

# FINAL REPORT

## Project MID TERM REVIEW:

**Sustainable Management Models for Local Government Organizations to Enhance Biodiversity Protection and Utilization in Selected Eco-regions of Thailand Project  
PIMS # 5271**

**GEF - UNDP / GOVERNMENT OF THAILAND**

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14 December 2018

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## i. Basic Report Information

Project Title	Sustainable Management Models for Local Government Organizations to Enhance Biodiversity Protection and Utilization in Selected Eco-regions of Thailand; PIMS # 5271
GEF Project ID	5726
MTR time frame and Date of MTR report	August - November 2018 Draft Report: 7 November 2018 Final Report: 10 December 2018
Region and countries included in the project	Thailand
GEF Operational Focal Area/Strategic Program	Biodiversity
Executing Agency	UNDP
Implementing Partner	Biodiversity-Based Economy Development Office (BEDO), Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE)
Other project partners	Department of Local Administration (DLA), Ministry of Interior (MOI)
MTR team members	Mr. Valdemar Holmgren and Ms. Walaitat Worakul

### Acknowledgements

The MTR consultants extend their sincere thanks to the many people have shared their experience of the project with us during the field mission, and with clarifying the follow up questions we had. The field mission was well organized by PMU and UNDP, with the various meetings taking place as planned and our transport needs smoothly provided. Thank you to our driver Khun Praphat for safe road travel.

Good UNDP-PMU-BEDO collaboration lies at the core of the well-managed MTR mission, with PMU handling all the coming-and-going concerning Bangkok meetings, district visits and local consultants' participation very well. Khun/Mr. Rachai Cholsindusongkramchai, Project Manager, especially was at the forefront of all matters to assist us with our various MTR requirements.

Khun Rachai was ably assisted by Project Coordinator Khun/Mr Tanchai Jaikong, and the 2 Project Field Coordinators, and our many thanks go to Khun Rachai and the PMU team.

Similarly, our many thanks to the UNDP team: we are very grateful to Ms. Diedre Boyd, (UN Resident Coordinator), Mr. Saengroj Srisawaskraisorn, Programme Specialist, Team Leader IGSD Unit; Ms. Napaporn Yuberk, (Programme Analyst, IGSD Unit, Head, SLBT project focal), Ms. Nisakorn Puangkamalar, Programme Associate, IGSD Unit, and Ms Lisa Farroway (Regional Technical Adviser, Biodiversity) for their participation in, and commitment to, the MTR process.

BEDO has shown committed and strong support to the project and MTR, with skillful leadership from Khun/Mrs. Chularat Niratisayakul, Director General, and Khun/Mr. U-thai Aue-areechit, Deputy Director General, and SLBT Project Director. The MTR team had productive exchanges with local community members at each site, and we thank them sincerely for their participation, their commitment to biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, and their sharing of the valuable biodiversity knowledge they have. Thank you also to the translators, Dr. Chanuntorn Katasaene, and Ms. Monchisa Prasanta.

Valdemar and Walaitat  
14 December 2018

## ii. Acronyms and Abbreviations

BEDO	-	Biodiversity-Based Economy Development Office
BBI	-	Biodiversity Benefit Index
BHI	-	Biodiversity Health Index
BKC	-	Bangkhachao
BMA	-	Bangkok Metropolitan Administration
BSC	-	Balanced Scorecard
CBD	-	(United Nations) Convention on Biological Diversity
CCD	-	Community Development Department
DDG	-	Deputy Director General
DHL	-	Don Hoi Lord
DG	-	Director General
DLA	-	Department of Local Administration
DO	-	Development Objective
DO	-	Dissolved Oxygen
DoF	-	Department of Fisheries
DPA	-	Department of Provincial Administration
EPA	-	Environmental Protection Area
EOP	-	End of Project
GAP	-	Good Agricultural Practice
GDP	-	Gross Domestic Product
GI	-	Geographical Indicator
GoT	-	Government of Thailand
IBA	-	Important Bird Area
IUCN	-	International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources
IP	-	Implementing Partner
KPI	-	King Prachatipok Institute
LAC	-	Local Advisory Committee
LDD	-	Land Development Department
LGO	-	Local Government Organisation
MoAC	-	Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives
Mol	-	Ministry of Interior
MoNRE	-	Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment
MTR	-	Mid Term Review
NBSAP	-	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NESDP	-	National Economic and Social Development Plan
NIM	-	National Implementing Modality
NRCT	-	National Research Council of Thailand
NT	-	Near threatened
ONEP	-	Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning
OPDC	-	Office of the Public Sector Development Commission
PAO	-	Provincial Administrative Organization
PART	-	Performance Assessment Rating Tool
PB	-	Project Board
PC	-	Project Coordinator
PCD	-	Pollution Control Board
PFC	-	Project Field Coordinator
PIR	-	Project Implementation Review
PLCUMPs	-	Participatory Land/coastal use Management Plans
PM	-	Project Manager
PMQA	-	Public Management Quality Award
PMU	-	Project Management Unit
PONRE	-	Provincial Office of Natural Resources and Environment
PQR	-	Project Quarterly Report

Ramsar		Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat
RBM	-	Result-Based Management
RF	-	Results Framework
RFD	-	Royal Forest Department
RP	-	Responsible Party
SAO	-	Sub-district Administrative Organisation
SEAs	-	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SMART	-	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound (re indicators)
SLBT		‘Sustainable Management Models for Local Government Organizations to Enhance Biodiversity Protection and Utilization in Selected Eco-regions of Thailand’ Project;
TAO	-	Tambon Administrative Organization
TOR	-	Terms of Reference
USD & \$	-	United States Dollars
VU	-	Vulnerable
WG	-	Working Group (BEDO)
WQ	-	Water Quality

## 1. Executive summary

### 1.1 Project Information table

Project Information	
UNDP PIMS ID	5271
GEF ID	5726
Title	Sustainable Management Models for Local Government Organizations to Enhance Biodiversity Protection and Utilization in Selected Eco-regions of Thailand (SLBT)
Country	Thailand
UNDP-GEF Technical Team	Ecosystems and Biodiversity
Project Implementing Partner	Government (through BEDO)
Joint Agencies	(not set or not applicable)
Project Type	Medium Size
Key Project Dates	
PIF Approval Date	May 8, 2014
CEO Endorsement Date	June 5, 2015
Project Document Signature Date	February 19, 2016 (project start date):
Date of Inception Workshop	September 2, 2016
Expected Date of Mid-term Review	June 1, 2018
Actual Date of Mid-term Review	August - November 2018
Expected Date of Terminal Evaluation	August. 22, 2019
Original Planned Closing Date	February 18, 2020
Revised Planned Closing Date	(not set or not applicable)
Key Financing Amounts (As per PIR 2017 and 2018)	
PPG Amount	67,580
GEF Grant Amount	1,758,904
Co-financing	7,560,000

### 1.2 Brief Project Description

The objective of the project is to mainstream biodiversity conservation priorities into the performance management, development planning and budgeting systems of local government in Thailand. The project will support the realization of this concept for mainstreaming by providing a framework for the inclusion of biodiversity into the development planning, management and performance assessment mechanisms of local government organizations (LGOs). This will be achieved through developing a national level framework to guide LGOs as well as developing the tools (including a Biodiversity Health Index), and capacity to implement it.

The project will also demonstrate how the achievement of this approach can be done at the two pilot sites of Don Hoi Lord DHL), Ramsar Site No. 1099, in Samut Songkram Province and Bangkachao (BKC), an “urban oasis” within Samut Prakarn Province. In doing so, the project will enhance conservation management of 69,618 ha of land and marine area, as well as support the conservation of the habitats of a number of threatened migratory bird species including Bar-tailed Godwit, *Limosa lapponica*, Eurasian Curlew, *Numenius arquata*, and Asian

Dowitcher, *Limnodromus semipalmatus* (all 3 /IUCN - NT), Great Knot, *Calidris tenuirostris* (IUCN - VU), as well as a locally endemic earthworm (*Glyphidrilus* sp).

### 1.3 Project Progress Summary

Table 1 presents the MTR ratings and achievement summary for the project. Based on the assessment of its activities implemented by concerned BEDO units and through engagement of multi-sector consultants responding to individual project outputs, the capacity for flexible adaptive management and an overall financial management with foresight, it is likely that the project objective will be met.

At Outcome level, the achievement is rated as Moderately Satisfactory (MS) for both Outcomes. It is noted that Outcome 1 was not on track in the first year due to the absence of Department of Local Administration (DLA) engagement as Responsible Party (RP). Through adaptive management decisions and action, however, things have been improved and are moving towards the planned results. BEDO has taken up the RP role and engaged King Prachadhipok Institute to provide technical support with regard to policy statement development and capacity building of LGOs.

Outcome 2 has made progressive achievements in all of its outputs. BHI/BBI for both pilot sites Bangkhachao and Don Hoi Lord are developed through consultation with local communities and LGOs and technical review of expert group. Provincial and district committees have been set up to supervise and support biodiversity mainstreaming into LGOs at both tambon and Provincial level. Sustainable land/coastal area use planning process is being conduct with participation of communities and LGOs. Feasibility study on sustainable livelihood activities that support conservation of biodiversity has been carried out and primary products identified.

Key challenges remain, however, on how to seamlessly integrate the deliverables of the various consultants into project implementation so that they contribute to the achievement of the project objectives in a concerted way and do not overlap, duplicate, or conflict with each other, especially in the detailed content of training curricula. Specific to Outcome 1, the challenge is how to get Mol buy-in for the proposed policy statement developed by KPI in the absence of DLA as a linking agency. The project is in the process of initiating direct contact with Mol Permanent Secretary to raise this issue.

A different kind of challenge is that posed by the difficulty to confirm the presence of the target habitat indicator species at BKC. Named ‘Flying Earthworm’, it has been studied by a team at Chulalongkorn University. Its presence at BKC appears to fluctuate and it has been difficult to find again since the time of PPG. It would be prudent to take a decision on an alternative to this earthworm, which the MTR team has recommended.

### 1.4 MTR Ratings and Achievement Table

**Table 1: MTR Ratings and Achievements Summary (see Annex 3 for details and Annex 4 for ratings scale)**

Measure	MTR Rating	Achievement Description
Proj. Strategy	N / A	
	<b>Objective:</b> Mainstream biodiversity conservation priorities into the performance management, development planning and budgeting systems of local government in Thailand.	The project objective is measured by 3 indicators. Achievement of activities so far give indication that the indicator on Hectare of landscape with enhanced conservation security is highly likely to be achieved by EOP. Populations of most significant species are constantly monitored with positive results. However, confirmation of the BKC species / “flying earthworm”

<b>Progress Towards Results</b>	<b>Achievement Rating: MS</b>	has not yet been made by time of the MTR, although search surveys continue. The indicator on “number of provinces where BHI is used as an annual performance measure for LGO by DLA” has not much progress at MTR time due to the absence of DLA. But the shift from DLA to Mol after the MTR will eventually contribute to the achievement of this indicator.
	<b>Outcome 1:</b> Enabling framework for LGOs to plan, monitor, and adapt land management for biodiversity conservation.  <b>Achievement Rating: MS</b>	There are signs that three out of the four indicators will be met by EOP. The policy statement is being drafted and will be proposed for Mol adoption in Q1/2019. Ten TAOs in the 2 pilot sites will be trained by TEI and KPI to incorporate BHI/BBi in their development and budget plans and baseline on capacity of the two PAOs and ten TAOs have been established and the assessment is conducted yearly. However, inclusion of BHI/BBi in PAO development plans, will need more efforts to accomplish and therefore indicator 2 is rated U. Overall rating remains at MS.
	<b>Outcome 2:</b> Local government development programmes based on biodiversity mainstreaming principles are demonstrated in two pilot areas;  <b>Achievement Rating: MS</b>	Most of the indicators under outcome 2 are progressively met, including establishment of participatory land/coastal management plans and the BHI/BBi of the 2 project sites, and the expansion of certified mango plantation in BKC. What remains to be done after the MTR is establishment of a certification scheme for razor harvest in DHL, reduction of identified threats to both pilot areas through improved LGO development plans, and implementation of sustainable livelihood activities for conservation of biodiversity which will result in increase in number of project beneficiaries. However, Considering the relatively short time left for the project (about 18 months), the target of 600 immediate beneficiaries with about 50% women may not be achieved within the project time frame and Indicator 5 is therefore rated as MU. Overall rating remains at MS.
<b>Project Implementation &amp; Adaptive Management</b>	<b>Achievement Rating: MS</b>	Implementation of some of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management, with some components requiring remedial action.
<b>Sustainability</b>	<b>Achievement Rating: ML</b>	Moderate risks, but expectations that at least some outcomes will be sustained due to the progress towards results of outcomes at the Midterm Review

## 1.5 Concise Summary of Conclusions

### Project Strategy and Design

The strategy to address biodiversity depletion through local government institutional capacity building has high relevance for Thailand and the development community globally. While solid biodiversity technical knowhow may support well-founded projects, implementation often falters and expected successful outcomes are diminished, due to gaps in local-level governance capacity. Lessons from the project will be useful for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use in other parts of Thailand, in Asia, and globally.



