



“Harmonization of information management for improved knowledge and monitoring of the global environment in Georgia”



Terminal Evaluation FINAL Report

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Implementing Partner:	Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture (MEPA)
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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

APA	Agency for Protected Area
APR	Annual Progress Report
AWP	Annual Work Plan
BUR	Biennial Update Report
CBD	Convention on Biodiversity
CCCCD	Cross-Cutting Capacity Development
CD	Capacity Development
CDR	Combined Delivery Report (Atlas)
CO	Country Office
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
EIEC	Environmental Information and Education Centre
EU	European Union
EPR	Environmental Performance Review
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
IT	Information Technology
LOA	Letter Of Agreement
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEPA	Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreement
MENRP	Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection
MTEF	Medium-Term Expenditures Framework
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIM	National Implementation Modality
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NCSA	National Capacity Self-Assessment
NEA	National Environmental Agency
NEAP	National Environmental Action Programme
NFA	National Forestry Agency
NPD	National Project Director
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PEB	Project Executive Board
PIR	Project Implementation Report
PM	Project Manager
PMU	Project Management Unit
PPG	Project Preparation Grant
SEIS	Shared Environmental Information System
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound
TE	Terminal Evaluation
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNPSD	United Nations Partnership for Sustainable Development
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollar

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DISCLAIMER

This report is the work of an independent Evaluation Team and does not necessarily represent the views, or policies, or intentions of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and/or of the Government of Georgia.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of the Terminal Evaluation (TE) of the UNDP-supported-GEF-Financed-Government of Georgia Project “*Harmonization of information management for improved knowledge and monitoring of the global environment in Georgia*”. This TE was performed by an Evaluation Team composed of Mr. Jean-Joseph Bellamy and Ms. Kate Skhireli on behalf of UNDP.

Table 1: Project Information Table

Project Title:	<i>Harmonization of information management for improved knowledge and monitoring of the global environment in Georgia</i>		
UNDP Project ID (PIMS #):	4883	PIF Approval Date:	December 18, 2013
GEF Project ID (PMIS #):	5467	CEO Endorsement Date:	January 28, 2015
Project ID:	00082289	Project Document (ProDoc) Signature Date (date project began):	July 22, 2015
Country:	Georgia	Date Project Manager hired:	September 21, 2015
Region:	Europe and Central Asia	Inception Workshop date:	July 21, 2015
Focal Area:	Multi-Focal Areas	Midterm Review date:	N/A
GEF-5 Strategic Program:	CD2: To generate, access and use information and knowledge CD5: To enhance capacities to monitor and evaluate environmental impacts and trends	Planned closing date:	July 21, 2018
Trust Fund:	GEF	If revised, proposed closing date:	May 31, 2019
Executing Agency:	Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia (MENRP) (<i>now Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture of Georgia (MEPA)</i>)		
Project Financing	at CEO endorsement (USD)		at Completion (USD)
(1) GEF financing:	1,200,000		1,200,000
(2) UNDP contribution:	150,000		144,406
(3) Government: MEPA	1,191,938		1,191,938
(4) Total co-financing [2+3]:	1,341,938		1,338,344
Project Total Cost [1+5]:	2,541,938		2,538,344

Georgia is located in the west of the south Caucasus region with a land area of 69,494km² and additional territorial waters covering 7,628.4ha. The country is bordered to the west by the Black Sea, to the north by Russia, to the south by Armenia, and Turkey, and to the east by Azerbaijan. It is located on the southern slopes of Great Caucasus Mountain Range, on the isthmus between the Black and Caspian Seas. Despite its small area, Georgia enjoys one of the most varied topographies in the region. The land rises from sea level at the Black Sea, to approximately 5,069m above sea level at Mount Shkhara in the Caucasus. Mountains occupy about 54% of the territory located at altitudes higher than 1,000m.

Over the years, Georgia has upgraded its environmental policies and programmes, its environmental legislation and its institutional framework to protect its environment. It included fulfilling its international commitments under MEAs, particularly the three Rio Conventions. Nevertheless, the country had been still facing environmental problems due to low institutional capacity and lack of financial, technical and human resources. The analysis conducted for the formulation of this project found that the policy, legal and institutional framework for environmental management and protection were still overrun by development decisions in Georgia and that barriers to achieving global environmental objectives were in large part a reflection of the challenges Georgia faces in pursuing environmentally sound and sustainable development.

During the period 2003-2005, Georgia conducted a National Capacity Self-Assessment (NCSA) funded by the GEF to identify priorities and needs for capacity development to address global environmental issues, in particular biological diversity, climate change, and land degradation, and synergies between them, with the

aim of catalyzing domestic and/or externally assisted action to meet those needs in a coordinated and planned manner. The process identified environmental monitoring and environmental data management as a key cross-cutting issue hindering development and implementation of effective policies for the management of global environmental resources in Georgia. This issue is also clearly stated as a priority in the NEAPs 2012-2016 and 2017-2021, in the MTEF 2012-2015 and in the NBSAP 2014-2020.

