PROJECT INDEPENDENT EVALUATION – MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

(Note: This form is to be included in the final report)

Name of programme/office/unit:	*Hiroshima Office*
Name of programme manager and title:	Chisa Mikami, Head, Hiroshima Office
Name of project undertaking:	*Shimanami Collective: Sea and Human Security for a Free and Open Indo-Pacific* Project ID C2024.TARHO070.JPNPM
Donor:	Permanent Mission of Japan to the International Organizations in Geneva
Name of evaluation:	Independent Evaluation of the "Shimanami Collective: Sea and Human Security for a Free and Open Indo-Pacific" project
Evaluation Report issuance date:	June 2025

SECTION I – MANAGEMENT COMMENTS ON FINDINGS / CONCLUSSIONS

Here, you can write any comments related to the evaluation findings and conclusions that inform the evaluation recommendations

The evaluation report was comprehensive and insightful. The cross-tabulation analysis of the survey data, along with the in-depth interviews conducted with participants, the project management team, and key stakeholders, yielded findings and evidence at a level of depth we do not typically have access to. We were particularly pleased to note the emphasis on the project's interdisciplinary approach, which was recognized as "not only unique but also highly relevant and aligned with country and regional needs." This validation is especially meaningful, as the interdisciplinary nature of the project was a core feature from the outset and closely aligned with donor priorities. The recommendations will help shape future iterations of the project as well as other related projects.

SECTION II – EVALUATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Management Response to Recommendations and Planned Action

Recommendation	Management Response (Accepted, Partially Accepted or Rejected)	Management response comments	Planned action					
			Key action (s)	Responsible	Timeframe (to be implemented by)	Information Source (link, document or any other evidence for future verification of planned actions)	Budget allocated (if necessary, otherwise specify "n/a")	Status at the time of completing the MR (planned or under implementation)
	In this column, write the response for each of the recommendations either: Accepted, Partially Accepted or Rejected	Write in this column any comments explaining why the recommendation was rejected or partially accepted, or add context to the selection in the previous column	Describe the specific action(s) planned for implementing the recommendation. Remember that actions should be specific and measurable (tasks).	Indicate the responsible person(s) or team to implement this recommendation	Indicate the (estimated) time required for implementing this recommendation by providing month and year of finalization of implementation	Indicate any information that can be used for following up on the implementation of this recommendation	Specify any human or financial resources that implementing the recommendation will require. If any budget is required, specify the amount here	Status of recommendation implementation at the moment of completing the MR, either planned or under implementation

Recommendation 1: **Improve formulation of project result statements, indicators, and theory of change**
 	
Though the project has developed a results framework with output and outcome formulations, indicators, baseline and targets, there appeared to be several inconsistencies when examining it in light of the activities undertaken and the perspectives of both staff of the project and participants in the programme. The project outcome statement provided a focus on the development of
	Accepted		• Review UNITAR project documents of similar projects to identify best practices in results framework design
			• Revise results framework template used in project proposals to strengthen linkages between:
			  - Increased knowledge and capacities of participants to changed behaviours, and larger organizational or other impacts
			  - Likelihood of impact from the implementation of the participants' individual projects to overall project impact
				• Hikari Nakajima, HO
				• Junko Shimazu, HO
					By 30th September 2025	Amended results framework template to be shared once finalized.	Two personnels from the project team.
							No additional financial resources needed (N/A).
								Planned

'networks' without clearly defining what was intended to be included as a network, nor what the potential baseline for the related indicator was. There was little in the outcome statement, or in the monitoring framework, on the application of the learning gained through the training programme across the three phases. Moreover, given the focus on having participants develop their own projects as well as, in the later phases, draft policy briefs in thematic areas connected to sea and human security, the focus on the network building aspects of the programme seems out of place. Overall, a more rigorous discussion of the theory of change for the programme and the potential outcomes would have informed the original project document as well as highlighting stakeholder expectations of potential impacts. This could have also informed the development of the training surveys and other monitoring instruments, to help capture the results of the training.							
Recommendation 2: **UNITAR should consider how to provide further**	Accepted		• Continue to build and enhance partnerships with key stakeholders in the	• Hikari Nakajima HO	By 31st January 2026	• MoUs or other informal partnership	Three personnels from the project team.	Under implementation

