EIAs), and marine spatial planning. This project will also facilitate: 1) more effective knowledge exchange across key ABNJ sectoral management organizations (national, regional and global); and 2) improved access to the best available information to enable well-informed decision-making and cross-sectoral collaboration for ABNJ management, including in relation to ABMTs, EIAs, and other measures that fall within the remits and mandates of various management bodies. Moreover, the project will inform high-level officials involved in the process of developing and ultimately implementing an international legally-binding instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction regarding the results of capacity assessments and actions/processes identified to enhance capacity development as well as contribute to the enhancement of public understanding of ABNJ benefits derived from ABNJ and engagement in associated issues and opportunities.

The project will contribute to the GEF-7 Common Oceans Program in the improvement of stakeholder coordination and management in multi-sectoral processes addressing governance and

Section 1.a 4): alignment with GEF focal area and/or Impact Program strategies;

132. The Program will support the implementation of the GEF International Waters Objective 2 - *Improve management in the areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ)* through a variety of measures to support the sustainable management of fisheries resources (largely through Components 1 and 2) and biodiversity conservation (through Components 2 and especially 3) in ABNJ.

133. Specifically Program activities that reflect key GEF-7 IW priorities will include the following:

- Improving management to deliver sustainable tuna and deep sea fisheries operating in ABNJ, in accordance with an Ecosystem Approach through assistance to capacity building among member States and organizations, with demonstration and scaling up of improved tools and practices for sustainable fisheries management and biodiversity conservation in ABNJ. A particular focus is on strengthening support to RFMO activities including national and regional policy setting/reforms to reduce overexploitation of fish stocks and end IUU fishing and inform sustainable management of marine capture fisheries (such as mainstreaming existing policy goals and targets established through RFMOs, the 2009 Port State Measures Agreement and other FAO voluntary guidelines), promoting technology to support monitoring, compliance and surveillance (MCS) activities, and supporting efforts towards reaching agreements to reduce and eliminate harmful incentive subsidies.
- Building on, strengthening and expanding partnerships at national, regional and global scales for further investments in sustainable use of ABNJ living natural resources, including fostering public-private partnerships between the RFMOs and the large commercial fishing fleets harvesting in the high seas, promotion of market mechanisms to support sustainable fisheries value chains, and encouraging de-risked innovative investment for sustainable practices through support to the testing of innovative approaches and technologies. Stimulating engagement along the different supply chains towards reducing impacts on the freshwater and marine ecosystem environments. This will entail working with large-scale commercial fishing fleets, and development of marine spatial plans to identify investment opportunities for both private and public sector.
- Facilitating capacity building, collaborative opportunities and information exchange among concerned states and organizations to improve cohesion between ABNJ and the Large Marine Ecosystems that they border.
- Strengthening of the capability of decision-makers to collaborate, cooperate and coordinate to deliver more integrated management of the ABNJ across multiple sectors, including fisheries, deep-sea mining, gas and oil, shipping and cable laying, including a focus on collaboration among relevant international, regional and domestic bodies on area-based management in ABNJ.
- The Program supports the GEF-7 IW aim to foster information sharing to promote sustainable practices and inform decision-making by relevant bodies operating in ABNJ, and the showcasing of lessons learned and validated good practice approaches through multimedia tools and focused advocacy work which is expected to facilitate consideration and adoption of relevant policy and managerial frameworks in other areas and regions.

134. The Program will also contribute to the delivery of GEF IW Objective 1 - Strengthening Blue Economy opportunities - through supporting its three areas of strategic action: (i) sustaining healthy coastal and marine ecosystems, particularly through promoting regional cooperation and more collaborative, integrated management of ABNJ resources including the use of marine spatial planning, identification, development and promotion of more innovative investment and financing arrangements to transition to sustainable use of ABNJ resources, and through better knowledge exchange, including through IW-LEARN. In addition, the Program contributes to the second priority of IW Objective 1 - Catalyzing sustainable fisheries management – particularly through building capacity for wider adoption of the EAF in both tuna and deep-sea fisheries, including promoting MCS technology to combat IUU fishing, and also contributes towards the third priority - Addressing pollution reduction in marine environments - particularly through measures to reduce discarding of old fishing gear into the oceans.

135. The Program will also contribute to the implementation of the GEF-7 Biodiversity Focal Area Objective 1.1 - Mainstream biodiversity across sectors as well as landscapes and seascapes - mainly through: (i) implementation of management strategies to support sustainable ABNJ fisheries following an ecosystem approach; (ii) the development of efficient tools and practices for improving ABNJ tuna and deep-sea fisheries management and biodiversity conservation; (iii) facilitating increased adoption of bycatch mitigation best technologies and practices by tuna and deep sea vessels operating in ABNJ, and (iv) promoting greater public and private sector institutional collaboration and cooperation to promote multi-sectoral planning and more comprehensive and participatory environmental impact assessment for a more integrated approach to management of ABNJ.

136. The Program also responds to the priority given under GEF-7 Programming Directions to private sector engagement. As further detailed in Section 4 below, key roles of private sector actors in relation to participating child projects will include as participants in value chains and through its support of innovative finance initiatives (see Outcome 1.3); and as co-financiers.

Section 1.a 5) : incremental/ additional cost reasoning and expected contributions from the baseline, the GEFTF, LDCF, SCCF, and co-financing;

137. In the GEF-7 Program, GEF funds would be used to continue and expand critical processes that have already made substantial contributions towards achieving transformational change towards sustainable utilization of ABNJ resources, such as promoting the ecosystem approach to fisheries management with continued reductions of by-catch and loss of critically important biodiversity affecting marine ecosystems, and building capacity among key stakeholders involved in global processes to protect biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction. The GEF investment will be used to catalyze a number of actions that will have global environmental benefits over those delivered by existing (baseline) actions. Without the GEF-7 Program, movement towards more sustainable and coherent management of ABNJ would be much slower and achieved in a less effective, integrated manner, with more limited prospects of impact. There would be considerable additional risks to biodiversity conservation and maintenance of ecosystem services as a result of such a slower, more fragmented approach, especially given the increasing interest and economic pressure to develop marine resources, e.g. deep sea mining.

138. GEF investment will support changes to policies, legal frameworks and processes and incentives for more effective application of sustainable management arrangements in ABNJ, including improving private sector engagement



139. Under the baseline scenario, legislation, policies, strategies and plans to provide enabling environments for sustainable natural resource management in the ABNJ would remain largely independent (not integrated) and limited and (in many cases) outdated and governance and management frameworks would still not fully incorporate obligations, non-binding agreements and good practices to support sustainable use of ABNJ resources. With GEF support, there would stronger national and institutional frameworks supporting sustainable use of ABNJ with greater mainstreaming of sustainable management approaches and tools, such as marine spatial planning, into fisheries and other sector development initiatives.

140. In terms of incentives and investment, without additional attention to promoting investment for sustainable use practices in ABNJ, it is likely that financing would continue to fund unsustainable forms and levels of resource exploitation and to undermine on-going (including other GEF-financed) sustainable fisheries and biodiversity conservation efforts. In addition, without a more coordinated, cross-sectoral viewpoint, investments would likely continue to be sector-specific with limited understanding or consideration of their impacts on other sectors. Under the alternative, the Program has a specific focus on engagement with the private sector and development of innovative finance arrangements. With GEF support this will enable a more systematic approach to allow scaling up of private sector investments, especially in relation to sustainability of fisheries across ABNJ. To support this the GEF investment will provide a dedicated knowledge-sharing platform to target private sector audiences and ensure that lessons learned from the Program-supported innovative finance initiatives are promoted through south-north and south-south exchanges so these can be scaled up in new areas. Mechanisms to support sustainability goals within investments promoted by the Program may include ensuring investments have environmental safeguards built in and mainstreaming and promoting sustainable management considerations into target value chains by child projects. By making a clear business case for sustainable management of ABNJ the GEF investment will facilitate greater promotion and linkage of innovative investments to regional and global finance initiatives in both private and public sectors including their uptake by larger multilateral development assistance initiatives.

141. Also, linking stakeholders through a programmatic approach would facilitate fisheries seeking to promote more sustainably sourced ABNJ products to attain sufficient capacity to influence and negotiate more favourable terms with regional and global markets.

142. The GEF investment will improve the capacity of key stakeholders to deliver more sustainable use of ABNJ, particularly in the fisheries sector

143. Many of the activities to build capacity for sustainable management of fisheries (both tuna and deep sea) supported under the GEF-5 Program involving the RFMOs are unlikely to have taken place in the absence of GEF financing (e.g., the reactivation of the Kobe process), whilst other capacity such as promoting the adoption of harvest control rules for tuna fisheries would not have been so successful or so accepted. Progress would likely continue but at a much slower rate and be much more limited (e.g., to a particular fleet, county, sub-region, RFMOs), technical support to the fisheries sector would focus more narrowly on maximizing production at the expense of environmental sustainability, and opportunities for synergies to resolve common problems in different ocean regions would be lost. The GEF-7 financing will allow for RFMOs and member States to increase their capacity to work together, and with other sectors, to share experiences and cooperatively develop new and more efficient approaches and tools. Under GEF-7, the Program would ensure that sustainable use and management considerations are mainstreamed into technical support. For instance, the GEF funding will support activities that will lead to better assessments of data-limited deep sea fish stocks (which amount to some 50 % of the exploited stocks), improvements in risk assessments on habitats and non-target species such as VMEs and deepwater sharks, and on improvements to monitor biodiversity and ecosystem health that will feed into improved fisheries management decisions. Without the

GEF financing it is likely that the fish stocks that are of unknown status would remain unknown and therefore subject to the risk of over-exploitation. In addition, GEF-7 financing would allow a number of other new approaches and technologies that demonstrated encouraging results under the GEF-5 program, such as EMS, MCS officer network, biodegradable FADs, to be further developed, up-scaled and expanded to effect transformational change across the whole ABNJ. Without the additional intervention, there would be less work relating to climate change impacts and adaptation, socio-economic development and drivers, and overall adoption and implementation of the EAF would be reduced.

144. The GEF investment will enhance systems and capacity of national governments, and relevant regional and global entities to effectively address issues of common concern in ABNJ. The child project on the support to the Sargasso Sea Commission to coordinate multi-sectoral approach to managing impacts on a unique ecosystem represents an example of this approach.

145. Strengthening the capacity of countries to participate in collaborative ocean governance in ABNJ is important for holistic ocean management. Under the baseline, investments in fisheries and other sector resource management and biodiversity conservation in ABNJ would continue to be planned and executed in “silos” with limited cross-sectoral interaction, collaboration and coordination so the complex impacts and interdependencies between sectors would be poorly recognized, particularly adverse cumulative impacts. Also, use of approaches and tools to address these interdependencies would not be widespread and remain fragmented, e.g. marine spatial planning and opportunities for synergies between sectors operating within ABNJ are missed. In the specific case of the Sargasso Sea, for instance, current single sector activities – fishing, shipping, exploration of marine resources (including potential for deep sea mining), etc, would continue independently of each other with no collaborative agreement on how best to ensure the Sea and its ecosystems continue on the long term.

146. One of the major achievements of the GEF-5 program was the successful establishment of groups of partners that came together to work toward the common goal of achieving more sustainable utilization of resources in the ABNJ (particularly in the tuna and deep sea projects) and achieved synergies not possible in the absence of GEF resources. The partnerships, also contributed to the mobilization of co-financing to address challenges beyond the capacity of any individual stakeholder or partner to resolve. GEF-7 funding would be used to build on and expand these existing partnerships, bringing together UN agencies, international environmental NGOs, foundations, academia, and importantly the private sector, with representatives from the key sectors operating in ABNJ, to promote more collaborative approaches and exchange. Such partnerships will particularly benefit the newer RFMOs and develop opportunities for those (GEF-eligible) coastal States that are members of RFMOs and their member States but have little or no ABNJ fisheries. The program partnership would help leverage additional global, regional and national investments and capacities not available through individual child projects. Without the GEF financing, such a cross-sector, cross-agency partnership to champion improved governance and management and sustainable use of ABNJ under a common platform will likely not exist.

147. Through the GEF-7 Program, it is envisaged that effective multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms would be developed offering enhanced communication, collaboration and partnerships between relevant stakeholder groups fostering greater understanding of sectoral and cumulative impacts, and also building capacity (knowledge, training) to address inter-sector threats and enable greater promotion of sustainability concerns in regional and global processes addressing issues of relevance to ABNJ, e.g. BBNJ process. The programmatic approach will also offer opportunities for wider integration of sustainable use of ABNJ considerations into specific and sectoral and national

development plans. It also offers, through helping to maintain a strong partnership arrangement, increased opportunities for co-financing from partners and a variety of other sources, including donors and the private sector.

