

# **External Evaluation of GRÓ International Centre for Capacity Development, Sustainability and Societal Change**

**Programme Evaluation Report - FTP**  
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Authors: Shawn Webb, Johannes Beck, Dr. Matteo Borzoni, Dr. Alfredo Gonzalez Cambero,  
Franziska Holzaepfel, Julia Schaefer, Tobias Schmolke

## ANNEX 11 GRÓ TRAINING PROGRAMME EVALUATION REPORTS

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## ANNEX 11.1 PROGRAMME EVALUATION REPORT - GRÓ FTP

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### 1. TRAINING PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND CONTEXT

#### 1.1. TRAINING PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION, INTERVENTION STRATEGIES AND APPROACH (OVERVIEW)

The **Fisheries Training Programme (FTP)** was founded in 1997 as part of Iceland's development cooperation agenda. It was the result of a trilateral agreement between the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA), the Icelandic Marine and Freshwater Research Institute (MFRI), and the United Nations University (UNU)<sup>1</sup>. **In response to the state of global fisheries**, characterized by overexploitation of marine resources and the increased importance of fish for economic and social development and food security, FTP was an expansion of the partnership with UNU through the Geothermal Training Programme (GTP). As stated in the Icelandic parliamentary resolution on Iceland's Policy for International Development Cooperation 2019-2023, Iceland's development cooperation shall focus on areas where **Iceland's expertise can be applied** in the fight against poverty and in **reaching the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**. Like the GTP, the Iceland MFA can leverage the nation's expertise in fishing and environmental resource management to cause development changes across different regions of the world.

From its inception until 2019, FTP ran as the United Nations University (UNU)-FTP. In 2020, the partnership with the UNU came to an end and the GRÓ Centre for Capacity Development, Sustainability and Societal Change (GRÓ) was established as an independent entity within the MFA operating as a Category 2 Centre (C2C) under the auspices of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). **The programme was rebranded as GRÓ FTP**. Within UNESCO, GRÓ FTP is supposed to work closely with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), as this Commission is the natural partner for FTP in that UN Agency.

GRÓ FTP aspires to **contribute to the sustainable use of living aquatic resources in partner countries**. In this regard, the mission of the GRÓ FTP is to **strengthen institutional capacity to support the sustainable use of living aquatic resources in partner countries** through international educational and research cooperation. To this end, GRÓ FTP aims to assist partner countries in achieving their own fisheries development goals by partnering with institutions and organizations in partner countries that are key for the advancement of a sustainable fisheries sector through research and policy design and implementation.

**FTP focuses on countries that qualify for Official Development Assistance (ODA)** in accordance with the OECD DAC classification, including **Small Island Development States (SIDS)**. As a result of the programme's array of interventions, it is expected that alumni and their organizations will promote and implement changes conducive to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda SDGs.

To accomplish its objective, **FTP offers a 6-month training programme** at the core of the programme's training efforts. In line with the overall objective of FTP, this programme has the purpose of training young/mid-career professionals **to enhance the capacities of their organizations to enable them to**

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<sup>1</sup> A pre-feasibility study was carried out to assess the suitability of having the programme in Iceland.

**bring developmental change in the fisheries sectors of the partner countries.** Currently, FTP offers **four lines of specialisation**<sup>2</sup>: Fisheries Policy and Management, Aquatic Resource Assessment and Monitoring, Quality Management of Fish Handling and Processing, and Sustainable Aquaculture. So far, worldwide **503 fellows** have graduated from the programme, of which 59% were male and 41% were female.

The programme **also offers scholarships for M.Sc. and Ph.D. studies at Icelandic universities**, through which qualifying fellows continue their professional development by undertaking postgraduate education through a Master's or doctoral degree from Iceland to further contribute to development change in the fisheries sector. So far **44 total scholarships** have been granted, 21 for a master's degree and 23 to pursue a Ph.D.

**In-country and regional training** is also provided through **short courses and workshops**, which are tailored to the local needs with the purpose of addressing pressing local issues in fisheries and reaching a larger/wider audience; **42 short courses and 10 workshops** have been delivered worldwide so far.

Complementary to the training efforts, the programme also **provides advisory services and facilitates knowledge sharing**. In that regard, 4 study tours have taken place with a total of 58 participants from 17 countries who came to Iceland to learn about the country's fisheries success. Initially, these study tours were meant to inform the Directors of the Fisheries Divisions/Institutions from partner countries of the capacities acquired by trained fellows.

FTP strives to empower its trainee base and **supports fellows to attend conferences** related to fisheries, having supported **196 alumni in 11 international conference events** where they have had the opportunity to share their knowledge and learn from other experts and stakeholders.

In a different venue, FTP has developed a series of videos as part of its **innovative online content creation**, which are openly available through **YouTube**. These video series focus on the relationship of fisheries and the SDGs and can educate a wider audience on the economic, environmental, and social importance of fisheries.

Overall, during its 25 years of existence, **FTP has graduated 503 fellows from 68 countries**, granted **44 scholarships**, and offered **52 workshops and short courses**.

## 1.2. MAIN STAKEHOLDERS AND TARGET GROUP BENEFICIARIES IN PARTNER COUNTRIES

At the individual level, **young/mid-career professionals from partner countries**, according to eligibility for ODA, **engaged in fisheries related activities are the core target group of FPT**. These professionals come from government agencies such as the Ministries of Agriculture or Fisheries Divisions/Institutions of the partner countries, from academic and research institutions, from companies in the fisheries sector, from associations in the fisheries sector, and from regional government organizations.

At the institutional level, stakeholders include **national Ministries of Agriculture or Fisheries Divisions/Institutions**, 76 in 54 countries; **universities and other academic institutions**, 29 in 21 countries; **research institutions**, 19 in 14 countries; private companies of the fishing industry; **eleven in eight countries, industry associations**, three in three countries, and three **regional government organizations**.

## 1.3. INSTITUTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR FTP MANAGEMENT

The FTP's primary actors are the GRÓ Centre, the Iceland MFA, the Marine and Freshwater Research Institute, MATÍS-Food Research and Biotechnology, the University of Iceland, the University of Akureyri, and Hólar University College, and the Fishing Industry. In the past two years, GRÓ FTP and the Faroe Islands initiated a partnership that focusses on aquaculture, an area in which the Faroese have a

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<sup>2</sup> The lines used to be six as per the description in the pre-feasibility study. But in order to improve the efficiency and increase consistency some of the lines were merged and some content distributed into the other lines (e.g. the environmental line).

competitive advantage; FTP receives in-kind and technical support through this partnership. The **GRÓ Centre is the commissioning agency** for the core services of the programme and establishes the annual financial contribution to the programme from the GRÓ Centre. A biannual service agreement, previously known as host institution agreement, signed between the GRÓ Centre and the **Marine and Freshwater Research Institute** allows this institute to **host the programme** and provide experts (lecturers and supervisors) and facilities for the development of training activities of the core training programme. **MATIS** hosts fellows specialising in Quality Management of Fish Handling and Processing and provides lecturers and supervisors as well as facilities for the development of training activities in that line of specialization. **The University of Akureyri** hosts the fellows specializing in Fisheries Policy and Management during the specialisation phase and provides the programme with supervisors and lecturers. **The University of Iceland** and **Hólar University College** also provide lecturers and supervisors as needed. The fishing industry complements the training needs by providing access to fishing facilities and equipment. For the delivery of short courses and workshops, **FTP partners with local educational institutions**; in the Caribbean, for example, the University of the West Indies and the University of Belize provide lecturers and participate in the design and delivery of short courses through the partnership with the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM). The Icelandic partners are also instrumental in the preparation and delivery of these in-country short courses and workshops.

In the context of **capacity building and the MFA's foreign policy agenda and objectives**, FTP often handles special requests by the Ministry, such as field trips by delegations from other countries to see firsthand Iceland's accomplishments in fisheries. In that context, GRÓ FTP has also participated in missions initiated by the MFA as part of its bilateral agenda for countries such as Sierra Leone, Uganda, Namibia, and Mozambique, to name a few.

The **MFA is the main source of funding** channelled through the GRÓ Centre to FTP to finance the FTP's numerous training programmes and special events.

Currently, the staff that manages and implements FTP includes the Programme Director, the Deputy Director, the Operations Manager, and one Specialist, with a gender composition of one female and three males. Sometimes FTP requires additional personnel, which is hired on a part time basis or short-term contracts, which brings the staff to the equivalent of 4.3 to 4.5 full time positions. Staff fluctuation is due, in great part, to budget uncertainties.

## 2. EVALUATION FINDINGS

### 2.1. PROGRAMME GOALS, STRATEGY AND APPROACH (RELEVANCE)

It is the evaluative opinion that **FTP is relevant** to the purpose of the Icelandic development cooperation goals in terms of both the specific development **problem related to fisheries** as the programme is clearly **aligned with the objectives of Iceland's policy for international development cooperation** and the cooperation efforts are directed to mostly LDCs, LMICs, and SIDS. FTP is also relevant to addressing the **cross-cutting areas of human rights, gender equality, and the environment**, as the effects of the programme's intervention facilitate the right to adequate food and the right to a healthy environment, as well as opportunity for women's increased participation along the value chain of fisheries as new knowledge in postharvest activities is produced.

#### 2.1.1. ALIGNMENT OF THE PROGRAMME WITH ICELAND'S INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION POLICIES AND ICELAND'S NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT VISION AND STRATEGIES

As stated by the **2008 Act on Iceland's International Development Cooperation**, the main objective of the country's international development cooperation is to **support the efforts of partner countries to promote the sustainable use of resources**, among other goals. In that context, Iceland supports the vision of the United Nations SDGs to eradicate hunger and extreme poverty, reduce inequality within and among states, respect human rights, and treat everyone equally before the law. In that regard, Iceland's development cooperation is **guided by human rights, gender equality, and sustainable development**, so Iceland's expert knowledge should be applied in the promotion of those ideals. One of the secondary aims of Iceland's international development policy goals is the **protection of the earth and the sustainable use of natural resources**. Especially relevant to FTP is the protection and

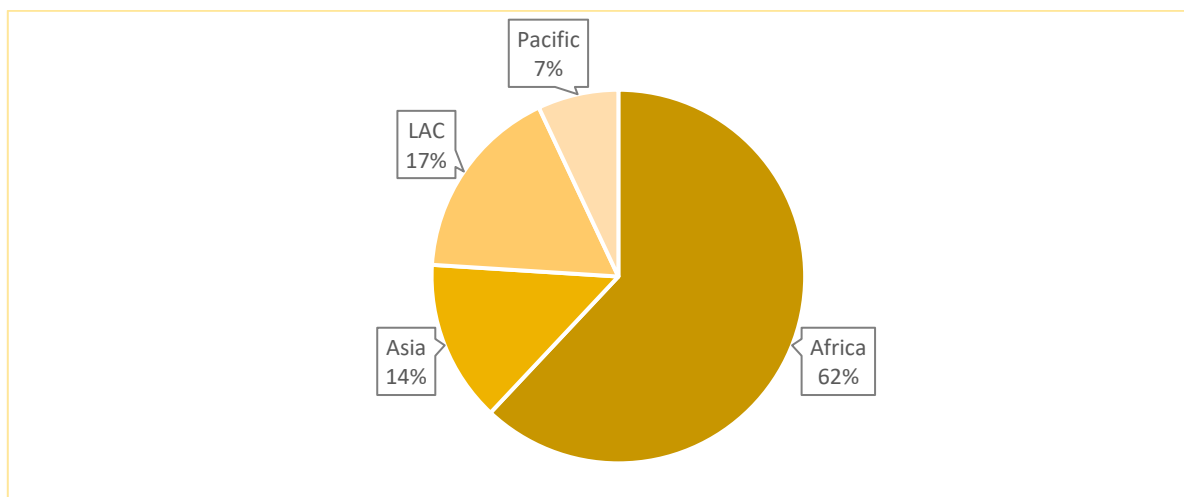
sustainable management of the oceans and waters **under SDG 14 Life Below Water**. Therefore, Icelandic efforts are expected to contribute to the improvement of the livelihoods and resilience of societies that rely on fisheries by enhancing capacities for fishing and fish processing while emphasising the provision of opportunities to participate in value chains through healthier and safer processing methods that increase the quality and value of fish products. **Development partners are selected based on convergence between the needs of the recipient country and Iceland's offered expertise**. Focus is placed on assisting **West African countries, including Sierra Leone and Liberia, and small island developing states (SIDS)**<sup>3</sup>. Based on those goals, one of the policy objectives set forth in the Bilateral Development Cooperation Strategy is the protection of the Earth and the sustainable use of natural resources, with gender equality, human rights, and climate and environment as cross-cutting priorities and thematic focus areas of fisheries and the blue economy.

As stated by its mission, FTP aims to contribute to the sustainable use of fisheries in less developed countries. Specifically, FTP's objectives are the strengthening of institutional capacities through international educational and research cooperation by providing excellence in training and facilitating education and research opportunities. **GRÓ FTP partners with institutions and organizations in partner countries that are key for the advancement of a sustainable fisheries sector** through research and policy design and implementation.

**121 fellows** (50% male and 50% female) (Table 15), were trained in Iceland in the 6-month postgraduate training. 62% from African countries, 17% from Latin American and Caribbean countries, 14% from Asian countries, and 7% from the South Pacific during the period 2018-2023 (Figure 42). As for their classification for ODA purposes, 26% of the countries were LDC, 31% Low Middle-Income Countries (LMIC), 34% Upper Middle-Income Countries (UMIC), and 9% High Income Countries<sup>4</sup> (HIC). Of the recipient countries, 6% were Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDC) and 34% SIDS.

Regarding the distribution of fellows per country category, 76% originated from LDCs or LMICs, (Graph 2), with a substantial 74% coming from SIDS.

Figure 1: Distribution of fellows by region: 2018-2023

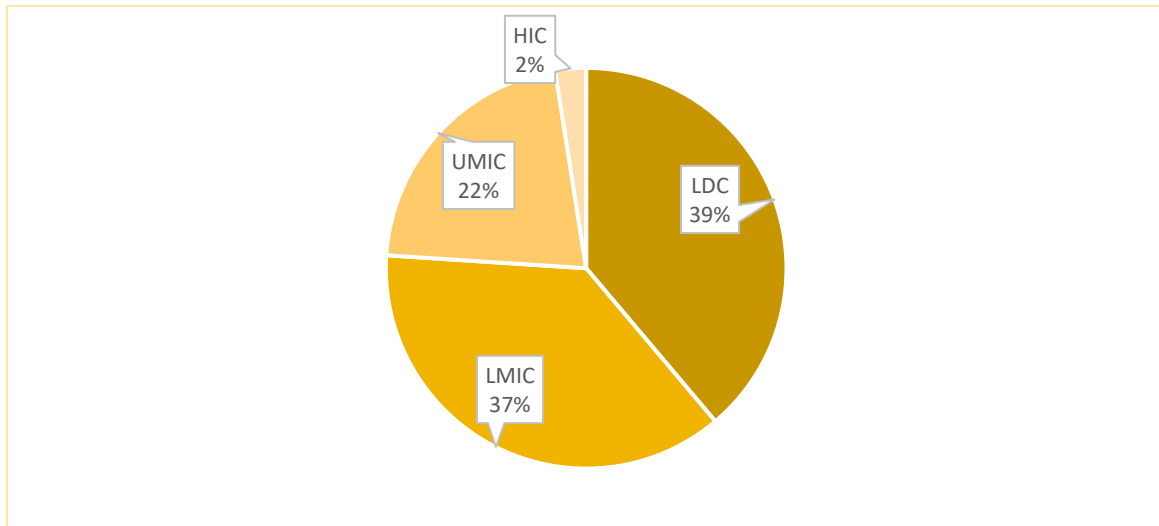


Data source: Statistics provided by GRÓ FTP

<sup>3</sup> Parliamentary Resolution on Iceland's policy for international development cooperation for 2019-2023, and 2024-2028.