## Project Management

Project management setup was well thought out with innovative concepts in time for project start. However, these arrangements as presented in the Project Document did not function effectively for the first 18 months due to the lack of engagement of the Department of Local Administration (DLA) as Responsible Party (RP). The presence of BEDO as IP is fortuitous as senior BEDO officials are committed to solve the issue through the BEDO networks with MOI, and it seems possible that the situation can be greatly improved. Moreover, project work planning is done in close cooperation between PMU and BEDO, and the MTR team finds the quality of project execution by to be of high level.

## Project Results

The overall project results are moderately satisfactory with partially achieved results as per the ProDoc. Outcome 1 was behind schedule due to absence of DLA's participation as mentioned above, but is catching up since BEDO has taken up the RP role instead of DLA and engaged relevant consultants to conduct technical work. However, the project will have to make extra efforts to establish direct contact with Mol to adopt the proposed policy statement developed by the consultant.

The weakest elements are at the PAO level in both provinces, and additional efforts are needed to get PAOs engaged in all capacity building and planning activities taking place in the second half of the project.

### 1.6 Recommendations Summary Table

Table 2: MTR team's specific recommendations - summary

Category	Number / Specific recommendation	Responsible party	Completion dates / Timeframe
Outcome 1	1. In the absence of DLA's active participation, the project should shift focal point to the Ministerial level and Mol.	BEDO	Q4/2018
Results Framework	2. Review the Results Framework to refine the indicators to be SMART	UNDP - PMU	Q4/2018
Objective	3. PMU and BEDO to urgently discuss with UNDP for decision on an alternative to the initial habitat indicator species <sup>1</sup> <i>Glyphidrilus sp</i> 'Flying' Earthworm at BKC. Or, as little time remains, focus on a BKC water quality study in the remaining project time, as biodiversity conservation supportive activity.	UNDP - BEDO - PMU	Q4/2018
Co-finance	4. Establish modality of reporting to GEF about change in available project co-finance due to the absence of DLA and submit report as required.	UNDP - PMU	Q1/2019
Outcomes 1 and 2	5. Gender mainstreaming should be emphasized throughout the remaining period of the project, and also women should be considered as trainers in project activities, to ensure that the planned activities are responsive to women's as well as men's needs.	PMU	Q1/2019
Outcomes 1 and 2	6. Ensure there is documentation of activities and their outcome, in film, photo written formats at both target sites.	PMU	Q4/2019
Outcomes 1 and 2	7. Consider working through LGO's Associations of Thailand to identify 'champions' with strong interests in sustainable BD conservation and utilization.	PMU	Q4/2019
Outcomes 1 and 2	8. Community business groups should be strengthened in management capacity and good governance/ transparency	PMU	Q2/2019

<sup>1</sup> This Earthworm species appears to be a locally endemic to the Chao Phraya River, but since its discovery at BKC its continued presence has not been confirmed.

<i>Category</i>	<i>Number / Specific recommendation</i>	<i>Responsible party</i>	<i>Completion dates / Timeframe</i>
	principles, with the use of simple language and visualized methods.		
Outcomes 1 and 2	9. Review the project M&E system to include modifications that could assist to track consultants' progress in a uniform manner and enable smooth reporting to PSC.	PMU - UNDP	Q4/2018
Outcome 1	10. Organize a roundtable meeting with all consultants for the purpose to share outputs from individual contracts, and to identify linkages and possible integration of related outputs across the groups.	PMU - BEDO	Q4/2018
Outcome 1	10. PMU and BEDO support the PFCs to do close follow up with the PAO mayors and teams to engage fully in the BHI / BBI training by TEI and KPI, and related test sessions. This will help the PAO groups to establish BHI/BBI targets in their development plans, and monitor the progress.	PMU - BEDO	Q1/2019
Outcome 2	11. Review the project website to be more engaging for more effective project awareness raising, and to show stories from project activities for stronger impact.	PMU - BEDO	Q1/2019
Outcome 2	12. Identify and promote show cases from LGOs which have already demonstrated good practice in integration of BD indicators in their planning and monitoring and use them as concrete examples for sharing lessons learned.	PMU - BEDO	Q2/2019
Outcome 2	13. In order to achieve the gender target, the project will need to develop sex-disaggregated data and needs assessment, and develop/implement gender responsive activities that benefit both women and men. Gender training must have practical sessions.	PMU - BEDO - UNDP	Q1/2019

## 2. Introduction

This is the Mid-term Review (MTR) report for the UNDP-GEF - Government of Thailand project: ‘Sustainable Management Models for Local Government Organizations to Enhance Biodiversity Protection and Utilization in Selected Eco-regions of Thailand’.

### 2.1 MTR Purpose and Objectives

The MTR is an integral part of the UNDP/GEF project cycle. Its purpose is to identify potential project design issues, assess progress towards the achievement of objectives, identify and document lessons learned, and to recommend specific actions that might improve the project. It is expected to serve as a means of validating or filling the gaps in the initial assessment of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency obtained from the review. Thus, the MTR provides an opportunity to assess early signs of project success or failure and prompt necessary adjustments.

The MTR objective is to identify the necessary changes to be made to set the project on-track to achieve its intended results. The primary deliverable of a MTR process is the MTR report. The 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. The MTR will also review the project’s strategy, and its risks to sustainability.

### 2.2 MTR Scope and Methodology

The MTR must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful. The MTR team has reviewed 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 has reviewed the baseline GEF focal area Tracking Tool submitted to the GEF at CEO endorsement, and the midterm GEF focal area Tracking Tool that must be completed before the MTR field mission begins.

Engagement of stakeholders is vital to a successful MTR and stakeholder involvement and participation will include interviews with those who have project responsibilities, including but not limited to 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 has conducted a field mission in Thailand, including the project sites in the two pilot locations of Don Hoi Lord (Ramsar Site No 1099) in Samut Songkram Province and Bangkhachao, an “urban oasis” of Bangkok, within Samut Prakarn Province.

The MTR team has followed a collaborative and participatory approach ensuring close engagement with stakeholders, in particular the Project Team, government counterparts, the UNDP Country Office, UNDP-GEF Regional Technical Adviser, and the Implementing Partner (IP) BEDO. Other stakeholders that participated in the MTR include those that are closely involved in local-level project implementation, such as the various consultants, local community leaders and project members, with efforts made to maintain gender balance among all these participants’ groups. A full list of the project stakeholders met and interviewed during the MTR, either in groups or individually, is presented in Annex 8.

The MTR team has assessed four categories of project progress as basis for the MTR, being in line with the GEF - UNDP document ‘Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-

Supported, GEF-Financed Projects'<sup>2</sup>: Project Strategy, Progress Towards Results, Project Implementation and Adaptive Management, and Sustainability. Each of the 4 categories comprise several components to be reviewed (see sections 4.1 - 4.4.4), as presented in the MTR's Terms of Reference (Annex 1). All these elements together constitute the bulk of MTR findings.

The review process has been framed by a large number of questions to project stakeholders from the MTR team. About 60-65% of the questions stem from the MTR team's experience in project evaluation and from the various situations with project stakeholders during the mission. The remaining set of questions is based on the recommended MTR entry points, as presented in Annex 5, with equivalent numbering as section 4 of this report.

### 2.3 Structure of this report

This MTR report is structured as per the 'Guidance Document' mentioned above. The body of the report comprises 5 main sections, with the Executive Summary as Section 1, which follows the first pages of Basic Report Information, and Annexes in Section 6 at the end.

Section 3 covers the project's setup, structure with objective and outcomes, implementation arrangements and expected results.

Section 4 presents the MTR findings and as such, comprises the main body of MTR work. Focus areas are the four categories of project progress mentioned above, and within those, M&E, communications, and gender were themes of importance to the MTR. A key part of the MTR is the Progress Towards Outcomes Analysis - Matrix (Achievement of outcomes against End-of-project Targets) that is presented in Annex 3.

Section 5 comprises MTR conclusions and recommendations. Conclusions are grouped in four sections: Project strategy and design, Project Management, Project results, and Stakeholders. Recommendations are made on management support to consultants, and management action for M&E and Gender, with overall supportive recommendation to continue the adaptive management mechanisms already founded. Other recommendations concern amendments on the results framework indicator phrasing and attention to inclusiveness of local community knowledge.

Several supporting documents to the MTR report are placed in a separate file of Annexes. There are 13 of them, with Annex 3 being a core part of the MTR documentation, as mentioned directly above. Two annexes are sent to UNDP Thailand as separate documents and files: Annex 12 the **MTR Report Clearance Form**, and Annex 13 the **MTR Audit Trail**.

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<sup>2</sup> [http://gef.undp.org/uploads/H-Jk1\\_dCXqGqaPG4BlccvA/Guidance\\_for\\_Conducting\\_Midterm\\_Reviews\\_of\\_UNDP-Supported\\_GEF-Financed\\_Projects\\_Final\\_June\\_2014.pdf](http://gef.undp.org/uploads/H-Jk1_dCXqGqaPG4BlccvA/Guidance_for_Conducting_Midterm_Reviews_of_UNDP-Supported_GEF-Financed_Projects_Final_June_2014.pdf)

### **3. Project Description and Background Context**

#### **3.1 Development context: environmental, socio-economic, institutional, and policy factors relevant to the project objective and scope**

Thailand is one of the most biodiverse countries in the world containing over 15,000 species of plant and 4,722 species of vertebrates. However, many of these species are threatened by on-going urban, agricultural and infrastructure development that is resulting in extensive habitat destruction or degradation as well as increasing demand for natural resources which is resulting in their unsustainable use.

The country has taken steps to protect its biodiversity by issuing a number of laws and regulations, including the Constitutions and the various national Acts on National Park, Forest Reserve, Wild Animal Reservation and Protection, Plant Quarantine, Animal Species, etc.

There is now an established and extensive protected areas network covering over 20% of the country's terrestrial and marine area but much of the country's biodiversity exists within areas that are not protected, and in many cases in production areas.

Thailand signed the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in 1992 and ratified the instrument on 31 October 2003. In spite of many problems and obstacles that have been encountered, it has since adopted and implemented various policies, projects and activities in support of the Convention. Since 1998, consecutive NBSAPs which serve as "national policies, measures and plans on the conservation and sustainable utilization of biodiversity have been developed. Biodiversity Bureau established to serves as a national focal point for access to and transfer of biological resources. For long-term targets, the Strategic Plan on Biodiversity 2011-2020 is in place, focusing on all aspects of access and utilization of biodiversity for all related stakeholders as well as local communities' right and fair and equitable benefit sharing.

#### **3.2 Issues that the project sought to address: threats and barriers targeted**

Despite these extensive efforts, only 20 % of the country's terrestrial and marine area are covered under protected areas networking. Much of the country's biodiversity exists within areas that are not protected, including production areas. If its survival is to be assured along with national development, it needs to be able to coexist with on-going human development, especially in eco-regions where local government can play a key role on biodiversity conservation through its planning and budgeting system.

The implementation of many of these biodiversity laws, policies and programmes is therefore linked to, and must interact with, a process of decentralisation and de-concentration that has been on-going in Thailand, moving power and control from the centre to agencies and authorities closer to the community level where important eco-regions are located and production activities take place.

In order to achieve this long-term solution, the Project Document has identified two key barriers including:

1. Absence of enabling framework and capacity in order for LGOs to integrate biodiversity into development decisions
2. Absence of successful demonstration experiences of LGOs integrating conservation of biodiversity-rich areas into their development planning and budgeting.

The project design to have two Outcomes to address these two barriers is therefore relevant.

### 3.3 Project Description and Strategy: objective, outcomes and expected results, description of field sites

The concept of the project is extremely relevant in relation to global efforts to successfully achieve sustainable development initiatives in biodiversity, natural resource management, poverty reduction and related themes. The Project Document describes very well how global efforts for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use are supported by UNDP - BEDO project in Thailand:

“The project supports strategic objective 2 of the GEF-5 biodiversity focal area (BD-2): Mainstreaming biodiversity conservation and sustainable use into production landscapes, seascapes, and sectors. More specifically, the project will contribute to BD-2 Outcome 2.1: Increase in sustainably managed landscapes and seascapes that integrate biodiversity conservation. It will do this through the development of effective management approaches for two areas of high biodiversity, directly impacting the management of 69,618ha land and sea scape”.