interdisciplinary training programmes on issues related to sea and human security and closely collaborate with UN country teams and national actors As noted in the evaluation report, this training programme occupied a unique position in the region, by providing capacity-building that was broad in scope, but which allowed participants to understand and focus on the interconnections between topics that are commonly treated separately, or that are often somewhat adjacent to their particular work or policy focus. The evaluation found this approach to not only be unique but also highly relevant and aligned to country and regional needs, helping to build capacities to take more holistic approaches to a range of current and future challenges, including in areas such as climate change, disaster risk reduction, economic development, etc. As these issues connect to a range of outcomes in national and regional development instruments (e.g. UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks, etc.), there may be strategic advantages to further capacity development programming in these			Asia-Pacific region related to sea and human security •	• Richard Crichton, HO • Junko Shimazu, HO		s established with stakeholders in the Asia-Pacific region. • Maintain the alumni network of this cohort as a group of strong national actors.	No additional financial resources needed (N/A).

areas, requiring close collaboration on country-level There is therefore an opportunity for UNITAR to provide further training programmes that help participants to understand connected issues around sea and human security in an integrated and interdisciplinary way, particularly given the Institute's existing network of experts and experience in delivering training in this area.								
Recommendation 3: **UNITAR should consider having distinct training programmes for potential leaders (e.g. in sea and human security and related topics), depending on career stage and consider expanding training to institutions** The report discussed the perception of differing professional 'cultures' among the participants, depending largely on their respective career positions. While there may be some positive impacts from the sharing of experiences between middle career professionals and those at an earlier stage of their careers, it seemed that during the training most sharing and network building occurred between participants at a similar career stage.	Partially accepted	While delivering separate programmes for each career stage is resource-intensive, design adaptations can be introduced to better meet diverse participant needs. An approach that engages institutions to nominate candidates is worth incorporating into project designs.	• Include pre-training needs assessment survey to identify and differentiate training needs between participants in different career stages. • Adapt content or group discussions to reflect varied professional experiences. • Include mentoring elements (peer-to-peer or alumni engagement) where feasible. • Incorporate approach to target institutions to nominate candidates in project proposals.	• Hikari Nakajima, HO • Richard Crichton, HO • Junko Shimazu, HO	By 31st July 2026 (next training cycle)	Project proposals that incorporate the identified approaches.	Three personnels from the project team. No additional financial resources needed (N/A).	Planned

Moreover, interviewees noted that their respective professional challenges were quite different depending on career stage (e.g. with early career professionals looking at establishing themselves, finding internships or junior positions, while mid-career were looking at how best to integrate the training in the work or their organisation and to disseminate to teams, they manage etc). In this respect, there may be value in having different cohorts grouped by career stage, perhaps with some opportunities for mentoring or advising on a voluntary basis between mid-career and early career professionals. While the programme was focused on individuals, an approach targeting institutions may further lead to lasting results and multiplier effects This could be, for instance, by directly targeting institutions or actors in the region whose work relates to the UNITAR training programme and inviting them to nominate candidates for the course, helping to fill the 'pipeline' of people into the first course phase.								
Recommendation 4: **UNITAR should consider, in future trainings on sea and human security and related topics in the**	Accepted		• Review existing training feedback to identify gaps in gender/human rights content. • Discuss and seek advice from other UN agencies	• Hikari Nakajima, HO • Richard Crichton, HO	By 31st July 2026 (next training cycle)	Updated gender/human rights training materials and modules.	Three personnels from the project team. ==USD 8,000== (estimated for	Planned