<sup>4</sup> The countries involved are Seychelles and St. Kitts and Nevis, which are small island development States and, as such, are targeted by Iceland's policy for international development cooperation, and New Zealand, which paid for the training service provided.

Figure 2: Distribution of fellows by country category: 2018-2023



Data source: Statistics provided by GRÓ FTP

FTP also granted **18 scholarships**, 10 for an M.Sc. and 8 for a Ph.D. (Table 16), with 33% of the grantees being male and 64% female.

The FTP training offer included the planning, preparation, and delivery of **6 regional and one local workshop attended by 122** fisheries officers, officials from fisheries public administration, personnel of the fishing industry, and monitoring, control and surveillance staff **from 20 countries**<sup>5</sup> (Table 17).

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<sup>5</sup> Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Ghana, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Liberia, Montserrat, Sierra Leone, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Tanzania, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands.

Table 1: FTP Fellows by region and country: 2018-2023

Africa	Category <sup>6</sup> (2023)	Fellows	Latin America and the Caribbean, LAC	Category (2023)	Fellows	Asia	Category (2023)	Fellows	South Pacific	Category (2023)	Fellows
Cape Verde	LMIC / SIDS	5	Belize	LMIC / SIDS	1	China	UMIC	3	Fiji	UMIC / SIDS	1
Ghana	LMIC	1	Costa Rica	UMIC	2	Indonesia	LMIC	3	New Zealand	HIC	1
Kenya	LMIC	5	Cuba	UMIC / SIDS	1	Myanmar	LDC	2	Papua New Guinea	LMIC / SIDS	6
Liberia	LDC	11	Dominica	UMIC / SIDS	1	Sri Lanka	LMIC	7	Solomon Islands	LDC/SIDS	1
Malawi	LDC / LLDC	6	El Salvador	LMIC	3	Vietnam	LMIC	2	<b>Total number of fellows</b>		<b>9</b>
Mauritania	LDC	1	Grenada	UMIC / SIDS	1	<b>Total number of fellows</b>		<b>17</b>			
Mozambique	LDC	1	Guyana	UMIC / SIDS	1						
Namibia	UMIC	7	Jamaica	UMIC / SIDS	4						
Nigeria	LMIC	10	Nicaragua	LMIC	2						
Senegal	LDC	1	Panama	UMIC	1						
Seychelles	HIC / SIDS	1	St. Kitts and Nevis	HIC / SIDS	1						
Sierra Leone	LDC	13	St. Lucia	UMIC / SIDS	2						
South Africa	UMIC	2	<b>Total number of fellows</b>		<b>20</b>						
Tanzania	LDC	6									
Uganda	LDC / LLDC	5									
<b>Total number of fellows</b>		<b>75</b>									

Data source: Statistics provided by GRÓ FTP

Table 2: FTP scholarships by country: 2018-2023

COUNTRY	CATEGORY	M.SC.	MALE	FEMALE	PH.D.	MALE	FEMALE
Angola	LDC	1	1				1
Cape Verde	LMIC/SIDS				1		
Bangladesh	LDC	1	1				
Ghana	LMIC	1		1			
Guyana	UMIC/SIDS	1	1				
Indonesia	LMIC				1		1
Jamaica	UMIC/SIDS	2		2			
Liberia	LDC				1	1	
Nigeria	LMIC				1	1	
Namibia	UMIC	1		1			
Suriname	UMIC/SIDS	1		1			
Tanzania	LDC				1		1

6 According to DAC classification of ODA 2022-2023 flows.



COUNTRY	CATEGORY	M.SC.	MALE	FEMALE	PH.D.	MALE	FEMALE
Uganda	LDC/LLDC	1		1	2	1	1
Vietnam	LMIC	1		1	1		1
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>

Data source: Statistics provided by GRÓ FTP

Table 3: Workshops by country: 2018–2023

YEAR	HELD ON	WORKSHOP	ATTENDANTS	MALE	FEMALE
2018	Liberia*	Analysis of Vessel Monitoring System Data II	16	15	1
2018	Sierra Leon*	Analysis of Vessel Monitoring System Data I	24	18	6
2018	Sierra Leone*	Analysis of Vessel Monitoring System Data II	7	7	0
2018	Trinidad and Tobago*	Fisheries Value Chain Management Workshop	29	17	12
2019	Tanzania**	Fish quality and training in sensory evaluation of fish freshness	17	13	4
2019	Sierra Leone*	Improved Fish Smoking	9	2	7
2023	Barbados*	Fisheries Assessment and Data Modelling	20	10	10
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>122</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>40</b>

\* Regional

\*\* Local.

Data source: Statistics provided by GRÓ FTP

### 2.1.2. ALIGNMENT OF THE PROGRAMME WITH THE PARTNER COUNTRIES' AND TARGET GROUPS' NEEDS AND PRIORITIES, POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

Marine fishery resources have been declining as the percentage of marine fish stocks fished within biologically sustainable levels has decreased from 90.0% in 1974 to 66.9% in 2015 and 62.3% in 2021<sup>7</sup>.

This situation has prompted countries to address the sustainability of fisheries resources. Various FTP partner nations, including Liberia, Malawi, Namibia, Papua New Guinea, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, and the Caribbean countries, have enacted fisheries policies with goals related to sustainably managing fisheries, promoting economic viability, and ensuring long-term prosperity. These policies generally aim to contribute to food and nutrition security, economic growth, and the overall development of the fisheries sector. Additionally, countries focus on enhancing capacities for sustainable management and development of fisheries and aquaculture while conserving the environment. **Training and capacity building are essential** to bring all these policy goals to reality.

Liberia, a country that has received substantial support from FTP, has enacted a fisheries policy with an overall goal of "sustainably managed and economically viable fisheries that generate prosperity for the present and generations yet unborn"<sup>8</sup>. Malawi's fisheries policy sets as a goal "to promote sustainable fisheries resource utilisation and aquaculture development in order to contribute to food and nutrition security and economic growth of the country", for which it requires the enhancement of capacities to sustainably manage and develop fisheries and aquaculture in Malawi<sup>9</sup>. The overall objective of Namibia's

<sup>7</sup> FAO (2024). The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2024. Blue Transformation in action. Rome.

<sup>8</sup> Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Liberia (2014). Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy and Strategy.

<sup>9</sup> Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development of Malawi (2016) National Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy.

Marine Resource Policy is to ensure responsible marine fisheries used sustainably and to ensure their contribution to the country's economy and development objectives. Papua New Guinea, in its fisheries strategic plan 2021-2030, establishes a strategic action of maintaining long term sustainable fisheries and marine resources by encouraging and strengthening fisheries management systems and processes<sup>10</sup>. Sierra Leone, another country with great support from FTP, in its fisheries management plan calls for the creation of a profitable fisheries sector that contributes to socio-economic development through the sustainable management and utilization of fisheries resources. For Sri Lanka, the objectives of fisheries policy focus on the sustainable management of resources and the improvement of the socio-economic conditions of the fisher community. Tanzania's fisheries policy sets as its overall objective the development of a robust, competitive and efficient fisheries sector that contributes to food security and nutrition, growth of the national economy and improvement of the wellbeing of fisheries stakeholders while conserving the environment. Through regional cooperative efforts, such as the Caribbean Community Common Fisheries Policy (CCCFP), countries also emphasize the conservation, management, and sustainable utilization of fisheries resources and related ecosystems.

As the sample of key FTP partner countries reveals, the **6-months postgraduate training programme, the scholarship programme and the in-country or regional short courses/workshops** build individual and institutional capacities that contribute to the fulfilment of **policy objectives and strategies of the partner countries** in terms of sustainably managing fisheries resources for the benefit of their economies, their fishers and fishing communities, and improving the prospects of achieving widespread food security and a healthy environment.

Most **fellows and scholarship recipients come from the Ministries or Government Agencies** in charge of implementing fisheries policies, strategies and projects. Therefore, they have the potential to apply their acquired knowledge in fisheries policy and management, stock assessment, quality management of fish handling and processing, and sustainable aquaculture in their home countries. Approximately **a third of trainees and scholarship recipients also work at academic institutions and research institutions** where they can increase collective knowledge and local capabilities in fisheries management in the promotion of achieving the SDGs.

To ensure relevance of the programme to the needs and policy objectives of partner countries, **the selection process of candidates follows a three-step process**. First, partner countries are selected based on meeting the following requirements: (1) capacity building needs that fall within FTP's offer are identified; (2) the country qualifies for ODA; (3) the country is stable; and (4) the partner institutions in those countries are willing to use and apply the capacities developed through the training programmes. Next, partner institutions within selected countries must have a mandate in the fisheries sector; these can be government agencies, academic institutions, research institutions, or companies and associations related to the fishing industry. Training and research needs are identified at this stage with the partner institution, and the institution nominates candidates for the 6-month training programme whose potential aligns to those needs. The third part of the selection process analyses the potential of candidates to apply and disseminate their knowledge upon return to their home institutions after training. These elements of **the selection process enhance the relevance of FTP interventions in addressing the fisheries issues that recipient countries face**.

The **workshops and short courses** offered by FTP also **add to the relevance** of the programme by **training local and regional staff** from stakeholders on pressing issues related to fisheries.

### **2.1.3. ALIGNMENT OF THE PROGRAMME WITH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY FRAMEWORKS, GOALS AND STRATEGIES**

GRÓ FTP's should assist partner countries in achieving their own fisheries development goals in a sustainable manner. In that regard, the programme is in line with the **Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries** (CCRF), which sets out principles and international standards for responsible practices for the

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<sup>10</sup> National Fisheries Authority (2021). Papua New Guinea Fisheries Strategic Plan 2021-2030.

conservation, management, and development of all fisheries. The CCRF aims to promote the contribution of fisheries to food security and food quality, the protection of living aquatic resources and their environments, and research on fisheries and their associated ecosystems. The capacities built through the programme are **consistent with these achieving principles and goals**.

The programme's interventions are also aligned with the **Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries**, which complement the CCRF and prioritize the contribution of small-scale fisheries to global food security and nutrition. These guidelines aim to realize the right to adequate food and gender equality through development strategies aimed at small-scale fisheries.

The programme also aligns with the **Agreement on Port State Measures**. For its implementation, the United Nations (UN) Food and Agriculture Organization launched capacity development efforts to assist partner countries in combating illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

The programme's support of the **sustainable management of marine fisheries** also directly contributes to the **conservation of the oceans**. This is key for **climate change mitigation**, as oceans absorb about 30% of CO<sup>2</sup> emissions produced by humans<sup>11</sup>. Progress towards sustainable fisheries is in line with the **Paris Agreement**.

Through the programme training offering, capacities are built for the formulation and implementation of fisheries policies. In that regard, the **World Trade Organization Agreement on Fisheries Policies** can be mainstreamed, where appropriate, to prohibit harmful fisheries subsidies that have the effect of depleting fish stocks.

All the above fits in the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**, where **FTP directly contributes to progress towards SDG 14 Life Below Water** and indirectly towards **SDG 1 No poverty, SDG 2 Zero Hunger, SDG 3 Good Health and Well-being, SDG 5 Gender Equality, SDG 6 Clean Water and Sanitation, SDG 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth, SDG 12 Responsible Consumption and Production, SDG 13 Climate Action, SDG 15 Life on Land, and SDG 17 Partnerships**. In these ways FTP's training interventions **are relevant to the international community's policy frameworks, goals, and strategies and apt to fulfil them in the fisheries sector**.

#### 2.1.4. QUALITY OF THE FTP DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT APPROACH

The programme seeks to enhance the contribution of Iceland to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for SDGs. To do this, FTP strengthens institutional capacities in partner countries by providing **excellence in training, education, and research opportunities to young/mid-career professionals** from partner institutions in partner countries, **facilitating the professional growth** of fisheries professionals, **sharing knowledge**, and enabling knowledge exchange in a way that enables development change in the fisheries sector towards the sustainable use of living aquatic resources.

The FTP utilises a coherent mix of capacity development interventions to carry out these tasks, the core of which being the **6-month postgraduate fellowship training program**. The 6-month fellowship takes place in Iceland, and fellowship recipients can specialize in Fisheries Policy and Management, Stock Assessment, Aquatic Resources Assessment and Monitoring, Quality Management of Fish Handling and Processing, or Sustainable Aquaculture depending on the needs of their home institutions and countries. These lines of specialization are of **Iceland's particular expertise** and are subsequently offered to cause needed developmental change in the fisheries sector of the partner countries.

Another training measure from FTP is the **scholarship programme** which financially supports qualifying fellows who have completed the 6-month training programme and have been accepted at an Icelandic university to pursue an MSc or PhD graduate degree. This component of the programme further augments the capacities of the partner institutions with qualified professionals, creates opportunities for research and the creation of knowledge outputs, and allows grant recipients to further disseminate knowledge on fisheries by conducting trainings in their home countries. FTP expects and encourages

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<sup>11</sup> National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. U.S. Department of Commerce.

scholars to study and research topics of particular concern to their host organization and country to develop skills specialised to the needs of their homelands.

A third component of the programme is the **short courses or workshops** that are offered within partner countries or regions. These events are tailored to local contexts and pertinent issues on a country or region's fisheries and are directed to professionals in fisheries offices and private companies in the fishing industry and fishers' organizations. The knowledge gained through these training events is expected to be readily applicable to address pressing issues in the fisheries sector and in management.

Knowledge exchange through **attendance at research conferences** is another element of the programme's capacity building measures. The programme supports alumni whose research has been accepted for presentation at these conference events through payment of conference fees, travel, and accommodation to **facilitate opportunities for knowledge dissemination**.

Complementing the above training components of capacity building, the programme provides **advisory services and knowledge sharing** by hosting delegations from partner countries to learn about Icelandic fisheries and the steps that Iceland took to turn fisheries into an opportunity for its economic development.

In all, **the design of the programme is appropriate** as it holds a vertical logic that is expected to confer effectiveness to the programme. It is also the evaluative opinion that the **programme is managed appropriately** for its implementation and the results sought.

It should be mentioned, however, that while the programme has an implicit design encompassed in its training strategies throughout its website, such design is not documented in a way that would give stakeholders a clear understanding of the programme.

## 2.2. PROMOTION OF SYNERGIES BETWEEN GRÓ FTP AND OTHER LOCAL DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS (COHERENCE)

FTP complements a wider array of development efforts by Iceland, partner countries, and other donors to advance capacity development to address the sustainability of the fisheries sector in the target countries and regions. Hence, **the programme shows coherence** in the context of other efforts and initiatives to address the needs of partner countries in achieving their fisheries policy goals **without overlapping or counteracting effects**.

### 2.2.1. COHERENCE AND SYNERGIES BETWEEN THE WORK OF THE PROGRAMME AND ACROSS DIFFERENT DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS BY ICELAND IN PARTNER COUNTRIES OR REGIONS

Iceland has an **extensive bilateral cooperation agenda on sustainable fisheries**. These efforts span several regions and encompass various projects, each designed to foster sustainable development, improve health and livelihoods, and enhance the overall fisheries management infrastructure.

In **Liberia, Uganda, and Sierra Leone**, Iceland supports projects that focus on improving fish handling, processing, and marketing infrastructure. These initiatives often include the construction of smoke oven shelters, provision of technical assistance, and enhancement of water and sanitation facilities in fishing communities. The overarching goal is to improve the quality and safety of fish products while promoting healthier working environments and reducing environmental impacts. In Sierra Leone, GRP-FTP has already offered a workshop in Improved Fish Smoking, in tandem with Icelandic bilateral cooperation.

In **Mozambique**, Iceland's efforts are directed towards research, monitoring, and development of local fishing grounds. Similarly, in **Lake Victoria**, Iceland is developing a comprehensive fisheries management plan intended to ensure sustainable fishing practices, economic benefits, and environmental protection.

Through partnerships with the World Bank and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, in **Vietnam**, Iceland provides technical assistance tailored to the needs of local fisheries development programs. The **Caribbean** sees Iceland supporting the implementation of the Fisheries Manager information system in several islands, aiming to enhance data collection and management for more effective fisheries oversight.

