

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Terminal Evaluation of the UNDP/UNEP project “Sustainable Forest Management in the Transboundary Gran Chaco Americano Ecosystem”

I. PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

1. Project General Information¹

Table 1. Project summary

UNEP PIMS ID: UNDP PIMS ID:		IMIS number:	GFL-2328-2713-4B47
UNEP Sub-programme:		UNEP EA:	
UNEP approval date: UNDP approval date:	01 September 2010 (UNEP) 04 April 2011 (UNDP)		
GEF project ID:	2505	Project Type:	FSP
GEF OP #:		Focal Area(s):	LD-BD-CCM
GEF approval date:	29 September 2009	GEF Strategic Priority/Objective:	
Expected Start Date:		Actual start date:	
Planned completion date:	August 2015	Actual completion date:	Under implementation
Planned project budget at approval:		Total expenditures reported as of [June 2014]:	
GEF Allocation:	USD 3,249,800 UNEP USD 3,659,291 UNDP	GEF grant expenditures reported as of [date]:	
PPG GEF cost:	USD 500,000	PPG co-financing:	USD 645,300
Expected FSP co- financing:	USD 18,370,852	Secured FSP co-financing (June 2015):	
First Disbursement:	08 September 2010 (UNEP)	Date of financial closure:	Open
No. of revisions:		Date of last revision:	
Date of last Steering Committee meeting:	February 2013		
Mid-term review/ evaluation (planned date):	January 2013	Mid-term review/ evaluation (actual date):	
Terminal Evaluation (actual date):			

¹ Sources: UNEP and UNDP project documents, project identification form, project implementation review 2015.

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2. Project rationale

1. The Gran Chaco Americano ecoregion covers approximately 1,000,000 km² extending to Argentina, Paraguay and Bolivia. The biome is comprised of different ecosystems including savannahs, wetlands and dry forests² and it hosts one of the largest remaining tracts of dry forests in the world and the second largest forested ecosystem outside the Amazon in South America. This area also hosts a considerable diversity of fauna and flora, including endemic species, making it an important area for biodiversity conservation. Despite its global significance, the Gran Chaco ecoregion is however faced with considerable socioeconomic and environmental challenges. The main threats have been identified as deforestation for timber, charcoal production and agricultural conversion; degradation of grasslands due to inadequate grazing management practices; fires; overdependence on forest exploitation and livestock production for livelihoods; and unsustainable management of water resources.

2. In Argentina, the Chaco is one of the largest biomes covering more than 62 million hectares and harbours considerable diversity of species, including an important number of endemics. Land use in the Argentinian Chaco is mainly focused on agriculture, extensive livestock ranching and forestry, with 78% of the land owned by 4.5% of the population. A total of 11% of the Argentinian population lives in the Chaco area. Livestock ranching is mainly focused on goats and the system relies heavily on natural resource base, exceeding its carrying capacity. Agriculture, mainly cultivation of soybean, has expanded in the area partly due to new cultivation technologies and transgenic seeds adapted to dry areas. Forestry is focused on small-scale production of firewood and charcoal. According to a national inventory, the agricultural and livestock sectors in Argentina are the second most important source of greenhouse gas emissions. The deforestation rate in the Argentinian Chaco was estimated at 0.86% around 2009. Fires are a continuous problem that degrades remaining dry forests, erosion affects more than 57% of the ecosystem and forest fragmentation diminishes the health of ecosystems and its biodiversity.

3. In Bolivia, the Chaco covers 12% of the land surface and is one of the most arid ecosystems in the country. However, like the Argentinian Chaco, also the Bolivian Chaco hosts considerable biodiversity, including endemic species. Approximately 4.5% of Bolivia's population lives in the area, nearly 80% of the population is considered impoverished and the region is home to several indigenous groups. Majority of the population in the Chaco area relies on agriculture, utilizing traditional methods for ranching and farming, including direct grazing on native trees and shrubs by cattle. This generally results in degradation of vegetation and land from overgrazing. Farming covers extensive areas but is not intensive. The use of more mechanized production methods is increasing with soybean being one of the crops that is increasing in coverage. Selective logging of hardwood species and the use of non-timber forest products is common. Also fishing and hunting are important activities that supplement diets and incomes of the local populations but the activities are generally not managed and therefore unsustainable. The Bolivian Chaco has also been impacted by infrastructure development, such as petroleum production, construction of roads, dams and irrigation and drinking water intakes. The rate of forest cover loss of the Bolivian Chaco was estimated at 16% of the surface area due to land-use change around 2009, contributing to soil erosion. Also fires impact the Bolivian Chaco ecosystem. Deforestation of the Chaco ecosystem is a large contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, together with livestock production.

4. In Paraguay, the Chaco covers approximately 60% of the area. The area is rich in biodiversity but a considerable number of species are threatened. Population in the area is relatively low, with indigenous communities making up a large part of the population. More than 60% of the population lives under the poverty line. The main economic activities in the Paraguay Chaco are agriculture and ranching, with 30% of the country's livestock located in the Chaco region. The majority of the small farmers have plots below 20 hectares in size and covering only 7% of the arable land, whilst an estimated 77% of the arable land is included in plantations of more than 1000 hectares. The rate of deforestation in the Paraguayan Chaco is high mostly contributed to clearing for agriculture and cultivation of pastures for livestock.

5. Since 1996, several agreements have been signed by Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay for regional cooperation to promote the sustainable development of the Gran Chaco. This includes the Framework Cooperation Agreement of the Sub-Regional Action Programme for the Sustainable Development of the Gran Chaco Americano (SRAP). The objective of the Framework Agreement is to "improve the socio-economic conditions of the Gran Chaco inhabitants, preserving and restoring the ecosystem through common actions for a sustainable use of natural resources, through a

² Sources: UNEP project document

participative model envisaging the needs, expectations and demands of the different social stakeholders involved". A Tri-national Council and Commission were established in order to facilitate the implementation of the SRAP through supporting a more focused coordination with national and international programs operating in the Gran Chaco area, creating conditions for better involvement of the local stakeholders and the civil society in decision making and promoting actions to reduce poverty.

6. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) joint project "*Sustainable forest management in the transboundary Gran Chaco Americano ecosystem*" (hereafter called the Gran Chaco project) was funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The project was designed to reverse land degradation trends in the Gran Chaco through supporting sustainable land management in the productive landscape. The project was also planned, with the assistance of UNEP, to contribute to the development and implementation of Sub-Regional Action Programs (SAP) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) to facilitate the management of shared territories, native forests and hydrological resources in dry lands. In order to establish a solid foundation for sustainable forest and land management in the Gran Chaco, the project sought to establish a Regional Framework for conservation of the natural resources of the Gran Chaco. The Tri-national Council and Commission were to then ensure synergies between the National Action Programs to Combat Desertification (NAPs) and the Regional Framework, whilst facilitating the implementation of the SRAP.

7. This project was designed to complement the efforts of Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay under the SRAP to overcome the most important barriers to the sustainable development of the Gran Chaco ecosystem by building upon the collective commitment of the three Governments to work together around the existing framework of the SRAP through i) mainstreaming sustainable forest management (SFM) and sustainable land management (SLM) principles into policy and legal frameworks; ii) capacity building at regional, provincial/departamental and local levels; iii) developing tools and instruments to mainstream SFM and SLM concerns into regional land use planning and decision making processes; and iv) on-the-ground investments and increased stakeholder participation to implement sustainable management practices to reduce land degradation and combat desertification contributing to poverty alleviation. The project was designed also to be fully consistent with the National Action Programs to Combat Desertification (NAP) of the three countries so as to create conditions for the sustainable development of the local population living in the area.

3. Project objectives and components

8. The objective of the Gran Chaco project was to *reverse land degradation trends in the Gran Chaco through supporting sustainable land management in the productive landscape*. The overall environmental benefits from the project were described in the project documents (UNEP and UNDP) to be reduced rates of deforestation, increased regeneration of native vegetation and strengthening of conservation areas and biological corridors, contributing to recovery of ecosystem functions and services, namely soil fertility, availability of water resources, CO₂ balance, habitats and plant and animal species, ecosystem carrying capacities and consequently recovery of ecosystem resilience. Further, the achievement of these environmental benefits was to contribute to reduced poverty and improved livelihoods. The project documents include a logical framework for the regional component, as well as separate logical frameworks for each of the three countries. Table 2 presents project outcomes and outputs as defined in the project document narratives.

Table 2. Project outcomes and outputs as defined in the UNEP and UNDP project documents

Component 1. Institutional strengthening (GEF US\$ 1,871,514)	
Outcomes	Outputs
1.1 Institutional capacities have been strengthened at regional, national and local levels to formulate and apply normative frameworks and practices available for SFM and SLM (with increased budgetary allocations or investments), taking into consideration climate change and biodiversity conservation variables.	<p>Regional Outputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A proposal for a regional Gran Chaco strategic vision and policy integrating SFM/SLM, BD and CC issues developed. Regional collaboration and coordination mechanisms strengthened. <p>Country outputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SRAP local offices implemented in Argentina (Santiago del Estero), Bolivia (?) and Paraguay (Asunción). Strengthening of inter-institutional coordination mechanisms that ensure the participation of the main stakeholder groups in decision making

	<p>processes, especially indigenous peoples and peasants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SLM, SFM, BD and CC policy and legal frameworks completed and harmonized in each country. • Capacity building programs targeting SLM and SFM technical and financial instruments developed and implemented.
1.2. SFM and SLM policies, technical tools and practices have been developed and mainstreamed at regional, national and local levels, taking into consideration climate change and biodiversity conservation variables.	<p>Regional Outputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gran Chaco GIS and database developed and functioning. • A set of common regional standards and criteria for development of SFM/SLM tools and instruments. • Coordination strategy among the early warning systems for extreme climatic events and wild fires established. • Sustainable traditional and new SLM and SFM technologies identified and systematized, including indigenous knowledge. • Sustainable management manual for the Chaco. <p>Country Outputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information systems strengthened. • Economically and environmentally sound unit compatible with SLM and SFM defined for the different sub-regions. • Environmental services identified and valued. • Strategies and action plans for development and implementation of land zoning plans. • Land use change monitoring methodologies and instruments by means of permanent field plots to measure desertification processes, erosion, salinization, regeneration of the native vegetation among other criteria. • Strategies for economic incentives and benefit-sharing for conservation and alternative uses of forests and sustainable use of biodiversity developed.
Component 2. Field application of SFM and SLM protocols (GEF US\$ 3,842,428)	
2.1 A critical core of priority areas for biodiversity is strengthened through SFM and SLM activities.	<p>Country Outputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical studies and proposals for establishment of new conservation areas. • Protected areas strengthened through management plans. • Economic incentives for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use in private lands developed.
2.2 CO ₂ is captured and emissions avoided through SFM and SLM practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CO₂ balance model and carbon stocks measured and monitored.
2.3 By the end of the project, the number of producers and the area in which SFM and SLM practices are being applied reach a critical threshold which, in the absence of major institutional barriers, allows the further adoption of SFM and SLM practices to become self-sustaining.	<p>Regional Outputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criteria for design, implementation and M&E of technology validation projects and demonstration projects. • Technology validation projects and demonstration projects evaluated and results systematized. <p>Country Outputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology validation and research projects designed and implemented. • Demonstration projects in pilot sites designed and implemented. • Support programs to cover transition costs to SLM and SFM practices implemented in the demonstration sites.
Component 3. Exit strategy (GEF US\$ 663,490)	
3.1 The end of the project leaves in place a mechanism to ensure sustainability of project-supported structures and programs that result in large-scale adoption of SFM and	<p>Regional Outputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional and national events for dissemination of results/lessons learnt and exchange of experiences.

SLM in the Gran Chaco.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integration and adoption of regional vision, policy, SFM/SLM best practices and a set of performance and sustainability indicators into the SRAP Chaco. <p>Country Outputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replication and up-scaling of best practices through awareness-raising and dissemination of findings across the Chaco region. Integration and adoption of best practices and a set of performance and sustainability indicators into the NAPs to combat desertification and public policies for the development of the Gran Chaco in each one of the three countries.
Component 4. Project management (GEF US\$ 609,909)	
Component 5. Monitoring and evaluation (GEF US\$ 281,750)	

9. The purpose of the demonstration projects was to showcase that the alternative sustainable management practices to be promoted are feasible and cost-effective and that a greater benefit will be attained with their adoption compared to the conventional practices. They were implemented in Argentina (Chancani in the Department of Pocho, Province of Cordoba; Santos Lugares and Garza, Province of Santiago del Estero; Riacho Teuguito Biosphere Reserve, Province of Formosa; and Teuco-Bermejito, Province of Chaco), in Bolivia (Charagua; Yacuiba; Monteagudo; and Villamontes) and in Paraguay (three sites in the Central Chaco, Department of Boqueron). According to the project documents, the demonstration projects were to include a series of interventions covering sustainable forest, agricultural, livestock and water management, rehabilitation of degraded areas, diversification of production, training and awareness raising. The demonstration projects were to promote the adoption of best practices already proven to be successful in preventing and reversing land degradation in the region, including crop residue management, minimum and zero tillage, green manure, crop rotation, pasture and stock density management, native forest management, silvo-pastoral management, forest enrichment and regeneration, afforestation and water management.

4. Executing Arrangements

10. The full-sized GEF funded project was jointly implemented by UNEP and UNDP, UNEP being the lead implementing agency. The responsibilities over project activities were to be distributed according to comparative advantages of the respective agencies but so that the agencies were to work in close collaboration. UNEP was to be in charge with implementation of the regional component, including project management and monitoring and evaluation, and at the country level of the development of SFM and SLM tools and instruments. UNDP was to be in charge of implementing the country based activities, including institutional strengthening at the country level and implementation of the demonstrations.

Table 3. Distribution of project responsibilities between UNEP and UNDP

Project Components / Outcomes	Implementing Agency	
Component 1. Institutional strengthening		
Outcome 1.1 Institutional capacities	UNEP	UNDP
Outcome 1.2 SFM/SLM tools and instruments	UNEP	
Component 2. Field application of SFM and SLM protocols		
Outcome 2.1 Priority areas for biodiversity		UNDP
Outcome 2.2 CO ₂ captured and emissions avoided	UNEP	
Outcome 2.3 SFM and SLM practices		UNDP
Component 3. Project exit strategy		
Outcome 3.1 Sustainability mechanisms	UNEP	
Component 4. Project management		

Project management	UNEP	
Component 5. Monitoring and evaluation		
Monitoring and evaluation	UNEP	

11. The project management structure was comprised of the Tri-national Commission, Executive Committee and local coordination mechanisms.