This project - which is part of the GEF Cross-Cutting Capacity Development (CCCD) programme - was conceptualized to address this issue. It has provided resources for the reduction and/or elimination of institutional bottlenecks and barriers to the synergistic implementation of Rio Conventions. The aim of this project is to improve Georgia's decision-making by harmonizing existing information systems related to the Rio Conventions, by integrating internationally accepted measurement standards and methodologies, and by ensuring a consistent reporting on global international best practices. It seeks to strengthen the underlying information and knowledge management foundations upon which Georgia can undertake a more holistic and comprehensive approach to analyze policy interventions from a Rio Convention perspective.

The objective of this project is to develop individual and organizational capacities in the MENRP (now MEPA) and EIEC for improved monitoring of environmental impacts and trends for elaboration of collaborative environmental management. It is to be achieved through the delivery of two expected outcomes:

1. Capacities for environmental monitoring are better enabled;
2. Technical and management staff sufficiently trained in monitoring and data analysis, and linkage to decision-making process.

This is a project supported by UNDP, GEF, and the Government of Georgia. It is funded by a GEF grant of USD 1,200,000, a contribution of USD 150,000 from UNDP (USD 80,000 in cash and USD 70,000 in-kind) and an in-kind contribution of USD 1,191,938 from the Government of Georgia for a total financing of USD 2,541,938. The project started in May 2015 and its duration is 3 years but was extended by one year to May 2019. It is implemented under the “*National Implementation Modality (NIM)*” and the implementing partner is the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia.

This terminal evaluation report documents the achievements of the project. It starts with an executive summary and includes four chapters. Chapter 1 presents an overview of the project; chapter 2 briefly describes the objective, scope, methodology, evaluation users and limitations of the evaluation; chapter 3 presents the findings of the evaluation; and chapter 4 presents the main conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned. Relevant annexes are found at the back end of the report.

Main Conclusions

Project Formulation

A good project document detailing a good and logical *Project Logical Framework Matrix* with adequate management arrangements. The project document is well written and presents a clear implementation strategy for the project. There is a good logical “*chain of results*” – activities, outputs, outcomes, and objective - to reach the expected results. This project is a response to capacity gaps and priorities that were initially identified through the NCSA, which was conducted during the period 2003-2005. It was found that environmental monitoring and environmental data management were a key cross-cutting issue hindering development and implementation of effective policies for the management of global environmental resources in Georgia. It concluded that there was a need to modernize and develop a sustainable national system of environmental monitoring and data collection for global environmental management. The project document reflects well what was needed and why and it integrated national priorities well. The implementation strategy formulated in the document has been used as a “*blue print*” to guide the implementation of the project.

Despite a successful project, opportunities were missed for other similar projects in other countries funded by the GEF to benefits from this experience, best practices and lessons learned. This project is part of the GEF CCCD programme funded by GEF6. It includes a portfolio of 30 similar projects throughout the world, which are all focused on “*integrating global environmental needs into management information systems*”. When considering the success of this project focusing on environmental monitoring and information management, a development area that is known as complex, involving many players and lots of coordination needs,

opportunities were missed from a global perspective to share, link and exchange best practices and lessons learned.

Project Implementation

The project has used adaptive management to secure project deliverables while maintaining adherence to the overall project design. Adaptive management has been used regularly to adapt to changing environments. The project has been able to navigate through several government changes, and a merger of ministries. Reforming the environmental monitoring function is complex and it is not a linear process. It is often mixed with political agendas and a certain resistance to change in existing institutions. It was a difficult project to implement and the implementation team demonstrated its capacity to adapt to these changes and secure the delivery of expected results while maintaining adherence to the overall project strategy approved by GEF.

The implementation of the project was efficient and cost effective. Using a good participative approach and constant informal communications through phone, emails and visits, the project enjoyed a good collaboration with all key stakeholders. The project management team prudently allocated project resources, stretching every single dollar as much as possible to get “*more bang for the buck*”. The efficiency of the project was also the result of a high-quality implementation team. Quality experts and consultants were hired as needed to ensure the implementation of activities with an emphasis on sourcing this expertise nationally; including the IT firm recruited to develop the web-based platform. It is worth noting that at the outset of the project, the Deputy Ministry of MERNP as the National Project Director was a *driving force/champion* for starting the project. He provided valuable guidance to the project management team and EIEC in preparing the tender process to recruit the best IT firm to build the required system.

The project performance has been well monitored and measured using a good set of indicators and targets. The M&E approach has provided the project with a good framework to measure its progress/performance. APR/PIRs were produced timely as well as Quarterly Progress Reports. Additionally, the capacity development scorecard was completed as required and has provided useful additional information to the government on how effective the management of the environmental information exchange has improved over time.

Project Results

The project has been effective in delivering its expected results. The targets set for this project should be all met by the end of the project in December 2018. The project was able to achieve what it was intended to achieve. Georgia is now better equipped to monitor and report on the state of its environment. It now has a web-portal and a web-based system to collect, process/analyze, visualize and share environmental monitoring information. It also has norms and standards for information exchange between agencies and tools for data collection, processing and analysis. Through capacity development activities, skills and knowledge were transferred to staff involved in the maintenance and use of the system and the enabling environment has been strengthened with a soon-to-be approved legislation and also a soon-to-be approved inter-ministerial cooperation mechanism. It is also important to note that in addition to these tangible outputs, the project provided numerous assessments, analyses, studies and proposals necessary to develop such a system. Considering the list of results presented above, the project certainly delivered the results expected at the outset of the project; on time and on budget. When considering the project resources and its timeline, good “*building blocks*” have been put in place; however, more efforts will be needed to consolidate these achievements.