148. GEF investment will improve the awareness and the evidence-based decision-making process needed to achieve more integrated, sustainable approaches to the utilization of ABNJ

149. Under the baseline, experience and knowledge on sustainable utilization and management of ABNJ is largely managed within sectors and stakeholder groups with limited opportunities for dissemination and upscaling, and reduced distribution and uptake of best practices resulting in reduced efficiency and sustainability of ABNJ management. Knowledge sharing particularly lacks sufficient information on successful cross-sectoral approaches. The GEF Program will enable effective knowledge sharing and learning between projects based on harmonized approaches and a common overall results framework and thus aid the knowledge base on management for sustainable utilization of ABNJ, including experiences with integrated approaches which address multi-sector cumulative impacts and different stakeholder priorities and concerns (social, environmental and economic), supporting a more holistic perspective on the use and conservation of ABNJ. As well as informing more sustainable management practices, improved knowledge sharing, collaboration and communication will enable national delegations and regional stakeholder groups to participate more effectively in regional global knowledge fora. With GEF support, the Program will provide a strong focal point (through the Global Coordination project) for supporting the critical role of coordination and collaboration and information exchange and knowledge management among the many stakeholders with interests in ABNJ.

150. Overall, the alternative scenario with GEF financing is likely to result in a significant acceleration of progress towards meeting the overall goal of sustainable fisheries management in ABNJ begun during the GEF-5 Program. Without this, there is a high risk that the impacts and synergies achieved in the GEF-5 program, which resulted in a more cost-effective approach to the management of global fisheries in particular, will be lost.

151. Also, it is worth noting that while small-scale fishers seldom fish in ABNJ, their livelihoods are connected to improved fisheries management in the high seas, so by decreasing overfishing of highly migratory and straddling fish stocks in ABNJ the GEF-7 Program should help support recovery of populations within national jurisdiction, thereby supporting small-scale artisanal fishers and coastal communities, contributing to the SGDs on livelihoods and poverty reduction.

152. In addition to the contributions from the individual projects funded under GEF-7, adoption of an integrated programmatic approach provides substantial additional value, particularly in terms of efficiency and impact. Addressing all the threats and barriers together is more effective as they are interrelated and cumulative. Although each threat and barrier requires a different response, progress is more effective if all the key challenges are simultaneously addressed and individual project and partner responses using a comprehensive and integrated programmatic approach. For instance, long-term progress in sustainable fisheries management is not achievable without progress in biodiversity conservation and vice versa. As an approach, advocacy for managing the use of ABNJ resources is also likely to be more convincing to policy makers when presented as an integrated program, than if addressed on a project by project.

153. The programmatic approach is also more cost-effective from an operational point of view than dealing with the different child projects independently as it avoids duplication of efforts and resources, facilitates partners working together effectively and offers better coordination of knowledge management under one strategic program

framework and harmonization of project monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems to facilitate reporting. The programmatic approach will also support efficient technical knowledge exchanges between projects, offers better opportunities to identify and optimize potential synergies and beneficial impacts of the various activities across the broad areas of intervention (for example, between Tuna and Deep-sea fisheries) as well as opportunities to link with new partners (for instance through the Cross-sector Development Project and the Sargasso Sea Project), as well as stakeholders coming together in the Program Steering Committee. A programmatic approach, managed at global level, will also facilitate greater opportunities for distribution of knowledge products to a wider set of sectors and stakeholders and offering greater potential for upscaling and replication of successes and innovations.

Section 1.a 6): global environmental benefits (GEFTF) and/or adaptation benefits (LDCF/SCCF)

154. The Program makes a number of significant contributions to the delivery of Global Environmental Benefits (GEBs). Key GEBs derived from the Program will result from meaningful reduction in the threats to bycatch species in ABNJ, especially for sharks, marine mammals, sea turtles and seabirds, and safeguarding of globally important marine ecosystems, such as seamounts and hydrothermal vents and their associated fauna, deep-water corals and sponges. These include many species including sharks and marine turtles listed as globally threatened by IUCN (IUCN Red List). Through effective ABNJ fisheries management and a more multi-sectoral collaborative approach to governance of ABNJ resources, the Program will support conservation of many of such species and reduce direct threats to target and non-target species that are not currently under globally threatened species' list. Also, given that there are many marine species whose range includes both coastal and high seas areas in at least part of the life cycle or at different times of the year, e.g. many tuna species, marine turtles, seabirds, more effective management of ABNJ fisheries and measures to improve the conservation of biodiversity in ABNJ will also support delivery of GEBs in national coastal waters and LME systems. Also, there is evidence that marine fauna could be important in carbon capture and storage (so-called 'blue carbon')<sup>[48]</sup> so sustainable management of marine biodiversity, especially fish and marine mammals, will support Green House Gas sequestration and thus provide additional global environmental benefits.

155. Program measures to move towards more sustainable fisheries in ABNJ will lead to measurable improvements in the status of targeted tuna and deep sea fish stocks in the areas under the jurisdiction of the RFMOs operating in ABNJ as well as a reduction in non-compliance behavior and IUU fishing in both tuna and deep sea fisheries, helping to maintain the species and genetic diversity of ABNJ fisheries' resources. Additional global benefits include strengthened global knowledge and capacities to support effective ABNJ fisheries management amongst national, regional and global stakeholders and through the development of the tools and methodologies that can assist effective long term planning, improved south-south and north-south cooperation on environmental management and greater capacity for involvement in governance processes related to ABNJ.

156. The new GEF-7 Program is aligned with the priorities of the GEF International Waters Focal Area. The Program particularly addresses multi-state cooperation to reduce threats to international waters, helping to restore and sustain marine ecosystems goods and services, including globally significant biodiversity, as well as maintaining

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capacity of natural systems to sequester carbon, and reducing vulnerability to climate variability and climate-related risks, and increasing ecosystem resilience. Through its constituent child projects, the program will contribute to the following specific Global Environmental Benefits<sup>[49]</sup> principally to:

§ GEF Core Indicator 8 – Globally over-exploited fisheries moved to more sustainable levels (metric tons), mostly through the Tuna and Deep Sea projects; but also contributions to:

- § GEF Core Indicator 2 – Marine protected areas created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use (ha), contributing sub-indicator 2.1 Marine protected areas newly created (ha), and sub-indicator 2.2 Marine protected areas under improved management effectiveness (ha), specifically through activities under the Deep sea projects (related to VMEs)
- § GEF Core Indicator 5 - Marine habitat under improved practices to benefit biodiversity (ha), contributing sub-indicator: 5.1 – Number of fisheries that meet national or international third-party certification that incorporates biodiversity considerations (number of fisheries), and sub-indicator 5.3 – amount of marine litter avoided (metric tons), mostly through the Sargasso Sea and Deep Sea projects
- § GEF Core Indicator 7 – Number of shared water ecosystems (fresh or marine) under new or improved cooperative management (number), contributing sub-indicator 7.4 – Level of engagement in IWLEARN through participation and delivery of key products (rating 1-4), with contributions from the Cross-sectoral Capacity and Sargasso Sea projects;
- § GEF Core Indicator 11 – Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF (number), through all the child projects.

157. These impacts will be particularly generated in the regions targeted directly by the individual child projects – such as the Indian Ocean and South-east Atlantic where pilot activities will be focused by the Deep Sea project - but the targets also include an estimated 5% “scaling out” effect at the global level covered by the program. This scaling out effect will result from the global programmatic vision of the Global Coordination Project, in particular its components on innovative investment component and knowledge management and outreach activities at global level.

158. The GEF-7 Common Oceans ABNJ Program will also contribute to the achievement of several of the goals (SDGs) of the United Nations 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. The Agenda recognizes that ending poverty must go hand-in-hand with strategies that build economic growth and address a range of social needs including education, health, social protection, and job opportunities, while tackling climate change and environmental protection. The Program particularly contributes to SDG 14 (Life Below Water) - Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development, and specifically its targets 14.4, 14.5, 14.6, 14.7, 14.A and 14.C (contributions to relevant SDG targets are given in Annex D). There are a number of other SDGs that are also relevant to the sector including on climate change (SDG 13 - Take

urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts, notably targets 13.1, 13.2, 13.3, and 13.B) and SDG 17 (Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development, notably target 17.6)[50]<sup>50</sup>.

159. As 2020 marks the deadline for the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, the CBD's Secretariat is currently in the process of implementing a comprehensive and participatory process for the preparation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. Mapping of Program contributions to the new targets will take place during the PPG phase when changes/modifications to the existing indicators and/or targets will be clear. However, under the current 2020 Aichi Targets the Program contributes to several targets, including to Biodiversity Target 11 (10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures) through the Sargasso Sea and deep sea projects.

Section 1.a 7) innovation, sustainability and potential for scaling up.

### ***Innovative solutions***

160. The Program has a number of innovative elements including:

- § Promotion of new technologies and approaches that lead to cost-effective management of fish stocks such as technology advancement in support of transparency and traceability, and support for modified or new technologies to reduce environmental impact associated with capture of non-target species (in particular further research and testing on the use of biodegradable FADs which will help reduce 'ghost fishing' and associated incidental entanglement of marine turtles, etc, as well as reducing the contribution of fisheries to marine pollution);
- § Identification and promotion of innovative private sector financing and investment arrangements to support sustainable use activities and management such as wider uptake of EMS equipment in targeted fleets, including targeted knowledge materials and platforms (e.g. guidance notes, website with links to resources) for potential investors in addressing issues in the ABNJ and increased use of market incentives in support of sustainable fisheries (e.g. through eco-labelling), as well as exploring the potential of novel approaches to financing sustainable measures in ABNJ such as impact bonds (such as a 'shark bond' modelled on other 'green bonds' being employed successfully in terrestrial conservation of biodiversity to be explored during the PPG phase);
- § Building and enhancing both sectoral and cross-sectoral capacity to effectively engage in cross-sectoral cooperation and coordination through the use of, inter alia, area-based management tools, environmental impact assessments, and marine spatial planning;

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- § Development of a novel practical approach to multi-sectoral governance in ABNJ piloted for a specific ABNJ region – the Sargasso Sea - based on the successful TDA-SAP model which is widely used in GEF LME projects; and
- § Improving management of knowledge and access to the best available information on ANBJ for a network of stakeholders (including RFMOs, Regional Sea Programmes and LME programs) to enable well-informed decision-making (improving the effectiveness of the science-management interface) and cross-sectoral collaboration for ABNJ management.

### *Sustainability*

161. Various factors can be identified as barriers to achieving sustainability of Program results and impacts including inadequate human and institutional capacities, collaboration and coordination among sectors and stakeholders, harmonization of regional, national and national policies, weak knowledge management systems, as well as a lack of common governance and management priorities at the global level. The Program's strategy to support sustainability of results and impacts is built into the design of the Program and constituent projects targeting the individual, institutional and system levels. The sustainability of the Program's results will be facilitated through its integration into the implementing and executing partners and through the mechanisms built into the program for knowledge management, and the close links and involvement of global and regional bodies with the Program, such as the FAO COFI and regional organizations will further support sustainability of Program results and provide opportunities for up-scaling. In addition, the individual child projects build on existing initiatives and structures, which will enhance the likelihood of the sustainability of their results. Specific elements that support sustainability include:

- § Improving uptake (mainstreaming) of international obligations and current best practice guidelines (e.g. measures to reduce bycatch) into RFMO member State fisheries policies and RFMO fisheries management practices, including through targeting the science-management interface (Components 1 and 2);
- § Strengthening cross-sectoral linkages and communication and partnerships (particularly through Components 3 and 4), with development of a partnership strategy and knowledge sharing strategy and platforms – the first will consolidate relationships that should endure past the life of the project, the second will be hosted in FAO which through the FAO Repository will ensure that the knowledge on the platform will be accessible past the life of the project;
- § Identification of long-term financing, particularly through private sector investment for measures to address sustainable use of ABNJ and as part of the development of each child project (e.g. the Strategic Action Program for the Sargasso Sea will have a (standard) element that addresses long-term funding);
- § Strengthening mechanisms for more effective and equitable participation of diverse stakeholders, including RFMO member developing country States, which currently have little capacity to engage with decision-making for sustainable management of fisheries in ABNJ, and wider participation by civil society groups and different sector bodies in multi-sector governance processes and planning for ABNJ. Wherever possible this will involve working with existing structures (such as science-management committees) rather than establishing potentially ephemeral new structures specifically related to the projects; the child projects will strengthen and facilitate these, providing them with information and orienting their discussion and decision-making processes related to ABNJ management issues; and

§ Improving individual, institutional and system-wide technical capacity to address sustainable use of ABNJ through targeted capacity building efforts (through all child projects and across all Program components), such as training on MCS and marine spatial planning.

162. Fostering the capacity of individuals and institutions is seen as central to ensuring lasting collective ability to address issues of common concern in the ABNJ. However, capacity building is always a concern after intervention funding ceases. The Program therefore identifies several mechanisms for institutionalizing sustained capacity building, including through the development of strategic partnerships, networking and cross-organizational knowledge exchange, and financing among stakeholders (e.g. fostering national and regional centers of excellence and cross-national networks of universities on ocean governance related to ABNJ and to EEZs; institutionalization of curricula and courses related to ABNJ; networked utilization of manuals, guidance, criteria, standards, and reference materials related to ABNJ; etc.).