12. The Project Steering Committee (PSC) was to be comprised of the Tri-National Commission established under the Framework Cooperation Agreement between Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay, made up of by representatives of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, the UNCCD Focal Points of each country and representatives of UNEP and UNDP. The PSC was to meet at least once a year to oversee project implementation and monitor project progress, to provide strategic and policy guidance and to review and approve annual workplans and budgets.

13. The local coordination mechanism (Federal Environment Council of Argentina (COFEMA), Association of Municipalities of the Bolivian Chaco (MANCHABOL) and SRAP Technical Steering Committee) was to ensure adequate planning and implementation of activities in line with the project objectives and local development and stakeholder priorities, as well as complementarity with on-going and planned programs and projects. According to the project document, both the regional and country inter-institutional coordination mechanisms were to be closely linked, ensuring that stakeholder concerns are up-streamed into higher project management levels (Executive Committee and Tri-national Commission).

14. The project was to be co-executed by the Secretariat for Environment and Sustainable Development (SAyDS) of Argentina, the Vice-ministry of Watersheds and Water Resources (VMCRH) of Bolivia and the Environment Secretariat (SEAM) of Paraguay as UNCCD Focal Points. The SAyDS was to assume the role of lead executing agency and the project's Regional Director was to be appointed by the executing agencies. According to the project documents, the executing agencies were to meet twice a year and to have responsibilities including jointly selecting, with UNEP and UNDP, the staff for the PCU, planning and monitoring the technical aspects of the project, participating in project activities and maintaining close communication and consultations with project stakeholders.

15. The Project Coordination Unit (PCU) was to be established within the SAyDS. The PCU was to work under the overall supervision of the Regional Project Director and to be responsible for day-to-day project coordination and management.

5. Project Cost and Financing

16. The total project cost at design was US\$ 25,970,852, from which US\$ 6,909,091 was GEF funds (US\$ 3,249,800 through UNEP and US\$ 3,659,291 through UNDP), and US\$ 18,370,853 was co-financing. By June 2014 the actual project expenditure at UNEP was US\$ 1,131,736. By June 2014, the total realized co-financing was US\$ 4,200,000.

17. Table 4. Cost of the project (source: project documents)

Cost of the Project	US\$	Percentage
Cost to the GEF Trust Fund	7,600,000	29.3%
Co-financing		
Cash		
National Government	5,542,000	21.3%
<i>Sub-total</i>	5,542,000	21.3%
In-kind		
National Government	12,828,852	49.4%
<i>Sub-total</i>	12,828,852	49.4%
Co-finance Total	18,370,853	
Total	25,970,852	100%

18. Table 5. Distribution of GEF funds to UNEP and UNDP (source: project documents)

Implementing Agency	GEF Funds (US\$)	Percentage of share
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UNEP	3,249,800	47%
UNDP	3,659,291	53%

Table 6. Total project co-financing (source: project documents)

Co-financing source	Cash	%	In-Kind	%	Total	%
SAyDS Argentina	3,400,000	18.51	7,000,000	38.10	10,400,000	56.6
VMCRH Bolivia	1,400,000	7.62	3,100,000	16.87	4,500,000	24.5
SEAM Paraguay	742,000	40.4	2,728,852	14.85	3,470,852	18.9
Total co-financing:	5,542,000	30	12,828,852	70	18,370,852	100

6. Implementation Issues

19. The project document identified the following risks that could affect successful implementation of the project (i) Lack of coordination at national, province/department and municipal levels; excessive bureaucracy to allow for smooth project implementation, (ii) human resources constraints, lack of qualification and frequent mobilization of personnel in public institutions. Lack of knowledge on local customs and traditions, (iii) financial constraints, lack of sufficient allocation of resources on a timely fashion and excessive bureaucracy to be complied with for disbursement, (iv) lack of stakeholder willingness to participate and shift to sustainable management practices, low education and capacity levels to adopt sustainable management within a reasonable period within life of project, (v) unfavourable weather conditions may delay implementation of project activities and slow down adoption of sustainable management practices by affecting, i.e. access to communities and project sites, temporary displacement of stakeholders in affected areas, and changes in priorities of institutions, producers and other stakeholders.

20. The project underwent a mid-term review (MTR) in September 2014, which reported considerable delays in project initiation and implementation resulting in outputs not being delivered according to the workplan. The main recommendation the MTR provided in order to address the delays was to prioritize the delivery of demonstration projects in all three countries as the first stage and to complete the delivery of the biodiversity and carbon – outputs as a subsequent stage. In the Project Implementation Review (PIR) 2015 the project has rated its overall success as moderately satisfactory, going up from the moderately unsatisfactory rating of the previous years of implementation.

II. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE EVALUATION

1. Objective and Scope of the Evaluation

21. In line with the UNEP³ and UNDP⁴ Evaluation Policies the terminal evaluation of the UNEP and UNDP joint project *Sustainable forest management in the transboundary Gran Chaco Americano ecosystem* is undertaken at completion of the project to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The evaluation has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote operational improvement, learning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP, UNDP and the GEF. Therefore, the evaluation will identify lessons of operational relevance for future project formulation and implementation.

22. It will focus on the following sets of **key questions**, based on the project's intended outcomes, which may be expanded by the evaluator as deemed appropriate:

- (a) To what extent has the project strengthened institutional capacities at regional, national and local levels so that lack of capacity is no longer a barrier to the adoption of SFM and SLM? Is the capacity enhancement sustainable?
- (b) Do the developed SFM and SLM policies, technical tools and practices adequately incorporate considerations of climate change and biodiversity conservation? Are they mainstreamed at regional, national and local levels and will their application and implementation be sustainable?
- (c) Has the project increased the number of producers and the area in which SFM and SLM practices are being applied? How likely is it that due to the increased number of producers and area, further adoption of SFM and SLM practices becomes self-sustaining? Has the project established adequate mechanisms that ensure sustainability of project-supported structures and programs that result in large-scale adoption of SFM and SLM in the Gran Chaco?
- (d) Was the approach adopted by the project adequate and best possible to support sustainable forest management in the Gran Chaco Americano ecosystem? What was the strength of the project and what could it have done better?

2. Overall Approach and Methods

23. The terminal evaluation of the project *Sustainable forest management in the transboundary Gran Chaco Americano ecosystem* will be conducted by an independent consultant under the overall responsibility and management of the UNEP Evaluation Office in consultation with the UNEP and UNDP Task Managers, UNDP Evaluation function and UNEP GEF Coordination Office.

24. It will be an in-depth evaluation using a participatory approach whereby key stakeholders (including UNEP, UNDP, and the executing partners) are kept informed and consulted throughout the evaluation process. Both quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods will be used to determine project achievements against the expected outputs, outcomes and impacts. The evaluation will promote information exchange throughout the evaluation implementation in order to increase the project stakeholders' ownership of the evaluation findings.

25. The findings of the evaluation will be based on the following:

- (a) A **desk review** of (but not limited to):
 - Relevant background documentation, inter alia UNEP and UNDP programme documents (UNEP MTS 2010-2013 and 2014-2017 with the respective Programmes of Work, UNDP Strategic Plans for 2010-2013 and

³ <http://www.unep.org/eou/StandardsPolicyandPractices/UNEPEvaluationPolicy/tabid/3050/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

⁴ <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/policy.shtml>

2014-2017), the relevant UNDAF documents for Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay; documents of the STRAP Framework Agreement; National level policy instruments such as Argentina's National Programme for Climate Scenarios, Bolivia's National Climate change Adaptation Mechanism and Paraguay's 2008-2012 Climate Change Plan;

- UNEP and UNDP project design documents (including minutes of the project design review meeting at approval); annual work plans and budgets or equivalent, revisions to the project document, the logical framework and its budget and possible revisions;
- Project reports such as PIRs, six-monthly progress and financial reports, progress reports from collaborating partners, meeting minutes, relevant correspondence etc.;
- Documentation on project outputs;
- Mid-term review of the project;
- Evaluations/reviews / other documentation of similar projects, such as projects implemented within the framework of the SRAP and other regional and national initiatives implemented in the Chaco and other similar projects funded by the GEF with which the Gran Chaco project was to have coordinated actions.

(b) **Interviews (individual or in group) with** (but not limited to):

- UNEP Task Manager and Fund Management Officer;
- UNDP Regional Technical Advisor and UNDP County Office staff;
- The Regional Project Director and other Members of the Project Coordination team;
- Members of the Project Steering Committee;
- Relevant staff at the project executing agencies SAYDS, VMCRH and SEAM;
- Members of the communities of the project demonstration sites, including representatives of indigenous groups, women's groups, producers, peasants, small and large landowners;
- Project's regional stakeholders, including members of the STRAP Tri-national Council and the Tri-national Commission, members of the Tri-national Indigenous Commission of the Chaco;
- Project's national stakeholders, including relevant government agencies in the three countries, CCD National Focal Points, NGOs, Universities and other science organizations, and private sector such as producers' associations;
- Key project staff implementing similar initiatives in the region, including staff of other UN agencies such as FAO.

(c) The evaluation consultant will visit Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay including meeting the government representatives and other relevant stakeholders in the capitals and visiting all project demonstration sites; Argentina – (i) Chancani in the Department of Pocho, Province of Cordoba, (ii) Santos Lugares and Garza, Province of Santiago del Estero, (iii) Riacho Teuguito Biosphere Reserve, Province of Formosa, (iv) Teuco-Bermejito, Province of Chaco; Bolivia (i) Charagua, (ii) Yacuiba, (iii) Monteagudo, (iv) Villamontes; Paraguay (i) three sites in the Central Chaco, Department of Boqueron.

(d) The evaluation can conduct surveys or apply other tools to collect evidence to support the evaluation. A detailed description of the evaluation methods will be provided in the Evaluation Inception Report.

3. Key Evaluation principles

26. Evaluation findings and judgements should be based on **sound evidence and analysis**, clearly documented in the evaluation report. Information will be triangulated (i.e. verified from different sources) to the extent possible, and when verification is not possible, the single source will be mentioned, however, respecting anonymity. Analysis leading to evaluative judgements should always be clearly spelled out.

27. The evaluation will assess the project with respect to **a minimum set of evaluation criteria** grouped in five categories: (1) Strategic Relevance; (2) Attainment of objectives and planned results, which comprises the assessment of outputs, effectiveness and likelihood of impact; (3) Sustainability and replication; (4) Efficiency; and (5) Factors and processes affecting project performance, including preparation and readiness, implementation and management, stakeholder participation and public awareness, country ownership and driven-ness, financial planning and management, UNEP and UNDP supervision and backstopping, and project monitoring and evaluation. The evaluation consultant can propose other evaluation criteria as deemed appropriate.

28. **Ratings.** All evaluation criteria will be rated on a six-point scale. Annex 3 provides guidance on how the different criteria should be rated and how ratings should be aggregated for the different evaluation criterion categories.

29. **Baselines and counterfactuals.** In attempting to attribute any outcomes and impacts to the project intervention, the evaluator should consider the difference between *what has happened with, and what would have happened without, the project*. This implies that there should be consideration of the baseline conditions, trends and counterfactuals in relation to the intended project outcomes and impacts. It also means that there should be plausible evidence to attribute such outcomes and impacts to the actions of the project. Sometimes, adequate information on baseline conditions, trends or counterfactuals is lacking. In such cases this should be clearly highlighted by the evaluator, along with any simplifying assumptions that were taken to enable the evaluator to make informed judgements about project performance.

30. **Theory of Change (ToC).** UNEP project evaluations make use of ToC analysis to help assess several evaluation criteria. The ToC of a project describes the causal pathways from project outputs (goods and services delivered by the project) through outcomes (changes resulting from the use made by key stakeholders of project outputs) towards impact (long term changes in environmental benefits and human living conditions). The ToC also presents any intermediate changes required between project outcomes and impact, called 'intermediate states'. The ToC further describes the external factors that influence change along the major impact pathways; i.e. factors that affect whether one result can lead to the next. These external factors are either drivers (when the project has a certain level of control) or assumptions (when the project has no control). The ToC also clearly identifies the main stakeholders involved in the change processes.

31. A ToC is best presented as a narrative accompanied by a diagram. A diagram is often useful to show an overview of the causal pathways, the cause-to-effect relationship between different results / changes, and where the drivers and assumption intervene along the results pathways. It is also a great tool for discussing the ToC with project stakeholders. The narrative, however, will explain how or why one result is expected to lead to another, and should also present the roles of the main stakeholders in the change processes and how they can be affected by the changes resulting from the project intervention.

32. The evaluation will reconstruct the ToC of the project at design and at evaluation, based on a review of project documentation and stakeholder interviews. Verifying, amending and updating the problem analysis at the origin of the project will be an essential first step in reconstructing the ToC. The evaluator is expected to discuss the problem analysis and reconstructed ToC with key stakeholders during evaluation missions and/or interviews in order to ascertain his/her understanding of the project context, the impact pathways, the roles of various stakeholders and the validity of drivers and assumptions described in the ToC. Annex 9 proposes an approach for reconstructing the ToC of a project at design and at evaluation.

33. **The "Why?" Question.** As this is a terminal evaluation, particular attention should be given to learning from the experience. Therefore, the "Why?" question should be at the front of the consultant's mind all through the evaluation exercise. This means that the consultant needs to go beyond the assessment of "what" the project performance was, and make a serious effort to provide a deeper understanding of "why" the performance was as it was. This would include reviewing the Theory of Change of the project and the processes affecting attainment of project results (criteria under category F – see below). This should provide the basis for the lessons that can be drawn from the project. In fact, the usefulness of the evaluation will be determined to a large extent by the capacity of the consultant to explain "why things happened" as they happened and are likely to evolve in this or that direction, which goes well beyond the mere review of "where things stand" at the time of evaluation.

34. A key aim of the evaluation is to encourage reflection and learning by UNEP and UNDP staff and key project stakeholders. The consultant should consider how reflection and learning can be promoted, both through the evaluation process and in the communication of evaluation findings and key lessons.

35. Once the evaluation consultant has obtained evaluation findings, lessons and results, the UNEP Evaluation Office will share the findings and lessons with the key stakeholders. Evaluation results should be communicated to the key stakeholders in a brief and concise manner that encapsulates the evaluation exercise in its entirety. There may, however, be several intended audiences, each with different interests and preferences regarding the report. The Evaluation Manager at UNEP Evaluation Office will plan with the consultant which audiences to target and the easiest and clearest way to communicate the key evaluation findings and lessons to them. This may include some or all of the

following; a webinar, conference calls with relevant stakeholders, the preparation of an evaluation brief or interactive presentation.