Four critical success factors contributed to this effectiveness: (i) the project was well designed, responding to national needs and benefitting from a good engagement and participation of stakeholders. It became part of the government response to improve environmental monitoring and management of environmental information; (ii) an excellent implementation team – including highly skilled experts and consultants - to implement this project; (iii) the existence of the *Association Agreement between the EU and Georgia* as a key driver to mobilize the government agenda in harmonizing its environmental governance framework with the EU, including the need to develop a shared environmental information system (SEIS); and (iv) a good flexibility in allocating project resources and implementing activities to be able to respond to stakeholders needs and changes.

The project has been highly relevant for Georgia by addressing a key national priority. Its timing was excellent;

it provided the government with extra resources to develop capacities seeking to improve the monitoring of the environment and to make environmental information available to decision-makers. The project concept emerged from clear national priorities to strengthen this area. The NCSA (2005) found that no comprehensive monitoring processes could provide ongoing and historical data on climate change, biodiversity and desertification. Environmental monitoring has been clearly stated in the NEAP 2012-2016 as a cross-cutting issue. This action plan also states that in the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) 2012-2015 “*monitoring ecological balance in the environment*” is among priorities in the environmental sector and recognize that environmental monitoring provides essential data for planning purposes. The project has also been highly relevant within the context of implementing the “*Association Agenda between the European Union and Georgia*”. The *Association Agenda* for the period 2014-2016 stated the need for the “*development of a coherent method of environmental data collection across the different ministries under the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS), and public access to environmental information*”. This agenda has been a key driver for implementing the project in Georgia.

Sustainability

Project achievements should be sustained over the long term, but a following phase is needed to consolidate these achievements. Project achievements are already well institutionalized within institutions engaged in monitoring the environment in Georgia, particularly EIEC that is already the custodian of the web-based environmental information platform. The system and the related norms, standards and procedures are within the institutions engaged in environmental monitoring. Once promulgated, the pieces of legislation will be part of the national legislative framework. Finally, the national coordination mechanism under review should also become part of the strategic government instruments to ensure that the environment is properly monitored, and that accurate and timely environmental information be available to decision-makers. Going forward, the *Association Agenda* with the EU will be a key driver to sustain and scaled up these achievements. The current agenda directs the need for “*improving the environmental information sharing in line with the principles of the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS)*” and the need for “*public access to environmental information*”. Overall, as stakeholders recognize the benefits of such system, pressure will remain on the need to continue to upload and/or make environmental information available as well as political pressure for allocating sufficient financial resources for the continued development of this system.

The project played a good catalytic role to modernize environmental monitoring in Georgia. As per the GEF definition of the catalytic role, the project produced a *public good* with the development of a web-based environmental information platform and its related norms, standards and procedures to collect, upload, analyze and share environmental information. The building blocks developed with the support of the project have demonstrated the usefulness of such an approach. The project has also closely collaborated with the *Integrated Biodiversity Management in the South Caucasus* project, a regional project implemented by GIZ focusing on biodiversity indicators and forest monitoring. Together, more financial resources were available to conduct activities in an area that is still facing a lack of governmental resources. Georgia is now equipped with instruments to better monitor the environment and share this information. The project is ending but the national agenda to improve the monitoring of the environment and sharing this information will go on and move forward to the next phase, which should be the consolidation of these building blocks.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this terminal evaluation, the following recommendations are suggested.

Recommendation 1: It is recommended to develop a roadmap for the way forward before the end of the project.

The project will end soon. It will leave the foundations for a modern environmental monitoring and information management system including a web-based environmental information platform and its related norms, standards and procedures to collect, upload, analyze and share environmental information. However, more efforts and resources are needed to consolidate these achievements. In order to help with the exit of the project, it is recommended to formulate a roadmap as a guide for the way forward after the end of the project. It should include the critical milestones to be met in the future and also the necessary steps for keeping the priority on the government agenda, including in the MTEF.

Recommendation 2: It is recommended to document which environmental areas is now covered by the system and which areas are not.

Key environmental areas are now covered by the system such as biodiversity, climate and some sub-areas of land degradation. Indicators are part of the draft legislation that is currently under review. However, not all environmental areas have been covered by the project; due mostly to its limited resources and time. It is recommended as part of the roadmap recommended above to insert a brief review to document which environmental areas can now be monitored and the information to be uploaded in the system; AND which areas are not included such as some sub-areas to measure/monitor soil quality and water quality.

Recommendation 3: It is recommended to develop a project concept focusing on land degradation and soil conservation, including a component on monitoring this area in relation to UNCCCD reporting obligations.

Related to the project, land degradation is an area that is poorly monitored in Georgia including soil conservation and soil quality. Good progress was made under this project to strengthen land degradation monitoring, particularly the proposal to amend the Law on soil protection of 1994 to include a new set of indicators to monitor land degradation and the methodology to use them. There are needs to expand what was started under this project to strengthen land degradation monitoring in Georgia, including the consolidation of achievements of this project such as capacities of data producers/collectors, capacities to analyze and visualize environmental information, etc. Two main funding entities may be possible: GEF and Adaptation Fund.