Through the **Island Growth Initiative**, Iceland extends its cooperation with **SIDS**, emphasizing sustainable fishing practices and energy solutions. **Training of senior fisheries ministry officials is a key component of this initiative.** Some of the short courses in the Caribbean have been funded by this Initiative.

Multilaterally, Iceland contributes to the **World Bank's West African Regional Fisheries Program** by offering expert advice and supporting the improvement of fish smoking facilities. Additionally, Iceland participates in the **PROBLUE Fund** to bolster global efforts towards healthy and productive oceans, aligning with SDG 14. Contributions are also made to funds under the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, focusing on offshore issues in partner countries.

While these development cooperation efforts are not the result of a coordinated strategy, synergies are inferred from the nature of the interventions in the partner countries and regions. The programme, thus, exhibits **coherence** across development cooperation actions by Iceland in partner countries or regions.

### **2.2.2. COHERENCE AND SYNERGIES BETWEEN THE WORK OF FTP AND OTHER DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS BY THE KEY PARTNERSHIP ORGANIZATIONS OR BY OTHER DONORS IN PARTNER COUNTRIES OR REGIONS**

Although not the result of a coordination effort, **there is a host of development initiatives in the countries where FTP focuses its efforts.** In **Liberia**, for instance, the International Development Association funds the Liberia Sustainable Management of Fisheries Project, which aims to enhance conditions for fishers by promoting value addition and supporting aquaculture development as well as **strengthening fisheries sector management and governance.** The European Union (EU), through the Communities for Fisheries project, collaborates with the government to engage local fishing communities in developing sustainable and fair management plans. These initiatives require local capacities, which GRP-FTP contributes to building.

In **Uganda**, the Directorate of Fisheries Resources (DFR) carries out the Parish Development Model, which emphasises **sustainable fishing practices**, fish farming techniques, and **resource management.** The implementation of this initiative requires the concurrence of various stakeholders to achieve the SDGs in the fisheries sector. FTP contributes by enhancing capacities, at both the individual and institutional level, to make this possible.

In **Nigeria**, the Aquaculture Development Project, funded by the Danish Government through the Danida Market Development Partnership, is a four-year initiative<sup>12</sup> whose goal is to establish a **sustainable aquaculture value chain** for smallholder fish farmers, seeking to improve output while minimizing pollution along the aquaculture value chain. FTP is in coherence with this initiative as it contributes to capacity development through its training in sustainable aquaculture.

In **Malawi**, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funds the Restoring Fisheries for Sustainable Livelihoods in Lake Malawi (REFRESH) project, which aims to **enhance capture fisheries management** in lakeshore districts; and the Sustainable Fisheries, Aquaculture Development, and Watershed Management Project, funded by the African Development Fund, aims to **diversify from capture fisheries to aquaculture** with the goals of enhancing aquaculture productivity and **reducing post-harvest losses.** Also, in **Cape Verde**, the Coastal Fisheries Initiative, a FAO-led project, aims to make Cape Verde's coastal fisheries more sustainable by **improving fisheries governance and management** and introducing best practices in post-harvest fish processing. The capacities developed by FTP through its training in sustainable aquaculture and quality management of fish handling and processing is needed for the implementation of these initiatives.

In **Tanzania**, the Heshimu Bahari ("Respect the Oceans") project, funded by the USAID, aims at enabling sustainable co-management and biodiversity **conservation of marine resources** through active involvement of local communities in addressing overfishing, gender-equity approaches to development,

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<sup>12</sup> From 2021 to 2025.

and climate change mitigation. While not the result of a coordinated effort, the focus of FTP on sustainable management of fisheries coherent with the efforts of this project.

In the **Caribbean region, there are synergies with interventions that are funded by other donors.** The Programme for Strengthening Fisheries Management in African, Caribbean, and Pacific Countries, funded by the EU, aims to contribute to the sustainable and equitable management of fisheries by improving institutional capacity for fisheries and aquatic resources management. Adding to these synergies, the Japan International Cooperation Agency implements several projects in the Caribbean through the CRFM, one of which is COASTFISH, which, among other things, supports data collection and monitoring, community-based resource management, and policy development and implementation, for which capacities developed by FTP in the region are useful. Also, CRFM member States receive support from the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission for capacity building for the sustainable use of fisheries resources, as well as from the University of Belize and the University of the West Indies. While GRÓ FTP does not participate with CRFM in the coordination of capacity development efforts, it does monitor the capacity building offer by donors to avoid overlapping and jointly address the region's needs.

Hence, the **programme exhibits coherence** with other development cooperation actions by other organizations or donors in partner countries and regions.

### 2.2.3. DUPLICATION OR OVERLAP OF THE PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES WITH OTHER EFFORTS BY ICELAND OR OTHER DONORS

In the review done for this evaluation, given the capacity building needs in the Caribbean region and the actual assistance received in that regard, **no conclusive evidence was found of duplication or overlapping** of the activities of the programme with other efforts by both Iceland and other donors.

The programme training offer, through its capacity development mix, is clearly focused on building or enhancing the individual and institutional capacities in partner countries to bring sustainable development change in the fisheries sector. In that sense, the development projects that coincide in the partner countries from both the Icelandic development cooperation and other donors, are in synergy with the programme's effort because the trainings contribute directly to the success and sustainability of fisheries because of increased capabilities among managing stakeholders. As for multilateral development cooperation, Iceland assists multilateral organizations in reaching their objectives in their targeted countries/regions, with no apparent risk of interference with the programme's interventions.

### 2.3. PROGRESS TOWARDS RESULTS (EFFECTIVENESS)

It is the evaluative opinion that **the programme is effective in achieving its intended results** as evidenced by its outputs of graduated fellows, post-graduate scholars, and local officials trained in fisheries issues, in addition to alumni continually empowered to bring change in fisheries development matters in partner countries. The effectiveness is due to the fellow selection process, the institutional nature of selected partner organisations, the tailoring of training and research conducted to institutional and country needs, the strategic focus of short courses, and the programme's flexibility.

#### 2.3.1. EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROGRAMME OVERALL IN REGARD TO THE DELIVERY AND THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE INTENDED RESULTS

During the period 2018-2023, the Programme has delivered outputs that **conform to the purpose of contributing to the enhancement of individual and institutional capacities** in order to promote and implement the changes needed for the achievement of targeted SDG 14, resulting in the sustainable development and use of fisheries resources in partner countries.

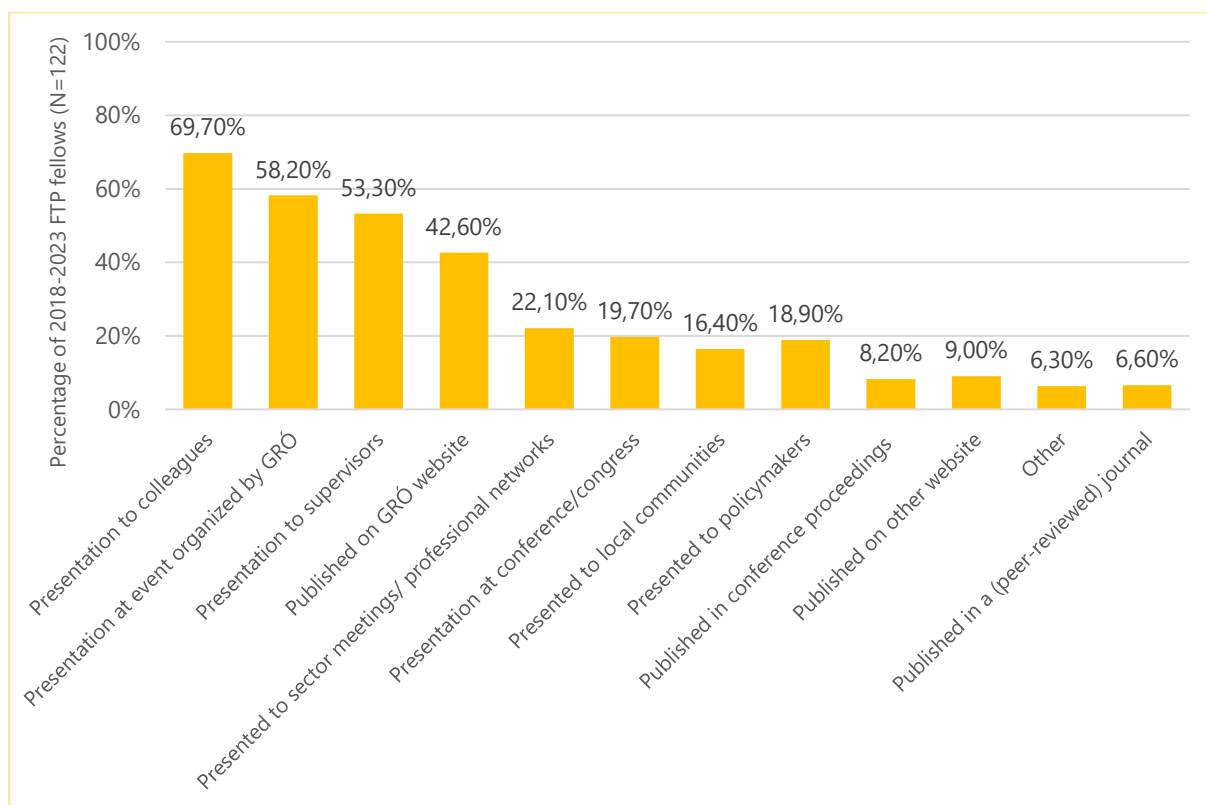
Regarding the **Increased capability of individuals and expertise of GRÓ partner organisations (Output 1)**, according to the evaluation team's questionnaire survey of GRÓ alumni, **FTP fellows who graduated** from the 6-month postgraduate training programme between 2018 and 2023 indicated it substantially or largely **improved their technical** (88%), **analytical** (87%), and **research skills** (88%). These high percentages are an indication that fellows are more qualified to perform the activities in their professional fields, which conveys effectiveness to the programme.

In addition, of the cohorts of fellows that graduated during the period 2018-2023, 80% agree or strongly agree that **management of their home organizations value the training they received**, which adds to the prospects of the programme’s effectiveness as it makes the application of the acquired knowledge more viable, thereby enhancing the expertise of partner organizations.

While the perceived appreciation by the organizations’ management is high, **80%** of the 2018-2023 FTP fellows, reported **having difficulties applying their knowledge** due to various reasons. The main challenge refers to **insufficient resources** to apply knowledge (61%), followed by insufficient support from the organization (37%) and unfavourable power dynamics within the home organization (23%).

Concerning the **Production and dissemination of new knowledge (Output 2)**, graduates have **used their training to share with colleagues and other experts in their respective field of expertise**. As indicated by the evaluation team’s survey, **78% of fellows have shared their knowledge** through presentations to colleagues and supervisors as well as expert networks and at events organized by GRÓ and publications through the GRÓ website (Figure 44). Sharing of knowledge begins with a poster session on graduation day, through which key research results are highlighted, and at events organized by GRÓ. Fellows **sharing their knowledge** is another element that **contributes to the effectiveness** of the programme.

Figure 3 Knowledge dissemination channels used by 2018-2023 FTP alumni



Data source: Evaluation team’s own alumni survey, multiple-choice question on dissemination channels by 2018-2023 FTP cohort.

The programme has a section on its website where fellows’ **research projects are published**, including **some university theses**. For the research papers by fellows from the 6-month training programme, the process involves editing the final draft with the assistance of FTP staff. Once the editing is complete, the papers are posted on the fellow’s profile page and in the section dedicated to publications under the Media section of FTP’s website. Regarding university theses, the publication section of FTP shares the link to Skemman, a digital repository for some Icelandic universities, including those that partner with FTP.

As for **professional empowerment through networking and community-building (Output 3)**, notwithstanding its importance, **only 36% of all FTP fellows have participated** in some form of networking (formal or informal) since their graduation. Among the 2018-2023 cohort, the share is even

lower with only 27% of the FTP having engaged in formal or informal networking since their graduation. The main reason for this low rate of networking is the **lack of awareness** of networking opportunities for 55% of FTP respondents who did not engage, and **lack of resources** for 43% of FTP respondents who did not engage. Of the 2018-2023 FTP fellows participating in formal networking events, 57% have been in an event organized by GRÓ FTP, 86% in GRÓ FTP funded participation in conferences, and 14% in FTP short courses or workshops. The main perceived benefit of networking among FTP fellows who were active is a boost in motivation to solve problems related to the technical field (75%), to find technical solutions for problems (73%) and to connect with other fellows for personal matters such as friendships (71%).

Another important activity by FTP consists of **sponsoring alumni to participate as presenters in international conferences** whose proposals have been accepted for presentation. Conference participation is a way to share knowledge by former fellows but **also to network with professionals and stakeholders in the fisheries field**, both of which contribute to the sustainability of the Programme results through increased capacities for fellows and further dissemination of knowledge products. During the period 2018-2023, **66 former fellows** (65% male and 35% female) were **supported to attend conferences**.

Another measure the FTP employs is the **engagement of former fellows in the short courses and workshops**, both as lecturers and organizers. This measure contributes to keeping alumni engaged in their learning as well as in the dissemination of knowledge, in addition to raising their profile in their home country as their visibility is enhanced through these events. For the period 2018-2013, alumni participated as organisers in 27% of the events.

For the period 2018-2023, **GRÓ fellows, trainees and their respective organisations promote and implement changes needed to achieve SDGs relevant to their field of work** thanks to the positive assessment, by management in partner organisations, of the training received by fellows. Of those responding to the team's questionnaire survey of GRÓ alumni, 80% indicated that management regards their training as valuable for the organisation. That has made it possible for 87% of the graduates who responded to the survey to use the training to advance their contribution in their field or sector of work.

In addition, 80% of graduates in those cohorts (2018-2023) have used their training to share with colleagues, supervisors and other experts in their respective field of expertise and 72% have substantially or extremely advanced professionally, either through promotion, salary increase, more responsibility or a scholarship for further studies.

All the above is **evidence of the programme's effectiveness** in achieving the outcome sought through the outputs delivered.

Table 18 shows the delivery of the programme's training mix that resulted in the above-mentioned outputs.