4. Evaluation criteria

A. Strategic relevance

36. The evaluation will assess whether the project's objectives and implementation strategies were consistent with global, regional and national environmental issues and needs. The evaluation will assess the project's consistency with the NAPs to combat desertification of Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay, as well as the SRAP Framework.

37. The evaluation will assess whether the project was in-line with the GEF Land Degradation, Biodiversity and Climate Change focal areas' strategic priorities and operational programme(s). The evaluation will also assess the project's relevance in relation to UNEP's and UNDP's mandates and its alignment with UNEP's and UNDP's policies and strategies at the time of project approval and verify the alignment of the project with UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) and Programmes of Work (PoW)⁵, and with UNDP's Strategic Plan. The evaluation will briefly discuss the comparative advantage of the two agencies in the project.

38. The evaluation should also provide a brief narrative of the following:

1. *Alignment with the Bali Strategic Plan (BSP)*⁶. The outcomes and achievements of the project should be briefly discussed in relation to the objectives of the UNEP BSP.
2. *Gender balance*. Ascertain to what extent project design, implementation and monitoring have taken into consideration: (i) possible gender inequalities in access to and the control over natural resources; (ii) specific vulnerabilities of women and children to environmental degradation or disasters; and (iii) the role of women in mitigating or adapting to environmental changes and engaging in environmental protection and rehabilitation. Are the project intended results contributing to the realization of international Gender Equality (GE) norms and agreements as reflected in the UNEP's Gender Policy and Strategy, as well as to regional, national and local strategies to advance gender equity?
3. *Human rights based approach (HRBA) and inclusion of indigenous people's issues, needs and concerns*. Ascertain to what extent the project has applied the UN Common Understanding on HRBA. Ascertain if the project is in line with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, and pursued the concept of free, prior and informed consent.
4. *South-South Cooperation*. This is regarded as the exchange of resources, technology, and knowledge between developing countries. Briefly describe any aspects of the project that could be considered as examples of South-South Cooperation.
5. *Safeguards*. Whether the project has adequately considered environmental, social and economic risks and established whether they were vigilantly monitored. Was the safeguard management instrument completed and were GEF environmental, social and economic safeguards (ESES) requirements complied with?

39. Based on an analysis of project stakeholders, the evaluation should assess the relevance of the project intervention to key stakeholder groups.

B. Achievement of Outputs

40. The evaluation will assess, for each component, the projects' success in producing the programmed outputs (products and services delivered by the project itself) and milestones as per the project document and any

⁵ UNEP's Medium Term Strategy (MTS) is a document that guides UNEP's programme planning over a four-year period. It identifies UNEP's thematic priorities, known as sub-programmes (SP), and sets out the desired outcomes [known as Expected Accomplishments (EAs)] of the sub-programmes. Programmes of Work are biennial planning documents that set out, for each sub-programme (SP), the desired outcomes (known as Expected Accomplishments) and outputs. Programme Framework documents are prepared for each sub-programme and present the overall sub-programme's Theory of Change.

⁶ <http://www.unep.org/GC/GC23/documents/GC23-6-add-1.pdf>

modifications/revisions later on during project implementation, both in quantity and quality, as well as their usefulness and timeliness.

41. While the assessment of achievement of outputs should cover all programmed outputs at design and those outputs added by possible project revisions, it is often impossible to assess all project outputs with the same level of detail. The reconstructed ToC can be used to determine what project outputs are most essential for achieving the project outcomes, and also to establish the minimum characteristics and quality requirements for the project outputs so that they can provide their expected contribution to the project outcomes. The assessment of the achievement of outputs can then focus on the most critical outputs, and verify whether these meet the requisite characteristics and quality.

42. The evaluation should briefly explain the reasons behind the success (or shortcomings) of the project in producing its different outputs and meeting expected quality standards, cross-referencing as needed to more detailed explanations provided under Section F (which covers the processes affecting attainment of project results). Were key stakeholders appropriately involved in producing the programmed outputs to promote their ownership and use?

C. Effectiveness: Attainment of Objectives and Planned Results

43. The evaluation will assess the extent to which the project's objectives were effectively achieved or are expected to be achieved.

44. The **Theory of Change** (ToC) of a project depicts the causal pathways from project outputs (goods and services delivered by the project) through outcomes (changes resulting from the use made by key stakeholders of project outputs) towards impact (long term changes in environmental benefits and living conditions). The ToC will also depict any intermediate changes required between project outcomes and impact, called 'intermediate states'. The ToC further defines the external factors that influence change along the major pathways; i.e. factors that affect whether one result can lead to the next. These external factors are either drivers (when the project has a certain level of control) or assumptions (when the project has no control). The ToC also clearly identifies the main stakeholders involved in the change processes.

45. The evaluation will reconstruct the ToC of the project based on a review of project documentation and stakeholder interviews. The evaluator will be expected to discuss the reconstructed ToC with the stakeholders during evaluation missions and/or interviews in order to ascertain the causal pathways identified and the validity of impact drivers and assumptions described in the ToC. This exercise will also enable the consultant to address some of the key evaluation questions and make adjustments to the ToC as appropriate (the ToC of the intervention may have been modified / adapted from the original design during project implementation).

46. The assessment of effectiveness will be structured in three sub-sections:

- (a) Evaluation of the **achievement of outcomes as defined in the reconstructed ToC**. These are the first-level outcomes expected to be achieved as an immediate result of project outputs.
- (b) Assessment of the **likelihood of impact** using a Review of Outcomes to Impacts (ROtI) approach⁷. The evaluation will assess to what extent the project has to date contributed, and is likely in the future to further contribute, to the intermediate states, and the likelihood that those changes in turn to lead to positive changes in the natural resource base, benefits derived from the environment and human well-being. The evaluation will also consider the likelihood that the intervention may lead to unintended negative effects (project documentation relating to Environmental, Social and Economic Safeguards). In order for the evaluation to meet UNDP requirements for impact assessment, the evaluation will also specifically assess whether the project has demonstrated: a) verifiable improvements in ecological status, b) verifiable reductions in stress on ecological systems, or 3) demonstrated progress towards these impact achievements. The reconstructed ToC will be used as a basis of the assessment and the evaluation will provide a rating for these three criteria.
- (c) Evaluation of the **achievement of the formal project overall objective, overall purpose, goals and component outcomes** using the project's own results statements as presented in the Project

⁷

Guidance material on Theory of Change and the ROtI approach is available from the Evaluation Office.

Document⁸. This sub-section will refer back where applicable to the preceding sub-sections (a) and (b) to avoid repetition in the report. To measure achievement, the evaluation will use as much as appropriate the indicators for achievement proposed in the Logical Framework (Logframe) of the project, adding other relevant indicators as appropriate. Briefly explain what factors affected the project's success in achieving its objectives, cross-referencing as needed to more detailed explanations provided under Section F. Most commonly, the overall objective is a higher level result to which the project is intended to contribute. The section will describe the actual or likely **contribution** of the project to the objective.

- (d) The evaluation should, where possible, disaggregate outcomes and impacts for the key project stakeholders. It should also assess the extent to which human rights and gender equity were integrated in the Theory of Change and results framework of the intervention and to what degree participating institutions/organizations changed their policies or practices thereby leading to the fulfilment of human rights and gender equity principles (e.g. new services, greater responsiveness, resource re-allocation, etc.).

D. Sustainability and replication

47. Sustainability is understood as the probability of continued long-term project-derived results and impacts after the external project funding and assistance ends. The evaluation will identify and assess the key conditions or factors that are likely to undermine or contribute to the persistence of benefits. Some of these factors might be direct results of the project while others will include contextual circumstances or developments that are not under control of the project but that may condition the sustainability of benefits. The evaluation will ascertain that the project has put in place an appropriate exit strategy and measures to mitigate risks to sustainability.

48. The evaluation consultant can use the ToC to see whether sustainability has been built into the impact pathways and whether the necessary drivers and assumptions (external factors and conditions) affecting sustainability have been adequately considered in the project's intervention logic. The evaluator should assess how likely the sustainability of direct outcomes is, and what the relative importance is of the direct outcomes to sustain higher level changes. Indeed, as outcomes relate most often to individual and institutional capacity building, they are often by themselves expected to ensure sustainability. For instance, a set of new regulations could be at the basis of a lasting change in how a natural resource is being managed. In addition to looking at the direct outcomes, the evaluation consultant will further assess sustainability of changes at intermediate state and impact levels by verifying the presence of drivers and validity of assumptions that affect sustainability of higher level results, considering their relative importance. Many drivers and assumptions required for progressing along the causal pathways from outputs to impact are also required for sustaining positive changes. Those external factors affecting sustainability are categorized in socio-political factors, financial factors, institutional factors and environmental factors:

- (a) *Socio-political sustainability.* Are there any social or political factors that may influence positively or negatively the sustenance of project results and progress towards impacts? Is the level of ownership by the main stakeholders sufficient to allow for the project results to be sustained? Are there sufficient government and other key stakeholder awareness, interests, commitment and incentives to sustain project results? Did the project conduct 'succession planning' and implement this during the life of the project? Was capacity building conducted for key stakeholders? Did the intervention activities aim to promote (and did they promote) positive sustainable changes in attitudes, behaviours and power relations between the different stakeholders? To what extent has the integration of human rights and gender equity led to an increase in the likelihood of sustainability of project results?
- (b) *Financial resources.* To what extent are the continuation of project results and the eventual impact of the project dependent on financial resources? What is the likelihood that adequate financial resources⁹ will be or will become available to use capacities built by the project? Are there any financial risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project results and onward progress towards impact?
- (c) *Institutional framework.* To what extent is the sustenance of the results and onward progress towards impact dependent on issues relating to institutional frameworks and governance? How robust are the institutional achievements such as governance structures and processes, policies, sub-regional

⁸ Or any subsequent **formally approved** revision of the project document or logical framework.

⁹ Those resources can be from multiple sources, such as the national budget, public and private sectors, development assistance etc.

agreements, legal and accountability frameworks etc. required to sustaining project results and to lead those to impact on human behaviour and environmental resources, goods or services?

- (d) *Environmental sustainability.* Are there any environmental factors, positive or negative, that can influence the future flow of project benefits? Are there any project outputs or higher level results that are likely to affect the environment, which, in turn, might affect sustainability of project benefits? Are there any foreseeable negative environmental impacts that may occur as the project results are being up-scaled?

49. **Catalytic role, replication and up-scaling.** The project's *catalytic role* is embodied in its approach of supporting the creation of an enabling environment and of investing in pilot activities which are innovative and showing how new approaches can work. UNEP aims to support activities that upscale new approaches to a national, regional or global level, with a view to achieve sustainable global environmental benefits. The evaluation will assess the catalytic role played by this project, namely to what extent the project has:

- (a) *catalysed behavioural changes* in terms of use and application, by the relevant stakeholders, of capacities developed;
- (b) provided *incentives* (social, economic, market based, competencies etc.) to contribute to catalysing changes in stakeholder behaviour;
- (c) contributed to *institutional changes*, for instance institutional uptake of project-demonstrated technologies, practices or management approaches;
- (d) contributed to *policy changes* (on paper and in implementation of policy);
- (e) contributed to sustained follow-on financing (*catalytic financing*) from governments, private sector, donors etc.;
- (f) created opportunities for particular individuals or institutions ("*champions*") to catalyse change (without which the project would not have achieved all of its results).

50. *Replication* is defined as the repetition of project approaches or application of project lessons in different geographic locations, while *up-scaling* is defined as the repetition of project approaches or application of project lessons in the same area, but on a much larger scale. Both replication and up-scaling should be undertaken by other actors and be funded by other sources than the project itself.

51. ToC analysis can help with the assessment of replication and up-scaling potential of an intervention in a similar way it can help with the assessment of sustainability, except that here, the evaluator should focus on those direct outcomes, drivers and assumptions that are most necessary for replication and up-scaling of project results. The evaluation consultant can thus use the ToC to see whether replication and up-scaling have been built into the causal pathways and whether the necessary drivers and assumptions (external factors and conditions) promoting replication and up-scaling have been adequately considered in the project's intervention logic. To assess the likelihood of replication and up-scaling, the evaluator will assess the relative importance of direct outcomes, drivers and assumptions for enabling replication and up-scaling, and verify to what extent the most influential ones have been achieved or are present. The reliability of this assessment can be enhanced by looking for early evidence of replication or up-scaling during the project lifetime.

E. Efficiency

52. The evaluation will assess the cost-effectiveness and timeliness of project execution. It will describe any cost- or time-saving measures put in place in attempting to bring the project as far as possible in achieving its results within its secured budget and time. It will also analyse how delays, if any, have affected project execution, costs and effectiveness. Wherever possible, costs and time over results ratios of the project will be compared with that of other similar interventions. The evaluation will also assess the extent to which human rights and gender equity were allocated specific and adequate budget in relation to the results achieved.

53. The evaluation will give special attention to efforts by the project teams to make use of/build upon pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other initiatives, programmes and projects to increase project efficiency. The evaluation will assess the extent collaboration has been sought and realised with the various other initiatives implemented in the Chaco ecosystem, including other GEF funded projects and projects implemented under the SRAP Framework.

F. Factors and processes affecting project performance

54. **Preparation and readiness.** This criterion focuses on the quality of project design and preparation. Were project stakeholders¹⁰ adequately identified and were they sufficiently involved in project development and ground truthing e.g. of proposed timeframe and budget? Were the project's objectives and components clear, practicable and feasible within its timeframe? Are potentially negative environmental, economic and social impacts of projects identified? Were the capacities of executing agencies properly considered when the project was designed? Was the project document clear and realistic to enable effective and efficient implementation? Were the partnership arrangements properly identified and the roles and responsibilities negotiated prior to project implementation? Were counterpart resources (funding, staff, and facilities) and enabling legislation assured? Were adequate project management arrangements in place? Were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated in the project design? What factors influenced the quality-at-entry of the project design, choice of partners, allocation of financial resources etc.? Were any design weaknesses mentioned in the Project Review Committee minutes at the time of project approval adequately addressed?

55. The ToC can be used to assess several aspects of project design, and, as a result, for assessing how well stakeholders were likely involved during project design processes. The UNEP Programme Manual recommends that all projects are designed on the basis of a thorough situation analysis with the development of a problem tree. This problem tree should then be used by the designers to develop the ToC of the project, by inverting problems into positive changes and conditions, and determining which changes and conditions the project will focus on. The necessary changes and conditions that are not part of the project's focus should then be considered as external factors affecting impact (either drivers or assumptions).

