



Food and Agriculture  
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Nations

## Office of Evaluation

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### **Sustainable Management of the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BOBLME) - GCP/RAS/236/GFF, GCP/RAS/248/SWE; GCP/RAS/246/NOR**

*Management response to the Mid-term evaluation report*

## Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

### Office of Evaluation (OED)

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For further information, please contact:

Director, OED  
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla 1, 00153  
Rome, Italy  
Email: [evaluation@fao.org](mailto:evaluation@fao.org)

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Bay of Bengal Large Ecosystem Project  
(GCP/RAS/236/GFF)  
Management Response to the Mid-term Evaluation

Overall response to the evaluation:

The MTE report is a fair and balanced assessment of the BOBLME project's performance to date. This report and its findings have also been similarly endorsed by the Project Steering Committee at its Annual Meeting in Colombo, 20-21 March, 2012. FAO and the Regional Coordination Unit (RCU) recognizes the validity and constructiveness of the recommendations and has already taken steps to ensure their implementation.

**Management response matrix**

Management response to the (BOBLME Project (GCP/RAS/236/GFF) Mid Term Evaluation)					
Evaluation Recommendation	Management response Accepted, partially accepted or rejected and comment on the Recommendation	Management plan			
		Action to be taken	Responsible unit	Timeframe	Further funding required (Y or N)
1) FAO is urged to enhance quality control for the preparation of project documents with a view to having them reviewed in-depth before becoming a management instrument for projects, with emphasis given to consistency and logic in the Logical Framework Analysis.	<p><b>Accepted.</b></p> <p>It is acknowledged that shortcomings exist in the project document, but they have less to do with FAO's quality control system, than with the complications experienced by the project which would normally have required a complete redesign of the project. This was not done because of the lengthy preparation process. The project was submitted for CEO endorsement on 22 December 2004, and the tsunami struck the region 4 days later. This completely changed the baseline scenario, and it was agreed with the GEF Secretariat that, instead of embarking a process to revise the project document to take into account the impact of the tsunami, a flexible approach would be adopted, and the priorities revisited at the first inception meeting, and the work plan and logical framework revised to reflect the new priorities. The Project Document was slightly adjusted to make references to the tsunami, changed baseline, and the need to take a flexible approach to be able to address new priorities as a result of the tsunami. Furthermore, when it looked liked it would not be possible to mobilize the required co-financing ratio, recommendations were made at the Appraisal Workshop, which was held in June 2007 and attended by all participating countries, to reduce funding, but not eliminate, some sub-components. For example, with respect to C.2 Field-based case studies under marine protected areas and</p>	<p>Action(s)</p> <p>On the corporate level, FAO is revising the whole approach to project appraisal, including the Project and Programme Review Committee, to improve the quality of its project formulation and implementation design. There will be a step to assess the technical quality and one for the compliance to corporate standards on LFM quality, capacity development, environmental sustainability, gender and human rights based approaches/right to food.</p>	TC Department	N/A	No

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	fish refugia, it was agreed that this component would not be eliminated but case studies would be postponed with the option to re-include them, when and if, additional co-financing becomes available during the the programme's first phase. Likewise, due to some constraining factors it was not possible to implement the Mergui Archipelago and Gulf of Mannar activities. Implementation was postponed until the situation improved and the budget reduced for the subcomponent. It was envisaged that these sub-components would be revisited in subsequent years of the project.				
2) GEF Focal Point in FAO should encourage national GEF Operational and Political Focal Points to engage in promotion of the project. There is scope for effective support to increase awareness of the project and facilitate high level contacts and inter-ministerial interactions.	<p><b>Partially accepted</b></p> <p>FAO agrees that the project needs strong support from both the environment ministries and the ministries responsible for fisheries. The GEF Operational and Political Focal Points should be requested to promote the project and facilitate high level support. It is TCI's view that this can best be done by the ministries of environment designating a PSC member who has authority and high-level inter-ministerial connections.</p> <p>Active participation of GEF focal points would help to raise the profile of projects. However, GEF focal points are responsible for coordinating their country's GEF collaboration and formally endorsing each project. Their role does not normally extend beyond this.</p>	<p>Action(s)</p> <p>The FAO GEF Focal Point will bring the matter to the attention of National GEF Operational Focal Points in the participating countries. The Assistant Director-General of the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAP) will raise the issue with both the ministries of environment and ministries responsible for fisheries, through various means including support of FAORs.</p>	TCI RAP	2012	No