Recommendation 4: It is recommended that all funded activities to prepare multilateral convention reports use the web-based environmental information platform.

Considering that Georgia is now equipped with instruments to better monitor the environment and share this information. It is recommended that all funded activities to prepare convention reports use the web-based environmental information platform. It includes the GEF funding for enabling activities and funding from other donors to prepare convention reports in the biodiversity and land degradation areas as well as the National Communications, the Biennial Update Reports (BURs), and the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) report to UNFCCC. The use of the system will reinforce/demonstrate the usefulness and consolidate/validate the system.

Lessons Learned

- A good design leads to a good implementation, which in turn leads to good project results. There is more chance for a project well designed to be a success.
- A project that is a response to national needs and priorities is often highly relevant for beneficiaries and its chance of being implemented effectively are maximized.
- A good assessment of needs and priorities of targeted beneficiaries facilitates the implementation of interventions. It provides a response to national priorities and lead to realistic solutions well adapted to the local context.
- Flexibility is a necessary management mechanism when implementing a project. It allows to better respond to beneficiaries' needs and priorities and align the implementation of activities in an efficient way.
- In order to ensure the mainstreaming of gender considerations in a project, it is important that gender-based expected results, indicators and targets be identified during the formulation of the project.
- This type of projects needs to use highly skilled expertise, particularly IT skills; it is critical that assessments, analyses, studies, recommendations and proposals be developed in close collaboration and participation of key stakeholders to “ground” project activities to local realities.
- The development of a system to respond partly to a national priority provides a "*Proof-of-Concept*" of the innovative interventions.
- The application of the UNDP NIM modality is an effective management tool to develop national ownership of projects funded by international donors.

- This type of project should include the development of an exit strategy in their overall strategy (log-frame) to become a mandatory step before closing these projects.
- A project of this nature implemented successfully provides a lot of lessons and best practices that are important to document.
- Reforming the environmental monitoring function in a country is complex and it is not a linear process. It is often mixed with political agendas and a certain resistance to change in existing institutions. A 3-year project timeframe is too short.

TE Ratings and Achievement Summary Table

Below is the rating table as requested in the TORs. It includes the required performance criteria rated as per the rating scales presented in Annex 10 of this report. Supportive information is also provided throughout this report in the respective sections.

Table 2: TE Ratings and Achievement Summary Table

Evaluation Ratings:			
1. Monitoring and Evaluation	<i>Rating</i>	2. IA & EA Execution	<i>Rating</i>
M&E design at entry	HS	Quality of UNDP Implementation	S
M&E Plan Implementation	HS	Quality of Execution - Executing Agency	S
Overall quality of M&E	HS	Overall quality of Implementation / Execution	S
3. Assessment of Outcomes	<i>Rating</i>	4. Sustainability	<i>Rating</i>
Relevance	R	Financial resources	L
Effectiveness	HS	Socio-political	L
Efficiency	HS	Institutional framework and governance	L
Overall Project Outcome Rating	HS	Environmental	L
		Overall likelihood of sustainability	L
5. Impact			
Improvement	3		
Environmental Stress Reduction	2		
Progress towards stress/status change	3		
Overall Project results	HS		

1. PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT¹

1. Georgia is located in the west of the south Caucasus region with a land area of 69,494km² and additional territorial waters covering 7,628.4 ha. The country is bordered to the west by the Black Sea, to the north by Russia, to the south by Armenia, and Turkey, and to the east by Azerbaijan. It is located on the southern slopes of Great Caucasus Mountain Range, on the isthmus between the Black and Caspian Seas. Despite its small area, Georgia enjoys one of the most varied topographies in the region. The land rises from sea level at the Black Sea, to approximately 5,069m above sea level at Mount Shkhara in the Caucasus. Mountains occupy about 54% of the territory located at altitudes higher than 1,000m.

2. Over the years, Georgia has upgraded its environmental policies and programmes, its environmental legislation and its institutional framework to protect its environment. It included fulfilling its international commitments under MEAs, particularly the three Rio Conventions. Nevertheless, the country had been still facing environmental problems due to low institutional capacity and lack of financial, technical and human resources. The analysis conducted for the formulation of this project found that the policy, legal and institutional framework for environmental management and protection were still overrun by development decisions in Georgia and that barriers to achieving global environmental objectives were in large part a reflection of the challenges Georgia faces in pursuing environmentally sound and sustainable development. Five types of barriers were identified during the formulation of the project:

- Institutional capacity and governance structure in key important ministries/agencies are weak or underdeveloped;
- Interagency coordination for the implementation and reporting on the Rio Conventions is weak or do not exist;
- Legal and regulatory barriers: environmental regulations are robust; however, a more rigorous application of these regulations is required;
- Technical implementation barriers such as lack of financial resources; lack of experienced personnel familiar with sustainable environmental management practices; lack of guidelines or manuals for planning, implementing and monitoring measures on combating land degradation, climate change and effective biodiversity management; etc.;
- Financial instruments for data management do not exist.