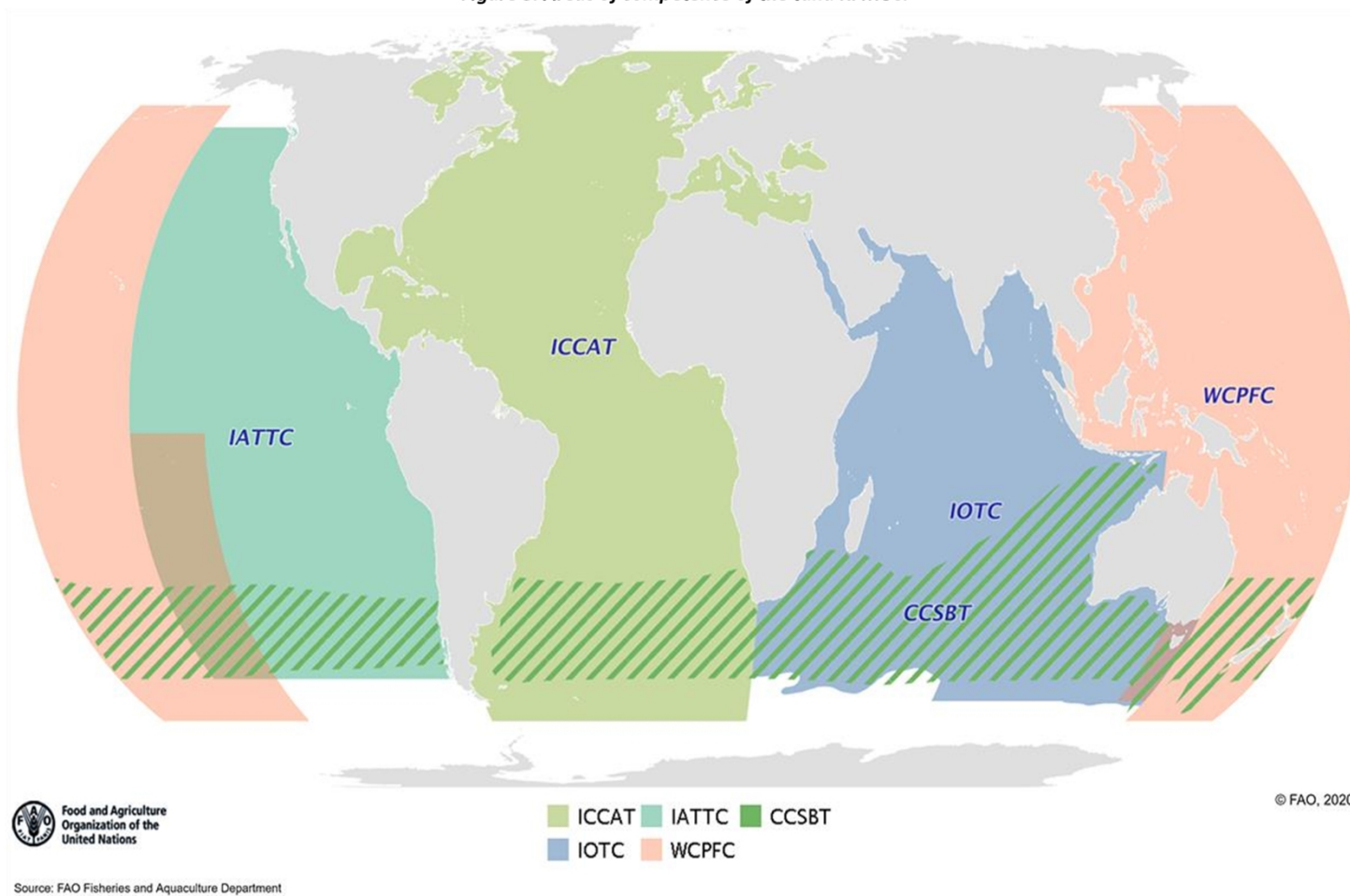
163. However, it is recognized that sustainability is a moving target given the evolving and emerging pressures on ABNJ, including growing impacts of climate change. The program will address this through building capacity for more adaptive management and sustainable use of natural resources in the ABNJ and all of the child projects incorporate considerations for resilience and adaptive management.

### *Scaling up*

164. The Program is designed to enable scaling up (at the level of policy and legislation), and scaling out beyond the boundaries of the current stakeholder groups involved (e.g. to sectors such as deep sea mining) of results, best practices and impacts, both in terms of the range of concerns/issues addressed and in terms of geographical scope. Indeed a central approach of the Program is to upscale and/or diversify approaches and technologies that demonstrated their cost-effectiveness under the GEF-5 program and, in some cases, extend this to include new and promising technologies, such as electronic monitoring in fishing fleets, as well as influence changing relationships and cultural values through Knowledge Management, outreach, information exchange, and targeted awareness raising activities under Component 4, including promoting markets that support sustainable products from the ABNJ.



Figure 3. Areas of competence of the tuna RFMOs.



165. The Program is built on successful partnerships and networks developed and supported through the previous GEF-5 program which will be employed in the dissemination and sharing of information and upscaling of results and lesson learned. It is expected that because of the importance of the ABNJ partnership, including three GEF Agencies and many of the RFMO secretariats, the lessons learnt and best practices will be disseminated, shared and applied in new initiatives. For instance, in relation to tuna fisheries, these include the cross tuna RFMO processes similar to the Kobe process, a global network for compliance officials across tuna RFMOs and an informal network to share information among tuna RFMOs (tuna-org.org).

166. Actions proposed under Component 3, in relation to cross-sectoral cooperation and Component 4 on knowledge management and outreach and coordination, will particularly support the participating partners in scaling out to new partners with similar conditions. For instance, improving cross-sectoral coordination and communication will also help catalyze the up-scaling of results to global as well as national level governance and management decision-making processes. Other Program results and lessons that are expected to have high potential for up-scaling and replication include the Strategic Action Program to be developed for the Sargasso Sea. The challenges facing the Sargasso Sea are common to most other high seas areas (human activities regulated on a sectoral basis with no overarching co-ordination framework that can detect governance gaps or cumulative impacts of such activities) and so the Program's approach for the region to pilot and promote closer interaction and partnership, is likely to be an important lessons and a potential model for other ABNJ regions.

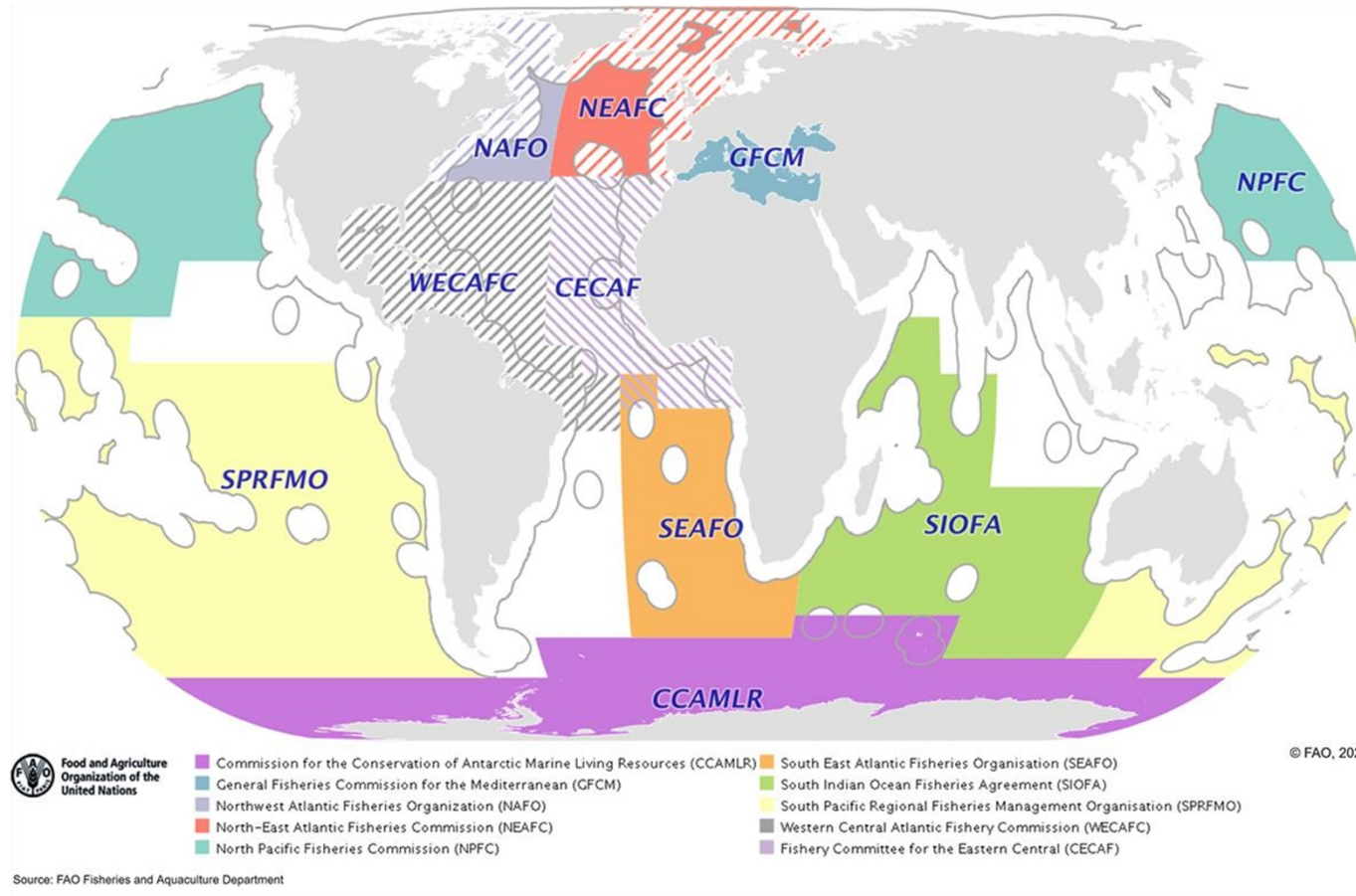
167. Particular attention will be given to empower the private sector investment to demonstrate that responsible investing can have a positive impact and be financially viable. Dissemination of successful results and clear demonstration of benefits and risks from innovative investments by pioneer private sector investors should encourage other investors to follow their lead and take similar risks to expand investments, supporting out scaling but also contributing to financial sustainability.

168. The capture of results and lessons learned, information dissemination and Knowledge Management activities (see section 8) will be coordinated through the Global Coordination Project, which will consequently play a key role in scaling up activities. Targets for dissemination and scaling up activities will be identified during the process of project formulation when a Knowledge Management and Communications plan will be drafted that will set out information needs, key messages, routes for effective dissemination, partner roles and responsibilities and resources and timescales.

### ***Section 1.b Program Map and Coordinates.***

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

**Figure 4. Regional Fisheries Bodies with competence to manage small pelagics and deep-sea fisheries.**



169. The Program is global in nature as it encompasses all marine areas beyond national jurisdiction, focusing on the areas of the relevant RFMO/RFB Conventions (see Figures 3 and 4), as well as the adjacent LME and RSP areas. The Sargasso Sea child project will focused on that particular geography (see Figure 5)

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[1] The ABNJ include the water column beyond the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), or beyond the Territorial Sea where no EEZ has been declared (the High Seas), and the seabed which lies beyond the limits of the continental shelf, ("the Area")

[2] Hoegh-Guldberg, O. 2015. Reviving the Ocean Economy: The Case for Action. Gland, Switzerland: WWF International; IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change). 2019. IPCC Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate (SROCC). Edited by H.O. Pörtner, D.C. Roberts, V. Masson-Delmotte, P. Zhai, M. Tignor, E. Poloczanska, K. Mintenbeck, et al. Geneva: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

[3] Costanza, R., R. de Groot, P. Sutton, S. van der Ploeg, S.J. Anderson, I. Kubiszewski, S. Farber, et al. 2014. "Changes in the Global Value of Ecosystem Services." *Global Environmental Change* 26 (May): 152–58. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2014.04.002>

[4] For the Sargasso Sea, for instance, the contribution to the global community is estimated to be in the order of many millions to billions of US Dollars. See Sumaila, U. R., Vats, V., and W. Swartz. 2013. Values from the Resources of the Sargasso Sea. Sargasso Sea Alliance Science Report Series, No 12, 24 pp. ISBN 978-0-9892577-4-9; Pendleton, L., F. Krowicki, P. Strosser, and J. Hallett-Murdoch. *Assessing the Economic Contribution of Marine and Coastal Ecosystem Services in the Sargasso Sea*. NI R 14-05. Durham, NC: Duke University... and ... Ingestion of Microplastics by Fish and Its Potential Consequences from a Physical Perspective. Boris Jovanovic. *Integr Environ Assess Manag*. 2017;13:510–515. C2017 SETAC.