The project will also contribute to BD-2 Outcome 2.2: “Measures to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity incorporated in policy and regulatory frameworks, through the development and adoption of a new policy statement and guidance documents on the inclusion of biodiversity concerns within local government planning to be issued by the Ministry of Interior. This will provide clear guidance on how local governments should include biodiversity considerations within their planning as well as providing incentive and enforcement mechanisms to ensure this is achieved through the inclusion of biodiversity considerations with performance management mechanisms for local government.”

The project objective “to mainstream biodiversity conservation in the performance management, development planning and budgeting system of local government in Thailand” is **highly strategic** for several reasons. Local governments play an important role in local level development processes. They are autonomous administrative bodies that exist in every province and sub-district across the country. Tambon (sub-district) Administrative Organization (TAO)) is the lowest planning unit where budget is centrally allocated. It adopts participatory planning process involving consultation with local communities and key constituent groups to come-up with four-year sub-district development plan where biodiversity conservation could be included.

The project objective will be realised through two project outcomes:

Outcome 1 focuses on strengthening the institutional framework for the inclusion of biodiversity conservation priorities into the performance management and development planning and budgeting systems of local government within Thailand.

Outcome 2 focuses on operationalising the mainstreaming of biodiversity conservation into local development planning of two key locations as well as supporting the sharing of lessons learned.

The Project objective and outcomes and their related outputs and activities are presented in Annex 2. The Project is focused on capacity building in institutional responsibilities for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use and mainstreaming. However, there are also noteworthy aspects of ecosystem service based livelihood enhancement, and also globally significant biodiversity conservation (mainly migratory wetland birds).

Department of Local Administration (DLA) and Biodiversity-Based Economic Development Office (BEDO) are strategically engaged as key implementing partners. DLA is directly responsible for Outcome 1: Strengthening the institutional framework for the inclusion of biodiversity conservation priorities into the performance management and development planning and budgeting systems of local government. DLA has direct responsibility to design and support local planning and monitoring systems and, in particular relevance to this project, to enact, revise, and amend the laws and regulations related to the local administrative



organizations. The project design to include performance management monitoring of LGOs by the provincial governor is also a good strategy to assure that integration of biodiversity conservation into LGO plans will be systematically followed-up.

BEDO is engaged as project implementer as well as responsible agency for Outcome 2: Operationalising the mainstreaming of biodiversity conservation into local development planning of two key locations as well as supporting the sharing of lessons learned. BEDO's speciality is to promote and assist value chain process from biodiversity and local wisdom utilisation and relevant interdisciplinary bio businesses. As such, it can facilitate the development of sustainable biodiversity-based alternative livelihood/business models which will be adopted by the TAOs in two demonstration sites.

The two pilot sites are selected with sound reasons. Bangkhachao is identified as an 'urban oasis' located in Samut Prakarn a province next to Bangkok with initial examples how livelihoods and conservation activities can go hand-in-hand. BEDO and Department of Agriculture Extension has promoted GI mango plantation, as one example. Don Hoi Lord has global significance. It is part of the Inner Gulf (of Thailand) Important Bird Area (IBA) and is identified as Ramsar site No 1099 due to its importance as a unique wetland within Thailand and the presence of threatened species.

#### Project target site maps

Bangkhachao is located in Phra Padaeng District, is a wetland area that lies within a bend of the Chao Phraya River, and is considered the last of the remaining green belt of the Greater Bangkok Metropolitan Area. The area contains traditionally farmed wetland areas as well as small pockets for flooded forest representative of the broader eco-region. (Project document section 1.4.1.1 refers.)

#### Bangkhachao - overview map



Don Hoi Lord is located in Muang Samut Songkram District and is a rare type of natural wetland for Thailand, comprising sandbars at the mouth of the Mae Klong River with a vast

area of intertidal mudflats. These are extremely productive locations for the Hoi Lord, an economically important mollusc /clam unique to the area. (Project document section 1.4.3 refers.)

Don Hoi Lord - overview map



### 3.4 Project Implementation Arrangements: short description of the Project Board, key implementing partner arrangements, etc.

The Project is executed through UNDP's National Implementing Modality (NIM) with the **Biodiversity-based Economy Development Office (BEDO)** of the Government of Thailand as the Implementing Partner (IP). It is accountable for the disbursement of funds and the achievement of the project objective and outcomes, according to the approved work plan. In particular, BEDO is responsible for (i) coordinating activities to ensure the delivery of agreed outcomes (ii) certifying expenditures in line with approved budgets and work-plans; (iii) facilitating, monitoring and reporting on the procurement of inputs and delivery of outputs; (iv) coordinating interventions financed by UNDP with other parallel interventions; (v) preparation of Terms of Reference for consultants and approval of tender documents for sub-contracted inputs; and (vi) reporting to UNDP on project delivery and impacts. The BEDO's technical leadership and engagement will focus on the operations of Outcome 2 although they will also be fully engaged as a project partner in supporting the DLA under the delivery of Outcome 1.

In the original project design, the **Department of Local Administration (DLA)** will be engaged as Responsible Party (RP) to lead the implementation of work on development of a policy framework and guidance documents for the inclusion of biodiversity within the development planning process under Outcome 1. During actual implementation phase, however, DLA did not take up this role due to changes in its management and organizational priorities. BEDO as the IP has taken up the role instead and engaged King Prachadhipok Institute (KPI) to provide technical support.

The **Project Management Unit (PMU)** established within BEDO consists of Project Manager, Project Coordinator, and Project Finance and Administrative officer. They are employed by the Project under BEDO regulations. The Project Manager reports to the Project Board (PB) and works in close collaboration with the Project Director who is appointed by BEDO. The PM is supported by technical consultants who provide advice and support on technical aspects under various outputs of the project.



BEDO's Deputy Director is assigned as the **Project Director** who chairs the multi-unit working group within BEDO. The working group ensures that the project activities fit with BEDO's lines of work and contribute the organizational mandate under each unit. They conduct monthly meeting to review the project progress and financial reports. **Project Field Coordinators** based in Bangkhachao and Don Hoi Lord are responsible for coordinating field level activities that engage with local governments, and local as well as technical consultants. They also monitor activities under taken in the field by the consultants and report to the PM.

The **UNDP Country Office** monitors the implementation of the project, reviews progress in the realisation of the project outputs, and ensure the proper use of UNDP/GEF funds.

A **Project Board (PB)**, chaired by BEDO's Director General, serves as the project's governance and decision-making body. It comprises representatives of the BEDO, DLA, UNDP, relevant agencies within MONRE and Mol, TAT, CSOs and the private sector. It meets once every six months to review project progress, approve project work plans (including budgets) and approve major project deliverables. The PB is also responsible for ensuring that the project remains on course to deliver products of the required quality to meet the outcomes defined in the project document.

### 3.5 Project timing and milestones

The project is a four-year project. The project preparation grant (PPG) took place in 2014 and the Project Document was signed in 2016. The project started in 2016 with the Inception Phase. The Project Manager was recruited in Q2-2016, and continues until now. The MTR takes place in September 2018, which is on schedule. The project has an anticipated closure date of February 2020.

### 3.6 Main stakeholders: summary list

The Project Document presents a comprehensive stakeholder list of 3.5 pages, which is reproduced as Annex 6. From that, an overview list drawn for information purpose, but kindly see Annex 6 for comprehensive information.

Table 3: Main SLBT stakeholders

Biodiversity-based Economy Development Office (BEDO), Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE)	BEDO is the project IP. It is well placed to coordinate activities with key line agencies under MoNRE including ONEP and the PCD as well as with other stakeholder groups bringing both technical expertise and a focus on the links between conservation and development. It will play a leading role in coordinating and supporting the local government organizations in the selected sites
Department of Local Administration (DLA), Ministry of Interior	The DLA is mandated to provide support to local authorities within both the administrative and autonomous lines of government to deliver their mandates. They help to provide a guiding framework for the operation of the LGOs under the National Commission on Decentralisation and have staff at provincial level to support the work of LGOs. In the project the DLA will be responsible for developing guidelines for and policy statements on the mainstreaming biodiversity into local development and land/coastal use plans and the integration of biodiversity into performance management systems.
Ministry of Interior (Mol) and the Department of Provincial Administration (DPA), Mol	The provincial government follows the traditional structure of the central system. The governors are appointed by the Ministry of Interior*, whereas the district chiefs (and district clerks) are appointed by the Department of Provincial Administration. In this project, the governor of the two demonstration provinces will provide necessary support on policy formulation, planning coordination, and capacity development to ensure smooth operation at both provincial and local levels.
Local government organizations -Sub-district -Tambon & municipality- Administrative Organizations - SAOs and	SAOs in the demonstration areas (Don Hoi Lord and Bang Krachao) will be focal points for mainstreaming biodiversity conservation their planning, development and performance management processes. As the local government units, SAOs are responsible for local sustainable development. They also coordinate the actions of different agencies and facilitate the resolution of land/coastal use conflicts; PAOs of the two demonstration provinces (Samut Songkram and Samut Prakarn) will

Provincial Administrative Organizations - PAOs), Ministry of Interior	work with the provincial government (governors and district chiefs) and the target SAOs to ensure mainstreaming Biodiversity Health Indices into the provincial development plan of the target provinces.
Royal Forest Department (RFD), MoNRE	The RFD is mandated to oversee government forestlands excluding protected areas. The agency manages approximately 200 ha of forest in Bang Krachao and will be involved in the development of land/coastal use plans for the six sub-districts.
Community-based enterprises	The project will work closely with community based enterprises and individuals within the two pilot locations. Key groups for engagement will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Fishermen within Don Hoi Lord</li> <li>➢ Mango farmers within Bang Krachao</li> </ul> Tourism operators in both Bang Krachao and Don Hoi Lord
Bang Krachao conservation groups	Locally formulated groups of community members and supporting partners with the aim to conserve the areas and biodiversity resources, including the Green Area Protection Network (Song Kanong), Lumphu Bang Krasorb Conservation Group (Bang Kasorb), and others.
Committee on Management of Don Hoi Lord Ramsar Site and Working Group on Demarcation of the Don Hoi Lord Ramsar Site Boundary	Established by Samut Songkram Province (Order 845/2005 and 604/2013) to oversee and manage the areas in accordance to the action plans, and to review the boundary of the site. The committee is currently focused on undertaking the boundary revision.
The Don Hoi Lord Conservation Group	The Don Hoi Lord Conservation Group was established by local people in 2009 aiming to conserve the site and the clams through awareness raising and community involvement. These activities included monitoring the status of Don Hoi Lord, and organizing study tours to other communities to exchange experiences regarding the management of natural resources.

## 4. Findings

This section presents the MTR findings and as such, comprises the main body of MTR work. Focus areas are the four categories of project progress: Project Strategy, Progress Towards Results, Project Implementation and Adaptive Management, and Sustainability. A key part of the findings is the Progress Towards Outcomes Analysis - Matrix (Achievement of outcomes against End-of-project Targets) that is presented in Annex 3, and which should be referred to in parallel.

### 4.1. Project Strategy

Biodiversity is globally the resource base for people's food, nutrition, and health, and also for a significant part of every country's economy concerning agriculture, forestry and fisheries. It has become clear over the years and many spent project budgets that solid institutional setup and capacity at local levels of governance for biodiversity management are equally important, at least, as technical knowledge in fauna and flora characteristics and distribution is. The concept of the project is extremely relevant in relation to global efforts to successfully achieve sustainable development initiatives in biodiversity, natural resource management, poverty reduction and related themes. Detailed information is provided in section 3.3.

#### 4.1.1 Project design:

##### **Problem addressed by the project**

Thailand is rich in biodiversity, with many globally significant species and varieties, but these natural assets are threatened by widespread depletion from habitat loss and degradation, and over-exploitation. In efforts to halt this problem, Thailand has implemented many policies and strategies for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, established many protected areas, and signed international conventions, as clearly presented in the Project Document, pages 6 - 8.

Despite high levels of research and knowledge, and of available technical expertise, biodiversity loss continues to be documented in Thailand and similarly in a wide range of nations worldwide. It is also clear from analyses of this global problem that even though solid biodiversity technical knowhow may support well-founded projects, implementation often falters and expected successful outcomes are diminished, due to gaps in local-level governance capacity. The gaps may be in biodiversity technical knowledge and/or experience, or in project management, or partnership building, or simply understaffing / time allocation issues (Project Document page 26). The challenge to achieve successful biodiversity conservation and sustainable use despite these institutional bottlenecks and gaps is the problem addressed by the project.