3. During the period 2003-2005, Georgia conducted a National Capacity Self-Assessment (NCSA) funded by the GEF to identify priorities and needs for capacity development to address global environmental issues, in particular biological diversity, climate change, and land degradation, and synergies between them, with the aim of catalyzing domestic and/or externally assisted action to meet those needs in a coordinated and planned manner. The process identified environmental monitoring and environmental data management as a key cross-cutting issue hindering development and implementation of effective policies for the management of global environmental resources in Georgia. It identified environmental monitoring and data management issues at systemic, institutional, and individual levels. The NCSA found that there was a need to modernize and develop a sustainable national system of environmental monitoring and data collection for global environmental management. Finally, it proposed specific strategies to address these issues such as enhancing the MENRP's coordination role in designing and developing environmental monitoring system countrywide; developing priority indicators for monitoring; developing standardized methodologies for monitoring; developing regulations and assign responsibilities to different institutions based on their competitive advantage; and mobilizing internal and external financial resources and building sustainable financial mechanism for monitoring.

4. This project, which is part of the GEF strategy for Cross-Cutting Capacity Development (CCCD), provides resources for the reduction and/or elimination of institutional bottlenecks and barriers to the synergistic implementation of Rio Conventions. As a response to barriers and issues described above, this project seeks to improve Georgia's decision-making by harmonizing existing information systems related to the Rio Conventions, by integrating internationally accepted measurement standards and methodologies, and by ensuring a consistent reporting on global international best practices. The project has looked at the underlying deficiencies in key sets of information and knowledge that limit a more comprehensive analysis of

¹ Information in this section has been summarized from the project document.

environmental and development policies, plans and programmes. It seeks to strengthen the underlying information and knowledge management foundations upon which Georgia can undertake a more holistic and comprehensive approach to analyzing policy interventions from a Rio Convention perspective.

5. The objective of this project is to develop individual and organizational capacities in the MENRP and EIEC for improved monitoring of environmental impacts and trends for elaboration of collaborative environmental management. It is to be achieved through the delivery of two expected outcomes (*see more detailed about the project strategy in Annex 1*):

- **Outcome 1:** Capacities for environmental monitoring are better enabled;
- **Outcome 2:** Technical and management staff sufficiently trained in monitoring and data analysis, and linkage to decision-making process.

6. This is a project supported by UNDP, GEF, and the Government of Georgia. It is funded by a grant from the GEF of USD 1,200,000, a contribution of USD 150,000 from UNDP (USD 80,000 in cash and USD 70,000 in-kind) and an in-kind contribution of USD 1,191,938 from the Government of Georgia for a total financing of USD 2,541,938. The project started in May 2015 and its duration is 3 years but was extended by one year to May 2019². It is implemented under the “*National Implementation Modality (NIM)*” and the implementing partner is the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia.

2. EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

7. This terminal evaluation - a requirement of UNDP and GEF procedures - has been initiated by UNDP Georgia the Commissioning Unit and the GEF Implementing Agency for this project. This review provides an in-depth assessment of project achievements and progress towards its objective and outcomes and recommendations for other similar UNDP-supported and GEF-financed projects in the region and worldwide.

2.1. Objectives

8. The objectives of this Terminal Evaluation (TE) are to promote accountability and transparency, to assess and disclose the extent of project accomplishments against the expected objective and outcomes and how they contribute to the achievements of GEF strategic objectives aimed at global environmental benefits, to draw lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project and aid in the overall enhancement of future UNDP programming.

2.2. Scope

9. As indicated in the TORs (*see Annex 2*), the scope of this TE was to conduct an assessment of achievements of project results and the extent to which the project has successfully carried out adaptive management, and to draw lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project, and aid in the overall enhancement of future UNDP programming. The Evaluation Team framed the evaluation effort using the evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact, as defined and explained in the UNDP *Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed Projects*. Under each of these criteria, evaluation questions were identified and compiled in an evaluation matrix (*see Annex 3*).

10. The scope of this evaluation was divided into three parts in accordance with the TORs and the *Guidance For Conducting Terminal Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects*. A summary of the scope of this TE is presented below:

I. Project Design and Formulation:

- Review the problem addressed by the project and the underlying assumptions;
- Review the relevance of the project strategy and assess whether it provides the most effective route towards expected/intended results;

² A no-cost extension of the project was approved by the PEB (June 30, 2017 PEB meeting) following the request from the Implementing Partner – Environmental Information and Education Centre to extend its Letter of Agreement in order to have sufficient time to complete one of the key outputs of the project – an operational Environmental Information/Knowledge Management System.

- Review how the project addresses country priorities.
- Review country ownership;
- Review decision-making processes;
- Review the extent to which relevant gender issues were raised in the project design;
- Undertake a critical analysis of the project's log-frame indicators and targets;
- Review the project's objectives and outcomes/components and how feasible they can be reached within the project's time frame;
- Assess how gender aspects are integrated into the project design.