[5] FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations). 2018. The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture: Meeting the Sustainable Development Goals. CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO. Rome: FAO. <http://www.fao.org/fishery/sofia/en>.

[6] In general, countries comprising small islands have high fish consumption rates, while large island countries have low consumption rates. Most Pacific island countries, for instance, significantly exceed the world average per capita fishery product consumption rate of 16.5 kg. An annual average per capita fish consumption of 34–37 kg is estimated to provide about 50% of the recommended protein intake for people in the Pacific island countries. See Hilmi, et al., 2016.

[7] Blasiak, R. (2019). Marine Gene Rush. *New Internationalist*. September –October 2019. pp29-30.

[8] Armstrong, Claire W, Naomi Foley, Rob Tinch, and Sybille van den Hove. 2010. "Ecosystem Goods and Services of the Deep Sea." *JOUR. Hotspot Ecosystem Research and Man's Impact on European Seas*. [https://www.pik-potsdam.de/news/public-events/archiv/alter-net/former-ss/2010/13.09.2010/van\\_den\\_hove/d6-2-final.pdf](https://www.pik-potsdam.de/news/public-events/archiv/alter-net/former-ss/2010/13.09.2010/van_den_hove/d6-2-final.pdf).

[9] Fishing is *illegal* if it is not authorized, takes place in contravention of conservation and management measures (CMM) by RFMOs, or against national laws or international obligations. Fishing is *unreported* if not reported, or the reporting contravenes international, RFMO or national laws and regulations. Fishing is *unregulated* if the fishing vessel has no nationality or fishing activities jeopardise fish stocks

[10] [www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/fact-sheets/2013/08/27/faq-illegal-unreported-and-unregulated-fishing](http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/fact-sheets/2013/08/27/faq-illegal-unreported-and-unregulated-fishing); Lecomte, et al., 2017b; Agnew et al., 2009.

[11] IUU fishing is much less of a problem in deep sea fisheries. Illegal fishing, though hard to monitor, is believed to be low for most high seas demersal fisheries. Unreported catches, or more commonly under-reporting of catches, continues and new initiatives and incentives for improve reporting are required. Unregulated or poorly-regulated deep-sea demersal fisheries are also common to about half of the fished stocks, typically assessed as data-limited.

[12] In a multi-species / multi-gear fisheries where there is poor gear selectivity and where most species caught are used, bycatch refers to that part of the catch that should not have been caught, inter alia, because of detrimental ecological and/or economic consequences (FAO, 2011).

[13] On average, the sets of purse seine on FADs are 50% more productive than on free-schools.

[14] Microplastics in Seafood and the Implications for Human Health. Madeleine Smith, David C. Love, Chelsea M. Rochman, Roni A. Neff. Curr Environ Health Rep. 2018; 5(3): 375–386. Published online 2018 Aug 16. doi: 10.1007/s40572-018-0206-z. Also, Wicczorek, A.M., Morrison, L., Coot, P.L. at al., 2018. Frequency of Microplastics in Mesopelagic Fishes from the Northwest Atlantic. Frontiers of Marine Science, 19, Feb. 2018.

[15] Bryndum-Buchholz, A., D.P. Tittensor, J.L. Blanchard, W.W.L. Cheung, M. Coll, E.D. Galbraith, S. Jennings, et al. 2019. “Twenty-First-Century Climate Change Impacts on Marine Animal Biomass and Ecosystem Structure across Ocean Basins.” Global Change Biology 25 (2): 459–72. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gcb.14512>.

[16] The projected large-scale redistribution of tropical tuna populations would most affect purse seine fishing for tuna; longline fishing would be less affected as this gear can better mitigate changes by setting hooks in deeper layers (Marsac, 2017).

[17] Pelagic Sargassum and its associated mobile fauna in the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and Sargasso Sea. A Thesis by Lindsay Margaret Martin Submitted to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies of Texas A&M University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF SCIENCE. Available from: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/299560667\\_Pelagic\\_Sargassum\\_and\\_its\\_associated\\_mobile\\_fauna\\_in\\_the\\_Caribbean\\_Gulf\\_of\\_Mexico\\_and\\_Sargasso\\_Sea](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/299560667_Pelagic_Sargassum_and_its_associated_mobile_fauna_in_the_Caribbean_Gulf_of_Mexico_and_Sargasso_Sea) [accessed Jan 20 2020].

[18] The issue of market-distorting subsidies to the fishing industry that leads to overcapacity and overfishing is currently being addressed through a World Trade Organisation process, which is in an advanced stage of negotiations. Consequently, it is not addressed by the Program, but it is assumed that agreement will be reached and harmful subsidies will be phased out in the near future.

[19] These were identified by two FAO-led GEF-5 Common Oceans/ABNJ Program development workshops in December 2018 and April 2019.

[20] For the fisheries sector this is further complicated by the lack of a clear definition or common understanding and effective implementation of the ecosystem approach to fisheries management in the context of an RFMO.

[21] FAO. 2020. *Worldwide review of bottom fisheries in the high seas in 2016*. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Technical Paper No. XXX. Rome, FAO. XX pp. in press.

[22] Thompson, A.B. Regional summaries of current work on shark bycatch assessment. Unpublished report circulated to RFMOs on 26 June 2019.

[23] The first tuna body, the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) was established in 1949 (pre-UNCLOS) followed by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna (ICCAT) in 1969, the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) in 1996, the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT) in 1993, and the West and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) in 2004.

[24] Three of these are long-established: the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM, 1949), the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC, 1959), and the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO, 1979). Four were established relatively recently; the South East Atlantic Fisheries Organization (SEAFO, 2003), South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organization (SPRFMO, 2012), Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA, 2012), and the North Pacific Fisheries Commission (NPFC, 2015). The conventions of the newer RFMOs reflect a more modern approach to fisheries management, but have limited information and little history of managing fisheries whereas those of the established RFMOs have been recently amended to encompass an EAF. The Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR, 1982), established under the Antarctic Treaty, has a wider remit that includes protecting the whole ecosystem. There are also two regional advisory bodies in the central Atlantic (CECAF (1967) and WECAFC (1973)).

[25] See <https://keystonedialogues.earth/>

[26] <https://traceability-dialogue.org/>

[27] MSC Sustainable Tuna Handbook, June 2019, UK Edition <https://www.msc.org/uk/for-business/sustainable-tuna-handbook>

[28] See DuBois (2019) for recent review of tuna fisheries management. DuBois R. (2019). Tuna in the ABNJ: A Review Paper. Report Submitted to the International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF) in support of the Sustainable Management of Tuna Fisheries and Biodiversity Conservation in the ABNJ II Project. 166pp. 18 November, 2019.

[29] VMEs are measures adopted in ABNJ to prevent significant adverse impacts of bottom fisheries on vulnerable marine ecosystems, and typically include seamounts, hydrothermal vents, cold water corals and sponge fields. The International Guidelines for the Management of Deep-sea Fisheries in the High Seas, a voluntary tool developed through FAO, detail the criteria for identifying VMEs, and States and RFMOs/As submit information to the database on all VMEs identified. FAO operates a global database of information on VMEs to facilitate information exchange on these sensitive ecosystems and assist States in assessing any impacts of bottom fisheries on these benthic ecosystems. This database includes information on specific VMEs, RFBs (or State), management measures, and management and scientific meeting reports that are connected with VMEs. See [www.fao.org/in-action/vulnerable-marine-ecosystems/en/](http://www.fao.org/in-action/vulnerable-marine-ecosystems/en/)

[30] At present no mechanism exists to account for the cumulative impacts of various resource uses in a region such as fishing and mining. See PEW (2017). Mapping Governance Gaps on the High Seas. PEW Charitable Trusts. Philadelphia, USA.

[31] These are assessed on four main criteria, including: assessment of the conservation and management of fish stocks; the level of compliance with and enforcement of international obligations; the status of current legal frameworks, financial affairs and organization; and the level of cooperation with other international organizations and non-member States. Some RFMOs also include assessment of the socio-economic aspects of fishing, the duties of RFBs towards developing countries, and the possible effects of fleet modernization.

[32] <https://www.ices.dk/marine-data/data-portals/Pages/vulnerable-marine-ecosystems.aspx>

[33] [www.globalfishingwatch.org](http://www.globalfishingwatch.org)

[34] <https://www.nafo.int/science/nereida.html>

[35] <http://www.deepseasponges.org/>

[36] <http://www.fao.org/in-action/eaf-nansen/background/programme-structure/en/>

[37] [www.prog-ocean.org/our-work/strong-high-seas/](http://www.prog-ocean.org/our-work/strong-high-seas/)

[38] [globaloceanforum.com](http://globaloceanforum.com)

[39] OED (2020). Terminal Evaluation of the FAO-GEF-5 common Oceans ABNJ Program.



[41] These represent a form of private governance using seafood supply chains to reduce environmental impacts of fishing in some of the most challenged fisheries. Some FIPs are industry-led, others are championed by NGOs. They have been successfully applied across many different fishery types, in both high- and low-income settings.

[42] Hilborn, R. (2019). The State of the stocks at global and regional levels – where are we and where are we heading? Presentation at International Symposium on Fisheries Sustainability, FAO, Rome, 18-21 November 2019.

[43] <http://apps.data.fao.org/smartforms/#/login?returnUrl=%2F>

[44] <http://www.fao.org/in-action/vulnerable-marine-ecosystems/vme-database/en/vme.html>

[45] The need for a more integrated approach to the governance of ABNJ is reflected in the current draft text of an international legally binding agreement on the sustainable utilization and conservation of biodiversity in the ABNJ currently being negotiated in the UN (i.e. the BBNJ process).

[46] The Sargasso Sea Commission has a mandate under the Hamilton Declaration on Collaboration for the Conservation of the Sargasso Sea to “exercise a stewardship role for the Sargasso Sea and keep its health, productivity and resilience under continual review.” - [http://www.sargassoseacommission.org/storage/Hamilton\\_Declaration\\_with\\_signatures\\_April\\_2018.pdf](http://www.sargassoseacommission.org/storage/Hamilton_Declaration_with_signatures_April_2018.pdf) in Annex II, para a..

[47] IW:LEARN, the GEF funded cross-agency and multi-actor platform of knowledge exchange and capacity building, supports facilitating partnerships between a range of actors to stimulate conversation and capacity between, and beyond, GEF funded activities.

[48] Greenpeace International (2019). In Hot Water: The Climate Crisis and the Urgent Need for Ocean Protection. Lead author: Richard Page with contributions from David Santillo, Kirsten Thompson, Kathryn Miller, Louisa Casson, Paul Johnston, Taehyun Park and Will McCallum. <https://www.greenpeace.org/international/publication/27261/in-hot-water/>

[49] To be refined/confirmed at PPG stage.

[50] Specifically target 17.6 - Enhance North-South, South-South and triangular regional and international cooperation on and access to science, technology and innovation and enhance knowledge sharing on mutually agreed terms, including through improved coordination among existing mechanisms, in particular at the United Nations level, and through a global technology facilitation mechanism.

## **1b. Program Map and Coordinates**

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

## **2. Stakeholders**

**Select the stakeholders that have participated in consultations during the program identification phase:**



**Civil Society Organizations** Yes

**Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities**

**Private Sector Entities** Yes

**If none, please explain why:**

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

*Regional Management Bodies*

1. Given the international nature of the ABNJ, the main stakeholders are the countries with an interest in the utilization of resources in the area, especially those that are part of intergovernmental organizations such as the Regional Fishery Management Organizations. Thirteen of these participated in the consultation: five tuna RFMOs (CCSBT, ICCAT, IATTC, IOTC, WCPFC) and seven deep-sea RFMOs (NAFO, NEAFC, SPRFMO, SEAFO, SIOFA, GFCM, NPFC) in addition to CCAMLR), representing more than 90 countries in total. Individual countries that have participated in the GEF-5 Program also participated in the consultation process, such as the Fiji, Ghana, the EU and the US (NOAA), and all have expressed their interest in participating in the project preparation phase. Eligible countries engaged in the Sargasso Sea Commission have also been part of the consultation and will be potential recipients of the activities

*Civil Society organizations*

2. These non-state actors remain key stakeholders through their direct work on the field as well as their advocacy and lobbying at the management bodies such as World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF-US), Conservation International, Birdlife International, MarViva, The Nature Conservancy, Pew Charitable Trusts, etc. Many of these organizations have been directly involved in capacity building such as Global Ocean Forum, WCMC, Grid Arendal, High Seas STRONG initiative, as they are committed to maintain this engagement during a GEF-7 Program. The Marine Stewardship Council is an international non-profit organization that promotes the use of economic incentives, such as certification schemes, to promote sustainable practices.