##### **Relevance of project design**

The strategy to address biodiversity depletion through local government institutional capacity building has high relevance for Thailand and the development community globally. Lessons from the project will be useful for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use in other parts of Thailand, in Asia, and globally.

The MTR team finds that the project design is thoroughly thought out with a relevant strategy, and comprises a results framework that is relevant to finding solutions to identified challenges (stated above).

Lessons from the completed UNDP/GEF 4 project 'Sustainable Management of Biodiversity in Thailand's Production Landscape' (have been integrated into the SLBT project design, particularly regarding Community-based Social Enterprises, and engagement of local government in support to that. The UNDP/GEF 5 project 'Conserving Habitats for Globally Important Flora and Fauna in Production Landscapes' is another biodiversity mainstreaming project implemented in parallel to SLBT that provided lessons during the PPG phase in its

similar set-up with evidence-based pilot cases to inform policy direction, including project coastal site management (SLBT / PIF doc 7 March 2014 refers).

Perspectives of those affected by project decisions, those who could affect project outcomes, and those who could contribute information or resources to the process, were fully taken into account during project design processes and reported in the Prodoc's Annex 6 'Stakeholder Engagement During Project document Development'. This presents Project design engagements with stakeholders undertaken during November 2014 to February 2015 with 13 meetings reported, including also summaries of the meetings' findings.

The MTR team finds that other relevant projects' lessons were incorporated into SLBT project design, and that stakeholders' perspectives were also taken into account during project design processes.

As presented in the Project Document page 54, quote "The project strategy is based on the assumptions that by:

- mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into the performance management, development planning and budgeting systems of LGOs in Thailand,
- providing guidance on how these processes should be achieved, and
- supporting capacity-building of LGOs to implement them,
- stakeholders will take up the approach.

In addition, it has been assumed that increased capacity in BEDO and the DLA, in particular, will facilitate the mainstreaming of biodiversity into local government development plans and budgets. .... The risk that these assumptions will fail is very low.", end quote.

The MTR team finds that the assumptions underpinning the project strategy are objective, logical, and relevant.

In connection to defining these assumptions the Project Document also presents 7 risks with ratings on page 54. The risk number 2 listed there: "Weak coordination and cooperation between different stakeholders and between different levels of government" was rated as a moderate risk with moderate likelihood. However, events unfolded to bring this risk to the centre of project implementation issues when the Department of Local Administration (DLA) did not engage with the project, as earlier agreed. DLA had participated in all project preparation meetings with the other parties and endorsed the final version of the Project Document, so the change of position to not participate when it became time to start implementation was surprising.

The MTR team finds that the change to the context to achieving the project results as outlined in the Project Document from the absence of DLA was unforeseen and not due to incorrect assumptions.

#### **Project alignment with country priorities**

The SLBT is fully aligned with the country's priorities. It fits within the framework of Thailand's 20-year strategic plan which consists of six areas including 'green growth'. It also aligns with the development strategies under the 12<sup>th</sup> National Economic and Social Development Plan (2017-2021) gearing to reduce income disparity and poverty and promote natural capital and environmental quality, underpinned by the three core principles of the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy: moderation, reasonableness, self-immunity.

#### **Gender**

The Project Document provides a clear guidance how gender elements could be mainstreamed into project activities throughout project inception, implementation and monitoring processes. There are guidelines for gender mainstreaming in project outcomes and outputs, as

well as mechanisms for adaptive management to address emerging gender concerns. During Inception Phase, it is expected that the concept and methods of gender analysis and gender-disaggregated of project activities will be introduced and that the PM and project staff will be fully versed with gender considerations within the project. Project monitoring will ensure that gender consideration indicators are included within all monitoring, review and evaluation activities.

Gender mainstreaming in project activities implementation could be achieved through considerations how guidance on integration of biodiversity consideration into planning processes will affect genders differently and potential differential impacts of proposed policy framework across genders; women's engagement in assessment of biodiversity and development of BHI/BBi; promotion of income generation activities that are relevant of both genders; and gender mainstreamed into extension activities.

Despite the clear and practical guidance on gender mainstreaming in the Project Document, the MTR team finds that gender considerations are not sufficiently addressed throughout the project inception, implementation and monitoring. The project did not engage gender specialist to assist with gender mainstreaming planning, training and implementation. Project work planning is not based on gender-disaggregated data.

To meet EOP gender targets, gender mainstreaming should be emphasized throughout the remaining period of the project.

#### 4.1.2 Table 4: Project Results Framework (RF) overview – MTR comments

Table 4 should be studied with Annex 3 as explanatory reference

RF strategy / Indicator <sup>3</sup>	MTR comments
<b>Project Objective: To mainstream biodiversity conservation priorities into the performance management, development planning, and budgeting systems of local governments in Thailand.</b>	
1. Hectares of landscape with enhanced conservation security; Mid-term target: not set or not applicable; End-of-project target: At least 69,618 ha of land and coastal area has biodiversity considerations mainstreamed into its management through development of regulations providing stricter management arrangements for land/coastal use within these areas,, , .	The numerical of Hectares is a strong element, although this is not a result from project impact, but from Government processes prior to project start. "Enhanced" is subjective and difficult to assess as the baseline only mentions "conservation considerations" to measure against. The EOP target strengthens this with "regulations providing stricter management arrangements,, , etc.," as qualifier. End-of-project target assessed to be SMART <sup>4</sup> (medium strength);
2. Number of provinces with important biodiversity areas within eco-regions where the BHI/BBi is used as an annual performance measure for LGOs by the DLA; Mid-term target: not set or not applicable; End-of-project target: 2 provinces;	Number of provinces is straight forward, and use of the BHI/BBi, the indicator's key aspect, is strong. Both indicators reflect project impact. Suggest to replace 'DLA' with 'Mol' (pending result of BEDO contacts with Mol on strengthened participation); End-of-project target assessed to be SMART;
3. Numbers of populations of the following species at target sites: •Eurasian Curlew - DHL •'Flying' Earthworm - BKC	Survey numbers are good numerical indicators. OK for DHL. But for BKC, it is problematic that the habitat quality indicator species is not available. An alternative species with feasible survey outcome should be identified. Or, focus on water quality study only in the remaining project time, which will be useful for all BKC

<sup>3</sup> Indicators numbered as per ProDoc RF with Mid-term and End-of-project targets stated as per PIR-2018;

<sup>4</sup> Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound;

RF strategy / Indicator <sup>3</sup>	MTR comments
Mid-term target: not set or not applicable; End-of-project target: No decline in population	stakeholders (recommendation 3, section 1.6, Table 2); End-of-project target assessed to be SMART;
<b>Outcome 1:</b> <b>Enabling framework for LGOs to plan, monitor, and adapt land management for BD conservation;</b>	
1. Policy statement and guidance on inclusion of biodiversity considerations in local government development planning and performance assessment issued by Mol; Mid-term target: not set or not applicable; End-of-project target: Policy statement issued;	Policy statement availability is a good indicator, and more so that it is issued (a date can be stated).  End-of-project target assessed to be SMART;
2. Number of PAOs who are meeting the BHI targets established within their Development Plans Mid-term target: not set or not applicable; End-of-project target: Two PAOs;	The number of PAOs confirmed meeting BHI targets is OK. The indicator includes also confirmation of achieving BHI targets, which the MTR team has identified as under risk.  End-of-project target assessed to be <b>not fully SMART</b> , as risk of not achieving Development Plan BHI targets;
3. Number of TAOs (SAOs) who are meeting the BHI targets in their Performance Management agreements with the Office of the Governor; Mid-term target: not set or not applicable; End-of-project target: 10 TAOs;	Same analysis as no.2, immediately above. The number is OK, but the important aspect of the indicator is confirming that BHI targets are being met, or have been met. Also, the MTR team suggests to now use the term 'BHI/BBI'.  With risk of not achieving Development Plan BHI targets, End-of-project target assessed to be <b>not fully SMART</b> ;
4. Improvements in capacity development indicator score for DLA for: Indicator 4: Degree of environmental awareness of stakeholders Indicator 10: Existence of adequate environmental policies and regulatory frameworks. Indicator 11: Adequacy of the environmental information available for decision-making mainstreaming. Indicator 14: Adequacy of the project/ programme monitoring process; Mid-term target: not set or not applicable; End-of-project target: 20% increase in capacity under indicators;	On initial study, indicator quality seems weak or inconclusive due to hard to define wording with terms such as "degree of", "adequate", and "adequacy". However, terminology is strengthened by the supporting explanation and details presented in the Capacity Assessment Score Card (Prodoc Annex 2), including Baseline values as per Capacity scorecard ratings for each sub-indicator: Indicator 4 = 1 Indicator 10= 1 Indicator 11= 1 Indicator 14= 2  End-of-project target assessed to be SMART;
<b>Outcome 2:</b> <b>Local government development programmes based on biodiversity mainstreaming principles are demonstrated in two pilot areas</b>	
1. Hectares of land for which participatory land/coastal management plans are in place Mid-term target: not set or not applicable; End-of-project target: DHL: 67,799 ha BKC: 1,819 ha;	Similarly to Objective Indicator 1 and Outcome 1 indicators 2 & 3, RF focus is on the numerical. The number of hectares with plans is SMART. But the indicator's significance to show project impact is that local development plans that incorporate conservation values are implemented in these hectares in each site.  End-of-project target: assessed to be SMART;

RF strategy / Indicator <sup>3</sup>	MTR comments
<p>2. Reduction in identified threats to pilot areas achieved through improved local development plans.</p> <p>DHL:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improper harvesting of clams - indicated by increases in species density</li> <li>• Pollution of canals - indicated by water pH and dissolved oxygen (DO) levels</li> </ul> <p>Mid-term target: not set or not applicable;</p> <p>End-of-project target:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in species density of razor clams</li> <li>• No decline in water quality levels as indicated by levels of pH and DO based on parameters set by the Thai PCD</li> </ul> <p>BKC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rapid urbanization</li> <li>• Pollution from agricultural run-off</li> </ul> <p>Mid-term target: not set or not applicable;</p> <p>End-of-project target:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No decline in area classified as 'green area' with no decline in conservation area within this</li> <li>• Improvements in water quality levels of dissolved oxygen (DO) and pH of water within canals to levels associated with Class 3 Water Quality (pH between 5 and 9, DO 4.0 mg/l)</li> </ul>	<p>This indicator is not fully SMART as stated because "Reduction", "improved", and "Improper", are not qualified, and sub-indicators' language is unclear. There are no pH data in the given general WQ baseline values to compare with so remove "improved" in the EOP target</p> <p>Proposed revision, DHL:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced improper harvesting of clams - indicated by increases in Razor Clam density;</li> <li>• Reduced pollution of canals - indicated by healthier water pH and dissolved oxygen (DO) values;</li> </ul> <p>End-of-project target assessed to be SMART, with revisions made;</p> <p>PMU and UNDP should propose indicator revision for both sites for Q1/2019.</p> <p>Proposed revision, BKC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Rapid urbanization compared to the 2016 situation*</u> (see below)</li> <li>• <u>Reduced</u> pollution from agricultural run-off</li> </ul> <p>Suggest to amend EOP text to read: 'water quality values of dissolved oxygen (DO) and pH of canal water reach levels associated with Class 3 Water Quality'.</p> <p>The sub-indicator criteria for rapid urbanization could be supported by comparison of satellite* images from 2015 - 16, with 2018. PMU-BEDO should explore to implement this, and suggest to the Board to procure 'baseline situation images' immediately..</p> <p>End-of-project target assessed to be SMART, with revisions made;</p>
<p>3. Biodiversity health of Don Hoi Lord Ramsar Site and Bang Krachao</p> <p>Mid-term target: not set or not applicable;</p> <p>End-of-project target: Increase in BHI score against baseline.</p>	<p>Biodiversity Health of the project sites is monitored through the BHI/BBI developed in consultation with community representatives and respective LGOs.</p> <p>(Baseline: No BHI currently used in Thailand.)</p> <p>End-of-project target assessed to be SMART;</p>
<p>4. Scale of certified production and operation</p> <p>Mid-term target: not set or not applicable;</p> <p>End-of-project target:</p> <p>DHL: 80% of fulltime Razor Clam harvesters are certified;</p> <p>BKC: Over 70 ha. of certified mango production;</p>	<p>The indicator focus at DHL is on achieving certification, and at BKC on increasing production. EOP is clear.</p> <p>MTR findings:</p> <p>At DHL, no certified clam harvesting; (Baseline - no certification.)</p> <p>At BKC, 10 ha certified mango production. (Baseline - 3.4 ha certified mango production.)</p> <p>End-of-project target assessed to be SMART;</p>
<p>5. Number of project beneficiaries (number of which are women).</p> <p>Mid-term target: not set or not applicable;</p> <p>End-of-project target: 600 (of which 250-300 are women)</p>	<p>The indicator and EOP are clear.</p> <p>The MTR team finds there may be challenges to achieve the EOP numbers.</p> <p>End-of-project target: assessed to be <b>not fully SMART</b>, due to short project time remaining to achieve numbers;</p>

## 4.2. Progress towards Results

### 4.2.1 Progress Towards Outcomes Analysis – narrative

This section provides an analysis in relation to project outputs of the project's key achievements to date, and to its implementation challenges.