56. **Project implementation and management.** This includes an analysis of implementation approaches used by the project, its management framework, the project's adaptation to changing conditions and responses to changing risks including safeguard issues (adaptive management), the performance of the implementation arrangements and partnerships, relevance of changes in project design, and overall performance of project management. The evaluation will:

- (g) Ascertain to what extent the project implementation mechanisms outlined in the project document have been followed and were effective in delivering project milestones, outputs and outcomes. Were pertinent adaptations made to the approaches originally proposed?
- (h) Evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of project management and how well the management was able to adapt to changes during the life of the project.
- (i) Assess the role and performance of the teams and working groups established and the project execution arrangements at all levels.
- (j) Assess the extent to which project management responded to the direction and guidance provided by the UNEP and UNDP Task Managers and project steering bodies;
- (k) Identify operational and political / institutional problems and constraints that influenced the effective implementation of the project, and how the project tried to overcome these problems.

57. The ToC can help understand the exact role of the project management team in delivering the project outputs and pushing change along the different causal pathways. The evaluation consultant can further assess whether the project team has put sufficient effort in promoting the drivers presented in the reconstructed ToC. Also, a comparison of the ToC at design and the reconstructed ToC can help assess adaptive management by the project to respond to a changing context and react to invalid assumptions.

58. **Stakeholder participation, cooperation and partnerships.** The evaluation will assess the effectiveness of mechanisms for information sharing and cooperation with external stakeholders and partners. The term stakeholder should be considered in the broadest sense, encompassing both project partners and target users of project products. The ToC and stakeholder analysis should assist the evaluators in identifying the key stakeholders and their respective roles, capabilities and motivations in each step of the causal pathways from activities to achievement of outputs, outcomes and intermediate states towards impact. The assessment will look at three related and often overlapping processes: (1) information dissemination to and between stakeholders, (2) consultation with and between

¹⁰ Stakeholders are the individuals, groups, institutions, or other bodies that have an interest or 'stake' in the outcome of the project. The term also applies to those potentially adversely affected by the project.

stakeholders, and (3) active engagement of stakeholders in project decision making and activities. The evaluation will specifically assess:

- (a) The approach(es) and mechanisms used to identify and engage stakeholders in project design and at critical stages of project implementation. What were the strengths and weaknesses of these approaches with respect to the project's objectives and the stakeholders' motivations and capacities?
- (b) How was the overall collaboration between the different functional units involved in the project? What coordination mechanisms were in place? Were the incentives for internal collaboration in UNEP adequate?
- (c) Was the level of involvement of UNEP's Regional, Liaison and Out-posted Offices in project design, planning, decision-making and implementation of activities appropriate?
- (d) Has the project made full use of opportunities for collaboration with other projects and programmes including opportunities not mentioned in the project document? Have complementarities been sought, synergies been optimized and duplications avoided?
- (e) What was the achieved degree and effectiveness of collaboration and interactions between the various project partners and stakeholders during design and implementation of the project? This should be disaggregated for the main stakeholder groups identified in the inception report.
- (f) To what extent has the project been able to take up opportunities for joint activities, pooling of resources and mutual learning with other organisations and networks? In particular, how useful are partnership mechanisms and initiatives to build stronger coherence and collaboration between participating organisations?
- (g) How did the relationship between the project and the collaborating partners (institutions and individual experts) develop? Which benefits stemmed from their involvement for project performance, for UNEP, UNDP and for the stakeholders and partners themselves? Do the results of the project (strategic programmes and plans, monitoring and management systems, sub-regional agreements etc.) promote participation of stakeholders, including users, in environmental decision making?

59. The evaluation consultant can refer to the ToC to verify whether it includes an approach for sharing information and cooperation with partners, national/local project stakeholders and across UNEP and UNDP. Also, the ToC, stakeholder analysis and partner analysis should assist the evaluator in identifying the key stakeholders and their respective roles, capabilities and motivations in each step of the causal pathways from activities to achievement of outputs, outcomes and intermediate states towards impact, and should help to answer many of the questions asked above.

60. **Communication and public awareness.** The evaluation will assess the effectiveness of any public awareness activities that were undertaken during the course of implementation of the project to communicate the project's objective, progress, outcomes and lessons. This should be disaggregated for the main stakeholder groups identified in the inception report. Did the project identify and make use of existing communication channels and networks used by key stakeholders? Did the project provide feedback channels?

61. **Country ownership and driven-ness.** The evaluation will assess the degree and effectiveness of involvement of government / public sector agencies in the project, in particular those involved in project execution and those participating in the Project Board:

- (a) To what extent have the Governments of the participating countries assumed responsibility for the project and provided adequate support to project execution, including the degree of cooperation received from the various public institutions involved in the project?
- (b) How and how well did the project stimulate country ownership of project outputs and outcomes?

62. **Financial planning and management.** Evaluation of financial planning requires assessment of the quality and effectiveness of financial planning and control of financial resources throughout the project's lifetime. The assessment will look at actual project costs by activities compared to budget (variances), financial management (including disbursement issues), and co-financing. The evaluation will:

- (a) Verify the application of proper standards (clarity, transparency, audit etc.) and timeliness of financial planning, management and reporting to ensure that sufficient and timely financial resources were available to the project and its partners;
- (b) Assess other administrative processes such as recruitment of staff, procurement of goods and services (including consultants), preparation and negotiation of cooperation agreements etc. to the extent that these might have influenced project performance;

- (c) Present the extent to which co-financing has materialised as expected at project approval. Report country co-financing to the project overall, and to support project activities at the national level in particular. The evaluation will provide a breakdown of final actual costs and co-financing for the different project components (see tables in Annex 4).
- (d) Describe the resources the project has leveraged since inception and indicate how these resources are contributing to the project's ultimate objective. Leveraged resources are additional resources—beyond those committed to the project itself at the time of approval—that are mobilized later as a direct result of the project. Leveraged resources can be financial or in-kind and they may be from other donors, NGO's, foundations, governments, communities or the private sector.

63. Analyse the effects on project performance of any irregularities in procurement, use of financial resources and human resource management, and the measures taken UNEP and UNDP to prevent such irregularities in the future. Determine whether the measures taken were adequate.

64. **Supervision, guidance and technical backstopping.** The purpose of supervision is to verify the quality and timeliness of project execution in terms of finances, administration and achievement of outputs and outcomes, in order to identify and recommend ways to deal with problems which arise during project execution. Such problems may be related to project management but may also involve technical/institutional substantive issues in which UNEP and UNDP has a major contribution to make.

65. The evaluator should assess the effectiveness of supervision, guidance and technical support provided by the different supervising/supporting bodies including:

- (a) The adequacy of project supervision plans, inputs and processes;
- (b) The realism and candour of project reporting and the emphasis given to outcome monitoring (results-based project management);
- (c) How well did the different guidance and backstopping bodies play their role and how well did the guidance and backstopping mechanisms work? What were the strengths in guidance and backstopping and what were the limiting factors?

66. **Monitoring and evaluation.** The evaluation will include an assessment of the quality, application and effectiveness of project monitoring and evaluation plans and tools, including an assessment of risk management based on the assumptions and risks identified in the project document. The evaluation will assess how information generated by the M&E system during project implementation was used to adapt and improve project execution, achievement of outcomes and ensuring sustainability. M&E is assessed on two levels:

- (a) *M&E Design.* The evaluator should use the following questions to help assess the M&E design aspects:
 - Arrangements for monitoring: Did the project have a sound M&E plan to monitor results and track progress towards achieving project objectives? Have the responsibilities for M&E activities been clearly defined between UNEP and UNDP and the executing agencies? Were the data sources and data collection instruments appropriate? Was the time frame for various M&E activities specified? Was the frequency of various monitoring activities specified and adequate?
 - How well was the project logical framework (original and possible updates) designed as a planning and monitoring instrument?
 - SMART-ness of indicators: Are there specific indicators in the logframe for each of the project objectives? Are the indicators measurable, attainable (realistic) and relevant to the objectives? Are the indicators time-bound?
 - Adequacy of baseline information: To what extent has baseline information on performance indicators been collected and presented in a clear manner? Was the methodology for the baseline data collection explicit and reliable? For instance, was there adequate baseline information on pre-existing accessible information on global and regional environmental status and trends, and on the costs and benefits of different policy options for the different target audiences? Was there sufficient information about the assessment capacity of collaborating institutions and experts etc. to determine their training and technical support needs?
 - To what extent did the project engage key stakeholders in the design and implementation of monitoring? Which stakeholders were involved? If any stakeholders were excluded, what was the reason for this? Was sufficient information collected on specific indicators to measure progress on human rights and gender equity (including sex-disaggregated data)?
 - Did the project appropriately plan to monitor risks associated with Environmental Economic and Social Safeguards?

- Arrangements for evaluation: Have specific targets been specified for project outputs? Has the desired level of achievement been specified for all indicators of objectives and outcomes? Were there adequate provisions in the legal instruments binding project partners to fully collaborate in evaluations?
- Budgeting and funding for M&E activities: Determine whether support for M&E was budgeted adequately and was funded in a timely fashion during implementation.

(b) *M&E Plan Implementation.* The evaluation will verify that:

- The M&E system was operational and facilitated timely tracking of results and progress towards projects objectives throughout the project implementation period;
- PIR reports were prepared (the realism of the Task Manager's assessments will be reviewed)
- Half-yearly Progress and Financial Reports were complete and accurate;
- Risk monitoring (including safeguard issues) was regularly documented;
- The information provided by the M&E system was used during the project to improve project performance and to adapt to changing needs.

67. The ToC of the project can help with assessing the quality of project monitoring and evaluation plans and tools, and how information gathered by the M&E system was used to adapt and improve project execution, achievement of outcomes and ensuring sustainability, replication and up-scaling. More specifically, the assessment of the ToC at design and the reconstructed ToC can help with the assessment of the quality of the logical framework (original and possible updates) as a planning and monitoring instrument. The quality of the ToC can also be very telling about the adequacy of baseline information, for instance on the problem context, lessons learned from previous experience on what works and doesn't work and the capacity of partners.

68. The evaluator can compare the ToC at design and the reconstructed ToC to verify whether monitoring and mid-term review findings have been used to bring possible adjustments to the project focus, increase attention on key drivers and put in place measures to deal with possible false assumptions, in other words whether the information provided by the M&E system was used during the project to improve project performance and to adapt to changing needs.

5. The Evaluation Consultant

69. This evaluation will be conducted by an independent evaluation consultant. The evaluation consultant should have ten years of technical / evaluation experience, including experience in evaluating GEF funded projects and using a theory of change approach. The consultant should have a good understanding of the Gran Chaco ecosystem, sustainable land management, sustainable forest management and sustainable management of water resources. Details about the specific qualifications and responsibilities of the consultant are presented in Annex 1 of these ToRs.

6. Evaluation Deliverables and Review Procedures

70. The evaluation consultant will prepare an **inception report** (see Annex 2(a) of ToRs for Inception Report outline) containing a thorough review of the project context, project design quality, a draft reconstructed theory of change of the project, the evaluation framework and a tentative evaluation schedule.

71. It is expected that a large portion of the desk review will be conducted during the inception phase. It will be important to acquire a good understanding of the project context, design and process at this stage. The inception report will present a draft, desk-based reconstructed theory of change of the project. It is vital to reconstruct the ToC *before* most of the data collection (review of progress reports, in-depth interviews, surveys etc.) is done, because the ToC will define which direct outcomes, drivers and assumptions of the project need to be assessed and measured – based on which indicators – to allow adequate data collection for the evaluation of project effectiveness, likelihood of impact and sustainability. The inception report will also include a stakeholder analysis and a review of project design. The evaluation framework will present in further detail the overall evaluation approach. It will specify for each evaluation question under the various criteria what the respective indicators and data sources will be. The evaluation framework should summarize the information available from project documentation against each of the main evaluation parameters. Any gaps in information should be identified and methods for additional data collection,

verification and analysis should be specified. Evaluations/reviews of other large assessments can provide ideas about the most appropriate evaluation methods to be used.

72. Effective communication strategies help stakeholders understand the results and use the information for organisational learning and improvement. While the evaluation is expected to result in a comprehensive document, content is not always best shared in a long and detailed report; this is best presented in a synthesised form using any of a variety of creative and innovative methods. The evaluator is encouraged to make use of multimedia formats in the gathering of information, such as video, photos, sound recordings. Together with the full report, the evaluator will be expected to produce a two-page summary of key findings and lessons. A template for this has been provided in Annex 10.

73. The inception report will also present a tentative schedule for the overall evaluation process, including a draft programme for the country visit and tentative list of people/institutions to be interviewed.

74. The inception report will be submitted for review and approval by the UNEP Evaluation Office before the any further data collection and analysis is undertaken.

75. **The main evaluation report** should be brief (no longer than 40 pages – excluding the executive summary and annexes), to the point and written in plain English. The main evaluation report will also be provided in Spanish. The report will follow the annotated table of contents outlined in Annex 2. It must explain the purpose of the evaluation, exactly what was evaluated and the methods used (with their limitations). The report will present evidence-based and balanced findings, consequent conclusions, lessons and recommendations, which will be cross-referenced to each other. The report should be presented in a way that makes the information accessible and comprehensible. Any dissident views in response to evaluation findings will be appended in footnote or annex as appropriate. To avoid repetitions in the report, the authors will use numbered paragraphs and make cross-references where possible.

76. **Review of the draft evaluation report.** The evaluation consultant will submit a zero draft report to the UNEP Evaluation Office (EOU) and revise the draft following the comments and suggestions made by the EOU. Once a draft of adequate quality has been accepted, the EOU will share this first draft report with the UNEP and UNDP Task Managers, who will alert the EOU in case the report would contain any blatant factual errors. The UNEP Evaluation Office will then forward the first draft report to the other project stakeholders for their review and comments. Stakeholders may provide feedback on any errors of fact and may highlight the significance of such errors in any conclusions. It is also very important that stakeholders provide feedback on the proposed recommendations and lessons. Comments would be expected within two weeks after the draft report has been shared. Any comments or responses to the draft report will be sent to the UNEP EOU for collation. The EOU will provide the comments to the evaluation consultant for consideration in preparing the final draft report, along with its own views.