*Private Sector Entities*

3. Private sector entities played a major role in the implementation of the GEF-5 Program, including as major co-financers, and have participated extensively during the consultation process. They have shown interest in participating directly in activities in a GEF-7 Program, proposing to lead in a number of activities. They are also major non-state

actors in the management bodies with a strong presence in national delegations and as observers and capable to influence decisions and promote ideas towards more sustainable use. Examples of these are the International Seafood Sustainability Association and the International Seafood Sustainability Foundation, gathering some of the major tuna producers in the world, the International Pole-and-Line Foundation, OPAGAC, an association of Spanish tuna purse-seine harvesters.

#### *Other international organizations*

4. The Pacific Community (SPC) facilitates the sharing of technical experience and knowledge and helps to implement specific development projects and activities in support of its 26 members.

#### *Academia*

5. A wide range of academic and research institutions have pledge support to the Sargasso Sea project, indicating their interest to provide scientific advice to management decisions, such as Bermuda Institute of Ocean Science, NASA, AFB, Duke University, Imperial College of London, Edinburgh University, Global Fishing Watch, Université de Bretagne Occidentale.

6. Local communities and indigenous people have not been directly consulted as they do not have an immediate connection with the ABNJ ecosystems. However, their interests would be represented at the RFMOs that deal with resources that might be connected to coastal waters by the delegations of the adjacent countries.

7. The wide range of partners from the different sectors and interests is one of the main assets of the Project, and their active participation in the design, and in the eventual implementation of the proposed activities, will be encouraged through direct consultation during the PPG phase, combined with joint workshops as necessary.

### **3. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment**

**Are gender dimensions relevant to the success of program.** Yes

**If yes, please provide indicative information on these dimensions and how these will be addressed in the program. If no, please explain why**

1. Fisheries is the dominant production and employment sector within ABNJ, which is usually perceived as male-dominated because most fishers – those who go out in boats and fish – are men. However, women make an essential contribution to marine fisheries<sup>[1]</sup> but much of the work women carry out in the fisheries sector is informal and occupational segregation is widespread.

2. In terms of social dimensions, in many fishing communities, women play an important role in fisheries along the value chain. In the tuna industry, for instance, while fishing itself is carried out overwhelmingly by men, women engage in a wide range of activities, including in pre- and post-harvesting, seafood processing, marketing and trading, and 80% of the workers in canning are women, making the industry a key player in gender balance in some countries/communities (differing according to country and cultural

context). Indeed it is estimated that about half of all people around the world working full or part time in fisheries are women. Nevertheless, the roles of women remain largely unacknowledged in fisheries sector, even though they contribute substantially to revenue stability and food security (and the picture can be unclear as some countries women's involvement with fish processing is reported under the manufacturing sector rather than the fisheries sector).

3. Many of the women involved are in low-skilled, low-paid jobs without health, safety and labour rights protections. In addition, women often face significant barriers to accessing financial resources, technology, market information and entrepreneurial support, although women, particularly through their involvement in the postharvest sector, often have a broader perspective of the value chain. Women are also poorly represented in the high-level leadership roles of the management of fisheries resources (e.g. heads of RFMOs, ministerial level), although they have more of a voice at the technical and (less so) lower managerial levels, e.g. scientific committees of RFMOs. A similar pattern is repeated in other sectors operating in ABNJ, e.g. deep-sea mining, oil and gas industry and shipping. However, within the environmental sector dealing with ABNJ and marine issues, and in national level personnel in departments such as foreign affairs, as well as in national delegations to the BBNJ process, there is much better representation of women in decision-making. In terms of the development and design of the GEF-7 Program, women represent almost half of the child project design teams, and the presence of women leaders in these teams will facilitate attainment of gender parity goals across the Program.

4. Gender equality is fundamental to any development but particular attention will be paid to this principle in Program in recognition of the vital role of women in high sea fisheries. The program will promote equal rights and opportunities for women and men, and ensure women's representation and involvement in decision-making that affects them and their livelihoods. Gender dimensions will be examined and a gender-specific capacity needs assessment undertaken for each Child project during the project design stage, from which gender-specific activities will be developed for each child project as appropriate, taking into consideration both the GEF's Gender Action Plan and FAO's gender policies and guidelines[2]. Efforts will be made to ensure that women are included in all stages of the Program (design, planning, implementation and Monitoring and evaluation), with measures to incorporate a gender perspective in budgeting frameworks and concrete investment in addressing gender gaps. The program will ensure that women and men have equal access to, and able to equally benefit from, program activities, opportunities and resources. The program will engage women in all Program activities. To ensure an active and productive participation by women in both the Program and related activities funded by co-financing, the Program will support high potential project ideas proposed by them and ones involving them by key actors, particularly through program activities related to innovative financing and value chain development (under Component 1). Women's participation in FIPs supported by the Program will be encouraged.

5. The FAO report *The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture* explicitly states that “enhanced statistics on both industrial and small-scale operators, together with data on the secondary post-harvest and service sectors, would greatly improve the understanding of the importance of women's contribution to fisheries and aquaculture, food security and livelihoods”. Consequently, the Program will incorporate sex-disaggregated data collection and gender-responsive indicators (with baselines) in its design and include differentiated reporting of output indicators across all child projects and at the Program level to help measure progress towards women's empowerment and gender equality and social-gender impacts in meaningful and consistent way. This will go beyond simplistic indicators solely based on attendance rates to include more qualitative data on women's involvement in the Program. The collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data will help highlight the largely invisible and unacknowledged, but active, roles that women play in fisheries and other sectors operating across ABNJ and inform gender-transformative policies and frameworks, as well as accelerate the achievements of relevant SDGs (e.g. 5.5).

6. The program will build on gender-sensitive efforts carried out under the GEF-5 program to facilitate women's engagement and develop specific roles and employment opportunities within the fisheries sector. There may, for instance, be opportunities for women to play leading roles in both at-sea and land-based observer schemes (pioneered in Ghana and South Korea as part of the GEF-5 tuna project) or enforcement teams for port State control measures. These will be examined during the PPG phase.

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[1] Both the FAO report *The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture* and the FAO *Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries* position women as central to the global fishing industry.

[2] Including FAO (2015). Voluntary Guidelines in securing sustainable small-scale fisheries in the context of food security and poverty eradication.

**In addition, please also indicate whether the program the program will include gender sensitive indicators in its result framework**

TBD

#### **4. Private sector engagement**

**Will there be private sector engagement in the program?**

Yes

**Please briefly explain the rationale behind your answer.**

1. The Program will engage the private sector in multiple ways, taking advantage of the unique roles of the sector in the economic activity. Private sector participation will be strong in the design and implementation of the activities of all child projects, as it was often the case during the GEF-5 Program. Many private sector initiatives are motivated by a desire to demonstrate their commitment to a sustainable utilization of the ABNJ resources, and they often contribute with a more direct approach and their ability to engage directly with the sources of fishery products. For example, ISSF, a foundation with participating companies along the tuna supply chain, including companies with vessels at sea, continues to promote and development of designs of Fish Aggregating Devices that are biodegradable and non-entangling, that involves testing and demonstrating at sea the efficiency of their designs in reducing anthropogenic impacts.

2. At the same time, the private sector can contribute to the creation of incentives to modify behavior at the source. ISSF processing companies have committed to source raw material only from vessels that have a demonstrated commitment to sustainable practices, providing an additional commercial incentive. Their actions have facilitated access to a number of practices that reduce the likelihood of IUU fishing practices.

3. The private sector can also contribute to a more effective and inclusive fisheries management process, supporting strengthening institutional capacity. For example, the International Pole-and-Line Foundation has proposed to contribute to expand the capacity of developing coastal States to participate fully in the decision making by helping them better understand the technical and scientific aspects of proposed measures.

4. The private sector also plays an important role as agents of change at the national and international level. Given that many of ABNJ fisheries products are traded internationally, the private sector is interested to ensure that their government fulfills the requirements of the fisheries management measures, so as to avert the chances of restricted access to valuable international markets. By the same token, the marketability of fishery products requires that certain actions be adopted at the RFMO level, thus encouraging private sector to become a voice for change during regional negotiations.

5. The Global Coordination Project contains a component designed to enable the private sector to engage and invest in collective action to address “global” or “ABNJ wide” sustainability issues.

6. There will be strategic documents (e.g. natural capital assessment) and forums (e.g. investor market place) identified and promoted, to improve investor understanding of the options, costs, risks, sustainability impacts and financial feasibility for innovative financing and to attract private sector partnerships to support actions to address ABNJ-wide sustainability issues. Based on these feasibility results, the GCP will encourage the development at least one investment “agreement” that contributes to realizing Program objectives (e.g. improved traceability, catch documentation etc.).

7. This component will also further test models/approaches/incentives including innovative financing tested (including Bond, Trust Fund, global lottery, impact investment) and risk mitigation measures for better private sector engagement and investment in addressing ABNJ-wide issues. The PPG phase will be used to further explore and identify appropriate private sector instruments for development. Without identification of, and guidance on, suitable models and approaches, much of the private sector will be reluctant to engage.

8. Finally, the private sector will also contributed significant amounts of co-financing as shown in Section C of this document on the sources of co-financing, where the estimates of co-financing, based on the actual co-financing achieved in the GEF-5 Program, reach 84.750 million USD.

## 5. Risks

**Indicate risks, including climate change, potential social and environmental risks that might prevent the Program objectives from being achieved, and, if possible, propose measures that address these risks to be further developed during the Program design (table format acceptable)**

1. There are number of external risks operating at different scales that could potentially affect the delivery of program results and impacts, and their long-term sustainability. These are shown below, along with the corresponding mitigation measures to be applied by the program and its child projects. They can be classified as: (i) political;

(ii) economic/market pressures; (iii) information for effective decision-making; (iv) stakeholder and partnership relationships; (v) institutional and technical capacity; and (vi) potential climate change risks. The specific nature and magnitude of these risks will be confirmed as part of project preparation, and will likely vary between projects. It is expected that the program and its child projects will undertake detailed operational risk assessment and mitigation as part of their standard management practice following their key implementation agency guidance.

Risk	Probability and likely impact	Mitigation measures
<p>1. Political will and changes to political and governance conditions</p>	<p><b>Probability: medium</b></p> <p><b>Implication if not mitigated: medium</b></p> <p>Sufficient and continued political will at global, regional and national levels is needed to agree and support (including committing financial resources) coordinated, sustainable management of ABNJ and conservation of its biodiversity in the face of other development priorities (particularly applies to RFMO member developing countries). This especially applies to the willingness of national governments to tackle IUU in ABNJ and associated corruption. There is also a risk that changes in decision-makers, or other political events beyond the control of the Program and/or its individual child projects may lead to changes in policies or support for Program and child project objectives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Program will undertake specific information collection and awareness-raising/outreach activities (following individual project and an overall program communication plans), aimed at political actors, to provide them with evidence of the mutual benefits of managing the ABNJ sustainably and multiple sectoral collaborative approaches so strengthen the political will to address sustainable utilization of ABNJ natural resources, e.g. through demonstrating their economic, social and environmental value (as well as costs of inaction)</li> <li>- The Tuna and Deep Sea projects will provide tried and tested technologies/measures to effectively fight IUU fishing, mainly through improved MCS, building on the piloting and lessons learned from the GEF-5 projects which should help maintain political commitment</li> <li>- The Tuna and Deep sea projects will also undertake reporting to all relevant RFMO bodies (e.g. Scientific Committee, Compliance Committee, Plenary Sessions) and have established contacts with individual countries, especially those who are members of several RFMOs. In addition, the have good support from key NGOs and private sector partners, such as WWF-US and ISSF.</li> <li>- In the case of the Sargasso Sea Project, the Sargasso sea Commission has 6 years' experience working with signatory governments.</li> <li>- The goals and objectives of the Program are in line and respond to international agreements and strongly anchored in existing policies and respond to developing concerns (e.g. growing climate change impacts)</li> <li>- The Program and child projects have been designed with wide and very active stakeholder participation (see Stakeholder section) to ensure national, regional and global support, which will be strengthened and broadened during the PPG stage and during project implementation. The program's and individual stakeholder and partnership coordination plans will support these efforts.</li> </ul>