region, having more adapted gender and human rights training While there were some individual components of the training programme which some participants found more or less useful or interesting, the majority of the feedback on relevance and coherence was positive. A key exception seemed to be the components on gender and human rights, particularly in the phase II regional workshops. Although for these topics there may sometimes be resistance to discussions for personal or other reasons, the overall feedback received was that these modules were singularly out-of-place within the overall training curriculum, often seen as 'too abstract' or 'too general'. In the context of a training programme that highlights the interconnections and interdependencies between thematic areas within sea and human security, UNITAR could consider reformulating these modules to more explicitly highlight the many connections between gender and human rights on the one hand, and issues such as environmental security, blue economy, community development, etc. on the other hand. Moreover, such modules could consider how to best			and gender and human right experts from the region • Revise training content to clearly link gender/human rights with other thematic areas and incorporate examples from the target country/region.	• Junko Shimazu, HO		expert input and content development)

provide gender and human rights training in a way that balances depth and audience relevance, within a limited space of time.								
Recommendation 5: **In future programming, find ways to support participants in the 'last mile' for implementation of projects, presentation of policy briefs, etc.** While the programme supported the development of individual project proposals, the number that are currently undergoing implementation appears small. At the very least, there is an unclear pathway towards implementation of many – perhaps most – of the 150 project proposals developed. While the question of resourcing the projects is challenging, particularly in the context of the target countries, more could potentially be done to help support participants in the next phase of their projects. This could include, for instance, efforts at showcasing projects or presenting them to potential donors, relevant agencies, providing additional coaching or related support etc. It may also be useful to consider the profile of the candidates (e.g. resources available, organizational position) as part of the qualitative	Partially accepted	Given the project timeline of one year, extensive follow-up after completion of project activities may not be feasible. However, more efforts can be made to enhance guidance and support for post-training implementation within the training activities.	• Introduce a dedicated "Next Steps" planning session to guide participants on post-training implementation. • Develop a toolkit, including templates, tools, and strategies to support project continuation. • Consider developing and proposing multi-year projects to donor and create the pathway to the project implementation stage	• Hikari Nakajima, HO • Richard Crichton, HO • Junko Shimazu, HO	By 31st July 2026 (next training cycle)	• Project continuation toolkit • New proposals to potential donors	Three personnels from the project team. No additional financial resources needed (N/A).	Planned

| criteria for selecting participants.

Similarly, another key product of the last phase of the project was the policy briefs. While some of these are now published online, it is unclear what next steps, if any, can be taken as a result of this work. Additional support to participants in helping to take these briefs to relevant fora, UN or international system partners, NGOs, media, etc. could help provide avenues for these briefs to inform policy dialogues and public discussion around issues linked to sea and human security more broadly.								

Name of Director/Programme Manager	Date	Signature
Chisa Mikami	**18 July 2025**	

Name of Project Manager	Date	Signature
Junko Shimazu	**18 July 2025**	

SECTION III – FOLLOW-UP / TRACKING

Recommendation	Management Response (Accepted, Partially Accepted or Rejected)	Management response comments	Planned action				
					Management Response to Recommendations and Planned Action Follow- up		
			Key action (s)	Status 6 months (planned, under implementation, implemented)	Comments	Status one year (planned, under implementation, implemented)	Comments
	This column will be completed by PPME	This column will be completed by PPME	This column will be completed by PPME	This column will be completed after six months only	Write in this column any comments explaining, giving context or details on the actual status of the planned action	This column will be completed after one year only	Write in this column any comments explaining, giving context or details on the actual status of the planned action
Recommendation 1: **Improve formulation of project result statements, indicators, and theory of change** There appeared to be several inconsistencies when examining the project results framework in light of the activities undertaken and the perspectives of both staff of the project and participants in the programme. The project outcome statement provided a focus on the development of 'networks' without clearly defining what was intended to be included as a network, nor what the potential baseline for the related indicator was. There was little in the outcome statement, or in the monitoring framework, on the application of the learning							

gained through the training programme across the three phases. Moreover, given the focus on having participants develop their own projects as well as, in the later phases, draft policy briefs in thematic areas connected to sea and human security, the focus on the network building aspects of the programme seems out of place. Overall, a more rigorous discussion of the theory of change for the programme and the potential outcomes would have informed the original project document as well as highlighting stakeholder expectations of potential impacts. This could have also informed the development of the training surveys and other monitoring instruments, to help capture the results of the training.						
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Name of Director/Programme Manager	Date	Signature

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