*Table 4: Principal deliveries by FTP by interventions: 2018-2023*

POSTGRADUATE FELLOWSHIP TRAINING PROGRAMME
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>121 fellows graduated from 36 countries</b>, 62 male (50.4%), 61 female (49.6%), 26% from LDCs, 31% from LMICs, 34% from UMICs, and 9% from HICs; of those countries, 11 were SIDS. Geographically, 61% of fellows came from Africa, 17% from Latin-America, 15% from Asia, and 7% from the South Pacific.</li> <li>• Fellows specialised in <b>Fisheries Policy and Management</b> (37%), <b>Quality Management of Fish Handling and Processing</b> (23%), <b>Sustainable Aquaculture</b> (15%), <b>Aquatic Resources Assessment and Monitoring</b> (13%), <b>Stock Assessment and Gear Analysis</b> (7%), and <b>Stock Assessment and Fishing Technology</b> (4%).</li> <li>• The programme's quality and coherences is rated highly, as 72% of the 2018-2023 FTP fellows rated the programme's quality as high (5 out of 5 on the scale) and 76% rated the programme as very coherent (5 out of 5).</li> </ul>



POSTGRADUATE FELLOWSHIP TRAINING PROGRAMME	
Scholarship programme	
<b>M.Sc.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>5 fellows</b> (3 male and 2 female) have been <b>awarded a scholarship for master's degree</b> studies at the University of Iceland.</li> <li>• 38.5% of grantees came from LDCs; 38.5% from LMICs, and 50% from UMICs.</li> <li>• 9 grantees graduated, and one is still completing coursework.</li> <li>• 6 graduates specialised in Environmental and Natural Resources, and 3 in Food Science.</li> <li>• 9 theses have been published.</li> </ul>
<b>Ph.D.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>8 scholars</b> (2 male and 6 female) were <b>granted a scholarship to pursue a Ph.D.</b> at the University of Iceland in Food Science (4), Environmental and Natural Resources (3), Economics (1).</li> <li>• 3 grantees graduated.</li> <li>• 37.5% of scholars are from LDCs and 62.5% from LMICs.</li> <li>• 3 grantees have graduated in Economics (1) and Food science (2).</li> </ul>
Short courses/Workshops (Regional/In-country)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>6 short training courses</b> were delivered in <b>7 events</b> (6 regional, 1 local) in 5 partner countries.</li> <li>• The <b>local course</b> was delivered in <b>Tanzania</b> titled "Fish Quality and Training in Sensory Evaluation of Fish Freshness"</li> <li>• The regional courses were delivered in <b>Barbados</b> (Fisheries Assessment and Data Modelling), <b>Liberia</b> (Analysis of Vessel Monitoring System Data II), <b>Sierra Leone</b> (Analysis of Vessel Monitoring System Data I and Analysis of Vessel Monitoring System Data II), and <b>Trinidad and Tobago</b> (Fisheries Value Chain Management Workshop)</li> <li>• <b>122 attendees</b> (67% male and 33% female) from 20 countries benefited from the short courses.</li> <li>• The subjects of the short courses are tailored to the needs of the partner countries as they have focused on the analysis of Vessel Monitoring Systems, fisheries assessment and data modelling, fisheries value chain management, and postharvest handling of fish.</li> <li>• The short courses are rated as useful by participants as their feedback indicated 95% considered using what they learned and 85% considered their competences had increased</li> <li>• Short courses contribute to the effectiveness of the programme as these courses address pressing issues in partner countries useful to participants.</li> </ul>	
Conferences and workshops	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FTP supported 17 former fellows (76% male and 24% female) to attend <b>the International Institute of Fisheries Economics and Trade conference</b> in 2018.</li> <li>• 2 former FTP fellows attended a symposium from the Organización del Sector Pesquero y Acuícola del Istmo Centroamericano (OSPESCA) and the Government of Nicaragua to discuss fisheries policy and management mechanisms in Central America and the Dominican Republic in 2019. The symposium was attended by 59 people from OSPESCA member states and 3 former FTP fellows.</li> <li>• The programme supported <b>18 fellows</b> (67% male and 33% female) to attend <b>the international symposium Great Lakes of the World GLOW 9 - Emerging Frontiers for Africa Great Lakes</b>, held in Kenya in 2019.</li> <li>• <b>11 former fellows</b> (45% male and 55% female) attended the <b>International Institute of Fisheries Economics and Trade (IIFET)</b> conference in 2022 with support from the programme.</li> <li>• Attendance by <b>18 fellows</b> (61% male, 39% female) to <b>the Aquatic Resources and Blue Economy Conference (ARBEC)</b> was made possible through support by GRÓ FTP.</li> <li>• In all, <b>66 former fellows</b> (65% male and 35% female) were <b>supported to attend conferences</b> during the period 2018-2023, enabling them to enhance their empowerment by disseminating their knowledge, learning from others, and networking.</li> </ul>	

## POSTGRADUATE FELLOWSHIP TRAINING PROGRAMME

### Innovative online content creation

- The programme developed a series of **five videos** that are massively disseminated through YouTube and focus on the relationship of **fisheries and the SDGs**.
- The videos, although not designed in-depth online learning, can expose a general audience to topics such as the economic, environmental, and social importance of fisheries.
- The video titles are:
  - **Introduction to the series**: An introduction to SDGs related to fisheries and the work of FTP.
  - **"Preserving the value of fish"**: addressing post-harvest losses related to SDG Target 14.7.
  - **"Small projects for big impacts in fisheries"**: addressing how incremental changes can have a substantial effect on the sustainable management of fisheries. It relates to SDG Target 14.4.
  - **"Data for sustainable fisheries management"**: outlining the importance of stock assessment and relates to SDG Target 14.4.
  - **"Defining and defending small-scale fisheries"**: presenting the trend in fisheries in the context of small-scale fisheries SDG 14.b.
- The videos have amassed **2,897 views** worldwide.

### Research and knowledge creation

- **121 fellows contributed to knowledge creation** through their research at the FTP postgraduate training program; **58% of that work is published** on the GRÓ FTP website.
- 9 scholarship recipients graduated with a master's degree from the University of Iceland and published their theses in environmental and natural resources, and food science.
- 3 scholars obtained their Ph.D. from the University of Iceland, contributing to knowledge generation through academic research.

### Advisory services and knowledge sharing

- The programme participated in the **FarFish project**, which aims at improving the sustainability of EU fishing outside European waters. FTP led the work package relating to capacity building and dissemination for the project. In 2020, 3 fellows, 2 from Cape Verde and 1 from Senegal, completed their 6-month training through the FarFish project.
- In 2022 the programme hosted a delegation from Indonesia of 15 mid-level fisheries officials from the Coremap-cti group from the Indonesian Ministry of National Development Planning, the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, and from the University of Halu Oleo. The purpose of this study tour was to enhance the capacity, skills, and experience of the participants on the management of sustainable fisheries, its scientific foundation, and policy implications.
- FTP hosted a delegation of **6 high-level-fisheries officials** from Sierra Leone to offer them a comprehensive overview of the Icelandic offer to support the sustainable development of fisheries in that country.
- A group of 15 specialists and policy makers from the **Pacific Island Community Knowledge Exchange**, 5 experts/task team leaders from the **World Bank**, and 2 experts from the **Pacific Islands Forum Fishing Agency** visited Iceland in 2023 to learn about the development of the fisheries management system, stakeholder cooperation, and the supportive environment for investment, innovation, education, and training.

### Capacity development partnerships

- Through the partnership with the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism, **FTP collaborates with the University of the West Indies** in the preparation and delivery of short courses/workshops in the Caribbean region.

Also, the evaluation of the 6-month training programme conducted by the Programme for the 2022 and 2023 cohorts resulted in a 4.57 and 4.72 score, respectively, in a scale from 1 (low) to 5 (high).

The outputs delivered by the programme and the outcomes linked to the target groups that it engaged are evidence of its **effectiveness in advancing towards the results sought** by the programme.

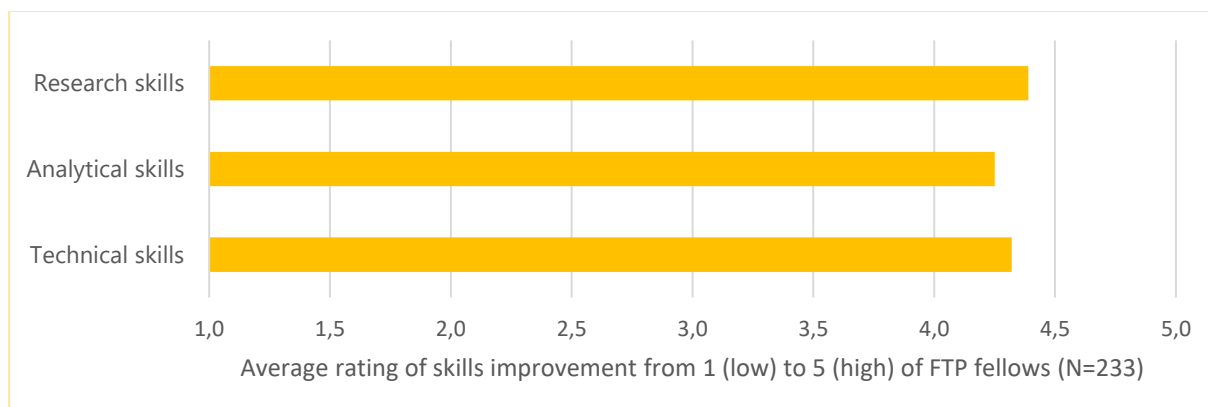
## 2.3.2. EFFECTIVENESS OF THE DIFFERENT PROGRAMME INTERVENTION STRATEGIES AND OF LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS IN REGARD TO THE DELIVERY AND THE ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS

### i. 6-month postgraduate training programme

The programme reached a gender balance in its flagship training programme, which in turn is likely to influence the partner institutions to foster gender equality. In addition, most trainees, through both the postgraduate fellowship training program and the scholarship program, come from partner countries, 39% from LDCs and 37% from LMICs; hence, although slightly below target, the **programme is effective** by reaching these target groups and contributing to enhancing their skills in various aspects of their professional lives.

The effectiveness of the programme through the outputs delivered is corroborated through the answers of former fellows to the evaluation team's questionnaire survey of GRÓ alumni. The survey respondents rated from 1 (low) to 5 (high) how the programme improved their professional skills (Figure 45). Overall, the rating is very positive, with most FTP respondents indicating rating equal to or higher of 4 out of 5 on the scale.

Figure 4: Main professional skills of participants enhanced by the postgraduate fellowship training programme.

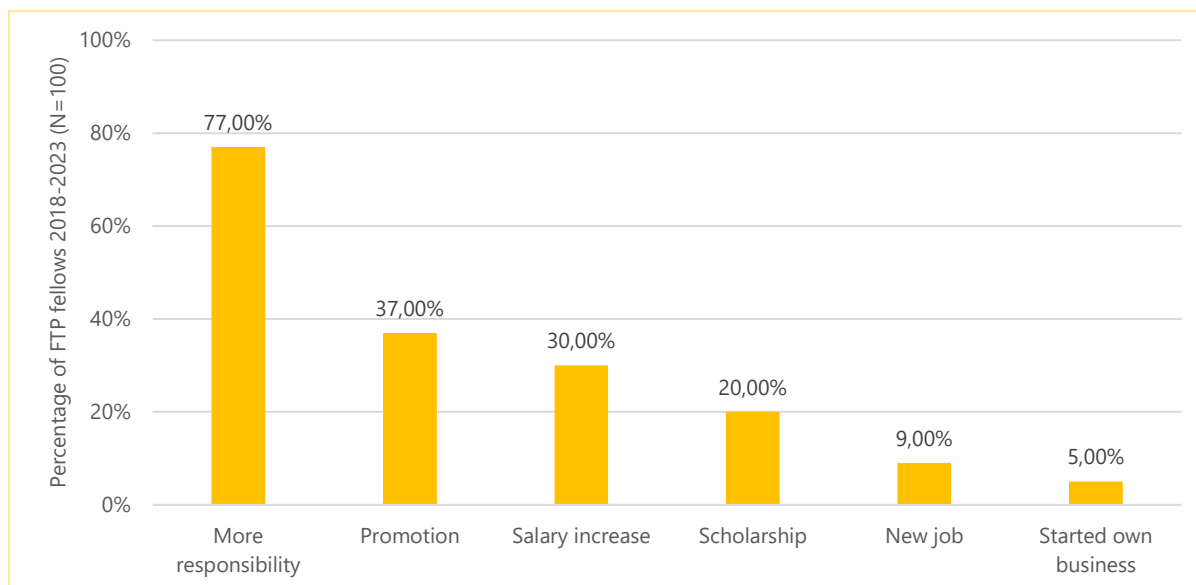


Data source: Evaluation team's own alumni survey, 5-point Likert scale rating of skills improvement by 2018-2023 FTP cohort.

From those who saw their skills substantially or largely improved, **89% were in technical skills, 89% in research skills, and 85% in analytical skills.**

Also at the personal (micro) level, GRÓ alumni who answered the evaluation team's questionnaire survey indicated that the enhanced capital made it possible for them to advance their career thanks to the postgraduate programme. Many FTP fellows were **promoted or given more responsibilities as a result of the programme**, among other effects (Figure 46).

Figure 5: Types of professional career advancement of 2018-2023 FTP fellows resulting from programme participation



Data source: Evaluation team's own alumni survey, multiple-choice question on types of career advancement by 2018-2023 FTP cohort.

During the period 2018-2023, fellows were trained primarily in Fisheries Policy and Management (38%); which corroborates the **proper targeting of the programme** as most partner countries face policy gap challenges in the fisheries sector; hence, the improvements of these capacities is expected to enhance their policy frameworks as a first step to providing context for any action in the fisheries sector. Second to fisheries policy and management, 24% of fellows specialized in Aquatic Resources Assessment and Monitoring<sup>13</sup>. Here, the Programme also shows its proper targeting as only 48% of the total global catch has sufficient data to determine its status. This situation is presumably worse in partner developing countries, where the fellows come from. Hence, the availability of data is a necessary condition, first to inform policy and, second, to take actions in the fisheries sector for a sustainable use of this resource. Third in line of countries' needs is addressing fish postharvest losses in the value chain. It is estimated that 35% of the total harvest from world fisheries is lost and it is expected to be higher in developing countries, as they lack the infrastructure and technologies for the adequate handling and processing of fish. Hence, the Programme is on target in selecting a substantial number of fellows to specialise in Quality Management of Fish Handling and Processing. As the fish catch declines, aquaculture is a means to make up for that decline and meet the growing demand for seafood. In this regard, 15% of fellows specialised in Sustainable Aquaculture, to prepare to meet their country's needs for knowledge in fish farming.

Therefore, **the mix of fellow's specialisation is aligned with pressing issues in the fisheries sector in the partner countries** where they come from, and they have been empowered to bring change through the application of their acquired knowledge through their work. In fact, **87% of 2018-2023 FTP fellows** answering the evaluation team's questionnaire survey of GRÓ alumni **acknowledge having contributed to their technical field** in several ways, mostly **through training and mentoring others (84%), conducting further research (70%), and the implementation of projects and initiatives (53%)** In addition to the pressing issues that the fellowship programme addresses, **there is also the need to address the value chain of fisheries**, along which there are important food losses, estimated at 35%. These losses put pressure on food security and on the fish stocks, as more fishing is needed to make up for those losses.

<sup>13</sup> For simplicity, fellows who specialised in Stock Assessment, Stock Assessment and Gear Technology, and Stock Assessment and Fishing Technology are grouped into this line of specialisation.

## ii. Scholarship programme

Scholars who have graduated with a Ph.D. degree have done so in the areas of food science (2), and economics (1). As for those scholars who graduated with a M.Sc. degree, they did so in Environmental and Natural Resources (6) and in Food Science (3), which are all **relevant for the advancement of the array of SDGs** to which implementation the Programme aims to contribute, in particular to SDG 14.

The scholarship programme has great potential to bring sustainable impacts in the fisheries sector, as scholars are mostly employed by universities and research institutes, which by nature have the incentive to use and disseminate the Programme's benefits in terms of new knowledge. In this regard, the enhancement of this programme is key to the Programme success. To enhance the effectiveness of the scholarship programme, FTP restricts the number of months to receive support in Iceland to encourage scholars to spend time at home during the study period, which allows them to maintain a close connection with their home institutions while they collect data or write about their research, which in turn improves the relevance of their research in relation to country needs and in line with the GRÓ FTP strategic approach.

## iii. In-country short courses/workshops

The Programme also shows effectiveness when it comes to the outcomes of the short courses/workshops, which were added to the training mix to cater to the needs of a broader audience, such as those who do not qualify for the 6-months training program and yet play an important role in the fisheries sector. The short courses/workshops in vessel monitoring systems, for example, have trained monitoring control and surveillance staff, thereby enhancing capacities that are essential for the sustainability of fisheries resources. Attendants to the short training in fisheries value chain management learned how to unlock the benefits of fisheries for the benefit of a wide spectrum of stakeholders. Participants in the training on fish quality and processing topics learned ways to improve the quality of fish and to reduce food losses after harvest. Attendees to the course on fisheries assessment and data modelling strengthened their skills in stock assessment and fisheries data analysis, which is vital to generate sound data for informed decision making and regulation in fisheries. Based on available data, the short course delivered in 2023, for instance, was rated with a score of 5 and 4 in terms of usefulness by 82% and 18% of attendants, respectively, in a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high).

As for involvement of alumni in short courses, 27% of the events involved alumni participating in the organization of events.

## iv. Conferences

The Programme's efforts to support alumni to attend conferences has **fostered their empowerment** by keeping them updated in the latest developments in the fisheries sector, by allowing them to disseminate their new findings, and to connect with a wider community of the fisheries sector, which may result in opportunities for further projects, research and initiatives; 66 alumni, 35% female and 65% male were able to attend conferences through which they had the opportunity to enhance their professional empowerment.