<p>2. Financial subsidies driving overcapacity</p>	<p><b>Probability: low</b></p> <p><b>Implications if not mitigated: medium</b></p> <p>Subsidies continue to be applied (if WTO process is unsuccessful)</p> <p>Harmful fisheries subsidies are estimated to total more than \$20 billion a year. Not only do they fuel overexploitation, they disproportionately benefit big business. Nearly 85% of fisheries subsidies benefit large fleets, but small-scale fisheries employ 90% of all fishermen and account for 30% of the catch in marine fisheries</p> <p>Associated with this risk is the widely recognized overcapacity of fishing fleets and associated overfishing, which needs to be reduced if fishing effort across the ABNJ is to be sustainable.</p> <p>Fisheries subsidies come in many forms, e.g. fuel subsidies, and sometimes they are not easy to identify</p>	<p>Sustainable Development Goal 14, which concerns the ocean, contains a target that calls on World Trade Organization (WTO) members to “prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing; eliminate subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing; and refrain from introducing new such subsidies” by 2020.</p>
<p>3. Short-term economic and commercial pressure to overexploit</p>	<p><b>Probability: medium</b></p> <p><b>Implications if not mitigated: medium</b></p> <p>Economic returns from sustainable utilisation of ABNJ resources need to be judged higher than risks associated with 'business as usual' practices and rewards. In other words, short-term corporate profit is seen as more important than achieving sustainability, especially if individual companies/sectors do not fully consider long-term negative impacts of their activities on the ABNJ environment or other sectors (externalities), such as deep sea mining destroying areas important for fisheries, e.g. seamount spawning areas. This drives overcapacity of fishing fleets. It is also assumed that consumers will continue to pay a premium for sustainably sourced ABNJ products even in face of future economic shocks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The capacity of the different sectors to share information, interact and collaborate on more integrated planning in the utilization of the ABNJ will be strengthened (through the Cross-sectoral Capacity Development Project), which will involve engagement with private sector groups and the international bodies representing the key sectors operating in the ABNJ, such as ISA, IMO and the tuna and deep-sea RFMOs, including capacity building to facilitate their involvement in shared planning, etc. In addition, a multi-sector model for stewardship of an ABNJ region will be provided through the Sargasso Sea Project.</li> <li>- Analysis of value chains for sustainable managed ABNJ products (Tuna and Deep Sea projects) will be undertaken with consideration of alternative economic scenarios along with ecosystem services assessments, and identification and promotion of economic incentives for sustainable sourced ABNJ resources</li> <li>- The Global Coordination Project will identify and engage potential private sector partners in the PPG phase and will ensure that the Program has effective engagement with the private sector and will seek representative industry body support where appropriate and feasible.</li> <li>- The Program will engage with the seafood industry (building on strong relationships developed during the GEF-5 program) to ensure that the market issues are well understood and that proposed solutions have clear socio-economic benefits</li> </ul>

4. Insufficient scientific information for effective decision-making, or limited availability of key information

**Probability: medium**

**Implication if not mitigated: medium**

There is a general lack of scientific data on ABNJ (compared to other regions), which is particularly poor in some areas, notably on fragile deep-sea ecosystems and associated species and biology of bycatch species. This limits effective science-based decision-making and the development of more effective approaches tools for more sustainable management of ABNJ resources. In addition, some information needed for multi-sectoral decision making may not be available or accessible, particularly that considered commercial sensitive such as locations for deep sea mining, oil and gas deposits.

- The program is promoting an ecosystem approach to the management of the ABNJ, which includes consideration of the precautionary approach which addresses lack of information in decision-making. This will be a focus for the Tuna and Deep Sea projects, and results and experiences from GEF-5 suggest potential for wider uptake among the RFMOs. Applying the precautionary approach is also a key consideration in the multi-sector planning activities of the Cross-sectoral Capacity Development Project
- All the projects will include collection, compilation and sharing of existing information from different stakeholder groups, data gathering on target and bycatch species, to fill key gaps in knowledge
- Some success experience with the handling of sensitive information has been gained through the GEF-5 program, e.g. bycatch data on marine turtles held by some nations, the experiences of which will be applied to the program



<p>5. Complex and demanding stakeholder relationships and partnerships</p>	<p><b>Probability: medium</b></p> <p><b>Implication if not mitigated: high</b></p> <p>The great number and diversity of sectors, stakeholders and partners, many with very different interests and mandates within the program (especially in relation to the cross-sectoral aspects of the program) could constrain the efficient coordination and delivery of individual project and program results.</p> <p>There that some partners in the ABNJ Program are not willing or able to adopt a more integrated and coordinated approach to sustainable use of the ABNJ due to lack of understanding of the perspectives of other sectors operating across ABNJ resulting in limited tangible benefits, e.g. little consideration of cumulative impacts in ABNJ from oil and gas, mining, shipping, and fisheries sectors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The key Program partners developed a common vision and framework for the GEF-7 Program with agreement on the overall scope of the program and areas to be targeted for action which commits them to working through a shared platform and towards joint results</li> <li>- Partnership and stakeholder management at the program level will be a key responsibility of the Global Coordination Project (GCP). Moreover, the GCP will allow for the development and dissemination of commonly agreed (across the project) messages that will ensure policy-makers and other actors have coherent and consistent advice in decision making.</li> <li>- A Global Steering Committee will be established under the program to ensure efficient communication, collaboration and coordination between the projects and also with the program level</li> <li>– A stakeholder and partnership coordination plan will be developed for each child project as well as the overall program (linking with each project plan), during the inception period setting out agreed roles and responsibilities of each partner and stakeholder group, including</li> <li>- The Cross-sectoral Capacity Development Project will improve communication, collaboration and cooperation among the key sector/stakeholder groups with an interest in ABNJ governance and management to explore opportunities for shared planning in particular. This will build on initial partnerships and networks developed during the GEF-5 project</li> <li>- Key and effective partnerships have been established during the GEF-5 program, e.g. between the Tuna project and the International Sustainable Seafood Foundation (ISSF), which will be strengthened during the new GEF-7 program</li> </ul>
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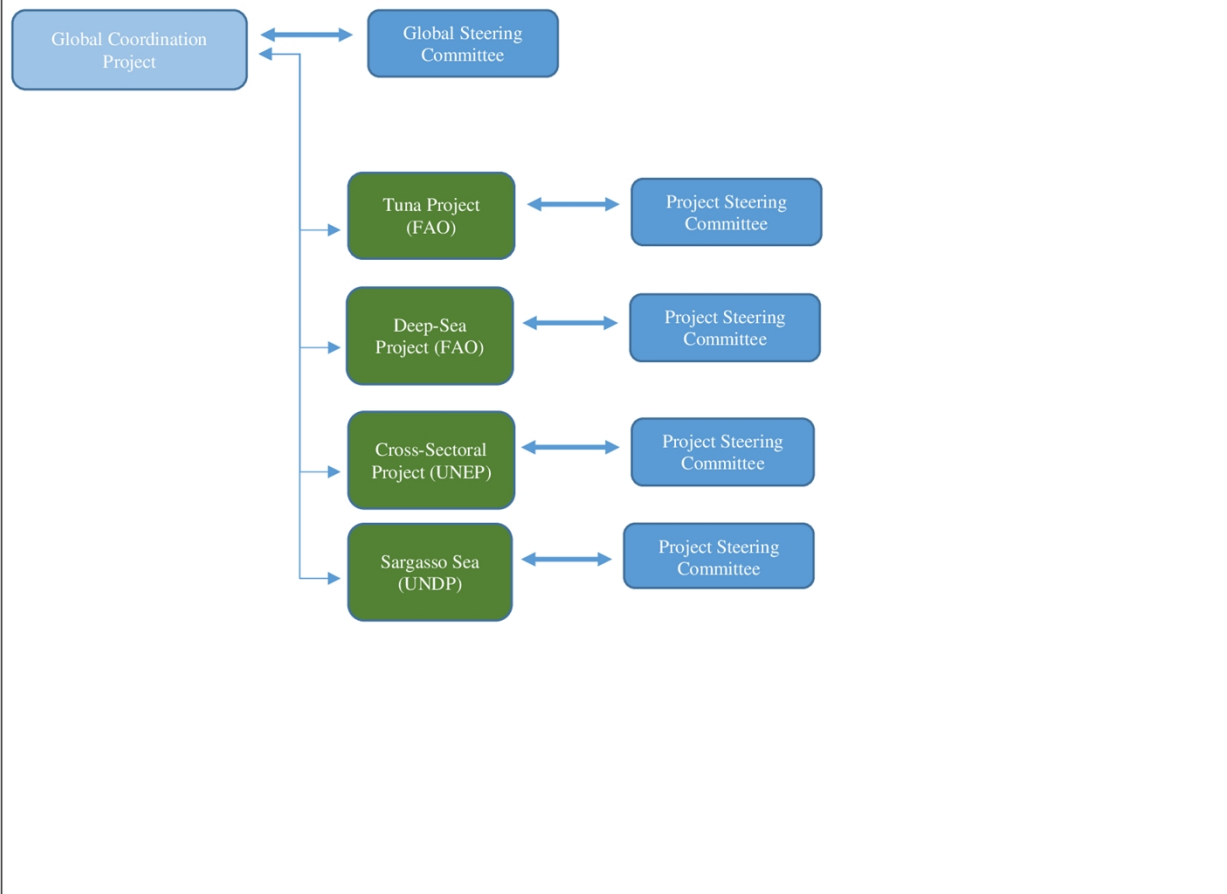
<p>6. Institutional and technical capacity constraints impede program and project implementation</p>	<p><b>Probability: low</b></p> <p><b>Implications if not mitigated: medium</b></p> <p>Many of the countries, particularly those in the developing world, along with some other stakeholder groups, with an interest in ABNJ have limited capacity to fully engage in governance and management process for sustainable utilisation of ABNJ resources, which could limit the Program's implementation and achievement of its proposed transformational changes. This particularly applies with regard to institutional and technical capacity in some developing countries. Some technical solutions may also present a risk in that they need to be acceptable (and affordable) to fishers and other stakeholders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Critical gaps will be identified and addressed through dedicated CB&amp;T programs in all child projects, including building capacity for adaptive, solutions-based ecosystem management and institutional support. GEF-eligible developing country institutions engaged in program activities will be targeted for capacity building activities</li> <li>- There has been significant development of technical solutions to unsustainable use of ABNJ resources in recent years. Some of these had successful piloting through the GEF-5 program, e.g. EMS, and can be scaled up, while others, e.g. biodegradable FADS, will under further development through the program. The program will work closely with fishers and other stakeholders, to ensure the most suitable approaches and practices for a particular situation are selected, developed and/or adopted.</li> <li>- In some cases, the barrier to wider uptake is financial and this will be addressed through innovative financing/business development through the projects (e.g. improving access to low-interest loans for fishing gear that reduces bycatch).</li> </ul>
<p>7. Climate change adversely impacting marine systems</p>	<p><b>Probability: high</b></p> <p><b>Implications if not mitigated: high</b></p> <p>Climate change is a certainty. According to the latest IPCC assessment (2019), expected adverse climate change impacts on the oceans (both EEZs and ABNJ) include increasing acidification and temperature of the oceans (especially surface waters), changes in salinity and currents, with changes in distribution of prey and composition of marine food webs affecting target fish species, such as tuna as well as deep-water systems. These may undermine project and program aims and efforts to move towards more sustainable and integrated management of natural living resources in ABNJ. In the longer term it is assumed that climate change impacts will be managed and do not irreversibly damage ecosystems structure and function and biodiversity in the ABNJ or key natural resource populations in ABNJ e.g. commercially valuable fish stocks, could collapse. For instance, major changes are expected to the Sargasso Sea currents and ecosystem particularly warming and acidification over the next few decades.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Significant climate change impacts are not predicted to occur within the lifetime of the program, although are likely before 2050. However, activities to raise awareness of climate change impacts and identify and build capacity for climate change adaptation measures to strengthen resilience in fisheries management are included in the Tuna and Deep Sea projects. They will also be address as an areas for action under the Sargasso Sea project which has been designed to analyze and model possible impacts on the ecosystem from climate change and recognize any associated adaptive management /stewardship requirements or guidelines.</li> <li>- Part of the work on the EAFM will provide mechanisms for tracking ecosystem changes that could be related to Climate Change.</li> <li>- Addressing governance and management of ABNJ through more integrated, cross-sectoral approaches (through the Cross-sectoral Capacity Development Project through, for instance, incorporating climate change considerations in all training programs, regional meetings, and other project activities. Building greater awareness and understanding of the consequences of climate change and the attendant need for collaboration across sectors and boundaries will, in fact, serve as an incentive to heighten sectoral-based and cross-sectoral collaboration on ABNJ</li> </ul>

## 6. Coordination

**Outline the institutional structure of the program including monitoring and evaluation coordination at the program level. Describe possible coordination with other relevant GEF-financed programs and other initiatives.**

1. The Program will consist of four child projects, each of which will have its own Project Management Unit, under the oversight of a Project Steering Committee (PSC), including the respective GEF Implementing Agency, the GEFSEC and project partners and beneficiaries. As and when required, the PSC will be the ultimate decision making body. A Chair will be elected for each PSC. FAO, who will also be the lead GEF agency for the Program, will participate in each of the respective PSCs. The Program as a whole will be coordinated, facilitated and supported by an additional project, the Global Coordination Project (GCP), will be executed by FAO, to provide consistency and coherence in the delivery of program-level outcomes. The Global Coordinator of the program will also act as the Coordinator of the GCP.
2. The GCP will assist the child projects in delivering their respective outcomes by providing support to the projects on coordination, monitoring and evaluation, knowledge management, and communications to ensure cohesiveness and consistency at the Program level. While the GCP will not be responsible for the implementation of the technical activities of the child projects, it will identify possible areas of cooperation and invite interested child projects to participate in proposed joint activities.
3. The Program as a whole will be guided by a Global Steering Committee, the membership and functioning of which will be defined in detail during the process of detailed formulation of the GCP and the child projects.
4. Each of the child projects will have its own monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system, to enable it to measure progress against the indicators defined in its results framework, thereby functioning as a tool for adaptive management. These project-specific results frameworks and M&E systems will be closely aligned with their respective child project concept notes and theory of change and underlying PFD, but refined to reflect further detailed project formulation.
5. The GCP will track and report progress towards achieving program-level outcomes, in collaboration with the child projects, utilizing appropriate outcome indicators with well-defined targets, in order to track the cumulative impact of the program as a whole.
6. A partnership strategy, to be fully developed during the formulation of the projects, will be key to ensuring that all stakeholders understand and commit to the Program goals and objectives as well as contributing to the success of their respective projects.
7. The child projects will conduct their own communications, supported by the GCP which will play a key role in the overall synthesis of output and outcome results across the four child projects for the production of global knowledge products and in the coordination of dissemination mechanisms.
8. Project indicators are aligned where relevant with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 14 for which FAO is custodian agency. During child project formulation, FAO will provide methodological guidance on practical and methodological aspects to achieve alignment between project and program indicators and SDGs.