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3) In order to complement the PSC members in their advocacy role, the RCU should consider contracting individuals with high status in the society, known for their commitment to conservation of nature, including sustainable management of aquatic living resources, and with access to and influence on high political level.	<b>Accepted</b> The RCU endorses this recommendation to contact high level individuals and is addressing it on a country-by-country basis.	Action(s)  The SAP completion plan includes provisions for the recruitment of relevant individuals to advocate for the SAP. This is planned for within existing budget	RCU	Ongoing, until NTE	No
4a) FAORAP should encourage FAO Representatives to take a more proactive role in the promotion of the BOBLME at country level and facilitate access to high administrative and political levels to enhance awareness about the project in regular high level contacts, and to participate in high profile project events;	<b>Accepted</b> FAO and the RCU endorse this recommendation. FAORs need to have a greater awareness of BOBLME activities and more contact with relevant ministries.	Action(s)  RCU will draft a letter from ADG/RR to all concerned FAO Representatives.  RCU will undertake to increase regularity of briefings to FAO country representatives. on the project activities and needs of the BOBLME in their countries.  With support of RCU, FAORAP will encourage FAORs to take a more proactive role in communicating with the ministries relevant to the BOBLME (ministries of environment, fisheries, finance/planning, depending on the country).  RAP to address the issue of FAORs having little buy-in to regional projects through allocating GEF fee and/or operational support resources to the Country Offices .	RAP RCU	Ongoing, until NTE	No

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4b) ADG FAORAP should be the Convener and Chair of a forum for annual regional meetings among Permanent Secretaries with the aim of reviewing the status of the SAP and agree on actions to enhance progress towards the Project Development Objective. At least two meetings should be held during the remaining project period.	<b>Accepted</b> In accordance with the SAP completion process approved by the PSC, there will be high level meetings starting in third quarter of 2013. No meeting is planned in 2012 due to the need for SAP preparatory work in-country. However, the RCU will organize internal annual Project Task Force meeting to be chaired by ADG/RR during the 2 <sup>nd</sup> half of 2012 to review the status of the SAP and ensure timely project progress towards achieving the objectives.	Action(s)  BOBLME SAP development plan includes provisions for a high level senior officer meeting in 2013 and a Ministerial meeting in early 2014. It is anticipated that this will be organized by BOBLME and convened by ADG RAP. These meetings could be combined with PSC meetings or any other similar meeting, as appropriate. The RCU will organize internal annual Project Task Force meeting to be chaired by ADG/RR during the 2 <sup>nd</sup> half of 2012	RCU RAP	Ongoing, until NTE	No
5) FAORAP (in consultation with GEF Focal Point) should urgently appoint a full time Field Operations Officer, preferably with a fisheries background, to be based in Phuket for tasks that to a large extent are currently done by the RC and CTA. These include organization of meetings and workshops, recruitment of consultants, drafting of Letters of Agreement and negotiating with recipient organizations, and monitoring of	<b>Partially Accepted</b> It should be noted that RAP has already an Operations Officer to operate this GEF project based in RAP. What the project needs is not the Operations Officer to be based in its HQs in Phuket, but It rather requires Administrative Officer who can handle all administrative tasks ( Operations Officer has naturally two key tasks ;one for project management and another for administrative	Action(s)  RAP will hire an Administrative Officer as soon as possible, as it had been envisaged in the project document and itemized in the approved budget resources.  The RCU will mobilize a short term administrative consultant to provide	RAP RCU	Ongoing, until NTE	No

