



TERMS OF REFERENCE
Mid-Term Review of the UNDP - GEF Project
“Strengthening Sustainability of Protected Area Management in Myanmar”

A. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The midterm review of the **Strengthening Sustainability of Protected Area Management in Myanmar** Project (PIMS #5162) is implemented through the *Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)*, and is scheduled to be undertaken in *October 2017*. The project, funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) started on *1 July 2015* and is in its *second* year of implementation. In line with the UNDP-GEF Guidance on MTRs, this MTR process was initiated before the submission of the second Project Implementation Report (PIR). This ToR sets out the expectations for this MTR. The MTR process must follow the guidance outlined in the document *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* found via this link: http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/guidance/GEF/mid-term/Guidance_Midterm%20Review%20_EN_2014.pdf.

The Strengthening Sustainability of Protected Area Management in Myanmar Project was designed with the overall goal of contributing to the conservation and sustainable use of globally significant biodiversity in Myanmar with the objective to strengthen the terrestrial system of national protected areas for biodiversity conservation through enhanced representation, management effectiveness, monitoring, enforcement and financing. To achieve the project objective, and based on a barrier analysis which identified: (i) the problem being addressed by the project; (ii) its root causes; and (iii) the barriers that need to be overcome to address the problem and its root causes, the project’s intervention has been organized into two components.

Component 1 addresses the first barrier: the weak systematic and institutional capacity to plan and manage the expanded national protected area (PA) system. This is being addressed through a range of inputs aiming to: strengthen the national and regional policy and planning frameworks in relation to PAs; build central capacity for PA system management; expand the PA system coverage to 10% of the national land area; develop a systematic approach for sustainable financing of the expanded PA system; and integrate PA values into regional and local development for sub national government units associated with the demonstration PAs.

Component 2 addresses the second barrier: insufficient management capacity and motivation at the PA level to manage local threats and achieve conservation outcomes. This component focuses on strengthening management effectiveness, financial sustainability, community engagement, monitoring

and planning to address external threats at the four selected demonstration PAs. The two components will result in the following project outcomes which are in line with the UNDP's country program output of 'enhanced capacities to sustainably manage natural resources at local, regional and national levels'. The project document can be found via this link:<https://www.thegef.org/project/strengthening-sustainability-protected-area-management>.

The project has two overall outcomes:

- **Outcome 1:** Enhanced Systemic, Institutional and Financial Frameworks for Protected Area Expansion and Management:
- **Outcome 2:** Strengthened Management and Threat Reduction in the Target Protected Areas and Buffer Zone:

The project is being implemented in four demonstration PA sites in Kachin State and Sagaing Region: Hukaung Valley Wildlife Sanctuary, Hkakaborazi National Park, Hponkanrazi Wildlife Sanctuary, and Htamanthi Wildlife Sanctuary. National level project coordination takes place in Nay Pyi Taw. The Myanmar Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation (MONREC), formerly the Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry, is the lead government agency and is responsible for the coordination of the project activities on behalf of the Government of Myanmar.

In line with the project cooperation agreement signed between UNDP and the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), the project is being implemented by the WCS under the civil society organization (CSO) modality. As implementing partner of the project, WCS is responsible for the project implementation, and the timely and verifiable attainment of project objectives and outcomes. The project is scheduled to run for 60 months and is expected to end on 30 June 2020. It is fully funded by the GEF in the amount of USD 6,027,397 and with planned government co-financing estimated at USD 4,646,300.

B. OBJECTIVES OF THE MID-TERM REVIEW

This MTR will assess progress towards the achievement of the project objectives and outcomes as specified in the project document, and assess early signs of project success or failure with the goal of identifying the necessary changes to be made to set the project on-track to achieve its intended results. The MTR will also review the project's strategy and any risks to its sustainability.

C. MID-TERM REVIEW APPROACH & METHODOLOGY

The MTR must provide evidence based information that is credible, reliable and useful. The MTR Team will review all relevant sources of information including documents prepared during the preparation phase (i.e. PIF, UNDP Initiation Plan, UNDP Environmental & Social Safeguard Policy, the Project Document, project reports including Annual Project Review/PIRs, project budget revisions, lesson learned reports, national strategic and legal documents, and any other materials that the team considers useful for this evidence-based review). The MTR Team will review the baseline GEF Focal Area Tracking Tool submitted to the GEF at CEO endorsement, and the mid-term GEF Focal Area Tracking Tool that must be completed before the MTR field mission begins.