**Progress towards Outcome 1: Strengthening the institutional framework for the inclusion of biodiversity conservation priorities into the performance management and development planning and budgeting systems of local government within Thailand.**

#### Output 1.1 LGO decision-making processes on development planning and infrastructure placement integrate biodiversity conservation considerations

Due to change in DLA's top management position as well as priorities, DLA has not taken up leading role for Outcome 1 but it still sits in the Project Steering Committee to provide overall recommendations with regard to local government planning procedures. BEDO as implementing partner has in its management role taken adaptive measure by engaging King Prajadhipok's Institute (KPI) to carry out technical tasks that were expected to be performed by DLA.

KPI's tasks include assessment of existing capacity of LGOs within the two pilot sites on development planning and budgeting as well as the level of their awareness on biodiversity issues. It will also develop national level policy statement on the integration of biodiversity conservation into performance management and development planning and budgeting systems of local government across the country. The statement will be proposed for MOI's adoption through DLA, which is sitting in the PSC as well as through MONRE Minister to MOI Minister. KPI is also responsible for developing training curriculum conduct the actual training for LGOs in pilot sites to incorporate biodiversity conservation in their development planning and budgeting. BHI information for each tambon will be integrated into the training manual. The training manual will provide clear guidelines how this could be done within the existing framework of the National 20-Year Strategic Plan, the 12<sup>th</sup> Economic and Social Development Plan, and the Provincial Development Plan. At time of the MTR, the training manual is being developed and actual training is planned to take place in Quarter 4 of 2018.

The Project has also established Provincial and District level Biodiversity Mainstreaming Committee for both pilot sites. The committees are chaired by the provincial governor, and chief-district officer, respectively. These committee are responsible for developing guidance and support inclusion of biodiversity in local and provincial planning, budgeting and monitoring processes.

#### **Challenges:**

Due to prolonged decision of DLA to take up leading role for Outcome 1, and finally its decision to not participate in implementation, the overall progress of results towards Outcome 1 is behind schedule.

The establishment of cooperation mechanism on biodiversity mainstreaming has not yet taken place in the absence of DLA as lead agency for this activity. However, the Project is in the process of establishing direct link at Ministry level through the Office of Permanent Secretary on the adoption of proposed policy statement as well as any other activities which require engagement of high-level decision makers, including the establishment of national level cooperation mechanisms on biodiversity mainstreaming.

#### Output 1.2 Increased management and compliance monitoring capacity of DLA and LGOs



Thailand Environment Institute (TEI) was engaged to develop area-specific Biodiversity Health Index (BHI) in the two pilot sites through consultation process with representatives from local community representatives and LGOs. The original BHI concept has been expanded to include also biodiversity benefits index (BBI) to balance biodiversity conservation with sustainable uses for community's livelihoods. The draft BHI/BBI developed with the communities are then reviewed by a group of experts. The final list of BBI/BHI includes 12 indicators under 4 categories, i.e. habitats, threats and pollution, significant species, and sustainable uses and management.

At MTR time, the list has just been finalized and will be presented to the community groups in November 2018, followed by the development of manual to integrate BHI/BBI in the LGO planning, budgeting as well as performance assessment management processes.

### **Challenges**

Under Output 1.1, KPI is engaged to develop training manual for local governments, which include four areas of content: (1) various national level planning frameworks (2) local level planning and budgeting procedures (3) knowledge on biodiversity and how it could be integrated into local development plans, and (4) BHI/BBI (developed by TEI). The challenge lies in how well the KPI team understands technical aspects of the BHI/BBI to be used as reference in its training manual.

## **Outcome2: Local government development programmes based on biodiversity mainstreaming**

### Output 2.1 Development of BHI for Don Hoi Lord and Bangkhachao

BHI/BBI of Don Hoi Lord and Bangkhachao are developed through consultative process facilitated by TEI through the following steps.

- (1) collecting data (social, economic, environmental capacity and threats) of each site and conducted consultative meetings with all LGOs in the areas
- (2) conducting survey on biodiversity and quality of the environment
- (3) identifying BHI/BBI for each area and conducting expert meeting to review and finalise the indicators
- (4) presenting the list to communities and LGOs to invite feedback and adjusting the indicators accordingly, and
- (5) conducting meetings with LGOs to identify biodiversity conservation activities to be included in the LGO plans and developing M&E guidelines.

At time of the MTR, activities 1-3 have been completed and activities 4-5 are planned for Quarter 4 of 2018.

### **Challenges**

BHI/BBI are technical concepts. It is necessary to make sure that the terminologies used are easy to understand by the local people.

### Output 2.2 Local development plans that incorporate conservation values are implemented for Bangkhachao and Don Hoi Lord

Project Committee are established at provincial and district level for both pilot sites through the facilitation of the project. The provincial committee is chaired by the provincial governor with members representing concerned government agencies, private sector and CSOs. District-level committee is chaired by Chief district officer with LGOs in pilot sites sitting as committee members. Key function of both committees is to ensure that the project activities in respective pilot sites are complying with the project's planned results and that biodiversity conservation are actually integrated into local government's planning, budgeting and performance agreement assessment systems.

At MTR time, not all LGOs in pilot sites have integrated biodiversity concerns in their 4- year development plans due to the delayed inputs from various consultants, i.e. BHI/BBI final list and discussion how they can be used to guide LGO planning, training manual by KPI to enhance LGO knowledge about alignments of national, provincial and local level planning to include biodiversity conservation.

Most LGOs in target sites have developed their 4-year development plan (2019-2022), which includes some activities on environmental conservation, e.g. reforestation, water quality control, organic farming, but nothing specific to biodiversity. However, there is still room to put biodiversity-related activities in their annual operation and budget plan under broad category of 'Environment Management'. One TAO in Don Hoi Lord has already allocated Baht 100,000 to awareness annually to support awareness raising activities on biodiversity conservation and sustainable management among school children and youth groups.

In Don Hoi Lord, the Thailand Wetland Foundation is engaged to conduct study and develop sustainable coastal area land use model for the site's conservation as well as economic purposes. Specifically, it has conducted monthly survey on species and population of birds that migrate to the coastal areas and benefit from its biodiversity. Based on the findings, models to add social and economic value to this habitat are developed. The foundation has come up with birds-related sustainable tourism model to engage land-owners, boat drivers, local tour guides, women and children in different kinds of services on a win-win basis. These people are trained on basic knowledge about coastal area biodiversity system and seasonal migrant birds.

In Bangkhachao, sustainable land use model has been discussed with local communities. Various measures have been implemented to conserve the green area which is regarded as 'urban oasis'. The project works with Department of Agricultural Extension and TAO to expand GI mango plantation areas, from 3 hectares at baseline to 70 hectares (EOP target). At MTR time, there are more farmers participating in the scheme and the total mango plantation area has increased to 10 hectares. The price of GI mangoes from Bangkhachao is 4 times higher than mangoes in the market. Provincial GI fruit committee has been established and representatives from mango farms in Bangkhachao is part of its members. The committee's role is to certify GI mangoes and other GI fruits using guidelines developed from technical as well as traditional knowledge.

Another GI fruit being promoted but on a more limited scale is Dheppharos tangerine which is unique to Bangkhachao.

The project also supports communities to be ready to participate in scheme under the Royal Forestry Department to protect the 204 hectares of preserved forest. Under this scheme, communities are allowed to use the land for sustainable farming on a shared benefit basis. They have to organize in groups to apply for land use. In each allocated plot, they have to grow trees recommended by RFD as well as their own fruit trees. Profits from the produces will be shared among farmers, contributed to conservation fund, and returning to the RFD. The farmer groups will have to submit quarterly report to RFD. The role of the project is to help farmers organized and introduce to them agroforestry concept and relevant knowledge.

### **Challenges**

Bangkhachao is threatened by rapid urbanization. Provincial development priorities are industry and tourism. Many farmers are tempted to sell their farmland as they do not get enough income from traditional farming. The challenge for the project is to help farmers turn their fruit orchards into GI fruit farms with technical support and demonstration of successful cases. Continual support to groups working on the RFD scheme is also necessary so the communities get economic benefits from their conservation efforts.

### **Output 2.3 Capacity building support to implement participatory land/coastal use plans**

Suan Dusit University is engaged to assess awareness of local communities in two project sites on the links between biodiversity and economic development and to develop their capacity on participatory land/coastal use planning, implementation, and monitoring. Specifically, they conducted participatory meetings with local community leaders and members to assess /raise their understanding on the relevance of biodiversity, assess their capacity gaps to address biodiversity issues in LGO planning process, and develop curriculum to address the identified needs. At MTR time, three curricula have been completed. The first curriculum focuses on sustainable biodiversity utilization and rehabilitation of ecosystems; the second curriculum is on integrated planning: biodiversity and economic development; and the third curriculum is on monitoring and evaluation on implementation of the integrated plans. The actual training will take place in the last quarter of this year.

### **Challenges**

The project has engaged several consultants to work on different training curriculum for local communities and local governments. There are some areas that these curricula are overlapped or could likely be conflicting in detailed content/message which would potentially cause confusion for the participants. It is crucial that the PMU conduct a roundtable forum where all consultants share their outputs and discuss how these different technical outputs can be seamlessly linked or synergized in real community setting.

### Output 2.4: Sustainable livelihood activities that support conservation of biodiversity supported

Thammasat University is contracted to conduct feasibility study on development of sustainable economic activities from biodiversity base for both project sites, conduct capacity building activities (training and study visits) for the participants of potential economic groups, and provide continual coaching to these groups. The approach used included multi-steps including:

- (1) Socio-economic survey
- (2) Analysis of existing biodiversity-based products
- (3) Identifying most potential options for further development
- (4) SWOT analysis of each option
- (5) Selection of the most potential (primary) product/option.

At time of the MTR, the primary potential options for each site have been identified.

#### Bangkhachao:

The primary option is to promote locally unique products under “Bangkhachao Brand” which reflects three BKC characteristics: natural, green, and serene. Products that would benefit most from this Brand have to show strong association with the Location (Bangkhachao) which is unique. Fruits are a good example, as they are grown on this land. Potential fruits to be promoted are Nam Dok Mai mango, Dhepparos tangerine, and fresh coconut.

#### Don Hoi Lord:

Currently, DHL is famous as tourist destination as well as mangrove rehabilitation site for many outside groups including corporate CSR programmes. However, haphazard planting of mangrove trees could alter natural distribution of trees in the mangrove forest. A potential option in sustainable environment management for DHL is “Planting Tourism”, which is sensitive to the balanced distribution of trees and creates economic benefits to the community at the same time. Key activities will include:

- (1) Identifying potential land available
- (2) Developing plantation frame to ensure natural mix of tree
- (3) Training interested participants on nursing and planting quota of trees
- (4) Establishing community-customer contact point
- (5) Developing marketing/communication/educational content and booking platform
- (6) Monitoring progress

These primary options for both sites will be presented to the communities for their feedback after the MTR.

The project also plans to coordinate with Fishery Department to conduct training on sustainable harvesting of razor clams for DHL groups.

### Challenges

Planting tourism is a relatively new concept and needs good organization and management skills. From the interview with DHL communities, they have rather limited experience working as organized groups. It is necessary that they are trained and closely coached on these skills in addition to technical tree nursing knowledge. Another challenge is how to synergise the 'Planting Tree' activity with the 'Bird Watch Tourism' facilitated by the Thai Wetland Foundation.

#### 4.2.2 Progress Towards Outcomes Analysis – Matrix and GEF Tracking Tools

The matrix is presented in Annex 3 and provides an overview of the project's achievement of outcomes against End-of-Project Targets in summary. It includes also the MTR rating assessments as defined in the Guidance document, and summarized in Annex 4. These assessments include also the MTR team's justification for each of the ratings.

The GEF Tracking Tools have been reviewed. While there is no change at MTR for most of the TT themes, comments on Indirect Coverage and on question 7 have been made by the MTR team (Annex 10).