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budget disbursement.	work. Since project management task is the responsibility of CTA, what the project requires is an Administrative Officer).	services required.			
6) The RCU should increase its efforts to strengthen collaboration with relevant existing institutions, organizations, and programmes in the region with compatible mandates, aims, and objectives as the BOBLME, in which partners take the responsibility for entire project outputs. This requires longer term and wider contractual arrangements than are used at present.	<b><u>Partially accepted</u></b>  FAO and the RCU recognize that this is an essential part of the SAP development strategy and will continue its efforts to promote greater collaboration with more institutions or organizations in addition to the efforts already made.	Action(s)  RCU will convene a series of partner round table meetings to ensure that programmes relevant to the SAP are integrated to the greatest extent possible.	RCU	Ongoing until NTE	No
7) The RCU should take the initiation of the SAP formulation process as an opportunity to engage the PSC more actively through inter-sessional interactions between the PSC members and RCU and among PSC members. This can possibly be through teleconferences and interactive networks to monitor and drive the SAP process. RCU should further urge the Governments to improve continuity in participation in meetings, directly and through the PSC.	<b><u>Partially accepted</u></b>  The first recommendation is covered by the SAP development plan and acknowledged by the PSC in its latest meeting (March 2012). Use of virtual meetings is anticipated  RCU recognizes the issue of continuity of participation of PSC members and continues to bring this to the attention of the national project proponents in communications with the PSC members and NCs	Action(s)  The endorsed SAP completion plan foresees increased engagement of the PSC. RCU will use virtual meetings to track this process.  Dates and locations of PSC meetings are set a year in advance. RCU will ensure invitations are issued 90 days prior to the PSC meeting in accordance with rules of procedure.  RCU will also coordinate with FAORs as required to ensure timely nominations, and particularly to follow up with the environment ministries.	RCU	Ongoing until NTE	No

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8) In PSC meetings, the RCU should continue to draw attention to fulfilment of national obligations, appointment of NTAs, and provisions of facilities and support, and seek the PSC members' support to urge the Governments to strengthen the national teams. The RCU should also more actively engage the national teams in project activities, and increase dialogue and cooperation among national agencies, PSC members, and other stakeholders within the countries.	<b>Partially accepted</b> RCU continues to draw countries' attention to their obligations. On the matter of NTAs, in most cases these duties are fulfilled by a range of national individuals, rather than a single position and this does not overly constrains the effective delivery of the BOBLME activities at national level. Other obligations are raised at PSC meetings,	Action(s)  RCU will request NCs to identify a focal point to act as NTA (where not yet done) to provide high level monitoring of the national LOAs that cover national activities. This person will be a direct liaison with the field operational support envisaged in Recommendation 5 above.  For 2012 activities, the contracts developed in each country will require greater elaboration of the national contribution to support this process.	RCU	Ongoing until NTE	No
9) FAORAP and the GEF Focal Point should consider the potential role of the BOBLME Task Force in institutional learning from project implementation and in networking between similar projects to exchange experiences with the aim to enhance and improve FAO's management of large regional projects. The BOBLME Task Force could be used as a pilot case to revitalize the task force concept and test and demonstrate its potential usefulness.	<b>Accepted</b> Whilst the BOBLME Project Task Force (PTF) to date has not taken a role as an oversight body in the project, there have been individual inputs from some PTF task force members.  The BOBLME task force has been convened, but not on a regular basis. Staff participation has been constrained by staff travel and absences.	Action(s)  The role of the Project Task Force (PTF) is being entirely revitalized in the context of the new project cycle, moving from an advisory to active role, with roles and responsibilities for the various functions redefined. The particular aspect of the role of the PTF in networking and institutional learning from implementation will be reviewed to integrate or further articulate the new guidelines on the PTF or as a good example.  The BOBLME PTF composition will be	LTU TCI FI RAP	First half of 2012	No