II. Project Implementation

- Review how adaptive management was implemented during the implementation of the project;
- Review overall effectiveness of project management as outlined in the project document;
- Review the quality of execution of the Executing Agency/Implementing Partner(s);
- Review any delays in project start-up and implementation; Review how Results-Based Management is being implemented
- Examine the use of the project's results framework/ log-frame as a management tool.
- Consider the financial management of the project, including cost-effectiveness;
- Review the changes to fund allocations as a result of budget revisions and assess the appropriateness and relevance of such revisions;
- Is the Project Team meeting with all co-financing partners regularly in order to align financing priorities and annual work plans?
- Review the monitoring tools currently being used and the project progress reporting function;
- Review project partnerships arrangements;
- Review stakeholders' participation and country-driven project implementation processes;
- Review project communications;

III. Project Results

- Review the progress made against the log-frame indicators and the end-of-project targets;
- Assess the stakeholders' ownership of project achievements;
- Compare and analyze the GEF Tracking Tool at the Baseline with the one completed at the time of TE;
- Identify remaining barriers to achieving the project objective in the remainder of the project;
- Validate whether the risks identified in the Project Document, Annual Project Review/PIRs and the ATLAS Risk Management Module are the most important and whether the risk ratings applied are appropriate and up to date;
- Assess risks to sustainability in term of financial risks, socio-economic risks, institutional framework and governance risks, and environmental risks.
- Review and possibly identify ways in which the project can further expand its achievements;

2.3. Methodology

11. The methodology that was used to conduct this TE complies with international criteria and professional norms and standards; including the norms and standards adopted by the UN Evaluation Group (UNEG).

2.3.1. Overall Approach

12. The evaluation was conducted in accordance with the guidance, rules and procedures established by UNDP and GEF as reflected in the UNDP "*Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed Projects*", and the UNEG Standards and Norms for Evaluation in the UN System. The evaluation was undertaken in-line with GEF principles which are: *independence, impartiality, transparency, disclosure, ethical, partnership, competencies/capacities, credibility and utility*. The process promoted accountability for the achievement of project objective and outcomes and promoted learning, feedback and knowledge sharing on results and lessons learned among the GEF and its Partners.

13. The evaluation adopted a *Utilization Focused Evaluation (UFE)*³ approach, which is predicated on maximizing the practical value of the evaluation to project stakeholders. The TE was planned and conducted in ways that enhanced the likely utilization of both the findings and of the process itself to inform decisions and improve performance of the project. Using this approach, the Evaluation Team did not make decisions independently of the intended users, but they rather facilitated decision making amongst the people who will use the findings of the terminal evaluation.

14. The Evaluation Team developed evaluation tools in accordance with UNDP and GEF policies and guidelines to ensure an effective project evaluation. The evaluation was conducted and findings were structured around the GEF five major evaluation criteria; which are also the five internationally accepted evaluation criteria set out by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). There are:

- *Relevance* relates to an overall assessment of whether the project is in keeping with donors and partner policies, with national and local needs and priorities as well as with its design.
- *Effectiveness* is a measure of the extent to which formally agreed expected project results (outcomes) have been achieved or can be expected to be achieved.
- *Efficiency* is a measure of the productivity of the project intervention process, i.e. to what degree the outcomes achieved derive from efficient use of financial, human and material resources. In principle, it means comparing outcomes and outputs against inputs.
- *Impacts* are the long-term results of the project and include both positive and negative consequences, whether these are foreseen and expected, or not.
- *Sustainability* is an indication of whether the outcomes (end of project results) and the positive impacts (long term results) are likely to continue after the project ends.

15. In addition to the UNDP and GEF guidance for project evaluations, the Evaluation Team applied to this mandate their knowledge of evaluation methodologies and approaches and their expertise in environmental management and natural resources management, including the application of multilateral environmental agreements in national environmental frameworks. They also applied several methodological principles such as (i) *Validity of information*: multiple measures and sources were sought out to ensure that the results are accurate and valid; (ii) *Integrity*: If needed, any issue with respect to conflict of interest, lack of professional conduct or misrepresentation were immediately referred to the client; and (iii) *Respect and anonymity*: All participants had the right to provide information in confidence.

16. The evaluation was conducted following a set of steps presented in the table below:

Table 3: Steps Used to Conduct the Evaluation

<p><u>I. Review Documents and Prepare Mission</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Start-up teleconference/finalize assignment work plan ▪ Collect and review project documents ▪ Draft and submit <u>Inception Report</u> ▪ Prepare mission: agenda and logistic 	<p><u>III. Analyze Information</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In-depth analysis and interpretation of data collected ▪ Follow-up interviews (where necessary) ▪ Draft and submit <u>draft evaluation report</u>
<p><u>II. Mission / Collect Information</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fact-finding mission to Georgia ▪ Interview key Stakeholders ▪ Further collect project related documents ▪ Mission debriefings / <u>Presentation of key findings</u> 	<p><u>IV. Finalize Evaluation Report</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Circulate draft report to UNDP-GEF and relevant stakeholders ▪ Integrate comments and submit <u>final Evaluation Report</u>

17. Finally, the Evaluation Team signed and applied the “*Code of Conduct*” for Evaluation Consultants (*see Annex 4*). The Evaluation Team conducted evaluation activities, which were *independent, impartial and rigorous*. This TE clearly contributed to learning and accountability and the Evaluation Team had personal and professional integrity and was guided by propriety in the conduct of its business.