77. The evaluation consultant will submit the final draft report no later than two weeks after reception of stakeholder comments. The consultant will prepare a **response to comments**, listing those comments not or only partially accepted by them that could therefore not or only partially be accommodated in the final report (see Annex 11 for UNDP-GEF evaluation audit trail template). The consultant will explain why those comments have not or only partially been accepted, providing evidence as required. This response to comments will be shared by the EOU with the interested stakeholders to ensure full transparency. The audit trail will be annexed to the main evaluation report.

78. **Submission of the final evaluation report.** The final report shall be submitted by e-mail to the evaluation manager at the UNEP Evaluation Office who will share the report with the Director of the UNEP Evaluation Office and the UNDP Independent Evaluation Office. The Evaluation Office will finalize the report and share it with the interested Divisions and Sub-programme Coordinators in UNEP. The final evaluation report will be published on the UNEP Evaluation Office web-site www.unep.org/eou.

79. As per usual practice, the UNEP EOU will prepare a **quality assessment** of the zero draft and the final evaluation report, which is a tool for providing structured feedback to the evaluation consultants. The quality of the report will be assessed and rated against the criteria specified in Annex 3.

80. The UNEP Evaluation Office will assess the project evaluation ratings in the final evaluation report based on a careful review of the evidence collated by the evaluation consultant and the internal consistency of the report. Where there are differences of opinion between the evaluator and UNEP Evaluation Office on project ratings, both

viewpoints will be clearly presented in the final report. The UNEP Evaluation Office ratings will be considered the final ratings for the project.

81. At the end of the evaluation process at UNEP, the UNEP Evaluation Office will prepare a Recommendations Implementation Plan to be completed and updated at regular intervals by the UNEP Task Manager. After reception of the Recommendations Implementation Plan, the Task Manager is expected to complete it and return it to the EOU within one month. (S)he is expected to update the plan every six month until the end of the tracking period. As this is a terminal evaluation, the tracking period for implementation of recommendations will be 18 months, unless it is agreed to make this period shorter or longer as required for realistic implementation of all evaluation recommendations. Tracking points will be every six months after completion of the implementation plan.

7. Logistical arrangements

82. This terminal evaluation will be undertaken by an independent evaluation consultant contracted by the UNEP Evaluation Office. The consultant will work under the overall responsibility of the UNEP Evaluation Office and will consult with the EOU on any procedural and methodological matters related to the evaluation. It is, however, the consultant's individual responsibility to obtain documentary evidence, plan meetings with stakeholders, organize online surveys, plan for her/his travel in coordination with the Evaluation Office, arrange for her/his travel visa, and any other logistical matters related to the assignment. The UNEP and UNDP Task Managers and project team will, where possible, provide logistical support (introductions, meetings, assistance in demonstration site visits etc.) allowing the consultant to conduct the evaluation as efficiently and independently as possible.

8. Schedule of the evaluation

83. Table 7 below presents the tentative schedule for the evaluation.

Table 7. Tentative schedule for the evaluation

Milestone	Deadline
Consultant contracted	September 2016
Inception Report	October 2016
Evaluation Missions	November 2016
Zero draft report	December 2016
Draft Report shared with UNEP and UNDP Task Managers	December 2016
Draft Report shared with other stakeholders	January 2017
Final Report	January 2017

Annex 1. Consultant terms of reference

The evaluation consultant will be hired for the period 1 November 2016 – 14 April 2017. (S)He will be responsible for conducting the evaluation, in close consultation with the UNEP Evaluation Office, and timely delivery of its outputs as described in the ToR of the evaluation. (S)He will lead the evaluation design, data collection and analysis and report-writing. More specifically:

Inception phase of the evaluation, including:

- conduct a preliminary desk review and introductory interviews with project staff;
- draft the reconstructed Theory of Change of the project;
- prepare the evaluation framework;
- develop the desk review and interview protocols;
- draft the survey protocols (partner survey and user survey);
- plan the evaluation schedule;
- prepare the inception report, including comments received from the Evaluation Office.

Data collection and analysis phase of the evaluation, including:

- conduct further desk review and in-depth interviews with key stakeholders of the project;
- keep the project manager informed of the evaluation progress and engage the project manager in discussions on evaluation findings throughout the evaluation process; and
- regularly report back to the Evaluation Office on progress and inform of any possible problems or issues encountered;
- conduct evaluation missions to Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay and visit the project demonstration sites.

Management of the reporting phase, including:

- write the main evaluation report, ensuring that the evaluation report is complete and coherent both in substance and style;
- liaise with the Evaluation Office on comments received and ensure that comments are taken into account during finalization of the main report;
- prepare a Response to Comments annex for the main report, listing those comments not accepted by the evaluation consultant and indicating the reason for the rejection;
- prepare a two-page summary of the key evaluation findings and lessons in both English and Spanish.
- Provide the full evaluation report in two languages, English and Spanish.

Managing relations, including:

- maintain a positive relationship with evaluation stakeholders, ensuring that the evaluation process is as participatory as possible but at the same time maintains its independence;
- communicate in a timely manner with the Evaluation Office on any issues requiring its attention and intervention.

The evaluation consultant shall have had no prior involvement in the formulation or implementation of the project and will be independent from the participating institutions. (S)He will sign the Evaluation Consultant Code of Conduct Agreement Form.

The evaluation consultant will be selected and recruited by the UNEP Evaluation Office through an individual consultancy contract.

Key selection criteria

- Advanced university degree in environmental sciences or other relevant political or social science areas;
- Extensive evaluation experience, including evaluations in developing countries, as well as using a theory of change approach;
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills;
- Broad understanding of sustainable land management, sustainable forest management and sustainable management of water resources. Understanding of the Gran Chaco ecosystem, experience in working with

developing country governments, private sector and communities and experience in developing institutional capacity;

- Knowledge of the UN system and specifically of UNEP and UNDP;
- Knowledge of the GEF;
- Excellent spoken and written skills in English and Spanish;
- Attention to detail and respect for deadlines;
- Minimum of 10 years of professional experience.

The fee of the evaluation consultant will be agreed on a deliverable basis and paid upon acceptance of expected key deliverables by the UNEP Evaluation Office. Costs of possible travel, including air tickets and daily subsistence allowance will be paid separately.

Deliverables:

- Inception report
- Draft main report incorporating Evaluation Office comments as required
- Final main report incorporating comments received from evaluation stakeholders as appropriate, including a “response to comments” annex
- Bulletin summarising evaluation findings (see template in Annex 10).

Schedule of Payment:

Deliverables	Percentage payment
Inception report	20% of fees
Submission and approval of the draft evaluation report	40% of fees
Submission and approval of the final evaluation report	40% of fees

Contractual arrangements

84. The consultant will be hired under an individual Special Service Agreement (SSA). The contract stipulates consultant fees only. Air tickets will be purchased by UNEP and 75% of the DSA for each authorised travel mission will be paid up front. Local in-country travel and communication costs will be reimbursed on the production of acceptable receipts. Terminal expenses and residual DSA entitlements (25%) will be paid after mission completion.

85. By undersigning the Special Services Agreement with UNEP/UNON, the evaluation consultant certifies that s(he) has not been associated with the design and implementation of the project in any way which may jeopardize his/her independence and impartiality towards project achievements and project partner performance. In addition, s(he) will not have any future interests (within the six months following completion of the contract) with the project’s executing or implementing units.

86. The consultant may be provided with access to UNEP’s Programme Information Management System (PIMS) and if such access is granted, the consultant agrees not to disclose information from that system to third parties beyond information required for, and included in, the evaluation report.

87. In case the consultant is not able to provide the deliverables in accordance with these ToRs, and in line with the expected quality standards by the UNEP Evaluation Office, payment may be withheld at the discretion of the Director of the Evaluation Office until the consultant has improved the deliverables to meet UNEP’s quality standards.

88. If the consultant fails to submit a satisfactory final product to UNEP in a timely manner, i.e. before the end date of the contract, the Evaluation Office reserves the right to employ additional human resources to finalize the report, and to reduce the consultant’s fee by an amount equal to the additional costs borne by the Evaluation Office to bring the report up to standard.

Annex 2. Annotated table of contents of the main evaluation deliverables

INCEPTION REPORT

Section	Notes	Data Sources	Max. number of pages
1. Introduction	Brief introduction to the project and evaluation.		1
2. Project background	Summarise the project context and rationale. How has the context of the project changed since project design?	Background information on context	3
Stakeholder analysis	See notes in annex 9	Project document Project preparation phase. TM	1
3. Review of project design	Summary of project design strengths and weaknesses. Complete the Template for assessment of the quality of project design (Annex 5 of the Terms of Reference).	Project document and revisions, MTR.	2 + completed matrix provided in annex of the inception report
4. Reconstructed Theory of Change	The Theory of Change should be reconstructed, based on project documentation. It should be presented with one or more diagrams and explained with a narrative.	Project document narrative, logical framework and budget tables. Other project related documents.	2 pages of narrative + diagram(s)
5. Evaluation framework	The evaluation framework will contain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed evaluation questions (including new questions raised by review of project design and ToC analysis) and indicators Data Sources It will be presented as a matrix, showing questions, indicators and data sources.	Review of all project documents.	5
Learning, Communication and outreach	Description of the approach and methods that the consultant will use to promote reflection and learning through the evaluation process.	Review of project documents, stakeholder analysis, discussions with the Evaluation Manager, Task Manager and Project Coordinator	1
6. Evaluation schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised timeline for the overall evaluation (dates of travel and key evaluation milestones) Tentative programme for the country visit 	Discussion with project team on logistics.	2
7. Distribution of responsibilities among within the evaluation team (if applicable)	Distribution of roles and responsibilities among evaluation consultants (when relevant, may be expanded in Annex)		1
6. Annexes	A- Completed matrix of the overall quality of project design B- List of individuals and documents consulted for the inception report C- List of documents and individuals to be consulted during the main evaluation phase		

MAIN REPORT

Project Identification Table	An updated version of the Table 1 (page 1) of these ToRs
Executive Summary	Overview of the main findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation. It should encapsulate the essence of the information contained in the report to facilitate dissemination and distillation of lessons. The main points for each evaluation parameter should be presented here (with a summary ratings table), as well as the most important lessons and recommendations. Maximum 4 pages.
I. Introduction	<p>A very brief introduction, mentioning the name of evaluation and project, project duration, cost, implementing partners and objectives of the evaluation.</p> <p>Objectives, approach and limitations of the evaluation</p>
II. The Project	
A. Context	<p>Overview of the broader institutional and country context, in relation to the project's objectives, including changes during project implementation. Factors to address include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The complexity of the project implication arrangements (number of partners/components, geographical scope, ambitiousness of objective) • The proportion of the Project Managers and FMO's time/workplan available to the project • The ease or difficulty of the project's external operating environment (climate, infrastructure, political/economic stability, socio-cultural factors) • Perceived capacity/expertise of executing partners
B. Objectives and components	
C. Target areas/groups	
D. Milestones/key dates in project design and implementation	
E. Implementation arrangements	
F. Project financing	Estimated costs and funding sources
G. Project partners	
H. Changes in design during implementation	
I. Reconstructed Theory of Change of the project	
III. Evaluation Findings	
A. Strategic relevance	<p>This chapter is organized according to the evaluation criteria presented in section II.4 of the ToRs and provides factual evidence relevant to the questions asked and sound analysis and interpretations of such evidence. This is the main substantive section of the report. Ratings are provided at the end of the assessment of each evaluation criterion.</p>
B. Achievement of outputs	
C. Effectiveness: Attainment of project objectives and results <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Direct outcomes from reconstructed ToC ii. Likelihood of impact based on reconstructed ToC and using RoTI iii. Achievement of project goal and planned objectives 	
D. Sustainability and replication	

E. Efficiency	
F. Factors affecting performance	
IV. Conclusions and Recommendations	
A. Conclusions	This section should summarize the main conclusions of the evaluation, told in a logical sequence from cause to effect. It is suggested to start with the positive achievements and a short explanation why these could be achieved, and, then, to present the less successful aspects of the project with a short explanation why. The conclusions section should end with the overall assessment of the project. Avoid presenting an “executive summary”-style conclusions section. Conclusions should be cross-referenced to the main text of the report (using the paragraph numbering). The overall ratings table should be inserted here (see Annex 3).
B. Lessons Learned	Lessons learned should be anchored in the conclusions of the evaluation. In fact, no lessons should appear which are not based upon an explicit finding of the evaluation. Lessons learned are rooted in real project experiences, i.e. based on good practices and successes which could be replicated or derived from problems encountered and mistakes made which should be avoided in the future. Lessons learned must have the potential for wider application and use. Lessons should briefly describe the context from which they are derived and specify the contexts in which they may be useful. Lessons should also identify how human rights and gender equity have adequately been integrated into project delivery and/or how they could have been taken into consideration.
C. Recommendations	<p>As for the lessons learned, all recommendations should be anchored in the conclusions of the report, with proper cross-referencing. Recommendations are actionable proposals on how to resolve concrete problems affecting the project or the sustainability of its results. They should be feasible to implement within the timeframe and resources available (including local capacities), specific in terms of who would do what and when, and set a measurable performance target. In some cases, it might be useful to propose options, and briefly analyse the pros and cons of each option.</p> <p>It is suggested, for each recommendation, to first briefly summarize the finding it is based upon with cross-reference to the section in the main report where the finding is elaborated in more detail. The recommendation is then stated after this summary of the finding.</p> <p>Recommendations should be SMART - Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Result-oriented and Time-bound.</p> <p>Recommendations should also identify actions which can be taken within the available time and resources to ensure the delivery of results relevant to the human rights and gender equity.</p>
Annexes	<p>These may include additional material deemed relevant by the evaluator but must include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Response to stakeholder comments received but not (fully) accepted by the evaluator2. Evaluation ToRs (without annexes)3. Evaluation program, containing the names of locations visited and the names (or functions) of people met4. Bibliography5. Summary co-finance information and a statement of project expenditure by activity (See annex 4 of these ToRs)6. Evaluation findings and lessons. A short and simple presentation of

	<p>evaluation findings and lessons ensures that information is easily accessible to a wide range of audiences. (Use the 2-page template provided in Annex 10)</p> <p>7. Any other communication and outreach tools used to disseminate results (e.g. power point presentations, charts, graphs, videos, case studies, etc.)</p> <p>6. Brief CVs of the consultant</p>
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Important note on report formatting and layout

Reports should be submitted in Microsoft Word .doc or .docx format. Use of Styles (Headings etc.), page numbering and numbered paragraphs is compulsory from the very first draft report submitted. The consultant should make sure to gather media evidence, especially photographs, during the assignment and insert a sample in the final report in the appropriate sections. All media collected during the assignment shall become property of the UNEP Evaluation Office; which shall ensure that the authors are recognised as copyright owners. The consultant grants permission to the UNEP Evaluation Office to reproduce the photographs in any size or quantity for use in official publications. The consultant shall seek permission before taking any photographs in which persons are recognisable and to inform them that the photographs may be used in UNEP official publications.