The MTR Team is expected to follow a collaborative and participatory approach¹ ensuring close engagement with the Project Team, government counterparts (the GEF Operational Focal Point), the UNDP Country Office(s), UNDP-GEF Regional Technical Advisers, and other key stakeholders.

Engagement of stakeholders is vital to a successful MTR.² Stakeholder involvement should include interviews with stakeholders who have project responsibilities, including but not limited to key senior management and environment program staff of the UNDP Myanmar Country Office; the Wildlife Conservation Society project team; government officials from MONREC, specifically the Environmental Conservation Department; executing agencies, senior officials and task team/ component leaders, key experts and consultants in the subject area, Project Board, project stakeholders, academia, local government and CSOs, etc. Additionally, the MTR Team is expected to conduct field missions to Kachin State, Sagaing Region, Nay Pyi Taw, and Yangon), including the following project sites: Htamanthi Wildlife Sanctuary, Hponkanrazi Wildlife Sanctuary and Hkakaborazi National Park.

The final MTR report should describe the full MTR approach taken and the rationale for the approach making explicit the underlying assumptions, challenges, strengths and weaknesses about the methods and approach of the review.

D. SCOPE OF WORK

The MTR Team will assess the following four categories of project progress. See the *Guidance for Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* for extended descriptions.

a) Project Strategy

Project Design:

- Review the problem addressed by the project and the underlying assumptions. Review the effect of any incorrect assumptions or changes to the context to achieving the project results as outlined in the Project Document.
- Review the relevance of the project strategy and assess whether it provides the most effective route towards expected/intended results. Were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated into the project design?
- Review how the project addresses country priorities. Review country ownership. Was the project concept in line with the national sector development priorities and plans of the country (or of participating countries in the case of multi-country projects)?
- Review decision-making processes: were perspectives of those who would be affected by project decisions, those who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the process, taken into account during project design processes?
- Review the extent to which relevant gender issues were raised in the project design. See Annex 9 of *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* for further guidelines.
- If there are major areas of concern, recommend areas for improvement.

¹ For ideas on innovative and participatory Monitoring and Evaluation strategies and techniques, see [UNDP Discussion Paper: Innovations in Monitoring & Evaluating Results](#), 05 Nov 2013.

² For more stakeholder engagement in the M&E process, see the [UNDP Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results](#), Chapter 3, pg. 93.

Results Framework/Logframe:

- Undertake a critical analysis of the project's logframe indicators and targets, assess how "SMART" the midterm and end-of-project targets are (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound), and suggest specific amendments/revisions to the targets and indicators as necessary.
- Are the project's objectives and outcomes or components clear, practical, and feasible within its time frame?
- Examine if progress so far has led to, or could in the future catalyse beneficial development effects (i.e. income generation, gender equality and women's empowerment, improved governance etc...) that should be included in the project results framework and monitored on an annual basis.
- Ensure broader development and gender aspects of the project are being monitored effectively. Develop and recommend SMART 'development' indicators, including sex-disaggregated indicators and indicators that capture development benefits.

b) Progress Towards Results

Progress Towards Outcomes Analysis:

- Review the logframe indicators against progress made towards the end-of-project targets using the Progress Towards Results Matrix and following the *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects*; colour code progress in a "traffic light system" based on the level of progress achieved; assign a rating on progress for each outcome; make recommendations from the areas marked as "Not on target to be achieved" (red).

In addition to the progress towards outcomes analysis:

- Compare and analyse the GEF Tracking Tool at the Baseline with the one completed right before the Midterm Review.
- Identify remaining barriers to achieving the project objective in the remainder of the project.
- By reviewing the aspects of the project that have already been successful, identify ways in which the project can further expand these benefits.

c) Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

Management Arrangements:

- Review overall effectiveness of project management as outlined in the Project Document. Have changes been made and are they effective? Are responsibilities and reporting lines clear? Is decision-making transparent and undertaken in a timely manner? Recommend areas for improvement.
- Review the quality of execution of the Executing Agency/Implementing Partner(s) and recommend areas for improvement.
- Review the quality of support provided by the GEF Partner Agency (UNDP) and recommend areas for improvement.

Work Planning:

- Review any delays in project start-up and implementation, identify the causes and examine if they have been resolved.
- Are work-planning processes results-based? If not, suggest ways to re-orientate work planning to focus on results?
- Examine the use of the project's results framework/ logframe as a management tool and review any changes made to it since project start.