## v. Innovative online content creation

While not a formal online learning, the series of videos on the importance of fisheries and their connection with the SDGs is a **valuable educational tool for a general audience** as these videos highlight the economic, social, and environmental significance of fisheries.

## vi. Research and knowledge creation

Through research by fellows and scholars, **new knowledge was created and made available through its publication**. From the publications available, 25% of graduating fellows did research on stock assessment and data collection, 18% on food quality, 10% on policy, 10% on sustainable management of fisheries, and another 10% on technical issues on fisheries. This created knowledge along with the skills gained during the training programme are part of the basis for the effects of the Programme in their home countries; **however, 80% of the FTP survey respondents experienced some sort of challenge** for their knowledge application after graduation.

### vii. Advisory services and knowledge sharing

By this strategy, the programme was able to **share Icelandic knowledge in fisheries with 12 countries**<sup>14</sup> through high- and mid-level fisheries officials as well as policy makers and fisheries specialists. This sharing of knowledge allowed participants to have an overview of the concept of fisheries management and how a transformation from one of the poorest nation in Europe to one of the richest has happened through the fisheries development over a relatively short period of time, its scientific foundation and policy implications; as well as an understanding of bioeconomic theory, the Icelandic Individual Transfer Quota, as well as the triple bottom line approach to sustainability.

### 2.3.3 OVERALL FACTORS INFLUENCING THE ACHIEVEMENT OR NON-ACHIEVEMENT OF THE EXPECTED RESULTS

The following **5 factors positively affect the programme's achievement** of its expected results:

#### i. Country selection process

One of the key aspects of the selection process is the selection of partner countries. First, the country must qualify for **ODA**. Second, there is an assessment as to whether the prospective **country lacks the capacities needed** for the sustainable management of its fisheries and if those needs are in line with what the programme can provide, considering that the programme's offer reflects Iceland's expertise. A third consideration of country selection is that the **country has a policy in place for the sustainable development of the fisheries sector**, which ensures that the outputs delivered to the partner country fall within a planning framework and the chance for their use and application is high. It is also required that the **country is stable** for the sake of the sustainability of the programme's effects.

#### ii. Partner institutions

Another element that is critical for the effectiveness of the programme is the selection of partner institutions. FTP's partnerships in partner countries mostly involve the Fisheries Divisions/Institutions in charge of promoting and regulating the fisheries sector. Also, importantly but to a lesser extent, it partners with local universities and research institutes, as well as private companies and associations related to the fishing industry. It is important to mention that the predominance of Fisheries Divisions/Institutions has to do with the fact that specialised research institutions are, for the most part, non-existent in the LDCs and that academic institutions in these countries do not have high standards, in terms of both qualified staff and good quality facilities. Hence, it is customary for Fisheries Divisions/Institutions to play the role of promotion and regulating agencies of fisheries, as well as research institutions. By partnering with these types of institutions, the programme ensures effectiveness in the delivery and results of the programme mix of interventions as the mandate of these institutions is facilitated by the outputs of the programme. In fact, 73% of trainees come from the Fisheries Divisions/Institutions or government Ministries that have the mandate to promote and regulate the fisheries sector in their countries. This **partnership strategy by the Programme adds to its relevance** as the outputs, in principle, are in line with the needs of the partner institutions and, therefore, with the countries themselves. With partner universities and research institutes, where 23% of trainees come from, the prospects for the effectiveness of the programme are also high, as academic and research institutions are centres for the dissemination and creation of knowledge and these partnerships have a multiplier effect. Institutional partnerships are key to the effectiveness of the programme, as they provide institutional context for capacity development needs, and nominate qualified fellows to be trained and generate knowledge to fill those capacity gaps. The partnership agreements with institutions **ensures that trainees return to their home institutions**, which is an important element for the effectiveness of the programme.

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<sup>14</sup> Indonesia, Sierra Leone, and from the Pacific Community (Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu).

The collaborative selection process with partner institutions further adds to the effectiveness of the programme. **Selecting candidates nominated by partner institutions ensures that institutional needs will be served.** From the pool of candidates, the programme selects those who have the academic credentials (a university degree relevant to fisheries), can apply and disseminate their acquired knowledge, and have at least one year of experience in the field with a clearly defined role in the fisheries sector and a clear understanding of the fisheries sector. Also, whenever possible, candidates are interviewed while FTP staff are on site<sup>15</sup>, which allows the programme to address the needs of the partner institution and the qualifications of the candidate, which in turn adds to the prospects for the programme's effectiveness.

### iii. Training research related to institutional/country needs

Another important factor that influences the achievement of the FTP's expected results is the fact that **training and research follows the country/institutional needs.** The programme favours focusing research on country issues for which local data is used, which contributes to ensure the application of knowledge to address fisheries issues in partner countries, thereby enhancing the prospects for the use of the programme's results to bring about development change.

### iv. Strategic focus of short courses

By strategically focusing on short courses in partner countries, fisheries officials, officers, and staff of organizations related to the fisheries sector can learn and apply in the short term the learning and tools provided in these events.

### v. Programme's flexibility

The programme is flexible to adjust to the changing needs in the countries and partner institutions to better accommodate for those changes. Over the years, FTP has sent Icelandic experts to partner countries to better understand the challenges these countries face in issues such as data collection, technical know-how, facilities, and funding, among others. The programme's flexibility makes it possible to improve the design of the specialisation lines, both in terms of content and the time allocated to each topic, based on the information gathered by the experts. In that regard, the lines of specialisation of the fellowship training programme have been updated based on the programme assessment for continuous improvement, to better fit training needs. Within each line of specialisation, content is also continuously updated based on feedback for relevance and applicability. This **flexibility ensures that the programme remains relevant and therefore effective for capacity building and catalysing development change.**

## 2.4. PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT (EFFICIENCY)

FTP is **efficiently managed.** It has **clearly established timelines and procedures** for its implementation, **as well as the flexibility** to introduce corrective measures as needed to accommodate evolving needs of partner institutions and diverse fellow profiles, as evidenced by the practice of continuous improvement in the design and implementation of the training provided. The outputs delivered by the programme are **cost effective** and, thus, the **Program is efficient** in their delivery.

### 2.4.1. PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS, PLANNING, MONITORING AND EVALUATION, OVERSIGHT, STEERING, AND RISK MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS AND THE EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE DELIVERY OF RESULTS

#### i. Programme management, planning and implementation systems

In 2023, there were **4.3 full-time equivalent positions allocated to FTP staff**, three on a full-time basis and two part-time, to manage and implement the FTP. This staff included the programme director, the deputy director, a project manager, an operations manager, and a specialist. Lecturers, supervisors, and

<sup>15</sup> Interviews are conducted online when physical presence is not possible.

head of lines come from the programmes' partner institutions such as the University of Iceland, the University of Akureyri, MATÍS, Hólar University College, and MFRI itself, whose services are paid by MFRI from the contributions made by GRÓ. **MFRI, as the host institution, also provides office space and access to its facilities** for the programme's activities.

Planning begins with the second meeting of **the Studies Committee**, which takes place in October with the purpose of discussing the work plan for the coming year and the status of the programme's activities. At the second meeting held in April/May the Committee **assesses the activities of the past year and plans the projects of the coming year**.

The Studies Committee is tasked with **designing and organizing the 6-month training programme in their four lines of specialty** (Aquatic Resource Assessment and Monitoring, Quality Management of Fish Handling and Processing, Fisheries Policy and Management, and Sustainable Aquaculture). They also design and organize short courses, workshops, meetings, and conferences related to fisheries in partner countries. The Committee assists the programme director in the selection of guest lecturers.

Members of the Committee also participate in defining the eligibility criteria for grants for scholarship recipients for graduate studies at an Icelandic university and selecting candidates considering the budget for the scholarship programme, which is determined by GRÓ's board. The **programme is managed by the core staff of FTP** following the plan set up by the Studies Committee in its second meeting and reviewed in its first meeting of the year. The FTP director also works with the heads of lines, who are part of the Studies Committee, in improving the 6-month training programme based on the results of the evaluation of the three Modules (Introduction, Specialisation, and Research).

**There are clearly defined timelines and processes**, which contribute to ensuring operational efficiency. In the case of the Programme's core training intervention, this normally runs from September to February, with a clearly defined schedule and content for each Module. In 2023, however, following the hiring of the GRÓ house, FTP was able to use the house only for three months, which forced FTP to move the fellowship programme to the period from the second half of November to the first half of May, which made it difficult to hire supervisors from the MFRI for two lines of specialisation (Sustainable Aquaculture and Aquatic Resources Assessment and Monitoring) given the regular busy schedule of experts from February to April. **FTP expects that this training programme goes back soon to its original timeframe**. The short courses are strategically planned, prepared, and delivered based on requirements by the programme's partner organizations in the targeted countries.

## ii. Programme financial management and oversight systems

The **Marine and Freshwater Research Institute serves as the host and service provider** for FTP. **Under a Service Agreement** with the GRÓ Centre, MFRI provides financing for programme implementation based on a biannual programme plan and budget. As a government institute under the Ministry of Food, Agriculture, and Fisheries, **MFRI adheres to its own operating rules**, including internal financial management controls. Additionally, the **FTP undergoes audits as part of the GRÓ Centre's oversight**. It is worth noting that while GRÓ is the commissioning entity, **MFRI directly invoices the MFA for the services provided**. While the service agreement is biannual, **GRÓ contributions are on an annual basis**. Also, GRÓ can cancel the agreement with a six-month notice.

Financially, **the host institution arrangement is practical** for budget purposes for both GRÓ and the MFA. It is also advantageous for MFRI as it adds to the organization's portfolio of services. However, this financial arrangement leaves **FTP without a say in the budget management while still responsible for programme delivery** as the decision-making unit.

## iii. Programme monitoring, reporting, oversight and steering systems



FTP has a **Studies Committee that convenes formally at least twice a year**. The Committee is made up of the four heads of the specialist lines<sup>16</sup>, **the FTP director, who is the chair of the Committee**, and a representative from the Icelandic fishing industry. The heads of lines come from the partner institutions, the University of Akureyri, MATÍS, and the Marine and Freshwater Research Institute. Between meetings, the chairman of the Studies Committee works closely during the year with committee members on individual issues related to the committee's role.

During the year, **the Studies Committee meets** for the first time in April or May, **with the purpose of assessing the activities of the past year and to discuss the projects of the coming year**. The second meeting of the Committee takes place in October, with the purpose of discussing the work plan for the coming year and the status of FTP's activities. The new service agreement contemplates that minutes from the Committee's meeting are submitted to the GRÓ Director by the FTP Director. **The GRÓ Centre holds regular meetings with the GRÓ management team to discuss implementation matters** and upcoming actions. Typically, these meetings occur monthly excluding the summer period. Additionally, FTP attends specific information requests by GRÓ.

**Monitoring and reporting are done using the Result-based Framework recently adopted by GRÓ**, which, in addition to fulfilling the GRÓ Results Framework, serves **as a tool to steer the programme**. Collection of information for monitoring and reporting purposes is performed with various instruments depending on the indicator to report on. **It is planned to take a survey from the partner institutions to monitor the value training has for them** every three years, with the first one taking place in 2024.

To monitor whether graduates have used their training to advance their contribution in their field/sector of work and whether they have advanced professionally, **the programme takes an alumni survey** at irregular intervals to assess training or to gather data on alumni status and employment updates. The programme is planning to standardise the conduction of this survey to once every two years.

**To monitor whether graduates have used their training to share with colleagues and other experts in the respective field of expertise**, a survey is planned to ask graduates one year after graduation whether **they have had the opportunity to disseminate their research**.

Throughout its implementation, **the 6-month training program undergoes monitoring and evaluation**. Fellows evaluate each of the three modules, and their feedback contributes to ongoing module optimisation. Additionally, at the programme's conclusion, focus groups by line of specialisation meet to discuss impressions, lessons learned, and suggestions for changes. Finally, **the FTP staff reviews evaluation results and proposes actions for continuous program enhancement**. The output of this review is a written report outlining key improvements for the next 6-month training program.

The scholarship programme is monitored through admissions documents and progress reports.

**Regarding the in-country or regional short courses/workshops**, the partner organizations conduct a survey of the attendees at the end of the event for the purpose of gathering information on the usefulness of the course, the relevance of the content, and the quality of the materials and lectures. At times, FTP takes the lead in monitoring the delivery of these courses to ensure the success of the event, as well as the evaluation. **A final report is prepared which contains the details of the course, the results of the evaluation, the areas of strength, and the areas that need improvement**.

#### iv. Programme risk management and mitigation systems

**The careful selection process carried out by the programme is the main risk mitigating factor** for the delivery of the programme's outputs. The beneficiary countries and institutions are targeted based on their respective needs, and individuals are targeted based on **qualifications and potential to bring change**. Also, the agreements with partner institutions to relieve fellows and scholars from their

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<sup>16</sup> Fisheries Policy and Management, Aquatic Resources Assessment and Monitoring, Quality Management of Fish Handling and Processing, Sustainable Aquaculture.

responsibilities at home **mitigates the risk of failure by allowing them to concentrate on their learning and research activities.**

Risk management also includes a **continuous monitoring of fellows by FTP staff to ensure they are on a timely path** to the achievement of their self-set goals and to identify and provide the needed support for success. This monitoring involves the participation of supervisors who play an important role, especially in the research phase of the fellowship programme.

In relation to the in-country short courses, the programme relies on the collaboration of local partners for the successful implementation of these courses. However, at times FTP takes the lead in monitoring the delivery of these courses to ensure the success of the event.

**No substantial risks were identified for the period 2018-2023** for the successful implementation of FTP **except for the COVID-19 pandemic.** This global health crisis led to the cancellation of the 6-month training program in Iceland for the 2020-2021 cohort and the delivery of in-country and regional short courses. Despite these challenges, **the programme demonstrated resilience** by using the disruption as an opportunity for reflection and innovation.

#### 2.4.2. THE USE OF PROGRAMME FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES AND THE EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE DELIVERY OF RESULTS (INCLUDING ANALYSIS OF UNIT COSTS AND VALUE FOR MONEY)

According to the available data (Table 19), there are some discrepancies between the MFA/GRÓ contributions and the actual cost of the programme, which are mostly due to unforeseen changes in staff. Also, in 2023, 22 fellows, instead of the 25 planned, graduated from the 6-month training programme. There were some restrictions on spending by the MFRI that contributed to underspending in 2023. In addition, in 2024 budgetary constraints affected GRÓ as a whole, with the GRÓ Centre and GRÓ FTP sharing the biggest budgetary restrictions, which may hinder some of the programme's projects, especially expanding the scholarship programme and the delivery of in-country or regional short courses/workshops.

Table 5: FTP budget 2021-2023, actual annual costs, and MFA contribution

BUDGET LINE	2021	2022	2023
FTP actual costs (ISK)	179,325,444	234,621,220	204,573,878
MFA/GRÓ actual (ISK)	173,400,000	215,738,475	219,781,466
MFA (% of actual)	97%	92%	107%

Data source: Based on financial data provided by the MFRI through FTP.

The FTP 2023 **budget increased 2%** with respect to 2022, **below the 8.8% inflation rate** registered in 2023.

In the 2018-2023 period, the Programme delivered the following outputs:

- **121 fellows** in the 6-months postgraduate training programme in Iceland, all 121 graduating.
- **Five scholars** supported for an **M.Sc. degree.**
- **Eight scholars** supported for a **Ph.D. degree.**
- 121 direct beneficiaries from **20 partner countries**, trained through short courses/workshops.
- **59 representatives** from OSPESCA member States discussing fisheries policy and management mechanisms.
- **66 attendances** by qualifying alumni to international conferences and symposiums.
- **2,897 worldwide viewers** of the video series on fisheries.
- 64 research publications by fellows.
- Nine master theses published by supported scholars.
- Three Ph.D. theses published by supported scholar.
- **Three delegations** from partner countries, with 43 participants in all, learned about the development of the fisheries management system in Iceland.