#### 4.2.3 Remaining barriers to achieving the project objective

Remaining barriers to achieving the project objective lie in the missing link between the project and DLA for the adoption of policy statement formulated by King Prachadhipok Institute. The Project is in the process of initiating direct contact with Mol through its Permanent Secretary Office to act as focal point for future collaboration for Outcome 1. However, at time of the MTR, it is too early to say whether this new linkage could really be established and to what level of effectiveness.

Another, and different, barrier is that posed by the difficulty to confirm the presence of the target habitat indicator species at BKC. This is a semi-aquatic living type of earthworm, of the Genus *Glyphidrilus* and a species locally endemic to the Chao Phraya River (other similar species have been found in Thailand, each one particular to a specific drainage basin area). It has been studied by a team at Chulalongkorn University<sup>5</sup>, and is named 'Flying Earthworm'. Its presence at BKC appears to fluctuate and it has been difficult to find again since the time of PPG. For the Project Team, it would be prudent to take a decision on an alternative to this species, which the MTR team has recommended.

For Outcome 2, key barrier remains in the lack of active engagement of PAO in the project activities in both pilot provinces. If this continues, it is likely that indicator 2.2 under Outcome 2 may not be achieved.

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<sup>5</sup> Chanabun R, Sutcharit C, Tongkerd P, Panha S (2013) The semi-aquatic freshwater earthworms of the genus *Glyphidrilus* Horst, 1889 from Thailand (Oligochaeta, Almidiae) with re-descriptions of several species. *ZooKeys* 265:1–76. doi: [10.3897/zookeys.265.3911](https://doi.org/10.3897/zookeys.265.3911)

### 4.3. Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

#### 4.3.1 Management Arrangements and Work planning:

Project management arrangements as presented in the Project Document did not function effectively for the first 18 months due to the lack of engagement of the Department of Local Administration (DLA) as Responsible Party (RP). That the risks from this for project survival were very real became evident after Q1/early 2017 (PIR and QPRs refer). With UNDP cooperation and PSC endorsement, BEDO took the additional role of RP to cover the gaps made by DLA's absence.

BEDO was well placed to do that due to its structure and through its function as project IP, and experience as IP on similar governance projects for biodiversity conservation. Moreover, the advantage of BEDO's organizational structure would bring clarity in responsibilities, establish clear reporting lines, and enable timely and transparent decision-making.

This was an absolutely necessary change to the project management setup if the project was to gain any progress. The MTR team believes this change is relevant and effective.

Project work planning is done with close cooperation between PMU and BEDO, and the MTR team finds the quality of project execution by BEDO to be of high level, with a high level of management inputs and processes, including budgeting and procurement.

The MTR team also has a recommendation for management improvement (section 4.3.4 refers). This is to review the new M&E system in connection with the consultation meeting with all consultants, to include modifications that could assist to track consultants' progress in a uniform manner and enable smooth reporting to the PSC.

The quality and timeliness of project technical support by UNDP is found by the MTR Team to be good, the UNDP team appears to have a smooth relationship with BEDO and can keep informed up-to-date on the status of project implementation. Both BEDO and UNDP have applied their focus on project results and have reported with candor and realism (PMU's QPRs refer, and UNDP's PIRs and the MTR briefing and debriefing discussions refer). Both BEDO and UNDP have also shown good quality risk management, and UNDP also good responsiveness to implementation problems. This has been evident in their active engagement together to solve the issue of withdrawal by DLA from active participation in the project, and rightly so, being a potentially 'kill-project' issue. In this context, and concerning project catch-up and survival, it is fortunate that the IP is BEDO, whose capacity and networks could enable a productive / sustainable final part of SLBT implementation.

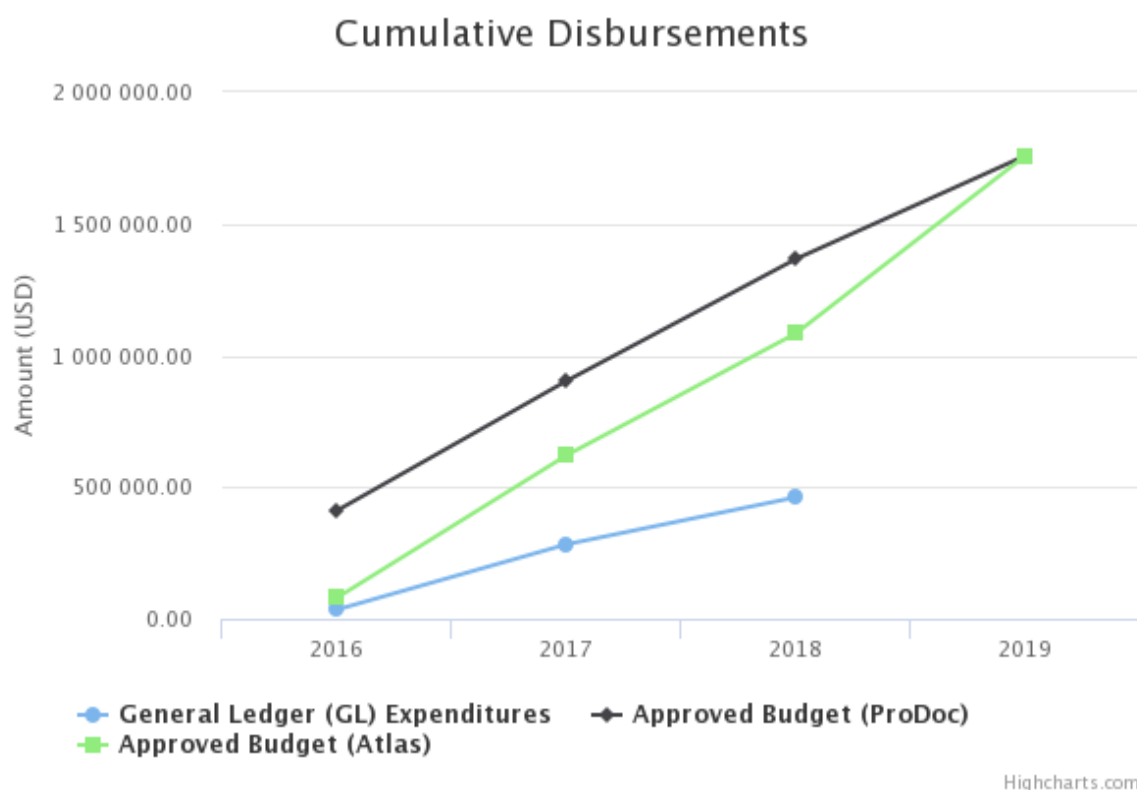
However, one remark on UNDP's supportive role is that field visits by UNDP to the 2 target sites at MTR time are lacking and should have been made during the first 6 - 8 months of implementation, to gain a solid understanding of local conditions at target site level early in the project. That would have been useful for early discussions with BEDO on local level conditions and issues. Overall though, the MTR team finds that UNDP CO and RTA have continually supported the project through several channels, including regular meetings to monitor progress towards achievement of results (as per RF), providing technical advice on relevant methodologies, and also in convening special meetings to resolve implementation issues, particularly as mentioned, the lack of DLA engagement as RP. Support from UNDP is seen as timely and sufficient and the RTA has provided high quality input to the PIRs.

#### 4.3.2 Finance and co-finance

Information from the improved project M&E system led to decisions by the WG to revise project finance management procedures and align them with those of BEDO's, in order to accelerate project funds' disbursement and reporting. Noted improvements were as follows:

- A) Sharper process and practice that included: detailed quarterly implementation schedules by all implementing units and related additional / precise financial reports; And
- B) Better coordination, through PM's responsibility to closely follow up on these schedules and reports, and submit output analyses to WG for timely review and approval.

The project's cumulative disbursement as reported in the PIR 2018, is presented here, as brief information on project spending until June 2018. By then, expenditure was 34 %.



Changes to fund allocation has so far mainly concerned resources needed for recruitment of consultants to conduct the work that was earlier under the auspices of DLA, for example the guidelines for LGOs, and policy proposals by King Prachatipok Institute (KPI), and the integration of BBI/BHI indicators in LGO planning processes.

The MTR team finds that changes in project fund allocations are appropriate, relevant, and necessary. The MTR team also finds that the project has appropriate financial controls for the scope of project activities, and that reporting and planning function well. PMU can make informed decisions regarding the budget and coordinate the timely flow of funds.

The project co-finance set up at project start is defined as 74 % by Government and 26% GEF-UNDP, see the table below from the Project Document.

#### Co-finance

The PM has reported the government actual expenditure of its co-finance funds in the table below. He also stated per email: "Of the government's total co-financing amount (USD 7,530,00) \$2,568,000 is expected from DLA as support to implementation of Outcome 1. With the absence of DLA in project implementation this amount has not been realized and the envisioned total target for co-financing has not been met." Table 5 presents part of BEDO's co-financing for Outcome 2 (in THB and currently approximately 18 % of \$4,962,000):

Table 5: BEDO's co-financing for Outcome 2 (in THB) in yearly breakdown concerning project office running costs and salaries, and BEDO overhead and logistics:

Types of expenditure *	2016	2017	2018	Total (THB)
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Office rent, electricity, water supply, air-conditioning, equipment, working tables, cabinets, office equipment and maintenance	482,322.40	482,322.40	482,322.40	1,446,967.20
Uses of telephone, meeting room, copying machine, vehicle and petrol, and postal fee	139,041.73	140,740.73	139,041.73	418,824.19
Staff salary based on project-related assignment, including messengers (25%)	6,774,010.90	8,593,566.30	8,984,908.50	24,352,485.70
	7,395,374.63	9,216,629.43	9,606,272.63	26,218,277.09
	Approx.			US\$ 874,000

\* Figures from responsible units, pending confirmation from Accounting Unit

Remaining part of BEDO co-financing is therefore a little less than approximately USD 4.1 million (\$4,088,000).

The MTR team finds that the BEDO part of project co-financing is used strategically to achieve project objectives. However, due to the absence of DLA, UNDP and BEDO should with reference to the Project Document discuss the co-financing shortfall in order to align co-finance priorities, and reporting to GEF on this particular situation.

The UNDP part of co-financing is USD 30,000, which is reported by the country office team as being in-kind contributions from programme officers spending extra time to support BEDO with project implementation (email refers).

#### 4.3.3 Project-level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems

PMU commendably created a monthly project-monitoring plan soon after start (by Q2) with intention for target site use, and held a first local level meeting at each site to discuss M&E. Subsequently, monthly monitoring visits are made by PMU to each site to hold consultation meetings function as monitoring sessions to also find solutions to any upcoming issue. The two project Field Coordinators are responsible for compiling field level monitoring results and reporting those to the PM. This is also a good way to keep track of local-level target site progress and challenges.

However, M&E tools needed for all the project's needs appear to not have been put in place. The SLBT has a multi stakeholder set up and comprises both data collection with analysis, and institutional capacity building processes and testing, in 2 locations. Moreover, gender mainstreaming and communications are two project elements that require a good monitoring setup. In order to track progress of all these elements properly and to assess activity effectiveness, a comprehensive project M&E system is required. This should have been presented and discussed as part of the Inception workshop agenda.

Participation of all stake-holders would have brought all parties to the same page of 'what is, and why M&E?'. This helps keep the project's vision and aims clear among all stakeholders and lays the ground for smooth collaboration with PMU on M&E. The concept of a project M&E plan being a participatory management tool to support implementation effectiveness was maybe not discussed fully at project start, and M&E functions were seen rather as being for field site checks and for PMU's consultant management (QPRs refer, where there is seldom any M&E coverage). While monitoring tools were insufficient then, the situation had been rectified to a good level in Q2 2017.

In May 2017, the PD (and DDG, BEDO) institutionalized a BEDO project Working Group (WG) chaired by himself, to support monitoring of all project activities (by BEDO teams, consultants and PMU) and finance. For this purpose, the WG holds a meeting every 2 weeks to review progress, with both activity and finance reporting documented in standard M&E templates. WG members are representatives from all units in BEDO that are engaged in project activities. The WG sessions include activity reports from the target sites' two PCs at local level, the



consultants' progress reports, and the BEDO team's coordination reports. This setup greatly improved the project monitoring system. There is no separate M&E budget allocated within the project financial plan. Costs incurred in internal M&E (e.g. field visits by PMU and BEDO implementing teams) are charged to the corresponding activity's budget (the Project Document pages 86-87 refers), and so far, it is sufficient (PM email comment refers).

The MTR team finds that the project M&E system functions well after BEDO - PMU collaboration established the monitoring WG.

The M&E system is the basis for project management to assess the potential of project outcomes to be up-scaled or out-scaled, but indicators for this need to be identified. PMU should discuss with UNDP on the feasibility of establishing indicators of this kind, and the potential uptake of project outcomes, one year before EOP.