2.3.2. Evaluation Instruments

³ http://www.betterevaluation.org/en/plan/approach/utilization_focused_evaluation

18. The evaluation provides evidence-based information that is *credible, reliable* and *useful*. Information was mined from project documents, as secondary information, and as primary information obtained through data-gathering activities conducted for this evaluation; most prominently key informant interviews. Using several evaluation tools and gathering information from different types of stakeholders at different levels of management, the information collected was triangulated⁴ through the concept of “*multiple lines of evidence*”, which validated the findings. To conduct this evaluation the following evaluation instruments were used:

Evaluation Matrix: An evaluation matrix was developed based on the evaluation scope presented in the TOR, the project log-frame and the review of key project documents (*see Annex 3*). This matrix is structured along the five evaluation criteria and includes all evaluation questions; including the scope presented in the guidance. The matrix provided overall directions for the evaluation and was used as a basis for interviewing people and reviewing project documents.

Documentation Review: The Evaluation Team conducted a documentation review in Canada and in Georgia (*see Annex 5*). In addition to be a main source of information, documents were also used to prepare the fact-findings mission in Georgia. A list of documents was identified during the start-up phase and further searches were done through the web and contacts. The list of documents was completed during the fact-findings mission.

Interview Protocol: Based on the evaluation matrix, an interview protocol was developed (*see Annex 6*) to solicit information from stakeholders. As part of the participatory approach, the Evaluation Team ensured that all parties viewed this tool as balanced, unbiased, and structured.

Mission Agenda: An agenda for the facts-finding mission in Georgia was developed during the preparatory phase (*see Annex 7*). The list of Stakeholders to be interviewed was reviewed, ensuring it represents all project Stakeholders. Then, interviews were planned in advance of the mission with the objective to have a well-organized and planned mission to ensure a broad scan of Stakeholders’ views during the limited time allocated to the facts-finding mission.

Key Informant Interviews: Stakeholders were interviewed (*see Annex 8*) ensuring that a proper balance of men and women was selected. The semi-structured interviews were conducted using the interview protocol adapted for each interview. All interviews were conducted in person with some follow up using emails when needed. Confidentiality was guaranteed to the interviewees and the findings were incorporated in the final report.

Achievement Rating: The Evaluation Team rated project achievements using the “*TE Ratings*” guidance provided in the TORs. It included a six-point rating scale to measure progress towards results and project implementation and adaptive management and a four-point rating scale for sustainability (*see Annex 9*).

2.4. Evaluation Output

19. This terminal evaluation report documents the achievements of the project. It starts with an executive summary and includes four chapters. Chapter 1 presents an overview of the project; chapter 2 briefly describes the objective, scope, methodology, evaluation users and limitations of the evaluation; chapter 3 presents the findings of the evaluation; and chapter 4 presents the main conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned. Relevant annexes are found at the back end of the report.

2.5. Limitations and Constraints

20. The approach for this terminal evaluation was based on a planned level of effort of 20 days. It comprised a 5-day mission to Georgia to interview key stakeholders and collect evaluative evidence. Within the context of these resources, the Evaluation Team was able to conduct a detailed assessment of actual results against expected results and successfully ascertains whether the project met its main objective - as laid down in the

⁴ **Triangulation:** The use of three or more theories, sources or types of information to verify and substantiate an assessment. By combining multiple data sources, methods, analyses or theories, evaluators seek to overcome the bias that inevitably comes from single informants, single methods, single observations or single theories. (DFID, *Guidance on Evaluation and Review for DFID Staff*. London. 2005)

project document - and whether the project initiatives are, or are likely to be, sustainable after completion of the project. The Evaluation Team made recommendations for any necessary corrections and adjustments to the overall project work plan and timetable for reinforcing the long-term sustainability of project achievements.

3. EVALUATION FINDINGS

21. This section presents the findings of this TE adhering to the basic structure proposed in the TORs and as reflected in the UNDP project evaluation guidance.

3.1. Project Formulation

22. This section discusses the assessment of the formulation of the project, its overall design and strategy in the context of Georgia.

3.1.1. Analysis of Results and Resources Framework

23. The *Project Logical Framework Matrix* identified during the design phase of this project presents a good and clear set of expected results. No changes were made to the *Project Logical Framework Matrix* during the inception phase. The review of the objective and outcomes indicates a good logical “*chain of results*” – Activities → Outputs → Outcomes → Objective. Project resources have been used to implement planned activities to reach a set of expected outputs (5), which contributed in achieving a set of expected outcomes (2), which together contributed in achieving the overall objective of the project. This *Project Logical Framework Matrix* also includes - for the objective and each outcome - a set of indicators with baseline and target values to be achieved by the end of the project. These indicators and targets have been used to monitor the performance of the project.

24. As discussed in Section 2 above, this project is a response to capacity gaps and priorities that were identified through the NCSA, which was conducted during the period 2003-2005. The assessment found that environmental monitoring and environmental data management were a key cross-cutting problem hindering development and implementation of effective policies for the management of global environmental resources in Georgia. It concluded that there was a need to modernize and develop a sustainable national system of environmental monitoring and data collection for global environmental management. The aim of the project has been to make the best practices and innovative approaches for meeting and sustaining the Rio Conventions available and accessible to policy-makers when developing and implementing national development policies and programmes.