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		<p>reviewed in light of the needs of the project, and the BH and LTO in close consultation with the RCU, will approach and designate new PTF members.</p> <p>ADG-RAP will request ADG-FI to designate TF participants to take part in six monthly task force meetings, and any meetings that will be organized on an as needed basis, by the budget holder</p> <p>TF members could include their responsibilities as targets in their PEMS agreements.</p> <p>The RCU will continue to draw on individual TF members for specific technical inputs.</p> <p>LTO and RCU to engage with FI &amp; TCI to explore the possibility of a "lessons learned" virtual conference, linking the PTF with LTOs and PTFs of other FAO-led LME and fisheries management projects, such as CCLME, REBYC II, ABNJ, OMFP-2).</p>			
10) The RCU should engage with the PSC to closely monitor progress towards SAP formulation and adoption. The first benchmark will be the 3rd PSC meeting where the regional TDA will be presented for approval, which will trigger the start of SAP	<p><b>Accepted</b></p> <p>The 3<sup>rd</sup> PSC meeting has been completed and the TDA adopted, along with the SAP completion plan.</p>	<p>Action(s)</p> <p>A virtual meeting is planned (November 2012) between the RCU and PSC to take stock on progress of SAP completion plan</p>	RCU	Q4 2012 Q1 2013	No

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formulation. Six months later the RCU should consult with PSC (in an extra physical meeting or a teleconference) about progress for the PSC to decide on required actions. The 4th regular PSC meeting in March 2013 should decide if there is need for an extension of the project.		implementation.  The 4 <sup>th</sup> PSC meeting will consider the project extension under its agenda in 2013.			
11) The RCU should consider, in consultation with the PSC and subject to final approval by the PSC, alternatives to a region-wide SAP, potentially a SAP consisting of smaller sub-regional, bi-lateral, and thematic components that could be brought together into a regional programme, with responsibility for management of individual components given to existing sub-regional institutions or institutional arrangements created specifically for this purpose.	<b>Accepted</b> This recommendation has been endorsed by the PSC at its 3 <sup>rd</sup> Meeting (March 2012) which agreed that the SAP will remain a region wide initiative/programme; however, its components will not necessarily require the engagement of all 8 BOBLME countries in all components. It will be an effective combination of regional, subregional and national initiatives to address transboundary and common shared priorities that are coherently linked to the overarching SAP objectives. This approach recognizes differing levels of national priorities within the BOB region with the anticipated SAP components.	Action(s)  RCU will commence the identification of the relevant processes and programmes, that are either ongoing, planned or to be developed, which would comprise the SAP.  This links to the recommendation related to enhanced partnership and cooperation (6), and will also be strongly influenced by the NAP process during 2012.  Discussion of future potential areas of cooperation with the existing donors to BOBLME will also stepped up, as well as exploration of other potential donors.	RCU RAP TC Department	Ongoing until NTE	No
12) The RCU should engage the PSC to urge the countries to increase the participation of women in the project, including in training and capacity building initiatives; and ensure that gender issues are explicitly considered in the SAP, including evaluation	<b>Accepted</b> RCU has developed TOR and is negotiating a contract for a gender review for the SAP and SAP development process.	Action(s)  Contract for gender review is under negotiation.	RCU TC Department	First half 2012	No

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of gender implications of proposed actions. The RC and CTA should ensure that the revised TDA incorporate gender issues as appropriate, including in the Causal Chain Analysis.					
13) A capacity needs assessment should be conducted and a strategy that targets the specific needs of the individual countries developed during the next year. Further, the RCU should ensure that provisions are made in the SAP for priority training and capacity development in the next phase of the project. The RCU should, through the PSC, urge countries to nominate the appropriate individuals and to provide mechanisms and incentives to enable them to contribute to the project on a sustainable basis	<p><b>Accepted</b></p> <p>A capacity needs assessment is being developed as part of the SAP. This will be informed by the NAP process.</p>	<p>Action(s)</p> <p>RCU is already drawing on the capacity development recommendations contained within the various thematic reviews prepared for the TDA and the project components.</p> <p>The completed SAP will contain the capacity development needs. The completion of the NAPs during 2012-2013 will give an advance notice of the capacity needs at the country level .</p>	RCU RAP-LTO		