#### 4.3.4 Stakeholder Engagement

Project PMU has put a lot of effort in partnership building from the start of the project, which began prior to project start up, with ground-level scoping visits regarding the project concept and to elicit feedback. Monthly local visits have been made to each local project group since project start-up.

The MTR team finds that PMU has developed appropriate partnerships in a commendable way with both direct and tangential stakeholders.

The project has support from its 'home agency' MoNRE, through BEDO. MoNRE promotes BEDO as its spearhead for biodiversity and endorses flexibility for it to function effectively as project IP and host for project PMU. Flexibility in operations has facilitated the added work BEDO and PMU have had to take on due to the lack of engagement with the project from DLA. At the time of the MTR, BEDO is exploring ways to establish closer collaboration with the Ministry of Interior (Mol). This would garner institutional support overall and in particular with implementation of Outcome 1 activities, and promote the project objectives among all local government agencies (TAOs) involved in the project. Some TAOs are clearly committed to the project objectives and have allocated budget for biodiversity conservation, while support for the project from other TAOs is not equally evident.

The MTR team finds the project has support from national and local stakeholders, in particular through BEDO decision-making that supports efficient and effective project implementation.

With reference to the above mentioned, the MTR team finds committed engagement to achieve project objectives by many local community members from both target sites, which portrays a strong potential for high extent of contribution to successful project outcomes. However, this cannot be properly assessed at the MTR due to the delay in project activities of both outcomes and it is, as yet, not possible to judge LGOs capacity to support community efforts in sustainable and profitable bio-product enterprise. By the same token, a similar assessment is made for stakeholders' involvement in public awareness and possible project progress.

#### 4.3.5 Reporting

The MTR team finds that project reporting is timely and comprehensive, with the exception of M&E coverage (the previous section refers). There is close collaboration between PMU and BEDO, and adaptive management reporting was a constant internal process until formal reporting was made to the Board. There is also productive exchange between PMU and UNDP to address all issues and plan for improvement. Moreover, PMU has commendably prompted measures to improve reporting and thereby implementation with a quarterly technical meeting with UNDP, and after receiving the PIR 2017, made a revised, outcome-focused implementation schedule. This schedule will be very useful for the terminal evaluation. (QPR 1/2018 refers.) The MTR team finds GEF reporting to be of good standard.



The MTR team finds that adaptive management process is largely an ongoing and productive internal activity, since Q4 2017 due to the serious nature of the main issue, which is to cover the absence of DLA while also handling day-to-day project management procedures. Outcome 1 activities are in focus, in particular the coordination of the consultants' responsibilities, methodologies and synergy seeking among them. PMU is documenting these processes with photo and video film, and the MTR team has suggested recommendations to PMU on the benefits in lesson learning from holding consultation meetings with all consultants. Gaining their mutual understanding on the importance of coherence in their approach is key to effective activity implementation and positive results.

#### **4.3.6 Communications**

The MTR team found that PMU and FPCs have regular and effective communication in various formats with stakeholders, and heard appreciation regarding this from those met during the MTR programme.

The MTR team has met relatively few of the project stakeholders (from 2 out of 10 sub-districts) in the limited time available and from interaction with these can confirm their high level of awareness of project outcomes and commitment to contribute to a successful project. PMU monthly field meetings are effective feedback mechanisms to the project regarding any issue or if clarification of communication is required.

Overall, project communications benefit from the expertise that BEDO has, in particular external communications for example, with materials and stakeholder outreach. Thereby, the project has access to a setup for external communication with high potential for developing and sharing project progress information, and other public messaging content. However at present this potential is not being fully tapped.

The project website hosted by BEDO was commendably set up soon after project start. The site has a good appearance in general, but its main page lacks easy-to-read and 'catchy' information. At present, 'Project Document-type text is presented there, with Results Framework bullets that in all likelihood will not attract many readers to stay on the site. The next web page (after clicking forward) is more engaging with photo-based reports from project activities, often from the field sites. But there should be items of interest already on the first/main page to catch people's attention, especially on biodiversity conservation and wise use, and also on promotion of local government roles.

The MTR team finds that the project website in its current style is too low-key and does not attract sufficient attention to express the project content, progress, and intended impact to the public. A more engaging website would be more effective for project awareness raising. PMU and the two FPCs have ensured local-level biodiversity awareness raising through target site activities, but wider initiatives for public awareness have not yet taken place.

#### **4.4. Sustainability**

The overall rating for project sustainability is Moderately Likely. The sub-sections below describe in more detail the MTR assessment, and provide risk ratings, intended as guidance.

##### **4.4.1 Financial risks to sustainability:**

There is relatively low risk associated with financial sustainability of project results. Several factors contribute to this. (1) Thailand has developed its first 20-year strategic plan (2017-2036) in which 'green growth' is one of the key strategies. The National Economic and Social Development Plan, ministerial plans, departmental plans, provincial plans and local level development plans will have to comply with budget provisions for this long-term strategic plan. Budget will be allocated at each individual level to support implementation of these

plans. (2) Local Government Organizations also have their own budget to implement activities under their mandates, which include natural resources management and environment conservation. Once the biodiversity conservation is mainstreamed into LGO development plan, the budget to support implementation is secured.

The MTR team considers the financial risks to sustainability to be of Rating: moderately likely

#### **4.4.2 Socio-economic risks to sustainability**

Local communities in two pilot sites have been engaged in project activities since the project start. They took part in the BHI/BBI development process, were consulted by consultant teams to identify biodiversity-unique products; and will be trained to develop development activities with links between biodiversity and economic development as well as participatory land/coastal use planning, implementation, and monitoring. By the end of the project, they should have strong ground to continue with the project activities after the project ends.

Alternative livelihood activities which have strong association with local biodiversity conservation, for example, GI mango and tangerine farms, bird-watching/eco-tourism, organic farming, planting tourism are designed to reduce risks for economic sustainability of the project results. However, tangible results in terms of economic gains may take longer time to see, and may not be fully realized during the remaining time of the project.

The MTR team considers socio-economic risks to sustainability to be of Rating: Moderately Likely.

#### **4.4.3 Institutional Framework and Governance risks to sustainability**

BEDO was established in 2007 with 11 objectives. Three of these objectives are directly related to the project outcomes and lay foundation for BEDO to pursue with the project's results after the project ends. These specific objectives are (1) to promote, support, and implement measures for the development of biodiversity-based economy (2) to promote and support the conservation of biodiversity resources and the local wisdom of communities and local communities and (3) to collect information, conduct studies, analyze data and assess needs for the development of biodiversity-based economy in order to make policy recommendations and propose measures to the Cabinet. The model working with LGOs in this project will be further replicated through BEDO's regular line of working at community levels. The fact that the policy to mainstream biodiversity conservation in LGO plans is in place for nationwide adoption will be enabling factor to help BEDO accelerate the application of lessons learned from this project through LGOs across the country. But it may have to be a gradual process, which takes a few years to cover the whole country. The project's provincial and district level government's attention to sustainable environment management is put primarily to issues of water and solid waste pollution as it is among national top priorities.

The MTR team finds that the lack of engagement by DLA and the lack of attention to biodiversity themes at provincial and district level government do pose a likely risk to project benefit sustainability. However, the project IP will pursue a strategy of lessening this risk through engagement with the MOI, including the election of a MOI representative to the project board/PSC. Rating: Likely

The inclusion of biodiversity conservation in the performance assessment agreement between the provincial governor and the LGOs which is one of the project's key outputs will be another factor assuring institutional framework to sustain the project results. However, as this point this mechanism is not yet established. It is planned for the second half of the project through series of training and workshops by KPIs.

With limited time, the MTR team has not had an opportunity to fully understand the scope of availability of required systems/mechanisms for accountability, transparency, and technical

knowledge in all the project's LGO stakeholders. It is believed that appropriate systems for accountability and transparency are present, but not so concerning technical knowledge in biodiversity conservation and sustainable use and their promotion / awareness-raising. This is presumed to be a likely risk to sustainability. Although elections at National and Provincial levels that are expected to take place within a year's time from the MTR could have an impact on project outcome sustainability, the target sites' future protection as Nature Reserve by gazette should buffer changes of governance structure at the project sites.

The MTR team considers the risks to sustainability from changes in legal frameworks, policies, governance structures and processes to be of Rating: Moderately Likely;

#### **4.4.4 Environmental risks to sustainability**

The main environmental risk to project outcome sustainability is land-use change, and pollution from solid waste dumping, and water-borne pollution.

At BKC the risk of land sale by farmers to 'outsiders' interested in acquiring plots with rural character for residential property or enterprise development near Bangkok city, is considered to be a moderately high, to high risk. This depends on the land price market, which at the time of the MTR is a buyers' market (Sept. 2018) with BKC plot-owners hesitant to sell, it was said. Should land prices become higher some plot owners would probably be tempted to sell their 'orchard/garden plots'. The gazette of a PA would secure part of the BKC 'green-lung' area, but the possibility that adjacent areas would be sold should remain to be considered a threat to BKC biodiversity values.

At DHL, land-use change would be connected to factors negatively impacting the Razor clam population such as up-stream water pollution from the rivers flowing into the DHL bay, or in the event of sea-borne toxic pollution arriving to the mud flats hosting the Razor clams. Should the Razor clam population die off for these or other reasons, the presence of the is critical to allow for the recovery of the clams. A diminished clam population (and drop in income to the local clam harvester and vendor families) would probably mean an equivalent drop in social engagement to maintain the DHL habitat. This situation would pose a threat to continued access to the mudflats by the project's target migratory wader bird species. An additional threat is that of coastal strip physical damage from storm surge/cyclone, tsunami.

On the other hand, the expansion of fruit orchards and organic farms, establishment of provincial-wide eco-tourism committee in Samut Prakarn, and the organized bird watching activities would help to secure sustainable management of the biodiversity to a certain extent, depending on how effectively these activities are implemented in the remaining period of the project.

Summary:

BKC SITE: Pollution from house construction and river borne toxins, and salinity fluctuation.

DHL SITE: Pollution from up-stream household effluents and river borne toxins; sea-borne toxins, including oil spill; weather induced flooding and wind damage.

The MTR team considers environmental risks to sustainability to be of Rating: Moderately Likely.

## 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

### 5.1 Conclusions

#### 5.1.1 Project Strategy and Design

The concept of the project is extremely relevant in relation to global efforts to successfully achieve sustainable development initiatives in biodiversity, natural resource management, poverty reduction and related themes. It is also very relevant to Thailand's specific situation to secure long-term solution for sustainable biodiversity conservation and utilization at local community level where people's livelihood relies largely on the use of biodiversity. Through its two Outcomes, the Project aims to overcome 2 key barriers in achieving this long-term solution: i.e. the absence of enabling framework and capacity in order for LGOs to integrate biodiversity into development decisions; and absence of successful demonstration experiences of LGOs integrating conservation of biodiversity-rich areas into their development planning and budgeting.

Engagement of DLA as Responsible Partner (RP) for Outcome 1 and BEDO as Implementation Partner as well as Responsible Partner for Outcome 2 are strategically relevant. DLA has direct responsibility to design and support local planning and monitoring systems and, in particular relevance to this project, to enact, revise, and amend the laws and regulations related to the local administrative organizations. Similarly, BEDO is a public organization established with a goal to create employment, income, and opportunities for local communities based on sustainable use of biodiversity. BEDO's specialty is to promote and assist value chain process from biodiversity and local wisdom utilization and relevant interdisciplinary bio businesses. As such, it can facilitate the development of sustainable biodiversity-based alternative livelihood/business models that will be adopted by the TAOs in two demonstration sites.

#### 5.1.2 Project Management

Project management arrangements as presented in the Project Document did not function effectively for the first 18 months due to the lack of engagement of the Department of Local Administration (DLA) as Responsible Party (RP). With UNDP cooperation and PSC endorsement, BEDO took the additional role of RP to cover the gaps made by DLA's absence. BEDO was well placed to do that due to its structure and through its function as project IP, and experience as IP on similar governance projects for biodiversity conservation. This was an absolutely necessary change to the project management setup if the project was to gain any progress. The MTR team believes this change is relevant and effective.

Project work planning is done with close cooperation between PMU and BEDO, and the MTR team finds the quality of project execution to be of high level. The project M&E work plan, however, needs to be modified to track consultants' progress in a uniform manner and enable smooth reporting to the PSC/Board.

The quality of project support by UNDP is found by the MTR Team to be good, the UNDP team appears to have a smooth relationship with BEDO and can keep informed up-to-date on the status of project implementation. But more frequent field visit supports is needed to get better understanding of the project activities on the ground.