Regarding resources used by FTP, there has been an initiative to set up a partnership with the Faroe Islands as the territory holds a comparative advantage in aquaculture. The possibility of pooling resources has the potential to create economies of scale with the benefit of lowering the unitary cost of Sustainable Aquaculture fellows.

Financially, the **delivery of training** programmes across the spectrum of FTP is **competitive** (Table 20), and thus **efficient**.

Table 6: Estimated cost per training type, based on 2024 budget

FTP TRAINING AND SCHOLARSHIP	PER FELLOW - ISK	PER FELLOW – EUR	
6-month training programme	5,300,000	35,333	
M.Sc. scholarship for 16 months	6,420,000	42,800	
Ph.D. Scholarship for 24 months	9,470,000	63,133	
SHORT COURSES/WORKSHOPS	PER EVENT - ISK	PER EVENT -EUR	PER GRANTEE – EUR
Ten-day in-country course for 15 <b>local</b> participants	8,050,000	56,666	3,578
Ten-day in-country course for 15 <b>regional</b> participants	11,000,000	73,333	4,889

Data source: Based on data provided by GRÓ FTP.

The International Ocean Institute, at its Centre in Halifax, Canada, offers a five-week training programme on Ocean Governance (Policy, Law, and Management). While this programme differs in content from that offered by FTP, it is worth noting that the fee for the programme is 5,550 EUR per person, which amounts to 28,286 EUR for the length of the fellowship programme at FTP, without covering expenses such as transportation, health care and full meals, among other expenses.

Additionally, benchmarked with universities in Europe and in the United States, **the programme is cost effective** in delivering the fellowship and scholarship programmes. The delivery of short courses/workshops is also cost effective as these are tailored to specific needs and audiences and are meant to be replicated and materials reused by lecturers, which would reduce the unitary cost as these courses are used in other events.

#### 2.4.3. EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PARTNERSHIP WITH UNESCO IN REGARD TO THE PROMOTION OF PROGRAMME RESULTS

As the partnership with the United Nations University was approaching its end, the MFA began searching for a partnership with a new United Nations agency, which resulted in an agreement with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) with the outcome of **the establishment of GRÓ as a C2C under the auspices of UNESCO in January 2020**.

Within UNESCO, **the programme works directly with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC)**, which supports its member states to build scientific and institutional capacities in order to achieve the SDGs of the UN 2030 Agenda.

A C2C is a privileged partner of UNESCO, and it is expected to meaningfully contribute to the implementation of the organisation's priorities through international and regional cooperation, research, knowledge production, policy advice, and capacity enhancement, all of which coincides with the FTP's activities and outputs.

In terms of promoting the programme results, the website of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission at UNESCO makes mention of GRÓ as one of the three C2Cs IOC works with. Within the context of GRÓ, the FTP's training offer is mentioned in general terms. It also mentions FTP's objectives and its intention of contributing to the achievement of the SDGs by promoting the science based sustainable use and management of living aquatic resources in less developed countries, as well as the

number of fellows trained since the inception of the Programme and the number of partner countries. The IOC website provides the link to GRÓ and to GRÓ FTP. There is no reporting on the contributions GRÓ FTP has made to UNESCO's priorities or to IOC's strategy, which could be a vehicle for promoting the programme's results. It is worth noting that **alumni and even partner institutions in the recipient countries rarely associate GRÓ FTP with UNESCO.**

The partnership with UNESCO **does not seem to be effective** in terms of promoting FTP results there is no explicit mention of FTP achievements in terms of knowledge creation, the regions, countries and areas of development with which the programme works or events or success stories.

## 2.5. PROSPECTS FOR THE MAINTENANCE/CONTINUATION OF THE PROGRAMME BENEFITS (SUSTAINABILITY)

The **prospects for the sustainability** of the programme's benefits **are good**. These prospects stem from the increased human capital invested in alumni, who largely continue to work in the field of fisheries where they make contributions because of their improved technical, analytical, and research skills. The **main hindering factor** for the sustainability of the benefits of the programme arises from the **challenges faced by alumni at the home institutions** where they face lack of support. **Networking** is an element that has the potential to counteract such lack of support, but only about one third of alumni engage in networking activities.

### 2.5.1. PROSPECTS FOR THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PROGRAMME RESULTS AND BENEFITS

Another element that affects the sustainability of the programme's effects is **fellows continuing to be engaged in the field of fisheries**, preferably at their home institutions. In that regard, the evaluation team's questionnaire survey of GRÓ alumni reveals that **85% of the FTP fellows still work in areas of government and public administrations**, and **85% are still engaged in academic or research institutes**. Those engaged in academic and research activities at education and research institutions are more likely to apply and disseminate their knowledge whether through teaching or research. Insights from key informants suggest the most challenges in staff retention are found in government and the public administration. Overall, 92% of all FTP fellows are residing in their home region in 2024. It is worth noting that fellows from critical regions (Africa, Asia, and LAC) have a high percentage of home retention, which is indicative of the sustainability of the programme's results and benefits. Additionally, **86% of the FTP fellows still work in the same technical field within the fisheries sector or have worked in it until retirement**, which is an optimistic indicator of the sustainability of the programme.

The **sustainability** of the programme's benefits **is complemented by the series of short courses/workshops** that are held both regionally and locally. These training events provide the opportunity to engage country government officers and officials of the fisheries sector, as well as staff from other stakeholders of the fishing industry. Government officials and officers receive the opportunity to learn about pressing issues in the fisheries sector and apply that knowledge in the short term in the context of their work responsibilities, but they also have the opportunity to put in context what fellows from their organizations have learned through the training programs, which increases the potential for the application of learnings.

### 2.5.2. PROCESSES, MEASURES AND ACTIVITIES TO ENSURE THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PROGRAMME RESULTS AND BENEFITS

FTP provides **advice in project preparation** to alumni to improve the chance of receiving funding to enact those projects. Approved projects further bolster the sustainability of the fisheries sector and subsequently the programme results.

Also, FTP supports alumni **networking** and attendance to regional or international **conferences**, both of which have the potential for alumni to harness opportunities for projects or initiatives in their field of work.

### 2.5.3. FACTORS SUPPORTING OR HINDERING THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PROGRAMME RESULTS AND BENEFITS

#### i. Factors supporting the sustainability of the programme's results.

A strong sense of **empowerment is felt by most fellows** who graduate from either the fellowship programme or the scholarship programme due to having improved their human capital and access to further knowledge. Fellows' empowerment to effect change is the main driver for the sustainability of the programme's results and benefits. **Fellows' remaining in the field of fisheries** is another strong contributing factor to sustainability at their original home institutions or somewhere else within the country. Sustainability is also enhanced by **knowledge dissemination**, which itself is enhanced by **networking and publications** as the spread of knowledge and research findings has a multiplier effect.

Also key to the sustainability of the programme's effects are the **partner organizations and institutions** as they play a key role in applying the knowledge gained and research results by fellows in the programme. Sustainability of the overall programme improves when partner institutions effectively apply knowledge created through the programme.

**Short courses** and workshops also play an **important role for sustainability** as they provide knowledge and tools that can be applied quickly to create medium- and long-term effects to complement the benefits from other areas of the programme's interventions.

While most of the factors supporting the sustainability of the results and benefit of the programme are beyond FTP's control, FTP does play a supporting role in knowledge dissemination and alumni networking.

#### ii. Factors hindering the sustainability of the programme's results.

A primary factor hindering the sustainability of the programmes' benefits is the difficulty in applying the knowledge acquired and generated by alumni through capacity building activities. Most working alumni fellows face **challenges at the home institutions** due to insufficient support by their home institutions, which in turn is due to insufficient resources, unfavourable power dynamics in their organization, resistance to change in the institution, and the narrow scope of responsibilities of alumni. The inability for fellows to apply their knowledge threatens the sustainability of the programme outcomes.

Hindering factors to the sustainability of the programme's results are beyond FTP's control.

### 2.6. PROSPECTS FOR LONGER-TERM DEVELOPMENT EFFECTS (IMPACT)

The programme's prospects for impact are **high at the micro-level**, since the enhanced human capital has a lasting effect on the individuals who are able to improve their professional careers as well as contribute to their technical field by applying their new knowledge, provided there are favourable conditions for that. **At the meso-level, the prospects are good**, depending on the ability of partners to use the benefits provided by the programme. **At the macro-level, long-term effects are less likely** to be realised as they depend on the existence and implementation of policy frameworks and adequate regulatory frameworks, much of which is beyond FTP's control.

#### 2.6.1. THE DIRECT EFFECTS AND LONGER-TERM PROSPECTS FOR IMPACT OF THE PROGRAMME ON THE MICRO, MESO, AND MACRO LEVELS

##### i. Micro-level

**Impacts** by the programme are **mostly realised at the micro level** since the trainees' enhanced human capital in fisheries and the sustainable use of this natural resource allows them to improve their professional perspectives in the labour market. In this regard, **72% of the fellows who graduated during the period 2018-2023 report having substantially or extremely advanced in their careers**, 37% of whom were promoted, 30% saw their salaries increased, and 77% were given more responsibilities.

The enhancement of **human capital** is not only in the field of expertise, but also **technical, analytical, and research skills**, which enables them to continue learning or to create new knowledge through

additional research (70% of FTP alumni have conducted further research). Also at the micro level, it is worth noting that 52% of alumni contributed to the field of fisheries by introducing new initiatives or projects, 44% led projects in the sector, and 87% of alumni indicate that they have contributed to their technical field, mostly through training, mentoring, and research, but also through advice to policy makers and the introduction of new policies. For example, at the local level one fellow trained a coastal community on sustainable conservation of the coastal and marine resources; at the district level, another fellow offered consultation and made manuals available to a team that is interested in replicating the MATÍS Oven project.

The prospects for **effects in the long run rely on alumni having the institutional support** to participate in, launch, or lead new initiatives, which in turn depends on the will of the organizations and funding availability.

#### ii. Meso-level

Despite alumni facing challenges to applying their knowledge because of lack of institutional support or resources, the power dynamics in the organizations, or the resistance to change, some alumni have made important contributions at the meso-level. **26% of the FTP alumni have indicated that they have introduced new policies or procedures in their institutions.** Some examples are an alumnus currently in the process of developing **a participatory fish disease monitoring and surveillance program** in his organization; the Fisheries Division in Grenada **modernized and updated the collection and management of fish landing** data with the input of a former fellow; and at an academic institution, an alumna contributed **to the development of a course on seafood processing technology.**

At the meso-level, the **prospects for long-term effects are good**, although **they depend** to a large extent **on the valuation and support of the partner institutions** to make use of the new or enhanced capacities achieved through the Programme.

#### iii. Macro-level

At the macro-level, **long-term effects of the programme rely on national policy implementation and adequate legal frameworks**, which is beyond the direct control of the programme. At this level, however, according to the evaluation team's questionnaire survey of GRÓ alumni, **24% indicated that they have contributed to the development of policies at the regional level, 39% at the national level, and 9% at the international level.** As examples, an alumnus contributed to the preparation of maritime fishing regulations, the master plan for infrastructure to support fishing and aquaculture, and the national sea policy. In Vietnam, a fellow participated in drafting a decree on planning the country's marine protected areas. In El Salvador, a new policy for managing aquaculture in Lake Ilopango was developed based on a fellow's research conducted in Iceland. Additionally, a former fellow played a role in formulating the National Maritime Security Strategy in his country. In Malawi, the government incorporated recommendations from an alumnus's research paper into the Malawi Fisheries and Aquaculture policy.

As per the higher goals the programme contributes to, the **knowledge acquired and created by fellows who specialised in fisheries policy and management relates to all targets of SDG 14**<sup>17</sup>. Knowledge provided and created in stock assessment is in line with SDG 14 **Targets 14.2, 14.4, and 14.7**. Knowledge provided and generated by the programme on quality management of fish handling and processing and sustainable aquaculture directly relates to **Targets 14.b and 14.7**, respectively. Of those SDGs not targeted by the programme, the outputs of the **programme relate to SDG 1**, as responsible fisheries and value chains support the livelihoods of fisherfolks. The outputs also relate to **SDG 2**, as sustainable fisheries are key for food security; **SDG 3**, as fisheries contribute to the availability of nutritious food and **SDG 5**, by enhancing the opportunities of women's participation in the value chain of fisheries. In addition, the outputs also contribute to **SDG 6**, as healthy inland aquatic ecosystems are required for good water quality; **SDG 8**, as sustainable fisheries are an important source of

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<sup>17</sup> See Annex 10 for SDG 14 targets.

employment, particularly in the partner countries; and **SDG 12**, as sustainable fisheries imply responsible consumption and production of fish food. The programme's outputs also benefit **SDG 13**, as the oceans are important carbon sinks and fish food production has lower environmental impact than other sources of meat protein; and **SDG 15**, as inland fisheries have an effect on land.

Through their acquired knowledge and its applications, alumni have contributed to projects and initiatives linked to SDG progress. In fact, 71% of the 2018-2023 FTP respondents indicated that they have contributed to projects and initiatives linked to the SDGs. Specifically, 69% of the 2018-2023 FTP fellows worked on initiatives related to SDG 14, 58% to SDG 2 and 39% to SDG 1.

Figure 6: Engagement of 2018-2023 FTP alumni in activities relating to the SDGs



Data source: Evaluation team's own alumni survey, frequencies of SDGs mentioned among the top five SDGs by 2018-2023 FTP cohort.

Additionally, an analysis conducted by FTP for the period 2015-2023 that focused on SDG 14, found that **57% of the research conducted by fellows has implications for targets 14.2, 14.4, 14.5, 14.6, 14.7, and 14.a.**

## 2.6.2. FACTORS SUPPORTING OR HINDERING PROGRESS IN THE LONGER-TERM ACHIEVEMENT OF DIRECT EFFECTS AND IMPACT

### i. Supporting factors

The enhancement of alumni human capital is a key driver for the programme's long-term effects and impacts. To support their role as agents of change, whether in the local, national, or international sphere, **a strong networking system would be of great support**, given that only 36% of all FTP alumni currently engage in any sort of networking. By increasing networking engagement, alumni would have more opportunities to enhance contacts with other professionals in the fisheries sector as well as with donors who could find new research initiatives or projects.

**Institutional support for alumni initiatives** is another important driver for the programme's effects and impacts in the long term. Such support is key for alumni to continue engaged in further contributions in terms of producing and disseminating new knowledge related to the sustainable use of fisheries.

The **replication of short courses/workshops** at the country level is another factor that supports the long-term effects of the programme as they create synergies with the capacities that alumni bring to their institutions. In that regard, the replication of courses involves the use of materials from previous courses, such as in the case of short courses on stock assessment or building upon previous courses such as in courses on fisheries value chain or the analysis of vessel monitoring systems data.

### ii. Hindering factors

Factors that hamper the programme's long-term effects and impact concern the **unfavourable power dynamics in partner institutions**, which results in alumni holding positions with a limited level of responsibility, thereby constraining their potential to contribute to the furthering of the programme results.

The **resistance to change** from partner institutions, although not widespread, is another hindering factor for the long-term results of the programme. From the evaluation team's questionnaire survey of GRÓ alumni, it is reported that 23% of all FTP alumni reported facing this type of challenge in their institutions.

The **lack of availability of funding in partner countries/institutions** adds to the constraints on results or impacts by the programme in the long term as alumni see reduced possibilities to advance projects/initiatives that otherwise would have an impact in the sector. This is so given the low-income nature of partner countries, especially LDCs, which results in a situation in which the benefits of the programme are not harnessed.

## 2.7. HORIZONTAL THEMES/CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

It is the evaluative opinion that **the programme contributes to the crosscutting priorities** identified in Iceland's policy for international development cooperation in terms of human rights, gender equality and the sustainability of the environment in an effective way.