**Figure 6. Organizational structure of the Program**



### *Relationship between child projects and programmatic approach*

9. This Program Framework Document (PFD) provides the overall framework for the design and implementation of the constituent child projects. The PFD has been developed to ensure that each of the constituent child projects conforms and contributes to the overall goal and principles of the GEF-7 ABNJ Program, and the structure and approaches of the child projects are sufficiently aligned and coordinated to allow them to be managed as part of a coherent multi-sector programmatic initiative with benefits at national, regional and global levels, rather than as conventional stand-alone projects. The components of each child project contribute to one or more of the program-level components and associated outcomes although individual child projects do not contribute to every Program component and outcome (see table). The PFD represents the sum of the child projects, but each child project will link with the elements of the PFD that are most relevant to them.

Program component	Project	Project outcome
Component 1: Frameworks and processes for more effective governance and management in ABNJ (including fisheries management) strengthened	Tuna	1.1 Major tuna stocks are increasingly managed according to the precautionary approach (as described in UNFSA and CCRF) through the use of harvest strategies / management procedures.
	Tuna	1.2 Tuna RFMOs are progressively committed to EAFM through development and adoption of implementation plans that also consider climate change impacts.
	Tuna	1.3 RFMOs are exchanging technical knowledge on topics of global relevance
	Tuna	1.4 Fisheries are further incentivized to implement sustainable practices.
	Deep Sea	1.1 Legal frameworks, incorporating obligations and good practices to support sustainable use of ABNJ resources harmonized, integrated and implemented
	Sargasso Sea	1.1 Collaborative stewardship of an iconic high seas ecosystem through the development and adoption of interactive, sustainable management measures for the conservation and protection of its natural resources
Component 2: Capacity for better implementation of ecosystem-based management in fisheries management in the ABNJ strengthened	Tuna	2.1 Human capacity for MCS in t-RFMO member States strengthened for consistent application of fisheries control and enforcement
	Tuna	2.2 Improved monitoring processes for compliance achieved based on lessons learned and shared across t-RFMOs
	Tuna	2.3 Fisheries monitoring and traceability of fishery products strengthened by the implementation of innovative tools

	Tuna	3.1 Sustainable management of sharks and rays is enhanced by implemented integrated fisheries and biodiversity tools
	Tuna	3.2 Environmentally sound gear types are identified and progressively deployed.
	Tuna	3.3 Appropriate mitigation techniques are widely and effectively applied to mitigate impacts to bycatch species.
	Deep Sea	2.2 Quality and availability of technical/scientific information to support evidence-based decision-making on fisheries governance, investment and management in ABNJ strengthened
	Deep Sea	2.1 Institutional and individual knowledge, skills and tools to apply EAFM in ABNJ built or strengthened
	Sargasso Sea	2.1 Quantified threats and impacts identified along with immediate and root causes establishing a baseline for on-going monitoring and adaptive management
	Sargasso Sea	2.3 Knowledge and Information capture and analysis to support effective stewardship and decision-making
Component 3 Participation in multi-sectoral coordination for more effective governance and management of ABNJ improved	Tuna	3.4 Marine waste from fishing gear is minimized through implementation of existent or new policies and standards.
	Deep Sea	3.1 Fisheries sector and other stakeholder mandates, roles and responsibilities related to ABNJ clarified and promoted (awareness raised) and understanding of sector-specific impacts and ecological connections improved
	Deep Sea	3.2 Mechanisms, tools and resources to improve knowledge sharing and coordination between fisheries sector and stakeholders to address threats and cumulative impacts in ABNJ strengthened
	Cross Sectoral Project	1.1 Officials, managers and technical staff in national, regional and global organizations that have an ABNJ-related management remit are applying their enhanced functional capacity (planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating) in sectoral and cross-sectoral cooperation and coordination initiatives in ABNJ management, including through the use of area-based management tools (ABMTs), environmental impact assessments (EIAs), and marine spatial planning.
	Cross Sectoral Project	2.1 More effective knowledge exchange and improved access to the best available information for well-informed decision-making in cross-sectoral cooperation and coordination among key ABNJ management organizations (national, regional and global).
	Cross Sectoral Project	2.2 Increased understanding by the International Waters community and high-level officials in the BBNJ process regarding individual and institutional capacity needs and priorities related to sectoral and cross-sectoral cooperation and coordination in ABNJ and corresponding actions/processes identified to address those needs.

	Sargasso Sea	2.2 Analysis of the global value of this unique ecosystem (with precise figures and conclusions where possible) so as to further justify and mobilize support for a collaborative sustainable management approach
	Sargasso Sea	3.1 Priority immediate and long-term actions identified in order to a) address or mitigate the impacts of threats and b) strengthen stewardship and conservation
	Sargasso Sea	3.2 Stewardship measures and associated priority actions identified and agreed by various management-mandated institutions, and other partners and stakeholders to support adoption of a sustainable process for the conservation and protection of the Sargasso Sea
	Global Coordination	3.1 The private sector enabled to engage and innovatively invest in collective action to address “global” or “ABNJ wide” sustainability issues
	Global Coordination	3.2 Model approach for improved engagement of the private sector in addressing collective action in the ABNJ based on lessons learned developed, established and operational. At least one pilot private sector partnership explored to better understand the feasibility of different options including possible income streams, financial sustainability, operating costs and risks as well as impact on sustainability
Component 4: Knowledge and information exchange for more informed decision-making among stakeholders to support sustainable utilization of ABNJ improved	Tuna	4.1 Awareness of project objectives, activities and achievements among stakeholders and target audiences is increased through information and knowledge products and evidence of effective project implementation
	Deep Sea	4.1 Information and knowledge products, and demonstration of effective project implementation, contribute to raise awareness of project objectives, activities and achievements among stakeholders and target audiences
	Cross Sectoral Project	2.3 Enhanced understanding of ABNJ benefits derived from ABNJ and engagement in associated sectoral and cross-sectoral issues and opportunities by the media and the public.
	Sargasso Sea	4.1 Knowledge Capture and Management through Identification of Best Lessons and Practices
	Sargasso Sea	4.2 Effective on-going Project Monitoring and Evaluation
	Global Coordination	2.1 Experiences and models of sustainable use of ABNJ are collated, analyzed and effectively communicated, stimulating scaling up

	Global Coordination	2.2 Increased capacity among global, regional and national actors in common areas of learning (e.g. ecosystem approach, natural capital assessment, climate change, monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) communication)
	Global Coordination	2.3 General public increasingly aware of ABNJ issues and the actions of the Program to address these issues

10. In addition, two outcomes from the Global Coordination project contribute to an integrated delivery on all Program components:

Global Coordination	1.1 Project partners, integrated and aligned on coordinated and prioritized actions, where appropriate, to increase effectiveness of the interventions at Program and Child Project levels
Global Coordination	1.2 The progress of the child projects and the program are effectively and consistently monitored.

## 7. Consistency with National Priorities

Yes

### **Is the Program consistent with the National strategies and plans or reports and assessments under relevant conventions**

The GEF-7 Program will help member States of RFMOs better fulfil their obligations under “The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)”, in particular Articles 116 to 119 on conservation and management of the living resources of the high seas and other relevant articles. The Program will also address global calls to reduce as much as possible the Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, as specifically requested in various fisheries instruments such as the “Agreement to Promote Compliance with International Conservation and Management Measures by Fishing Vessels on the High Seas (the Compliance Agreement)”, the “Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate IUU fishing (Port State Measures Agreement)”, the “Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (the Code)” and the “International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate IUU Fishing (IPOA-IUU)”.

The Program also responds to concerns from various meetings of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) about the serious threats posed by destructive fishing practices and IUU fishing to marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction, in particular in relation to overfishing and damage to seamounts, cold-water coral reefs and hydrothermal vents.

The Program also supports several of the recommendations from a joint LME-Regional Seas program-ABNJ workshop in 2017<sup>[1]</sup> including that:



- § The ecosystem approach is an essential condition for the continued long-term science-based collaboration in regional ocean governance and that continuing and strengthening collaboration is needed, while also including social and economic elements;
- § Capacity development, including institutional strengthening, is needed for implementing the Ecosystem Approach;
- § Interactions among relevant stakeholders towards better regional ocean governance should make use of best existing practices and respect existing mandates;
- § There is a need of open access scientific knowledge as a foundation for policy on all levels;
- § There is a need for a mechanism to translate science into policy;
- § The need to recognize the importance of interregional collaboration for sharing lessons learned / experience and to create synergy among regional initiatives and/or activities; and
- § Recognition that trans-boundary interactions between LMEs, Regional Seas, Regional Fisheries Bodies and adjacent high seas areas are critically important. Therefore a cross-cutting, multi-sectoral interactive process is needed to identify what the priority issues are for LMEs and ABNJ, who might be the key partners, and what potential conflicts and synergies there may be with other stakeholders.

The Program (largely through Component 3) will also support the ongoing UN-led process to develop (and ultimately to implement) the new legal instrument for the conservation of BBNJ and its eventual implementation of the resulting Agreement through building functional capacity (planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating) for sectoral and cross-sectoral cooperation, coordination and information exchange, especially within RFMOs, RSPs, LME Programs, and other relevant regional organizations, including their secretariats and member state focal points. The Program will provide specific capacity building for application of area-based management tools (ABMTs, including for Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)) and environmental impact assessments (EIAs) procedures and guidance on implementation of capacity building, which are highlighted in the current draft of the draft Agreement.

The Program (again through Component 3) also seeks to help assist the signatories to the Hamilton Declaration on Collaboration for the Conservation of the Sargasso Sea and their partners to deliver conservation measures for the Sargasso Sea ecosystem, including through an area-based ecosystem management approach and coordination and cooperation across a wide range of stakeholders and responsible institutions/bodies, including neighboring LME management mechanisms, and the Sargasso Sea Commission with its mandate to “exercise a stewardship role for the Sargasso Sea and keep its health, productivity and resilience under continual review.”

## **8. Knowledge Management**

**Outline the Knowledge management approach for the Program, including, if any, plans for the Program to learn from other relevant Programs and initiatives, to assess and document in a user-friendly form, and share these experiences and expertise with relevant stakeholders.**

### ***Program approach to knowledge management***

The management of knowledge[1] and its effective communication are integral to the GEF-7 Program. The Program's overall approach to KM is to support flow of Program and individual child project results, lessons learned and best practices and other knowledge products, to, and from, both global, regional and national policy and decision-making processes (such as RFMO science-management committees, BBNJ process), as well as exchange of knowledge between child projects and global repositories of relevant information (such as IW:LEARN), while harmonizing knowledge management within the child projects and across the Program as a whole. To do this the Program will utilize its main partners and others as information conduits and platforms and build on existing lessons and best practices, including from GEF-5, as well as on relevant lessons from other relevant projects, programs, initiatives and evaluations.

The KM strategy is a key element of the Program's coordinated programmatic approach which will help promote two-way interaction between program and project levels and ensure harmonized action, strong coherence and linkages between all levels, and ensure that projects 'talk to each other' as well as help foster partner ownership of Program activities and results. KM activities will tap into Program partners' platforms and their networks, and be carried out in close consultation with all program partners and their respective knowledge management services.

The Program will also help enhance South-South, North-South and regional and international cooperation on and access to scientific, technological knowledge for decision-making and enhance knowledge sharing on mutual issues, including through improved coordination among existing mechanisms. The involvement of three UN agencies – FAO, UNEP and UNDP – should help facilitate the management and sharing of knowledge across a large group of partners. Other global initiatives, such as the Sustainable Oceans Initiative (SOI), the World Ocean Council[2] and the UN Global Compact[3] will also be engaged to assist in information dissemination and outreach.