Examples of UNEP Evaluation Reports are available at www.unep.org/eou.

Annex 3. Evaluation ratings

The evaluation will provide individual ratings for the evaluation criteria described in section II.4 of these ToRs.

Most criteria will be rated on a six-point scale as follows: Highly Satisfactory (HS); Satisfactory (S); Moderately Satisfactory (MS); Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU); Unsatisfactory (U); Highly Unsatisfactory (HU). Sustainability is rated from Highly Likely (HL) down to Highly Unlikely (HU).

The UNDP required ratings on Impact will be rated as follows: Significant (S), Minimal (M), Negligible (N).

In the conclusions section of the report, ratings will be presented together in a table, with a brief justification cross-referenced to the findings in the main body of the report.

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Rating
A. Strategic relevance		HS → HU
B. Achievement of outputs		HS → HU
C. Effectiveness: Attainment of project objectives and results		HS → HU
1. Achievement of direct outcomes		HS → HU
2. Likelihood of impact		HS → HU
Impact: Significant (S), Minimal (M), Negligible (N)¹¹		
Environmental Status Improvement		
Environmental Stress Reduction		
Progress towards stress/status change		
3. Achievement of project goal and planned objectives		HS → HU
D. Sustainability and replication		HL → HU
1. Financial		HL → HU
2. Socio-political		HL → HU
3. Institutional framework		HL → HU
4. Environmental		HL → HU
5. Catalytic role and replication		HS → HU
E. Efficiency		HS → HU
F. Factors affecting project performance		
1. Preparation and readiness		HS → HU
2. Project implementation and management		HS → HU
3. Stakeholders participation and public awareness		HS → HU
4. Country ownership and driven-ness		HS → HU
5. Financial planning and management		HS → HU
6. UNEP and UNDP supervision and backstopping		HS → HU
7. Monitoring and evaluation		HS → HU
a. M&E Design		HS → HU
b. Budgeting and funding for M&E activities		HS → HU
c. M&E Plan Implementation		HS → HU
Overall project rating		HS → HU

¹¹ This criterion is introduced to comply with UNDP/GEF requirements

Rating for effectiveness: Attainment of project objectives and results. An aggregated rating will be provided for the achievement of direct outcomes as determined in the reconstructed Theory of Change of the project, the likelihood of impact and the achievement of the formal project goal and objectives. This aggregated rating is not a simple average of the separate ratings given to the evaluation sub-criteria, but an overall judgement of project effectiveness by the consultant.

Ratings on sustainability. All the dimensions of sustainability are deemed critical. Therefore, the overall rating for sustainability will be the lowest rating on the separate dimensions.

Ratings on Financial planning and management: An aggregated rating will be provided based on an average of the various component ratings listed in the table below. Please include this table as an annex in the main report:

GEF projects

Financial management components			Rating	Evidence/ Comments
Attention paid to compliance with procurement rules and regulations			HS:HU	
Contact/communication between the PM & FMO			HS:HU	
PM & FMO knowledge of the project financials			HS:HU	
FMO responsiveness to financial requests			HS:HU	
PM & FMO responsiveness to addressing and resolving financial issues			HS:HU	
Were the following documents provided to the evaluator:				
A.	An up to date co-financing table	Y/N		
B.	A summary report on the projects financial management and expenditures during the life of the project - to date	Y/N		
C.	A summary of financial revisions made to the project and their purpose	Y/N		
D.	Copies of any completed audits	Y/N		
Availability of project financial reports and audits			HS:HU	
Timeliness of project financial reports and audits			HS:HU	
Quality of project financial reports and audits			HS:HU	
FMO knowledge of partner financial requirements and procedures			HS:HU	
Overall rating				

Ratings of monitoring and evaluation. The M&E system will be rated on M&E design, M&E plan implementation, and budgeting and funding for M&E activities (the latter sub-criterion is covered in the main report under M&E design). M&E plan implementation will be considered critical for the overall assessment of the M&E system. Thus, the overall rating for M&E will not be higher than the rating on M&E plan implementation.

Overall project rating. The overall project rating should consider parameters 'A-E' as being the most important with 'C' and 'D' in particular being very important.

Annex 4. Project costs and co-financing tables

Project Costs

Component/sub-component/output	Estimated cost at design	Actual Cost	Expenditure ratio (actual/planned)

Co-financing

Co-financing (Type/Source)	UNEP own Financing (US\$1,000)		Government (US\$1,000)		Other* (US\$1,000)		Total (US\$1,000)		Total Disbursed (US\$1,000)
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	
– Grants									
– Loans									
– Credits									
– Equity investments									
– In-kind support									
– Other (*)									
–									
–									
Totals									

* This refers to contributions mobilized for the project from other multilateral agencies, bilateral development cooperation agencies, NGOs, the private sector and beneficiaries.

Annex 5. Quality Assessment of the evaluation report

Evaluation Title:

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All UNEP evaluations are subject to a quality assessment by the Evaluation Office. The quality assessment is used as a tool for providing structured feedback to the evaluation consultants.

The quality of both the draft and final evaluation report is assessed and rated against the following criteria:

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Draft Report Rating	Final Report Rating
Substantive report quality criteria			
A. Quality of the Executive Summary: Does the executive summary present the main findings of the report for each evaluation criterion and a good summary of recommendations and lessons learned? (Executive Summary not required for zero draft)	Draft report: Final report:		
B. Project context and project description: Does the report present an up-to-date description of the socio-economic, political, institutional and environmental context of the project, including the issues that the project is trying to address, their root causes and consequences on the environment and human well-being? Are any changes since the time of project design highlighted? Is all essential information about the project clearly presented in the report (objectives, target groups, institutional arrangements, budget, changes in design since approval etc.)?	Draft report: Final report:		
C. Strategic relevance: Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of strategic relevance of the intervention in terms of relevance of the project to global, regional and national environmental issues and needs, and UNEP strategies and programmes?	Draft report: Final report:		
D. Achievement of outputs: Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of outputs delivered by the intervention (including their quality)?	Draft report: Final report:		
E. Presentation of Theory of Change: Is the Theory of Change of the intervention clearly presented? Are causal pathways logical and complete (including drivers, assumptions and key actors)?	Draft report: Final report:		
F. Effectiveness - Attainment of project objectives and results: Does the report	Draft report:		

	present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the achievement of the relevant outcomes and project objectives?	Final report:		
G.	Sustainability and replication: Does the report present a well-reasoned and evidence-based assessment of sustainability of outcomes and replication / catalytic effects?	Draft report: Final report:		
H.	Efficiency: Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of efficiency? Does the report present any comparison with similar interventions?	Draft report: Final report:		
I.	Factors affecting project performance: Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of all factors affecting project performance? In particular, does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used; and an assessment of the quality of the project M&E system and its use for project management?	Draft report: Final report:		
J.	Quality of the conclusions: Do the conclusions highlight the main strengths and weaknesses of the project, and connect those in a compelling story line?	Draft report: Final report:		
K.	Quality and utility of the recommendations: Are recommendations based on explicit evaluation findings? Do recommendations specify the actions necessary to correct existing conditions or improve operations ('who?' 'what?' 'where?' 'when?'). Can they be implemented?	Draft report: Final report:		
L.	Quality and utility of the lessons: Are lessons based on explicit evaluation findings? Do they suggest prescriptive action? Do they specify in which contexts they are applicable?	Draft report: Final report:		
Report structure quality criteria				
M.	Structure and clarity of the report: Does the report structure follow EOU guidelines? Are all requested Annexes included?	Draft report: Final report:		
N.	Evaluation methods and information sources: Are evaluation methods and information sources clearly described? Are data collection methods, the triangulation / verification approach, details of stakeholder consultations provided? Are the limitations of evaluation methods and information sources described?	Draft report: Final report:		
O.	Quality of writing: Was the report well written?	Draft report:		

(clear English language and grammar)	Final report:		
P. Report formatting: Does the report follow EOU guidelines using headings, numbered paragraphs etc.	Draft report: Final report:		
OVERALL REPORT QUALITY RATING			

The quality of the evaluation process is assessed at the end of the evaluation and rated against the following criteria:

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	UNDP Evaluation Office Comments		Rating
Evaluation process quality criteria				
Q. Preparation: Was the evaluation budget agreed and approved by the EOU? Was inception report delivered and approved prior to commencing any travel?				
R. Timeliness: Was a TE initiated within the period of six months before or after project completion? Was an MTE initiated within a six month period prior to the project's mid-point? Were all deadlines set in the ToR respected?				
S. Project's support: Did the project make available all required documents? Was adequate support provided to the evaluator in planning and conducting evaluation missions?				
T. Recommendations: Was an implementation plan for the evaluation recommendations prepared? Was the implementation plan adequately communicated to the project?				
U. Quality assurance: Was the evaluation peer-reviewed? Was the quality of the draft report checked by the evaluation manager and peer reviewer prior to dissemination to stakeholders for comments? Did EOU complete an assessment of the quality of the final report?				
V. Transparency: Were the draft ToR and evaluation report circulated to all key stakeholders for comments? Was the draft evaluation report sent directly to EO? Were all comments to the draft evaluation report sent directly to the EOU and did EOU share all comments with the commentators? Did the evaluator prepare a response to all comments?				
W. Participatory approach: Was close communication to the EOU and project maintained throughout the evaluation? Were evaluation findings, lessons and recommendations adequately communicated?				

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	UNDP Evaluation Office Comments		Rating
X. Independence: Was the final selection of the evaluator made by EOU? Were possible conflicts of interest of the selected evaluator appraised?				
OVERALL PROCESS RATING				

Rating system for quality of evaluation reports

A number rating 1-6 is used for each criterion: Highly Satisfactory = 6, Satisfactory = 5, Moderately Satisfactory = 4, Moderately Unsatisfactory = 3, Unsatisfactory = 2, Highly Unsatisfactory = 1

The overall quality of the evaluation report is calculated by taking the mean score of all rated quality criteria.

Annex 6. Documentation list for the evaluation to be provided by the Task Managers

- Project design documents
- Project supervision plan, with associated budget
- Correspondence related to project
- Supervision mission reports
- Steering Committee meeting documents, including agendas, meeting minutes, and any summary reports
- Project progress reports, including financial reports submitted
- Project Implementation Reports (PIRs)
- Management memos related to project
- Other documentation of supervision feedback on project outputs and processes (e.g. comments on draft progress reports, etc.).
- Project revision and extension documentation
- Project Terminal Report (draft if final version not available)
- Specific project outputs: guidelines, manuals, training tools, software, websites, press communiques, posters, videos and other advertisement materials etc.
- Any other relevant document deemed useful for the evaluation

Annex 7. TEMPLATE FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF PROJECT DESIGN QUALITY (PDQ)

1. This template is intended for use during the inception phase of an evaluation or review. It supports an assessment of the initial design of a project. (For Terminal Evaluations/Reviews where a revised version of the project was approved based on a Mid-Term Evaluation/Review, then the revised project design forms the basis of this assessment). The purpose of this template is to stimulate thinking, based on a review of project design documentation, that will strengthen: a) the development of useful and insightful evaluation questions and b) the development of a robust causal pathway, assumptions and drivers in the reconstructed Theory of Change. Where substantive and significant weaknesses are apparent at the project design stage, these may either be potential areas for further questioning, may have stimulated adaptive management or may have limited the overall effectiveness of the intervention.
2. Key sources of information for completing this assessment include the approved project document (ProDoc), the Project Review Committee (PRC) review sheet, the project logical framework or Theory of Change (TOC) at design stage and, where appropriate, a revised project design following a Mid-Term Evaluation/Review. (For GEF projects the GEFSEC reviews sheet and UNEP response sheet should also be reviewed).
3. The ratings should be established across a six-point scale (see below) for each section and aggregated to determine an overall rating for the Quality of Project Design. Note that this score, combined with other information gathered during the data collection process, later informs the final evaluation rating under *Factors Affecting Project Performance: Preparation and Readiness*.

A.	Project Context and Complexity		YES/NO	Comments/Implications for the evaluation design (e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)	Section Rating ¹² :
1	Does the project face an unusually challenging operational environment that is likely to negatively affect project performance?	i)Ongoing/high likelihood of conflict?			
		ii)Ongoing/high likelihood of natural disaster?			
		iii)Ongoing/high likelihood of change in national government?			
B.	Project Preparation		YES/NO	Comments/Implications for the evaluation design (e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods	Section Rating:

¹² Rating system for quality of project design and revision

A number rating 1-6 is used for each section: Highly Satisfactory = 6, Satisfactory = 5, Moderately Satisfactory = 4, Moderately Unsatisfactory = 3, Unsatisfactory = 2, Highly Unsatisfactory = 1. The overall quality of the evaluation report is calculated by taking a weighted mean score of all rated quality criteria, see below. (For Project Context and Complexity, replace 'un/satisfactory' with 'un/likely')

			<i>and approaches, key respondents etc)</i>	
2	Does the project document entail a clear and adequate problem analysis?			
3	Does the project document entail a clear and adequate situation analysis?			
4	Does the project document include a clear and adequate stakeholder analysis?			
5	<i>If yes to Q4: Does the project document provide a description of stakeholder consultation during project design process? (If yes, were any key groups overlooked: government, private sector, civil society and those who will potentially be negatively affected)</i>			
6	Does the project document identify concerns with respect to human rights, including in relation to sustainable development?	i) Sustainable development in terms of integrated approach to human/natural systems		
		ii) Gender		
		iii) Indigenous peoples		
C	Strategic Relevance	YES/NO	Comments/Implications for the evaluation design (e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)	Section Rating:
7	Is the project document clear in terms of its relevance to:	i) UNEP MTS, PoW and Sub-programme		
		ii) Regional, Sub-regional and National environmental issues and needs?		
		iii) The relevant GEF focal areas, strategic priorities and operational programme(s)? (if appropriate)		
		iv) Key SDG ¹³ goals and targets		

¹³Depending on the date of project approval and type of intervention the MDGs (2015) or Aichi Biodiversity Targets (2020) may stand as alternatives to the SDGs (2030).