### 2.7.1. CONTRIBUTION TO GENDER EQUALITY

Iceland's approach to gender equality as part of its development cooperation policy includes, among other cross-cutting priorities, the promotion of gender equality for both men and women along the fisheries value chain by introducing healthier and safer processing methods with the aim to increase the quality and value of the products. In this regard, FTP's capacity building efforts **contribute to gender equality** by contributing to building capacities in management of fish handling and processing and in sustainable aquaculture, areas in which women are currently more involved. The capacities created or enhanced also have the potential to influence policy making by ensuring they **encourage women's participation in the fisheries sector**. These contributions are key given the fact that worldwide women have only a 24% participation as fishers and fish farmers, with their participation mostly concentrated, 62%, in the post-harvest activities<sup>18</sup>.

While FTP contributes to gender equality, this contribution could be enhanced if the GEST Programme collaborated on research on gender equality issues in the fisheries sector.

### 2.7.2. CONTRIBUTION TO HUMAN RIGHTS

Iceland's policy for international development cooperation is also guided by a human rights approach, defined to include safety, power, and control over one's own circumstances.

FTP, as one of the main instruments for Iceland's international development cooperation, has the potential to improve fish harvest and postharvest handling, which in turn makes seafood more available, accessible, and stable in supply. This **positively impacts food security** and contributes to the realization of the **human right to adequate and wholesome/healthy food**. The availability, accessibility, and stability of fish food is especially relevant for artisanal fishers, who present vulnerability to the uncertainties of seasonal income. This is in line with the approach that guides Iceland's international cooperation.

FTP also has the potential to contribute to **the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment**, as the capacities enhanced through the programme can help restore and maintain aquatic natural ecosystems through the sustainable management of fisheries resources, which is also emphasised by the Icelandic approach to international development cooperation.

### 2.7.3. CONTRIBUTION TO ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

FTP intrinsically **contributes to the sustainability of the environment**, and as such, it is one of the implementers of the Icelandic approach to development cooperation which focus on sustainable use of marine resources and waters.

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<sup>18</sup> FAO (2024). The state of world fisheries and aquaculture 2024: Blue transformation in action. Rome.



The capacities built through the programme's mix of training interventions have the potential to positively **impact the health of fish stocks through the sustainable use of fisheries and the restoration of fish habitats and ecosystems**. Additionally, the programme also has the potential to **improve life on land**. As aquaculture becomes the leading activity in fisheries, the potential for environmental degradation from the effluents may negatively impact environmental sustainability on land, and eventually in water. The FTP addresses aquaculture from a sustainability approach emphasizing to environmental health.

#### 2.7.4. MANAGING AND COUNTERING THE EFFECTS OF EXTERNAL SHOCKS AND RISKS TO THE PROGRAMME

One of the biggest external shocks that affected FTP was the emergence of COVID-19, **which led the programme to the cancellation of the 2020 fellowship cohort**. The following cohort, 2021, included two more fellows to accommodate for some of the cancellations. Also, due to COVID-19, there were no offers of in-country or regional short courses/workshops or participation in conferences. The pause on training in 2020 was taken by FTP as an opportunity to review and improve the quality and process of its work and identify new opportunities for growth and innovation. While the pause due to COVID-19 was an opportunity to reflect, it made FTP lose some momentum with its partners; thus, additional efforts would be needed to relaunch those partnerships.

The ongoing **social conflict in some of the partner countries**, such as Haiti<sup>19</sup>, Mozambique, Myanmar, and Nigeria, **poses risks to the continuation of the programme in these countries** and the sustainability of its effects. However, this is beyond the programme's control.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

#### 3.1. THE EXTENT THAT THE TRAINING PROGRAMME INTERVENTIONS HAVE MET THEIR INTENDED RESULTS

FTP successfully achieved its capacity development goals during the 2018-2023 period. Notably, it produced 121 graduates from a 6-month postgraduate training program in Iceland, aligning with its annual target of 25 fellows<sup>20</sup>. Additionally, ten qualifying fellows received scholarships for an M.Sc. degree, with nine already graduated, and eight alumni were supported in pursuing Ph.D. degrees, three of whom have completed their studies.

Regarding country eligibility, participants in the program represented 35 different countries, with 75% of them coming from LDCs or Low- and LMICs. Notably, the program's efforts aligned with Icelandic international development policy, concentrating on West African nations, specifically, Liberia, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone, who collectively received 28.3% of the program's benefits during the 2018-2023 period.

Between 2018 and 2023, the postgraduate fellowship training program achieved gender parity, with an equal representation of 50% males and 50% females. This accomplishment is noteworthy in terms of gender balance. Based on the answers to the evaluation team's questionnaire survey of GRÓ alumni, fellows highly value the quality of the fellowship training programme.

Regarding knowledge creation, graduating fellows completed research papers. Among these, 25% focused on stock assessment and data collection, 18% on food quality, 10% on policy, 10% on sustainable fisheries management, and another 10% on technical fisheries issues. **These contributions, combined with the skills acquired during the training programme, form the foundation for the programme's impact in their home countries**. However, 80% of graduates encounter challenges when applying this knowledge post-graduation.

According to the evaluation team's questionnaire survey of GRÓ alumni, **87% of fellows from the 2018-2023 period have made contributions to the technical aspects in their field of work thanks to the**

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<sup>19</sup> Though a qualifying country and a member State of CRFM, it has not participated in the programme since 2012.

<sup>20</sup> Due to COVID-19, FTP did not offer the fellowship programme in 2020.

**training they received.** Additionally, 71% have experienced professional growth because of enhanced capacities. Furthermore, **71% of FTP respondents have played a role in advancing SDG 14.**

Regarding the scholarship program, of the ten fellows qualifying for an M.Sc. in the period 2018-2023, three were from LDCs, two from LMICs, two from UMICs/SIDS, and three from UMICs, nine of whom have graduated from the University of Iceland. Also, of the eight qualifying alumni who received support to pursue a doctoral degree at the University of Iceland, four were from LDCs and four from LMICs. The research by these scholars is published through the University of Iceland in the digital repository for Icelandic universities.

For the period of analysis, **short courses/workshops trained 122 local officials, officers and staff** from companies and associations related to the fisheries sector **from 20 countries** in matters of vessel monitoring systems, stock assessment and data modelling, fisheries value chain management, and postharvest handling of fish. Due to the applicability orientation of these courses, most attendees considered their competencies had been increased and intended to use their learning and tools provided in their job responsibilities.

The programme facilitated knowledge dissemination and networking for alumni by enabling their participation in international conferences and symposia. **A total of 66 alumni were facilitated to attend a relevant conference** (65% male and 35% female). Additionally, **59 representatives from OSPESCA member States convened in Nicaragua to discuss fisheries policy and management mechanisms in Central America and the Dominican Republic.**

**The programme actively engaged in the FarFish project**, taking a leadership role in the capacity building and dissemination work package. Additionally, it facilitated knowledge sharing by imparting Icelandic expertise on fisheries to officials and specialists from 12 countries. This exchange provided participants with insights into fisheries management concepts, scientific foundations, policy implications, bioeconomic theory, the Icelandic Individual Transfer Quota, and the triple bottom line approach to sustainability.

As part of its innovative online content creation, the programme produced **a series of videos that reached 2,897 viewers worldwide.** These videos highlight the economic, social, and environmental significance of fisheries and their connection to the SDGs. This is a good start for the programme to begin expanding its training offer through massive online means.

### 3.2. THE PRIMARY SUCCESSES OF THE TRAINING PROGRAMME AND THE BENEFITS GENERATED

Overall, **FTP has been successful in delivering the intended outputs** and, to some extent, its outcome, although the latter is beyond the programme's control.

**The fellowship programme is key to FTP's success both in terms of delivery and results.** This programme is highly recognised; on average, four to six candidates are nominated for each fellow that is selected based on academic and professional background, as well a clear notion of the needs of the fisheries sector in their countries. In fact, **the approach to the selection process is a contributing factor to the success of this training programme**, which first focuses on countries' profiles and their needs to be targeted for the programme, looking at elements such as stability and the existence of a policy for the sustainable management of fisheries. The selection of partner institutions in targeted countries is also another element of the programme's success, since they are, in principle, fertile soil for the programme's delivery.

**The empowerment of fellows is a primary success of the programme**, as 72% report having advanced in their professional careers thanks to having graduated from the fellowship programme. This empowerment allows them to act as **agents of change.** In this regard, 87% of the fellows who answered the evaluation team's questionnaire survey of GRÓ alumni acknowledge **having contributed to their technical field** and 72% report **having undertaken projects or initiatives that related to the achievement of SDGs**, primarily SDG 14, to which 71% of fellows have contributed to.

**Another success of the programme comes from the in-country or regional short courses**, which have been tailored to pressing issues on the analysis of data from vessel monitoring systems,

management of value chains, postharvest handling of fish, and stock assessment and data analysis. **Short courses have shown to be useful for attendees and of ready application.**

**Support for alumni to attend international conferences** has been another of FTP's successes, as these events are an ideal outlet for alumni to disseminate their research results and connect with the international fisheries community, keeping them updated on fisheries issues and providing them with opportunities to engage in new projects or initiatives.

**FTP has responded and adhered to the policy priorities of Iceland's development cooperation**—focusing on West African countries, LDCs, LMICs, and SIDS—and **embraced the cooperation's approach** to sustainable management of natural resources, human rights, gender equality, and environmental protection. Additionally, FTP aligns with international policy frameworks and agreements related to fisheries.

### 3.3. THE PRIMARY CONSTRAINTS FOR RESULTS ACHIEVEMENT BY FTP

The primary constraints for the realisation of **FTP's outcomes are related to external risks beyond its control** as the partner institutions and countries must make use of the outputs delivered by the programme to render its results. As evidenced by the results of the evaluation team's questionnaire survey of GRÓ alumni, **a vast majority of alumni indicated experiencing challenges in applying their knowledge after graduation.** Challenges such as insufficient institutional support, lack of funding, unfavourable power dynamics in partner institution, institutional resistance to change, and the low level of responsibility assigned to them in their home institution, individually or combined, play an important role in constraining the programme from achieving the outcomes that it is meant to deliver.

**At the country level, policy gaps and inadequate regulatory frameworks are also constraining factors for the realisation of FTP's outcomes.** In the absence of a coherent fisheries policy in a country, the actions resulting from the application of the knowledge learned or produced through the programme lack grounding and purpose and therefore are not of interest to policy makers. These difficulties are augmented by outdated legal frameworks, which further add to the risk factors facing FTP in delivering its outcomes and impacts.

These constraints come even though FTP is careful in its selection process, both at the country and institutional levels, to ensure the proper use of the outputs delivered by the programme.

### 3.4. THE SUITABILITY OF FTP INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS TO GENERATE THE PROGRAMME RESULTS

The management structure and overall institutional framework for implementing FTP's programme to achieve the desired outcomes are generally appropriate.

In 2023, FTP had of 4.3 full-time equivalent staff positions to manage all the activities related to the programme's delivery. This staff is highly qualified but may sometimes get overloaded with work.

FTP's Studies Committee is responsible for the planning of the programme's yearly activities. Members of the Committee also participate in defining the eligibility criteria for grants for scholarships and selecting candidates.

There are clearly defined timelines and processes, which contribute to ensuring operational efficiency. Monitoring and reporting are done using the Result-based Framework adopted by GRÓ, which also serves as a steering tool. To monitor results, **the programme collects data from alumni through surveys.** To monitor the delivery of services, **the programme runs evaluations of the 6-month training programme while in session,** which are appropriate for timely feedback and adjustments if needed. **The scholarship programme is monitored through the admission documents and progress reports.** In-country and regional **short courses are evaluated at the end of each event** to give feedback on their usefulness, applicability and the quality of materials and lecturers. **All monitoring and evaluation procedures are considered appropriate.**

Regarding the in-country or regional short courses/workshops, the partner organization conducts a survey of the attendees at the end of the event, for the purpose of gathering information on the usefulness of the course, the relevance of the content, and the quality of the materials and lectures. A

final report is prepared, which contains, among other things, the details of the course, the results of the evaluation, the areas of strength, and the areas that need improvement.

The institutional arrangement of the programme has been a factor for its cost effectiveness, offering high quality training and educational programmes through the partnerships with the Marine and Fresh Water Research Institute, MATÍS, the University of Iceland, the University of Akureyri, Hólar University, and the Fishing industry. **This arrangement of partnerships allows the programme to be effective in delivering high quality outputs at a reasonable cost.**

Through GRÓ, **the MFA's contributes most of the programme's cost.** These contributions are made to FTP through a Service Agreement with the Marine and Freshwater Research Institute (MFRI) that is signed on a biannual basis. Such agreement can be cancelled with a six-month notice by GRÓ; however, this period of time for the notice is not suitable for MFRI since activities or preparation may already be underway, and MFRI would be required to readjust its own planning, which poses a burden on it.

The service agreement with MFRI is a practical way to fund the programme; however, it has the disadvantage that it leaves FTP without a say in the budget management despite being responsible for the programme's delivery.

### 3.5. OVERALL EVALUATION CONCLUSION ON THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PROGRAMME

Based on a five-level scale rating<sup>21</sup>, the evaluation team finds that the **overall performance of FTP is satisfactory**, as per the rating of each evaluation criterium (Table 21).

Table 7: Evaluation performance rating

EVALUATION CRITERIA	PERFORMANCE RATING
Relevance	Satisfactory
Coherence	Satisfactory
Effectiveness	Satisfactory
Efficiency	Highly Satisfactory
Sustainability	Adequate
Impact	Adequate

## 4. LESSONS LEARNED

The following lessons are drawn from the evaluation findings:

### LESSON 1

While the selection process emphasizes choosing suitable partner institutions, **there are gaps between the needs identified by these partner organizations and how they utilize the benefits provided by FTP.** These gaps significantly hinder the programme's intended outcomes and impacts. Therefore, reassessing the partnership approach seems necessary to ensure FTP's efforts are fully leveraged. In this reassessment, two key aspects should be considered: first, **clearly identifying the capacity-building needs of partner institutions**, and second, **determining the critical mass of individuals requiring training to address those needs.**

### LESSON 2

The branding value of FTP rests on Iceland's high reputation of expertise in the fisheries sector since Iceland has taken a leading role in the sustainable management of that natural resource and turned it into an economic driver. In that regard, **the partnership with UNESCO does not seem to add significant value to the programme.** Under the UNESCO partnership, the postgraduate training

<sup>21</sup> Highly Satisfactory, Satisfactory, Adequate, Unsatisfactory, Highly Unsatisfactory. The rating criteria is provided as part of the overall evaluation report.

fellowship does not carry the same value as the UNU partnership did in terms of being associated with an academic institution.

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### LESSON 3

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**The effects of the programme would not be maximised to the extent that they could be in countries whose participation in the postgraduate training fellowship is sparse.** During the period 2018-2023, for instance, 15 out of 36 countries had only one fellow trained in Iceland in the fellowship programme. At first glance, this could be seen as a diluted effort across countries; however, due to size and needs, countries have different requirements in terms of how many fellows needed to be trained. Thus, determining the critical mass by country would shed clarity on whether the critical mass needed to create developmental change in partner countries is being reached.

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### LESSON 4

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**FTP has empowered a great number of alumni worldwide** and that empowerment has had positive effects on individuals in terms of career advancement. This success poses the challenge to harness that empowerment towards the overarching result of implementing changes for the achievement of the targeted Sustainable Development Goal. In that regard, enhancing alumni involvement in the activities of advisory services and knowledge sharing carried out by FTP could contribute to achieving the end result of the programme.