### ***Improving knowledge management platforms and decision-making***

A key aspect of the Program's KM approach is leveraging existing platforms and communities of practice as a means to contribute to the global body of knowledge on the effectiveness of different approaches to address threats and barriers to sustainable management of ABNJ resources. The Program and child projects will contribute to sustained uptake and scaling out of impacts by ensuring that lessons learned through the child projects are effectively systematized and fed into knowledge hubs and disseminated to stakeholders both within and beyond the Program. In doing so, the Program will help to fill knowledge gaps at global, regional and national levels and support the creation of larger more relevant knowledge sources (relevant to more stakeholders) that will help improve availability and use of data and science by the public, decision- and policy-makers, and private sector and in turn support better, more informed decision-making on sustainable utilization of ABNJ resources.

Conversely, the Program's KM approach will contribute to the effectiveness of child project investments by ensuring that they respond to lessons learned regionally and globally and to the cutting edge of science and best practice by linking them to existing regional and global knowledge management platforms and hubs and technical communities of practice. These are likely to include: IW:LEARN[4], Ocean Biogeographic Information System (OBIS)[5], International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES), IOC-UNESCO's Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS)[6] and International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange (IODE)[7], and Ocean+ Data[8], and the Ocean Data Platform[9]. The

Program and child projects are expected to particularly assist in further building the IW:LEARN network, through strong engagement in the GEF biennial IW Conferences and sharing of experiences and production of IW:LEARN Experiences Notes and newsletters. Project support to IW:LEARN has been reflected in the KM budget.

### ***Knowledge Management strategy and organization of KM within the Program***

The Program will develop a robust Knowledge Management and Communication Strategy (KMCS) at the outset of the program, with participation of all Program partners to showcase and upscale results, lessons and best practices. The KMCS will function as the essential reference for all Program KM and communication activities and falls under the umbrella of Program Component 4. It will underpin, guide and support the generation, dissemination and application of information and knowledge from the Program, set out a common analytical framework to organize and analyze information gathered by the different child projects, collect and share best practices, lessons learned, and innovative solutions to ABNJ issues across the Program, and ensure that key target audiences are kept informed of the Program and individual child project objectives, activities and achievements.

The KMCS will build on acknowledged best practices widely employed by FAO, such as the Knowledge Sharing Toolkit<sup>[10]</sup> and be in line with the principles of the FAO Knowledge Strategy (2011) and GEF's Knowledge Management strategy and associated guidance<sup>[11]</sup>, as well as recent experiences of other FAO-GEF programs where knowledge management and communications have had a significant focus, including the FAO-GEF Coastal Fisheries Initiative (CFI). At the same time it will encourage innovative approaches (particularly related to digital media).

The KMCS will define the audiences targeted and determine the particular knowledge management goals for each target audience. Target audiences include: program partners including RFMO Member States; relevant national government agencies; private sector representatives, e.g. seafood industry; representatives from oil and gas, shipping, cable, and mining sectors; academia; environmental NGOs; civil society groups and the general public; and the donor community, in particular the GEF.

Each child project will include a component on monitoring, KM and communications and also develop its own KMCS to ensure that key target audiences are aware of each project's objectives, activities and achievements, that processes are put in place to facilitate the synthesis, exchange and uptake of project-specific lessons learned, best practices, and expertise generated during project implementation, and to support monitoring and adaptive management of each project.

The effectiveness of the different KMCS will be reviewed annually and each have indicators to monitor and evaluate the impact of knowledge exchange and learning activities included in the Program's and each child project's results framework (to be developed, with baseline, at PPG stage) as part of the program-level M&E framework. The annual reviews will take into account new innovative approaches and developing technology in Knowledge Management (KM) and effective communication and the KMCS updated as required.

### ***Role of the GCP in Knowledge Management***

As KM applies across the whole Program, it will be organized centrally through the Global Coordination Project (GCP), so that KM strategies and resources for implementation are coordinated and jointly developed with the program-level KMCS (nested approach). This will ensure harmonized actions, coherent messaging and strong linkages both between the child projects and between the program and project levels.

The role of the GCP is central to the implementation of the KMCS as it will capture, present and communicate results, experiences and lessons learned both among the child projects (as a support to their adaptive management), and to external audiences in consistent and accessible formats. Essentially it acts as the coordinator and conduit for information flow coming into and out of the Program with a coherent, coordinated program-wide lesson learning process that will ensure that lessons learned through the individual child projects are collected, collated and analyzed and disseminated among child projects and to program partners, other stakeholders and national, regional and global knowledge hubs. The program-level KMCS and those of the individual child projects will be co-designed and implemented with partners in a comprehensive collaborative fashion approach to ensure the best possible generation and leveraging of knowledge resources at all levels across the Program, and contributing to the added value of the Program's programmatic approach.

In addition, the GCP will provide KM and communication 'support services' to the individual child projects such as customized training and technical assistance on knowledge management, outreach and communications to child project implementation teams and common learning areas such as shared training on MCS between the Tuna and Deep Sea projects. These may include support for the development of effective communication materials to strengthen the enabling environment (under Component 1); specific KM services to technical elements of child projects (mostly under Component 2) depending on the needs of individual child projects; support in communications for building cross-sectoral collaboration and coordination processes (Component 3); and effective messaging and narratives for raising awareness among civil society and decision-makers (under Component 4). These will be fully defined during the PPG phase.

### ***Processes, tools and approaches***

Focusing on the program's key priority areas of sustainable management of ABNJ resources, targeted knowledge activities and products will be developed, tapping into available resources of program partners and using the most appropriate tools, platforms and methodologies to reach well-defined stakeholder groups at all relevant levels. Specific KM and communications approaches, activities, tools and products may include (to be defined at the PPG stage):

- § Stocktaking of existing knowledge products, tools and approaches supporting knowledge exchange and learning on sustainable management of ABNJ resources;
- § Meetings and conferences at global, regional and local level, such the GEF International Waters Biennial Conferences, meetings of COFI, CBD, ISA, IMO, RFMOs, Regional Seas Programmes and LME programs, high level meetings and workshops of the wider international community involved in the BBNJ process and other ongoing global processes (e.g. the development of a post-2020 global biodiversity framework, Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals, etc.), as well as private sector events connected to the Program such as Tuna project Skippers' workshops;
- § Stakeholder exchanges, including project-project "twinning" exchanges, promoting peer-to-peer learning and South-South cooperation;
- § Trainings and workshops addressing common capacity building needs, including cross-project trainings, webinars, e-learning and online courses, using a variety of methods, including Fish bowl, World Café, Share Fairs, Market Place;
- § Dedicated Program and child project website presenting results (reports, newsletter, videos), lessons and hosted by FAO with links to relevant key partner web pages, and other digital media, including social media outreach, leveraging the use of hashtag #CommonOceans and tagging relevant stakeholders, influencers and media; and

- § Other tools for virtual dissemination of best practices and lessons learned, including websites, virtual library of resources, forums, blogs, E-mail marketing, along with a
- § ‘Communication package’ for internal program use, with guidelines for the visual identity and branding, logo use, and media talking points, templates for presentations, letterheads and publications.

Targeted training (workshops, e-learning, etc) will be undertaken at program level to build capacity to ensure these can be effectively employed and delivered, particularly in areas where current capacity is considered weak, such as knowledge management systems and effective communications tools. The most appropriate, effective means for KM and communication and any associated capacity needs will be determined during the PPG phase.

### ***Generation of new knowledge***

The Program and its child projects will generate new knowledge for improving sustainable management of ABNJ resources. Specific contributions include new information on ABNJ ecosystems and associated species such as deep sea fish stocks and deep-water sharks, improved understanding of the impacts of human activities (particularly fishing and mining) on ABNJ habitats (especially cumulative impacts). In the case of the Sargasso Sea, for instance, information arising from the Ecosystem Diagnostic Analysis, existing monitoring and time-series data collection and information on the effects from impacts that are already being measured will provide a baseline of ‘knowledge’. This will then aid in identifying a list of gaps in knowledge and information for the Sargasso Sea area and its biological, chemical and physical status and interactions along with a road-map for filling the priority gaps that directly influence decisions for effective stewardship guidance and decision-making.

## **9. Child Program Selection Criteria**

### **Outline the criteria used or to be used for child program selection and the contribution of each child program to program impact.**

1. Two workshops were conducted in December 2018 and April 2019 with the participation of a wide range of potential partners from regional fisheries management organizations and their member States, inter-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, national governments, international private sector initiatives, and academia, to develop the basis for activities, including a Theory of Change, to address the objectives of the GEF-7 International Waters Focal Area Strategy second objective, “Improve management in the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ)”. Many of these partners were active partners in the GEF-5 Program and expressed their interest to continue to support and expand the joint efforts that proved impactful in the GEF-5 program.
2. At the second workshop, a large number of proposals for activities were advanced by the partners, providing the basis for clustering them in homogeneous projects that could address the barriers and challenges identified in the workshops.

3. Child projects were selected on the basis of the following criteria:

- High potential/ability to deliver on objectives in the IW Focal Area and promote greater sectoral and thematic integration, and contributing to systems change in key areas that impact the GEF mission
- High potential for grouping partners that could exercise joint influence with direct impact on the issues identified in the theory of change workshops
- Ability to contribute to GEF core indicator targets
- Contribution to wider regional strategies and alignment with existing initiatives on sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity
- Potential to energize multi-sectoral collaboration on management challenges at regional and global scale
- Demonstrated political will and support from key members States in regional fisheries management bodies
- Support from private sector through direct involvement (political and financing) in activities
- Potential for achieving large-scale change, or generating globally relevant lessons and experiences
- Ability to catalyze innovations generated in technology, policy, governance, financing, and business models
- Ability to generate capacity in officials from GEF-eligible countries to fully engage and participate effectively in new international management arrangements addressing sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity in ABNJ

4. Four child projects were selected that are closely linked to the main outcomes identified in the Theory of Change. Two of these projects, one focusing on **global tuna fisheries** and one on **deep-sea fisheries** were identified and selected as priorities, taking into account the characteristics of the resources, their management arrangements and the main challenges from a biodiversity point of view.

5. To prepare the ground for a more integrated management of the ABNJ, a third **cross-sectoral project** focuses on enhancing the capacity of officials from eligible countries to participate effectively in the management of the ABNJ, especially through the implementation of the future BBNJ Agreement, including coordination among different sectoral initiatives.

6. Strengthening integrated management of a unique ABNJ ecosystem is also the focus of the **Sargasso Sea project**, supporting the cooperation of a number of stakeholders in the management and conservation through the Sargasso Sea Commission.

7. The four child projects that will contribute to the integrated management of the ABNJ will be supported by a fifth **global coordination project** that provides guidance and support to achieve consistently the goal of the programmatic outcomes.

**Part III: Approval/Endorsement By GEF Operational Focal Point(S) And Gef Agency(ies)**

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

Name	Position	Ministry	Date
N/A			3/23/2020

**ANNEX A: LIST OF CHILD PROJECTS UNDER THE PROGRAM**

<b>Child Projects under the Program<sub>a/</sub></b>							
<u>-</u> <b><u>Country</u></b>	<u>-</u> <b><u>Project Title</u></b>	<u>-</u> <b><u>GEF Agency</u></b>	<u>-</u> <b><u>GEF Amount (\$)</u></b>			<u>-</u> <b><u>Agency Fee (\$)</u></b>	<u>-</u> <b><u>Total (\$)</u></b>
			<b><u>Focal Area 1</u></b>	<b><u>Focal Area 2</u></b>	<b><u>TOTAL</u></b>		
			<u>Project</u>	<u>Project</u>	<u>Project</u>		
-	<b><u>FSPs</u></b>	-					
Global	1. Sustainable management of tuna fisheries and biodiversity conservation in the areas beyond national jurisdiction.		14,378,000		14,378,000	1,294,020	15,672,020
Global	2. Deep-sea Fisheries under the Ecosystem Approach		4,437,156		4,437,156	399,344	4,836,500
Global	3. Building and Enhancing Sectoral and Cross-Sectoral Capacity to Support Sustainable Resource Use and Biodiversity Conservation in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction		2,500,000		2,500,000	225,000	2,725,000
Global	4. Strengthening the stewardship of an economically and biologically significant high seas area – the Sargasso Sea		2,652,294		2,652,294	238,706	2,891,000 -
Global	5.Global Coordination Project of the Common Oceans ABNJ Program		2,752,294		2,752,294	247,706	3,000,000
-	<b><u>Subtotal</u></b>	-	26,719,744	0	26,719,744	2,404,776	29,124,520 -



-	MSPs	-					
	1.				0		0
-	<u>Subtotal</u>	-	0	0	0	0	0
-	<u>Total</u>	-	26,719,744	0	26,719,744	2,404,776	29,124,520

#### ANNEX A1: Project Map and Geographic Coordinates

Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project intervention takes place

The Program is global in nature as it encompasses all marine areas beyond national jurisdiction, focusing on the areas of the relevant RFMO/RFB Conventions (see Figures 3 and 4), as well as the adjacent LME and RSP areas. The Sargasso Sea child project will focused on that particular geography (see Figure 5)