8	Does the project address key cross cutting issues?	i) South-South Cooperation (where appropriate)			
		ii) Bali Strategic Plan			
D	Intended Results and Causality		YES/NO	Comments/Implications for the evaluation design (e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)	Section Rating:
9	Is there a clearly presented Theory of Change?				
10	Are the causal pathways from project outputs (goods and services) through outcomes (changes in stakeholder behaviour) towards impacts (long term, collective change of state) clearly and convincingly described in either the lograme or the TOC?				
11	Are impact drivers and assumptions clearly described for each key causal pathway?				
12	Are the roles of key actors and stakeholders clearly described for each key causal pathway?				
13	Are the outcomes realistic with respect to the timeframe and scale of the intervention?				
E	Logical Framework and Monitoring		YES/NO	Comments/Implications for the evaluation design (e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)	Section Rating:
14	Does the logical framework	i)Capture the key elements of the Theory of Change/ intervention logic for the project?			
		ii)Have 'SMART' indicators for outputs?			
		ii)Have 'SMART' indicators for outcomes?			
15	Is there baseline information in relation to key performance indicators?				
16	Has the desired level of achievement (targets) been specified for indicators of outputs and outcomes?				
17	Are the milestones in the monitoring plan appropriate and sufficient to track progress and foster management towards outputs and outcomes?				
18	Have responsibilities for monitoring activities been made clear?				
19	Has a budget been allocated for monitoring project progress?				

20	Is the workplan clear, adequate and realistic? <i>(eg. Adequate time between capacity building and take up etc)</i>			
F	Governance and Supervision Arrangements	YES/NO	Comments/Implications for the evaluation design <i>(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)</i>	Section Rating:
21	Is the project governance and supervision model comprehensive, clear and appropriate? <i>(Steering Committee, partner consultations etc.)</i>			
22	Are roles and responsibilities within UNEP clearly defined?			
G	Partnerships	YES/NO	Comments/Implications for the evaluation design (e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)	Section Rating:
23	Have the capacities of partners been adequately assessed?			
24	Are the roles and responsibilities of external partners properly specified and appropriate to their capacities?			
H	Learning, Communication and Outreach	YES/NO	Comments/Implications for the evaluation design <i>(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)</i>	Section Rating:
25	Does the project have a clear and adequate knowledge management approach?			
26	Has the project identified appropriate methods for communication with key stakeholders during the project life? If yes, do the plans build on an analysis of existing communication channels and networks used by key stakeholders?			
27	Are plans in place for dissemination of results and lesson sharing at the end of the project? <i>If yes, do they build on an analysis of existing communication channels and networks?</i>			
I	Financial Planning / Budgeting	YES/NO	Comments/Implications for the evaluation design <i>(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)</i>	Section Rating:
28	Are there any obvious deficiencies in the budgets / financial planning at design stage? <i>(coherence of the budget, do figures add up etc.)</i>			
29	Is the resource mobilization strategy reasonable/realistic? <i>(If it is over-ambitious it may undermine the delivery of the project outcomes or if under-ambitious may lead to</i>			

	<i>repeated no cost extensions)</i>			
J	Efficiency	YES/NO	Comments/Implications for the evaluation design <i>(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)</i>	Section Rating:
30	Has the project been appropriately designed/adapted in relation to the duration and/or levels of secured funding?			
31	Does the project design make use of / build upon pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. to increase project efficiency?			
32	Does the project document refer to any value for money strategies (ie increasing economy, efficiency and/or cost-effectiveness)?			
33	Has the project been extended beyond its original end date? <i>(If yes, explore the reasons for delays and no-cost extensions during the evaluation)</i>			
K	Risk identification and Social Safeguards	YES/NO	Comments/Implications for the evaluation design <i>(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)</i>	Section Rating:
34	Are risks appropriately identified in both the ToC/logic framework and the risk table? <i>(If no, include key assumptions in reconstructed TOC)</i>			
35	Are potentially negative environmental, economic and social impacts of the project identified and is the mitigation strategy adequate? <i>(consider unintended impacts)</i>			
36	Does the project have adequate mechanisms to reduce its negative environmental foot-print? <i>(including in relation to project management)</i>			
L	Sustainability / Replication and Catalytic Effects	YES/NO	Comments/Implications for the evaluation design <i>(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)</i>	Section Rating:
37	Was there a credible sustainability strategy at design stage?			
38	Does the project design include an appropriate exit strategy?			
39	Does the project design present strategies to promote/support scaling up, replication and/or catalytic			

	action?		
40	Did the design address any/all of the following: socio-political, financial, institutional and environmental sustainability issues?		
M	Identified Project Design Weaknesses/Gaps	YES/NO	Comments/Implications for the evaluation design <i>(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)</i>
41	Were there any major issues not flagged by PRC?		
42	What were the main issues raised by PRC that were not addressed?		

CALCULATING THE OVERALL PROJECT DESIGN QUALITY SCORE

	SECTION	RATING (1-6)	WEIGHTING	TOTAL (Rating x Weighting)
A	Project Context and Complexity	1	0.4	0.4
B	Project Preparation	2	1.2	2.4
C	Strategic Relevance	4	0.8	3.2
D	Intended Results and Causality	5	1.6	8
E	Logical Framework and Monitoring	6	0.8	4.8
F	Governance and Supervision Arrangements	3	0.4	1.2
G	Partnerships	4	0.8	3.2
H	Learning, Communication and Outreach	3	0.4	1.2
I	Financial Planning / Budgeting	2	0.4	0.8
J	Efficiency	1	0.8	0.8
K	Risk identification and Social Safeguards	2	0.8	1.6
L	Sustainability / Replication and Catalytic Effects	6	1.2	7.2
M	Identified Project Design Weaknesses/Gaps	5	0.4	2
			TOTAL SCORE <i>(Sum Totals)</i>	
			AVG SCORE <i>(Divide Total Score by 13)</i>	

Annex 8. Introduction to theory of change / impact pathways, the ROTI Method and the ROTI results score sheet

Terminal evaluations of projects are conducted at, or shortly after, project completion. At this stage it is normally possible to assess the achievement of the project's outputs. However, the possibilities for evaluation of the project's outcomes are often more limited and the feasibility of assessing project **impacts** at this time is usually severely constrained. Full impacts often accrue only after considerable time-lags, and it is common for there to be a lack of long-term baseline and monitoring information to aid their evaluation. Consequently, substantial resources are often needed to support the extensive primary field data collection required for assessing impact and there are concomitant practical difficulties because project resources are seldom available to support the assessment of such impacts when they have accrued – often several years after completion of activities and closure of the project.

Despite these difficulties, it is possible to enhance the scope and depth of information available from Terminal Evaluations on the achievement of results through rigorous review of project progress along the pathways from outcome to impact. Such reviews identify the sequence of conditions and factors deemed necessary for project outcomes to yield impact and assess the current status of and future prospects for results. In evaluation literature these relationships can be variously described as 'Theories of Change', Impact 'Pathways', 'Results Chains', 'Intervention logic', and 'Causal Pathways' (to name only some!).

Theory of Change (ToC) / impact pathways

Figure 1 shows a generic impact pathway which links the standard elements of project logical frameworks in a graphical representation of causal linkages. When specified with more detail, for example including the key users of outputs, the processes (the arrows) that lead to outcomes and with details of performance indicators, analysis of impact pathways can be invaluable as a tool for both project planning and evaluation.

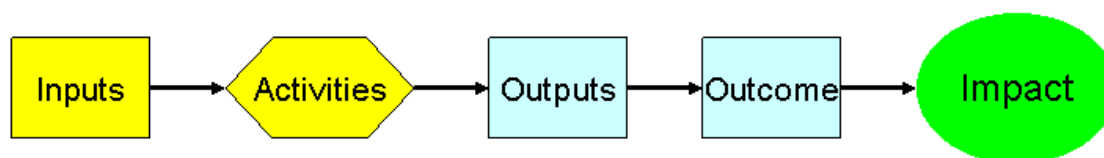


Figure 1. A generic results chain, which can also be termed an 'Impact Pathway' or Theory of Change.

The pathways summarise causal relationships and help identify or clarify the assumptions in the intervention logic of the project. For example, in the Figure 2 below the eventual impact depends upon the behaviour of the farmers in using the new agricultural techniques they have learnt from the training. The project design for the intervention might be based on the upper pathway assuming that the farmers can now meet their needs from more efficient management of a given area therefore reducing the need for an expansion of cultivated area and ultimately reducing pressure on nearby forest habitat, whereas the evidence gathered in the evaluation may in some locations follow the lower of the two pathways; the improved farming methods offer the possibility for increased profits and create an incentive for farmers to cultivate more land resulting in clearance or degradation of the nearby forest habitat.

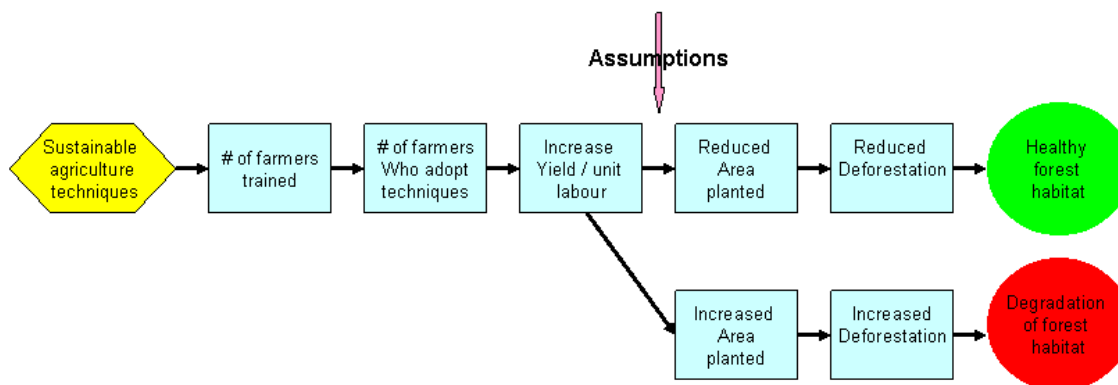


Figure 2. An impact pathway / TOC for a training intervention intended to aid forest conservation.

The GEF Evaluation Office has recently developed an approach to assess the **likelihood of impact** that builds on the concepts of Theory of Change / causal chains / impact pathways. The method is known as Review of Outcomes to Impacts (ROtI)¹⁴ and has three distinct stages:

- a. Identifying the project's intended impacts
- b. Review of the project's logical framework
- c. Analysis and modelling of the project's outcomes-impact pathways: reconstruction of the project's Theory of Change

The **identification of the projects intended impacts** should be possible from the 'objectives' statements specified in the official project document. The second stage is to **review the project's logical framework** to assess whether the design of the project is consistent with, and appropriate for, the delivery of the intended impact. The method requires verification of the causal logic between the different hierarchical levels of the logical framework moving 'backwards' from impacts through outcomes to the outputs; the activities level is not formally considered in the ROtI method¹⁵. The aim of this stage is to develop an understanding of the causal logic of the project intervention and to identify the key 'impact pathways'. In reality such processes are often complex: they might involve multiple actors and decision-processes and are subject to time-lags, meaning that project impact often accrues long after the completion of project activities.

The third stage involves analysis of the 'impact pathways' that link project outcomes to impacts. The pathways are analysed in terms of the '**assumptions**' and '**drivers**' that underpin the processes involved in the transformation of outputs to outcomes to impacts via **intermediate states** (see Figure 3). **Project outcomes** are the direct intended results stemming from the outputs, and they are likely to occur either towards the end of the project or in the short term following project completion. **Intermediate states** are the transitional conditions between the project's direct outcomes and the intended impact. They are necessary changes expected to occur as a result of the project outcomes, that are expected, in turn, to result into impact. There may be more than one intermediate state between the immediate project outcome and the eventual impact. When mapping outcomes and intermediate states it is important to include reference to the stakeholders who will action or be effected by the change.

Drivers are defined as the significant, external factors that if present are expected to contribute to the realization of the intended impacts and **can be influenced** by the project / project partners & stakeholders. **Assumptions** are the significant external factors that if present are expected to contribute to the realization of the intended impacts but are largely **beyond the control of the project** / project partners & stakeholders. The drivers and assumptions are considered when assessing the likelihood of impact, sustainability and replication potential of the project.

Since project logical frameworks do not often provide comprehensive information on the processes by which project outputs yield outcomes and eventually lead, via 'intermediate states' to impacts, the impact pathways need to be carefully examined and the following questions addressed:

- Are there other causal pathways that would stem from the use of project outputs by other potential user groups?
- Is (each) impact pathway complete? Are there any missing intermediate states between project outcomes and impacts?
- Have the key drivers and assumptions been identified for each 'step' in the impact pathway.

¹⁴ GEF Evaluation Office (2009). ROtI: Review of Outcomes to Impacts Practitioners Handbook.

https://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/documents/M2_ROtI%20Handbook.pdf

¹⁵ Evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources to generate outputs is already a major focus within UNEP Terminal Evaluations.

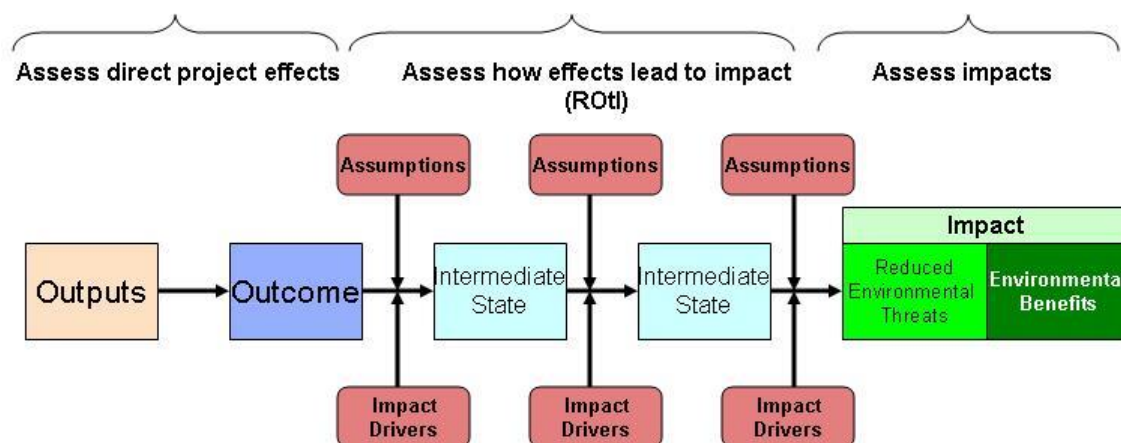


Figure 3. A schematic 'impact pathway' showing intermediate states, assumptions and impact drivers¹⁶ (adapted from GEF EO 2009)

In ideal circumstances, the Theory of Change of the project is reconstructed by means of a group exercise, involving key project stakeholders. The evaluators then facilitate a collective discussion to develop a visual model of the impact pathways using cards and arrows taped on a wall. The component elements (outputs, outcomes, intermediate states, drivers, assumptions, intended impacts etc.) of the impact pathways are written on individual cards and arranged and discussed as a group activity. Figure 4 below shows the suggested sequence of the group discussions needed to develop the ToC for the project.