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made to improve FTP:

1. FTP demonstrates relevance, coherence, and effectiveness in achieving its objectives. While the design of the programme is presented throughout the various webpages of FTP's website, it is recommended to **prepare a design document of the programme** presenting the problem(s) it solves, the objectives it pursues, the mix of its interventions, the implementation strategy, and the monitoring and evaluation of results in a single document. Additionally, **developing a theory of change** would help in documenting the programme's impact pathway. This would allow for clarity to stakeholders and enhanced public acceptance of the programme.
2. Given the overarching goal of GRÓ and the cross-cutting areas of human rights, gender equality, and the environment approach of Iceland's International Development Cooperation, it is recommended to **explicitly mainstream the SDGs**, in particular SDG 14, as the programme's targeted sustainable goal as well as the cross-cutting areas **in the research by fellows and scholars**. This approach would improve the relevance and effectiveness of the programme.
3. Some qualifying fellows have received support for a graduate degree. Given the potential for far-reaching impact of these graduates in their home countries and institutions, it is recommended to **expand the scholarship programme at the Ph.D. level to enhance FTP's effectiveness**. Expanding the number of scholars would also increase the prospects of long-term impacts and sustainability of the programme as scholars would most likely be employed by academic and research institutions whose mandate is the creation and dissemination of knowledge.
4. In-country/regional short courses and workshops have proven useful to address pressing issues in partner countries related to the fisheries sector. It is **recommended to replicate those courses at the country level**, according to needs, **to continue enhancing local capacities at a decreasing cost**, since those courses have already been prepared.
5. As research and knowledge creation is an important element of FTP, the dissemination of knowledge adds sustainability to the programme benefits. It is therefore recommended to publish all research papers by fellows and all theses by scholars on the website of FTP.
6. Given the potential the GEST Programme has to offer, it is suggested to **strengthen synergies with the GEST Programme**, as gender equality is an important issue in the fisheries sector, especially in partner countries where both programmes direct their efforts. There has been research done by four

GEST fellows from Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, and Ghana on gender in fisheries that seems promising for the fisheries sectors in those countries. In that regard, the FTP and GEST Programmes could enhance their synergies by encouraging **research on gender issues related to the fisheries sector** where important gender gaps are observed in terms of women's participation.

- It is recommended to **set up a communication strategy** with Icelandic stakeholders on the accomplishments of FTP, which would enhance public acceptance of the programme and reduce risks or threats to the existence of the programme.

## 6. OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAMME'S STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS (SWOT)

Based on findings, the following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats are summarised below (Table 22).

Table 8: Programme's SWOT

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FTP brings state of the art knowledge in fisheries through its structure of Icelandic partnerships.</li> <li>The mix of specialisation lines of the fellowship training programme is relevant to the capacity development needs in partner countries.</li> <li>The programme has well established timelines and processes that ensure its efficient delivery of outputs.</li> <li>The programme is relevant to achieve the goals of Iceland's development cooperation policy and partner countries' policy goals.</li> <li>FTP is cost effective in delivering its outputs and, thus, efficient.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A dilution effect of the programme's results due to apparent insufficient country targeting.</li> <li>Limited synergy of FTP with the GEST Programme to advance gender issues in the fisheries sector.</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Worldwide increasing urgency to address the sustainability of fisheries resources.</li> <li>Mandate by Iceland's international development cooperation policy to support partner countries to achieve sustainable management of fisheries resources.</li> <li>Strong Icelandic branding in fisheries.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MFA is mostly unaware of the programme successes.</li> <li>Impacts and their sustainability at the meso- and macro-level beyond the Programme's control.</li> </ul>

## 7. PROSPECTS FOR FUTURE ENDEAVOURS, SCENARIOS/OPTIONS

Based on findings, the following scenarios and options are laid out for future endeavours by FTP.

- As the 6-month training programme is the core of FTP's training strategies, it is suggested to **explore the feasibility of adding a line of specialisation on Fisheries Value Chains** to make the programme more relevant to institutional needs. This is because postharvest losses, estimated at 35%, are an important factor hindering food security and degrade fish stocks as food losses reduce food availability.
- Given that the fellowship training programme does not earn academic credits, it is suggested to **explore the possibility with partner universities whether the fellowship programme can be accredited**. Awarding credits would add efficiency to the scholarship programme by reducing the cost of an M.Sc. by allowing fellows to finish studies faster; it would also add to the sustainability of FTP's effects as more qualifying fellows would be incentivized to pursue graduate studies.

3. While the Programme implements a careful selection of partner institutions, evidence shows that **there are barriers for partner institutions making use of the individual capacities built or enhanced** through the programme. In that regard, **it is suggested to pilot a results-based, customer driven approach**, in which partner institutions, in joint consultation with FTP, prepare a medium-term plan to address the capacity development needs. This approach would add to the sense of ownership of the programme's benefits, thereby enhancing the sustainability of the programme's results. This plan, which would take the form of a **Country Capacities Development Cooperation Strategy**, should also contain elements for the monitoring and evaluation of the cooperation efforts. By following this approach, the prospects for long term impacts at all levels would be enhanced, as **partner institutions gain ownership** of the benefits FTP delivers.
4. FTP could enhance its efficiency by scaling up the innovative online content creation. In that regard, it is suggested to explore a possible partnership with the University of the West Indies for Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) on fisheries topics or by using a Web-based learning management system such as Canvas or Blackboard. This would allow FTP to reach a wider audience at a low cost while enhancing the capacities of regional partners. In addition, it is suggested to share course materials through an OpenCourseWare to encourage their use by other lecturers, which will not only increase the efficiency of the short courses/workshops but also their sustainability.
5. The partnership with FIRUM of the Faroe Islands is an opportunity worth bolstering, as it has the potential to achieve economies of scale in the Sustainable Aquaculture line of specialisation. In this regard, it is **advisable to explore venues with FIRUM for the most efficient ways to scale up this partnership**.
6. The financial agreement with the Marine and Freshwater Research Institute is a practical approach to transfer funding for the implementation of the programme. However, **efficiency gains can be obtained if MFRI assumes the role of a budget holder** instead of an overall service provider. This would allow FTP as the decision maker, to decide on the use of funding and outsourcing for the programme's delivery.
7. Should the Marine and Freshwater Research Institute continue to be the service provider by means of the biannual agreement, it is **advisable to extend the notice period from six months to 12 months** for the cancellation of the agreement. The period extension would minimise efficiency losses, as the Institute may already have made investments or hired personnel pursuant to the provision of services.
8. The sustainability of FTP could be enhanced by increasing the support to **form alumni network organizations**. This is because networking activities open opportunities for alumni to engage in projects or initiatives on which they can apply their capabilities enhanced by the programme. In that sense, it is **suggested to have alumni chapters by region** in a way that alumni can find common issues and interest arising from the region's fisheries. This would require substantial effort on the part of FTP, but it is suggested to start by piloting one chapter. In Uganda, an alumnus based at Makerere University has already started efforts on his own for such a chapter. In fact, this former fellow is already the main contact with GRÓ Centre on this effort, but additional support may be needed.
9. Since the realisation of impacts in partner countries is the desired impact of FTP, it is advisable to **run an impact assessment in a sample of countries**, preferably **from those who have received the most support**, such as Kenya, Namibia, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Uganda, or Vietnam.

## APPENDIX 2. SOME ALUMNI TESTIMONIALS

Fellows frequently expressed gratitude for how the program served as a significant **launchpad for their careers and personal growth**. Many described it as a transformative experience that provided them with **invaluable skills** and **knowledge**.

*"I strongly recommend continuing this programme as it benefits beyond words the work that fellows are capable of carrying once we are back home. Being able to see and experience in first person all the improvements made by Iceland, expands our vision and translates in greater motivation to continue our work in our countries."*

*"It's a great program and goes beyond just academic skills. Having lifetime connections with people from various countries where we continue to engage, share knowledge, and empower one another"*

*"I want to appreciate the organizers and sponsors of the 6 months post-graduate fisheries training program. It was an exciting experience being in Iceland and great knowledge acquired."*

*"I would like to thank GRÓ FTP for arranging an excellent training program."*

*"The Fisheries Training Programme was very informative. Thanks to GRÓ International Centre for capacity building."*



## GRÓ TRAINING PROGRAMME RESULTS DELIVERY &amp; ACHIEVEMENT – GRÓ FTP

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	SPECIFIC INDICATORS	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	SUMMARY
<b>Outcome: GRÓ fellows, trainees and respective organisations promote and implement changes needed to achieve SDGs relevant to their field of work</b>									
P1. Management in partner organisations assess the training to be valuable for the organisation	% of alumni survey respondents who agree (4 out of 5 on the scale) or strongly agree (5 out of 5 on the scale) that their organisation's management values and appreciates their skills from the postgraduate training (3 years after graduation)	83.3%	80.0%	86.7%	N/A	66.7%	80.0%*	81.6%*	79.8% (2018-2023 cohort) (GOPA 2024 alumni survey data)
P2. Graduates have used the training to advance their contribution in their field/sector of work	% of alumni survey respondents (fellows) who agree (4 out of 5 on the scale) or strongly agree (5 out of 5 on the scale) that they advanced their contribution in their field/sector due to the postgraduate programme (3 years after graduation)	83.3%	86.7%	93.3%	N/A	66.7%	90.0%*	86.8%*	87.2% (2018-2023 cohort) (GOPA 2024 alumni survey data)
P3. Graduates have used their training to share with colleagues and other experts in their respective field of expertise	% of alumni survey respondents (fellows) who report sharing their training knowledge with supervisors, colleagues and/or expert networks (3 years after graduation)	100.0%	75.0%	93.8%	N/A	55.6%	86.4%*	73.3%*	77.9% (2018-2023 cohort) (GOPA 2024 alumni survey data)

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	SPECIFIC INDICATORS	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	SUMMARY
P4. Graduates have advanced professionally (e.g. promotion or received scholarship for further studies)	% of alumni survey respondents (fellows) who report substantial (4 out of 5 on the scale) or extreme (5 out of 5 on the scale) career advancement due to the training (3 years after graduation)	66.7%	66.7%	93.3%	N/A	44.4%	65.0%*	73.7%*	71.6% (2018-2023 cohort) (GOPA 2024 alumni survey data)

*\*The GRÓ Results Framework suggest measuring outcome level results 3 years after programme graduation. Therefore, the indicator value for the graduation year 2022 and 2023 should be interpreted with caution. Generally, the survey findings suggest that it might take some time for outcome level results to materialise after programme completion. Therefore, the measurement 3 years after programme completion seems reasonable.*

**Output N°1: Increased capability of individuals and expertise of GRÓ partner organisations to design and implement programme activities in respective professional fields**

P1. Number of experts trained in the GRÓ 5-6-month training programmes	Annual # of fellows Gender ratio M/F (%) Country Income level LDC and LMI (%)	21 13 F (62%) 8 M (38%) 29% LDC 33% LMIC	24 9 F (37%) 15 M (63%) 42% LDC 33% LMIC	23 12 F (52%) 11 M (48%) 43% LDC 35% LMIC	0 (COVID)	27 15 F (56%) 12 M (44%) 48% LDC 33% LMIC	23 12 F (52%) 11 M (48%) 30% LDC 39% LMIC	24 11 F (46%) 13 M (54%) 42% LDC 38% LMIC	142 72 F (51%) 70 M (49%) 56 LDC (39%) 50 LMIC (35%)
P2. Quality of the 5-6 month training	Self-assessment survey of fellows at the start and end of training on knowledge, skills and mindset (on a scale from 1 low – 5 high)	Data not available, no formal survey conducted	Data not available, no formal survey conducted	Data not available, no formal survey conducted	Not applicable	Data not available, no formal survey conducted	48% = 5/5 35% = 4/5 17% = No answer	67% = 5/5 29% = 4/5 4% = No answer	Surveys prior to 2022 relate to the quality of the process, not of the training

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	SPECIFIC INDICATORS	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	SUMMARY
P3. Number of graduates eligible for 30 ECTS credits / Diploma degree at completion. Only applicable GEST & LRT fellows	Annual # of diploma certificates issued Graduation ratio (% of total cohort of fellows eligible)	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	FTP postgraduate fellowship diploma is not eligible for ECTS credits
P4. Number of short courses (5-7 days) in partner countries	Annual # of weeks of on-site training # of participants short courses Gender ratio M/F (%)	2 weeks 31 people 6 F (19%) 25 M (81%)	3 weeks 76 people 19 F (25%) 57 M (75%)	2 weeks 26 people 11 F (42%) 15 M (58%)	0	0	2 weeks 21 people 7 F (33%) 14 M (67%) (Study visits Iceland = 2)	2.5 week 42 people 20 F (48%) 22 M (52%) (Study visits Iceland = 1)	11.5 weeks 196 people 63 F (32%) 133 M (68%)
P5. Quality of short course training	% of participants assess the course to be useful for enhancing skills & knowledge (relevant and helpful for my job) (on scale from 1 – 5)	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available	Not applicable	Not applicable	Data not available	82% = 5/5 18% = 4/5	Courses evaluated on variable scales; 2023 on new standard scale
P6. Number of live streaming training courses	Annual # # of participants	0	0	0	0	1 course 50 people	0	0	1 course 50 people
P7. Quality live streaming training courses	% of participants assess course useful for enhancing skills & knowledge (relevant & helpful for my job) (on scale 1 – 5)	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Data not available	Not applicable	Not applicable	Open seminar, no evaluation data available

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	SPECIFIC INDICATORS	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	SUMMARY
P8. Number of online courses and number of participants in the online courses	Annual # # of participants newly enrolled	0	0	0	0	1 (SDG 14 Videos)	1 (SDG 14 Videos)	1 (SDG 14 Videos)	1 (SDG 14 Videos) 2,897 viewers
P9. Quality of online training	% of participants assess the course to be useful for enhancing skills & knowledge	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available	Open access, no evaluation is conducted
P10. Number of GRÓ graduate studies scholarships provided annually	Annual # Master's and PhD Gender ratio M/F (%)	M.Sc. = 4 3 F (75%) 1 M (25%) PhD = 2 1 F (50%) 1 M (50%)	M.Sc. = 4 3 F (75%) 1 M (25%) PhD = 2 1 F (50%) 1 M (50%)	M.Sc. = 5 2 F (40%) 3 M (60%) PhD = 4 3 F (75%) 1 M (25%)	M.Sc. = 4 2 F (50%) 2 M (50%) PhD = 4 3 F (75%) 1 M (25%)	M.Sc. = 5 4 F (80%) 1 M (20%) PhD = 7 5 F (71%) 2 M (29%)	M.Sc. = 4 3 F (75%) 1 M (25%) PhD = 8 6 F (75%) 2 M (25%)	M.Sc. = 2 1 F (50%) 1 M (50%) PhD = 7 6 F (86%) 1 M (14%)	M.Sc. = 11 7 F (64%) 4 M (36%) PhD = 9 6 F (67%) 3 M (33%)
<b>Output N°2: Production and dissemination of new knowledge by GRÓ training participants and scholarship recipient</b>									
P1. Number of research outputs (research project reports) annually by GRÓ fellows	Annual # of research project papers confirmed on GRÓ website	21	24	23	0	27	23	24	All fellows completed a paper. 82 were published on the FTP website
P2. Number of master's thesis published annually by GRÓ scholarship recipients (research output)	Annual # of published master's thesis at universities' websites	0	3	1	0	3	2	0	9

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	SPECIFIC INDICATORS	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	SUMMARY
P3. Number of PhD papers published annually by GRÓ scholarship recipients (research outputs)	Annual # of publications in research journals	0	1	2	3	1	5	4	16
<b>Output N°3: Professional empowerment of GRÓ training participants and scholarship recipients is increased through GRÓ community building and networking</b>									
P1. Number of alumni events organised by GRÓ annually	Annual #	0	0	0	0	0	1 alumni meeting (side event at conference)	1 Online alumni seminar 2 in-country alumni meetings	4 events
P2. Number of GRÓ funded alumni participating in regional and international conferences	Annual # Gender ratio M/F (%)	22 7 F (32%) 15 M (68%)	17 4 F (42%) 13 M (76%)	20 6 F (30%) 14 M (70%)	0	0	29 13 F (45%) 16 M (55%)	0	88 alumni 30 F (34%) 58 M (66%)
P3. % of GRÓ short courses involving alumni in teaching/ organisation of short courses	Annual # (% of GRÓ short courses involving alumni)	50% (1 of 2 events)	25% (1 of 4 events)	100% (2 of 2 events)	No courses delivered	0% (0 of 1 event)	50% (1 of 2 events)	50% (1 of 2 events)	46% (6 of 13 events)