Finance and co-finance:

- Consider the financial management of the project, with specific reference to the cost-effectiveness of interventions.
- Review the changes to fund allocations as a result of budget revisions and assess the appropriateness and relevance of such revisions.
- Does the project have the appropriate financial controls, including reporting and planning, that allow management to make informed decisions regarding the budget and allow for timely flow of funds?
- Informed by the co-financing monitoring table to be filled out, provide commentary on co-financing: is co-financing being used strategically to help the objectives of the project? Is the Project Team meeting with all co-financing partners regularly in order to align financing priorities and annual work plans?

Project-level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems:

- Review the monitoring tools currently being used: Do they provide the necessary information? Do they involve key partners? Are they aligned or mainstreamed with national systems? Do they use existing information? Are they efficient? Are they cost-effective? Are additional tools required? How could they be made more participatory and inclusive?
- Examine the financial management of the project monitoring and evaluation budget. Are sufficient resources being allocated to monitoring and evaluation? Are these resources being allocated effectively?

Stakeholder Engagement:

- Project management: Has the project developed and leveraged the necessary and appropriate partnerships with direct and tangential stakeholders?
- Participation and country-driven processes: Do local and national government stakeholders support the objectives of the project? Do they continue to have an active role in project decision-making that supports efficient and effective project implementation?
- Participation and public awareness: To what extent has stakeholder involvement and public awareness contributed to the progress towards achievement of project objectives?

Reporting:

- Assess how adaptive management changes have been reported by the project management and shared with the Project Board.
- Assess how well the Project Team and partners undertake and fulfil GEF reporting requirements (i.e. how have they addressed poorly-rated PIRs, if applicable?)
- Assess how lessons derived from the adaptive management process have been documented, shared with key partners and internalized by partners.

Communications:

- Review internal project communication with stakeholders: Is communication regular and effective? Are there key stakeholders left out of communication? Are there feedback mechanisms when communication is received? Does this communication with stakeholders contribute to their awareness of project outcomes and activities and investment in the sustainability of project results?
- Review external project communication: Are proper means of communication established or being established to express the project progress and intended impact to the public (is there a web presence, for example? Or did the project implement appropriate outreach and public awareness campaigns?)

- For reporting purposes, write one half-page paragraph that summarizes the project's progress towards results in terms of contribution to sustainable development benefits, as well as global environmental benefits.

d) Sustainability

- Validate whether the risks identified in the Project Document, Annual Project Review/PIRs and the ATLAS Risk Management Module are the most important and whether the risk ratings applied are appropriate and up to date. If not, explain why.
- In addition, assess the following risks to sustainability:

Financial risks to sustainability:

- What is the likelihood of financial and economic resources not being available once the GEF assistance ends (consider potential resources can be from multiple sources, such as the public and private sectors, income generating activities, and other funding that will be adequate financial resources for sustaining project's outcomes)?

Socio-economic risks to sustainability:

- Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outcomes? What is the risk that the level of stakeholder ownership (including ownership by governments and other key stakeholders) will be insufficient to allow for the project outcomes/benefits to be sustained? Do the various key stakeholders see that it is in their interest that the project benefits continue to flow? Is there sufficient public / stakeholder awareness in support of the long-term objectives of the project? Are lessons learned being documented by the Project Team on a continual basis and shared/ transferred to appropriate parties who could learn from the project and potentially replicate and/or scale it in the future?

Institutional Framework and Governance risks to sustainability:

- Do the legal frameworks, policies, governance structures and processes pose risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project benefits? While assessing this parameter, also consider if the required systems/ mechanisms for accountability, transparency, and technical knowledge transfer are in place.

Environmental risks to sustainability:

- Are there any environmental risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project outcomes?

Summary of Conclusions & Recommendations

The MTR Team will include a section in the report which outlines the MTR's evidence-based conclusions, considering the findings.³ Recommendations should be succinct suggestions for critical intervention that are specific, measurable, achievable, and relevant. A recommendation table should be put in the report's executive summary. See the *Guidance for Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* for guidance on a recommendation table.

The MTR Team will include its ratings of the project's results and brief descriptions of the associated achievements in a MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table in the Executive Summary of the MTR report.

³ Alternatively, MTR conclusions may be integrated into the body of the report.