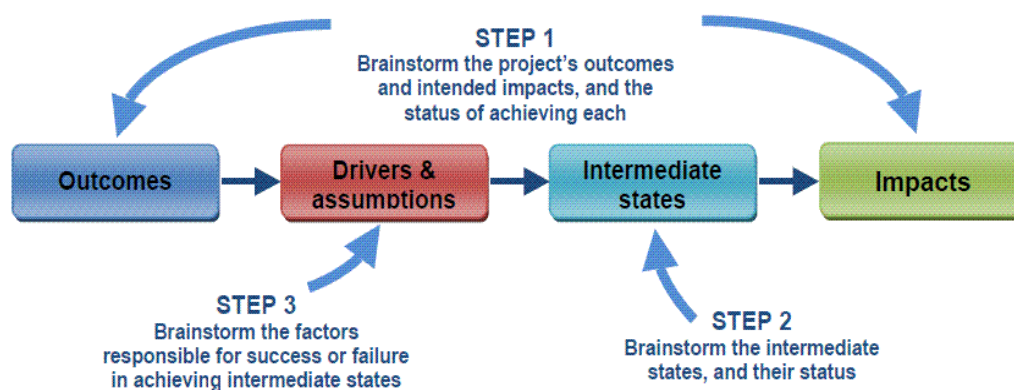


Figure 4. Suggested sequencing of group discussions (from GEF EO 2009)

In practice, there is seldom an opportunity for the evaluator to organise such a group exercise during the inception phase of the evaluation. The reconstruction of the project's Theory of Change can then be done in two stages. The evaluator first does a desk-based identification of the project's impact pathways, specifying the drivers and assumptions, during the inception phase of the evaluation, and then, during the main evaluation phase, (s)he discusses this understanding of the project logic during group discussions or the individual interviews with key project stakeholders.

Once the Theory of Change for the project is reconstructed, the evaluator can assess the design of the project intervention and collate evidence that will inform judgments on the extent and effectiveness of implementation, through the evaluation process. Performance judgments are made always noting that project contexts can change and that adaptive management is required during project implementation.

¹⁶ The GEF frequently uses the term "impact drivers" to indicate drivers needed for outcomes to lead to impact. However, in UNEP it is preferred to use the more general term "drivers" because such external factors might also affect change processes occurring between outputs and outcomes.

The Review of Outcomes towards Impact (ROtI) method requires ratings for outcomes achieved by the project and the progress made towards the ‘intermediate states’ at the time of the evaluation. According to the GEF guidance on the method; *“The rating system is intended to recognize project preparation and conceptualization that considers its own assumptions, and that seeks to remove barriers to future scaling up and out. Projects that are a part of a long-term process need not at all be “penalized” for not achieving impacts in the lifetime of the project: the system recognizes projects’ forward thinking to eventual impacts, even if those impacts are eventually achieved by other partners and stakeholders, albeit with achievements based on present day, present project building blocks.”* For example, a project receiving an “AA” rating appears likely to deliver impacts, while for a project receiving a “DD” this would be very unlikely, due to low achievement in outcomes and the limited likelihood of achieving the intermediate states needed for eventual impact (see Table 1).

Table 1. Rating scale for outcomes and progress towards ‘intermediate states’

Outcome Rating	Rating on progress toward Intermediate States
D: The project’s intended outcomes were not delivered	D: No measures taken to move towards intermediate states.
C: The project’s intended outcomes were delivered, but were not designed to feed into a continuing process after project funding	C: The measures designed to move towards intermediate states have started, but have not produced results.
B: The project’s intended outcomes were delivered, and were designed to feed into a continuing process, but with no prior allocation of responsibilities after project funding	B: The measures designed to move towards intermediate states have started and have produced results, which give no indication that they can progress towards the intended long term impact.
A: The project’s intended outcomes were delivered, and were designed to feed into a continuing process, with specific allocation of responsibilities after project funding.	A: The measures designed to move towards intermediate states have started and have produced results, which clearly indicate that they can progress towards the intended long term impact.

Thus a project will end up with a two letter rating e.g. AB, CD, BB etc. In addition the rating is given a ‘+’ notation if there is evidence of impacts accruing within the life of the project. The possible rating permutations are then translated onto the usual six point rating scale used in all UNEP project evaluations in the following way.

Table 2. Shows how the ratings for ‘achievement of outcomes’ and ‘progress towards intermediate states translate to ratings for the ‘Overall likelihood of impact achievement’ on a six point scale.

Highly Likely	Likely	Moderately Likely	Moderately Unlikely	Unlikely	Highly Unlikely
AA AB BA CA BB+ CB+ DA+ DB+	BB CB DA DB AC+ BC+	AC BC CC+ DC+	CC DC AD+ BD+	AD BD CD+ DD+	CD DD

In addition, projects that achieve documented changes in environmental status during the project’s lifetime receive a positive impact rating, indicated by a “+”. The overall likelihood of achieving impacts is shown in Table 11 below (a + score above moves the double letter rating up one space in the 6-point scale).

The ROtI method provides a basis for comparisons across projects through application of a rating system that can indicate the expected impact. However it should be noted that whilst this will provide a relative scoring for all projects assessed, it does not imply that the results from projects can necessarily be aggregated. Nevertheless, since the approach yields greater clarity in the ‘results metrics’ for a project, opportunities where aggregation of project results might be possible can more readily be identified.

Results rating of project entitled:	
--------------------------------------------	--

		Rating (D – A)		Rating (D – A)		Rating (+)	Overall
Outputs	Outcomes		Intermediate states		Impact (GEBs)		
1.	1.		1.		1.		
2.	2.		2.		2.		
3.	3.		3.		3.		
	Rating justification:		Rating justification:		Rating justification:		

Scoring Guidelines

The achievement of **Outputs** is largely assumed. Outputs are such concrete things as training courses held, numbers of persons trained, studies conducted, networks established, websites developed, and many others. Outputs reflect where and for what project funds were used. These were not rated: projects generally succeed in spending their funding.

Outcomes, on the other hand, are the first level of intended results stemming from the outputs. Not so much the number of persons trained; but how many persons who then demonstrated that they have gained the intended knowledge or skills. Not a study conducted; but one that could change the evolution or development of the project. Not so much a network of NGOs established; but that the network showed potential for functioning as intended. A sound outcome might be genuinely improved strategic planning in SLM stemming from workshops, training courses, and networking.

Examples

Funds were spent, outputs were produced, but nothing in terms of outcomes was achieved. People attended training courses but there is no evidence of increased capacity. A website was developed, but no one used it. (Score – D)

Outcomes achieved but are dead ends; no forward linkages to intermediate states in the future. People attended training courses, increased their capacities, but all left for other jobs shortly after; or were not given opportunities to apply their new skills. A website was developed and was used, but achieved little or nothing of what was intended because users had no resources or incentives to apply the tools and methods proposed on the website in their job. (Score – C)

Outcomes plus implicit linkages forward. Outcomes achieved and have *implicit forward linkages* to intermediate states and impacts. Collaboration as evidenced by meetings and decisions made among a loose network is documented that should lead to better planning. Improved capacity is in place and should lead to desired intermediate outcomes. Providing implicit linkages to intermediate states is probably the most common case when outcomes have been achieved. (Score - B)

Outcomes plus explicit linkages forward. Outcomes have *definite and explicit forward linkages* to intermediate states and impacts. An alternative energy project may result in solar panels installed that reduced reliance on local wood fuels, with the outcome quantified in terms of reduced C emissions. Explicit forward linkages are easy to recognize in being concrete, but are relatively uncommon. (Score A)

Intermediate states:

The **intermediate states** indicate achievements that lead to Global Environmental Benefits, especially if the potential for scaling up is established.

“Outcomes” scored C or D. If the outcomes above scored C or D, there is no need to continue forward to score intermediate states given that achievement of such is then not possible.

In spite of outcomes and implicit linkages, and follow-up actions, the project dead-ends. Although outcomes achieved have *implicit forward linkages* to intermediate states and impacts, the project dead-ends. Outcomes turn out to be insufficient to move the project towards intermediate states and to the eventual achievement of GEBs. Collaboration as evidenced by meetings and among participants in a network never progresses further. The implicit linkage based on follow-up never materializes. Although outcomes involve, for example, further participation and discussion, such actions do not take the project forward towards intended intermediate impacts. People have fun getting together and talking more, but nothing, based on the implicit forwards linkages, actually eventuates. (Score = D)

The measures designed to move towards intermediate states have started, but have not produced result, barriers and/or unmet assumptions may still exist. In spite of sound outputs and in spite of explicit forward linkages, there is limited possibility of intermediate state achievement due to barriers not removed or unmet assumptions. This may be the fate of several policy related, capacity building, and networking projects: people work together, but fail to develop a way forward towards concrete results, or fail to successfully address inherent barriers. The project may increase ground cover and or carbon stocks, may reduce grazing or GHG emissions; and may have project level recommendations regarding scaling up; but barrier removal or the addressing of fatal assumptions means that scaling up remains limited and unlikely to be achieved at larger scales. Barriers can be policy and institutional limitations; (mis-) assumptions may have to do with markets or public – private sector relationships. **(Score = C)**

Barriers and assumptions are successfully addressed. Intermediate state(s) planned or conceived have feasible direct and explicit forward linkages to impact achievement; barriers and assumptions are successfully addressed. The project achieves measurable intermediate impacts, and works to scale up and out, but falls well short of scaling up to global levels such that achievement of GEBs still lies in doubt. **(Score = B)**

Scaling up and out over time is possible. Measurable intermediate state impacts achieved, scaling up to global levels and the achievement of GEBs appears to be well in reach over time. **(Score = A)**

Impact: Actual changes in environmental status

“Intermediate states” scored B to A.

Measurable impacts achieved at a globally significant level within the project life-span. . (Score = ‘+’)

Annex 9. Stakeholder analysis for the evaluation inception report

The evaluator should request the project team to provide a list of key stakeholders, and evidence of stakeholder mapping and analysis. If the project is unable to provide this, or if the evaluation consultant feels the information provided is not complete, the evaluation consultant should develop the stakeholder map based on evidence provided in the project document (and using methods described in the programme manual or other stakeholder mapping techniques of their choice).

The purpose of stakeholder analysis in the preparation of the evaluation inception report is:

1. To understand which individuals or groups are likely to have been affected by, or to have affected the activities of the project.
2. To ensure that the evaluation methodology includes mechanisms for the participation of key stakeholder groups in the process.
3. To enable the evaluation to identify and make use of key channels of communication between the project and its stakeholders (and between the stakeholders themselves).

In the **review of Project design** the evaluator should assess whether the project address the following issues (as specified by UNEP's Quality Assessment Section¹⁷):

- Have all **stakeholders**¹⁸ who are affected by or who could affect (positively or negatively) the project been identified and explained in the stakeholder analysis?
- Did the main stakeholders participate in the design stages of the project and did their involvement influence the project design?
- Are the economic, social and environmental impacts to the key stakeholders identified, with particular reference to the most **vulnerable groups**¹⁹?
- Have the specific roles and responsibilities of the key stakeholders been documented in relation to project delivery and effectiveness?
- For projects operating at country level, are the stakeholder roles country specific? Is there a lead national or regional partner for each country/region involved in the project?

In the **review of project outputs and outcomes**, the evaluation should consider:

Were outputs accessible to all the relevant stakeholder groups?

Have desired outcomes and impacts occurred amongst all stakeholder groups (and if not, consider why this might be).

Have there been any unanticipated outcomes or impacts with particular reference to the most vulnerable groups.

In the **review of factors affecting performance** the evaluation should consider:

- Participation of key stakeholders
- What were the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders and how did their performance affect the achievement of project outputs and outcomes.

¹⁷ See The Quality Assessment Section's Matrix for Project Review. Information on stakeholder analysis can also be found in UNEP's programme manual.

¹⁸ Stakeholders can be governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, including business and industry. Project beneficiaries are often representatives of Civil Society and within UNEP defined as the belonging to the nine Major Groups as defined in the Agenda 21: Business and Industries, Children & Youth, Farmers, Indigenous People and their communities, Local Authorities, NGO's, the Scientific & Technological Community, Women, Workers and Trade Unions.

¹⁹ Vulnerable groups such as: women, children, youth, elderly people, indigenous peoples, local communities, persons with disabilities and below poverty line.

Annex 10. Template for 2 page bulletin summarising project results and key lessons

The lessons derived from the evaluation of projects comprise one of the most important outcomes of the entire evaluation exercise. Even where high quality lessons are developed, they are seldom communicated effectively to their intended audiences. In order to aid their dissemination and communication to both external and internal audiences, the Evaluation Office has developed a bulletin that presents an abridged version of the key project results and lessons within a 2-page write up. The recommended structure for preparing a summary that will be used for the bulletin is presented below to serve as a guideline:

[Enter Project Title]

Results and Lessons Learned (Sub-title)

About the Project (approx. 150 words)

- Main objective
- Implementation dates
- Lead division and Sub-programme
- Region and Countries
- Budget
- Date of Evaluation
- Add link to project document on our website/repository.

Relevance (approx. 100 words)

- Summarise key project relevance to global/regional/national issues.

Performance (approx. 150 words)

- Summarise project's overall performance in achieving outcomes and progress towards impact (results).

Factors Effecting Performance (approx. 100 words)

- Highlight the key factors (design-related, process-related, external factors, etc.) that affected overall performance.

Key Lessons Learned (approx. 150 words)

- Highlight the most pertinent lessons emerging from the evaluation.

Annex 11. UNDP Management Response and Tracking Template

Evaluation Title:**Evaluation Completion Date:**[illegible]

* Unit(s) assigned to be responsible for the preparation of a management response will fill the columns under the management response section.

** Unit(s) assigned to be responsible for the preparation of a management response will be updating the implementation status. Assigned with an oversight function monitors and verifies the implementation status.

***** Status of Implementation:** Completed, Partially Completed, Pending