The Project Management Unit established under BEDO has been effective in its management and worked closely with BEDO-based Working Group, chaired by BEDO's Deputy Director and comprising representatives from all concerned units within BEDO to monitor and review implementation progress and financial disbursement. The Project Board, chaired by BEDO's Director met twice a year to provide strategic advice and improve the project annual work plan.

Overall, the MTR team finds that BEDO has demonstrated strong sense of ownership and commitment on the project and has mainstreamed the project activities into its regular lines of work.

### 5.1.3 Project Results

The overall project results are moderately satisfactory. The project has partially achieved the planned results according to the ProDoc. Outcome 1 was behind schedule due to absence of DLA's participation as Responsible Party to lead activities under this Outcome. However, it has gained back the momentum since BEDO has taken up RP role instead of DLA and engaged relevant consultants to conduct technical work required for both outputs for Outcome 1. At MTR time, it was clear that things are now on track but the project will have to make extra efforts to establish direct contact with Mol to adopt the proposed policy statement developed by the consultant.

Outcome 2 has more progressive achievements across its 4 outputs, although at varying degrees. The weakest link is at the PAO level in both provinces. The project needs to make more efforts to get the PAOs engaging in all capacity building and planning activities to be taken place in the second half of the project. It is also crucial that various outputs by different consultants are synergized both in terms of content and timing for implementation to ensure that the two pilot sites get inputs in systematic and congruent way, leading to the achievements of the overall results of the project.

### 5.1.4 Stakeholders

The project has engaged a wide range of stakeholders in its management and implementation, At the Management Level, Project Board consists of 26 members from BEDO as well as external departments, NGOs, CSOs and representative of the two pilot provinces. Project Committees at provincial and district levels also include representatives of concerned government agencies under Ministries of Interior, Natural Resources and Environment, and local institutions, NGOs.

Technical consultants are recruited to conduct feasibility study of alternative livelihoods, develop BHI/BBI, develop training curriculum and manual, conduct training, and develop policy statement for integration of biodiversity conservation into LGP development plans and performance assessment agreements. Details of their engagement is provided in Annex 7.

At pilot site level, representatives of LGOs and local communities in the 10 pilot tambon played an active role to participate in technical consultation workshops and extension activities (e.g. GI mango plantation) conducted by the consultants.

The MTR finds that the level of stakeholder participation is high and the overall quality of technical consultancy is satisfied although there needs to be a review session how these various inputs of different consultant teams can be linked or synergized where possible.

## 5.2 Recommendations

From the conclusions presented above, the MTR team proposes 13 recommendations as follows below. After each recommendation the proposed responsible party/ies is/are stated in brackets. See table 2, page 9, for proposed dates for completion of the recommendations:

1. In the absence of DLA's active participation, the project should shift the focal point to the Ministerial level, to Mol. At the national level, Mol is sitting in the National Integrated Planning Committee chaired by the Prime Minister. At provincial level, the governor (under Mol) chairs the Provincial Integrated Planning Committee (BEDO).

To get Mol's 'buy in' of the policy statement developed by KPI, there should be Mol representative sitting in the Project's Board. A courtesy visit to Mol Permanent Secretary is planned by BEDO's DG, to give a briefing on the project and to explore Mol's support towards the achievement of Project Aims and Outcomes, with focus on Outcome 1.

2. Review the Results Framework to refine the indicators to be SMART /section 4.1.2 refers, (UNDP / PMU).

3. Due to the continued absence of the initial habitat indicator species *Glyphidrilus sp* 'Flying' Earthworm at BKC, an alternative species with feasible survey outcome should be identified immediately in order to avoid a gap in BKC's science-based results by EOP. Or, as little time remains, focus on a BKC water quality study only in the remaining project time, as biodiversity conservation supportive activity. PMU and BEDO to urgently discuss with UNDP for decision (UNDP / BEDO / PMU).

4. PMU and BEDO to discuss with UNDP to establish modality of reporting to GEF (as required), about the change in available project co-finance due to the absence of DLA, and resulting fund shortfall in order to re-align co-finance priorities (UNDP / PMU).

5. To meet EOP gender targets, gender mainstreaming should be emphasized throughout the remaining period of the project. This could be done through, for example, including more women in decision-making and leading roles to implement the project's community-based activities in biodiversity conservation and sustainable use at both sites. For example, in produce harvesting, handling and sales, and also in related waste management. The project should also support and encourage more women to be placed in management positions at the Local Government Unit or Community Leaders, and in Social Enterprise Business. Moreover, women should also be considered as trainers in project activities, to ensure that the planned activities are responsive to women's as well as men's needs. Gender Mainstreaming Guidance provided in the Project Document (pp. 60-63) should be used as reference. In order to achieve the gender target, the project will need to develop sex-disaggregated data and needs assessment, and develop/implement gender responsive activities that benefit both women and men (PMU).

6. The project should ensure there is documentation of activities and their outcome, in film, photo and written formats at both target sites. This is in order to have material for discussions about project lessons learned, and for promotion of the project's local government focus for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use throughout Thailand (PMU).

7. For widespread adoption of the project's planning models and manuals by more LGOs, the project may consider working through LGO's Associations of Thailand to identify 'champions' with strong interests in sustainable BD conservation and utilization to participate in the training, should there be extra budget in the remaining period of the project (PMU).

8. Community business groups should be strengthened in management capacity and good governance/transparency principles, with the use of simple language and visualized methods to communicate new and maybe technically complicated concepts/ideas with local people. Where possible, opportunities to establish community social enterprise businesses should be explored at both project sites and the enterprises set up (PMU).

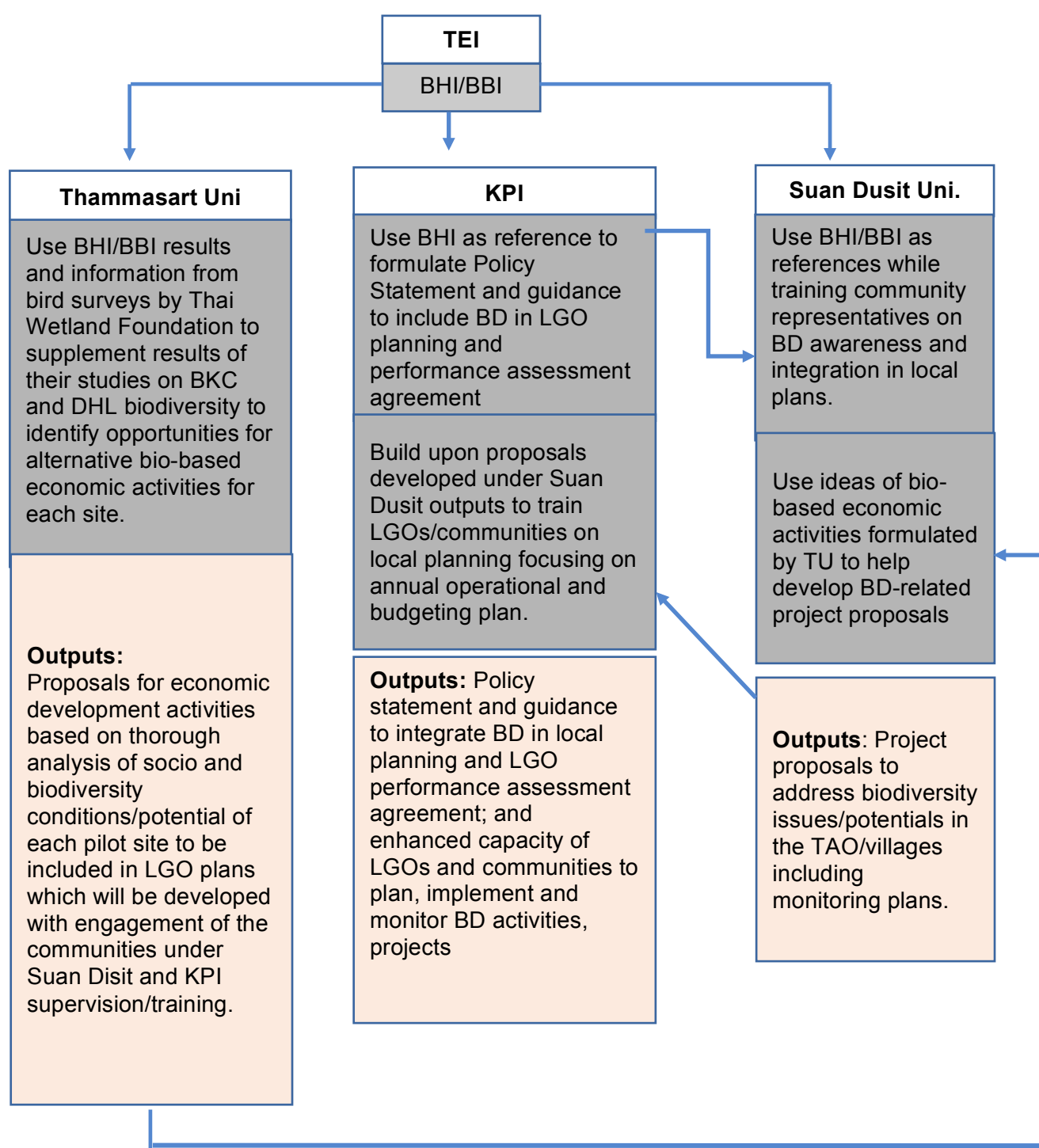
9. Review the project M&E system in light of the planned consultation meeting with all consultants and include modifications that could assist to track consultants' progress in a uniform manner and enable smooth reporting to the PSC (PMU / UNDP).



10. The project has engaged several consultants/consulting groups to conduct studies, training as well as to develop training curriculum, planning and implementation manuals on various subject areas. TORs of these consultancies appear to be overlapping in some parts.

In order to link and also integrate the inputs of these different consultants for seamless implementation of project activities towards the planned results, it is recommended that:

- PMU organizes a roundtable meeting participated by every consultant group. The purpose is to (1) share outputs from individual contracts, and (2) identify linkages and possible integration / blending of related outputs across the groups for seamless application of these outputs in implementation process.
- The BHI developed by TEI can be used as a starting point of the chain. and further work can be developed by individual consultants as illustrated in the following chart.
- Moreover, PMU and BEDO should support the PFCs to do close follow up with the PAO mayors and teams to engage fully in the BHI / BBI training by TEI and KPI, and related test sessions. This will help the PAO groups to establish BHI/BBI targets in their development plans, and monitor the progress (PMU / BEDO).



11. Review the project website. Its current style appears too low-key and is presumed to not attract sufficient attention. A more engaging website would be more effective for project awareness raising, and to show stories from project activities is one way to gain intended public impact. Project progress could also be shown with short photo reports. The website could be a prominent platform to promote clear ways to discuss biodiversity (including terminology issues) in Thailand (PMU / BEDO).

12. In addition to the study tour to Japan, the project should identify and promote show cases from LGOs which have already demonstrated good practices on integration of BD indicators in their planning and monitoring and use them as concrete examples for sharing lessons learned from the two pilot sites. Engage also older community members in the activities at community level, to build upon their experiences and traditional knowledge/wisdoms for lessons learned and biodiversity conservation stories (PMU / BEDO).

13. In order to achieve the gender target, the project will need to develop sex-disaggregated data and needs assessment, and develop/implement gender responsive activities that benefit both women and men Gender training must have practical sessions. Other gender-focused action includes to ensure fair benefit sharing across all groups including women and men, to tap into women's special skills/knowledge (e.g. in natural resources management and utilization, food processing), which would add value to existing bio-based production activities. (PMU / BEDO / UNDP).



## 6. ANNEXES

Annex 1	TOR for the MTR of the ‘Sustainable Management Models for Local Government Organisations to Enhance Biodiversity Protection and Utilisation in Selected Eco-Regions in Thailand’ project, PIMS# 5271
Annex 2	Project Logical Framework: Objective, Outcomes, Outputs and Activities
Annex 3	MTR Evaluative Matrix - Progress Towards Outcomes Analysis
Annex 4	Scale of MTR Ratings
Annex 5	MTR recommended review coverage
Annex 6	Project Stakeholders - detailed list from the Project Document
Annex 7	List of SLBT consultants September 2018 (overview by MTR team)
Annex 8	People met during MTR field mission
Annex 9	MTR field mission programme 17 - 28 September 2018
Annex 10	GEF Tracking Tool (xlsx )
Annex 11	Signed UNEG Code of Conduct forms
Annex 12	MTR Final Report clearance form - delivered to UNDP Thailand as separate document and file
Annex 13	MTR Audit Trail - delivered to UNDP Thailand as separate document and file