25. It was the intention that the project will focus on the development of individual and organizational capacities within the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection (MENRP)⁵ and within the Environmental Information and Education Centre (EIEC) to improve the monitoring of environmental impacts and trends and contribute to a more collaborative environmental management among Stakeholders. The project was also designed as a response to address a set of underlying barriers to environmental management, which hampered the goal of meeting and sustaining global environmental outcomes. It was anticipated that the project will address these barriers by:

- Catalyzing cooperation and coordination that has previously been limited by narrow institutional mandates and obsolete methods of analysis and decision-making.
- Facilitating new partnerships between policy and decision-makers across environmental focal areas and socio-economic sectors while actively engaging other key non-governmental stakeholders.
- Improving environmental governance and stewardship by developing improved environmental legislative tools.
- Developing technical capacities of government and other stakeholders to work collaboratively and in a coordinated way within the environmental context, on how to structure and implement policy interventions that better respond to Rio Convention obligations.

26. The logic model of the project presented in the *Project Logical Framework Matrix* is summarized in table 4 below. It includes one objective, two outcomes and five outputs. For each expected outcome and the objective, targets to be achieved at the end of the project were identified.

⁵ The MENRP has been merged in late 2017 with the Ministry of Agriculture. It is now the Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture (MEPA).

Table 4: Project Logic Model

Expected Results	Targets at End of Project
<p>Project Objective: To develop individual and organizational capacities in the MENRP and EIEC for improved monitoring of environmental impacts and trends for elaboration of collaborative environmental management.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Planners and decision-makers at different levels have immediate access to the relevant, reliable, timely, accurate, and up-to-date existing information for environmental planning and monitoring through the common system
<p>Outcome 1 - Capacities for environmental monitoring are better enabled</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Output 1.1: System of information exchange among relevant departments in key ministries (Environment and natural resources protection, economy and sustainable development, regional development and infrastructure, agriculture, etc) and the EIEC to support environmental monitoring in implementing Rio Conventions improved ● Output 1.2: Clear legal framework established to facilitate monitoring in implementing Rio Conventions ● Output 1.3: Data collection, analysis and monitoring system developed at the EIEC with optimal linkages to local authorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A unified system for monitoring the implementation of Rio Conventions and reporting on them is established by the end of the second year of the project ● There is a minimum of 50% increase in acceptance by government representatives and other stakeholder representatives of the legitimacy of the new information management system at EIEC by the end of the year 2 of the project ● Managers will document references to environmental legislation show an improvement in institutional responses to monitoring and enforcing environmental legislation for the Rio Conventions ● A unified system for data collection, analysis and sharing established at EIEC by the end of the year 2 of the project ● Sectoral environmental data is accessible to end users in a comprehensive and policy-relevant way by the end of the project.
<p>Outcome 2 – Technical and management staff sufficiently trained in monitoring and data analysis, and linkage to decision-making process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Output 2.1: Convention monitoring and reporting capacities developed ● Output 2.2: Inter-ministerial cooperation for collaborative decision-making among policy makers achieved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Annual dialogues held by quarters 4,6,8,12 ● Capacities of at least 4 institutions and 100 females and males are enhanced by the end of month 33. ● # Of training workshops per year, for technical staff, decision-makers and key stakeholders.

Source: Project Document.

27. The overall project – its rationale, its strategy, its proposed management structure - was reviewed during the inception phase. No changes were made to the strategy and Stakeholders reconfirmed the relevance of this project to address the existing need for having a common platform for more effective and sustainable ways of cooperating on land, biodiversity and climate change issues. The constant accessibility to relevant and reliable environmental data was also highlighted during the inception phase as the issue to be the core of the project. In the meantime, following a thorough review of project outputs and (planned) activities, several changes were made in the formulation of some outputs and activities to improve their clarity and avoid duplication of efforts by having distinct set of activities to be implemented with no overlap.

28. Following interviews conducted for this evaluation, the Evaluation Team noted that despite a clear formulated project, the implementation strategy when presented to Stakeholders at the beginning of the project was received with skepticism. Most Stakeholders interviewed during this evaluation revealed that they had lots of doubts that the implementation of this project would succeed. It was said to be too complicated, too many actors and processes to align and not enough resources mobilized. However, they also mentioned how quickly this skepticism changed to optimism and that the good participation of all parties contributed to the success of the project.

29. The detailed review of the project document conducted for this evaluation revealed a project formulation with a clear set of planned activities, which were expected to lead to the achievement of a set of expected results (see Annex I). The project strategy was well integrated in national priorities and benefitted from a good “country ownership”. Early on, the implementation of activities became part of the MEPA strategy to develop its own individual and organizational capacities as well as capacities of the EIEC to improve the monitoring of environmental impacts and trends and contribute to a more collaborative environmental management among Stakeholders. Overall, the project document has been used as a “blue-print” to guide the project management team through the implementation of the project.

3.1.2. Assumptions and Risks

30. Risks and assumptions were identified and presented in the project document. Three main risks were identified at the outset of this project: a financial and operational risk, a political and regulatory risk and an operational and political risk. In addition, following the review conducted during the inception phase, three additional risks (#4 to 6) were added; however, no level of impact was provided for these additional risks documented in the inception report. The six risks are presented in the table below:

Table 5: List of Risks and Mitigation Measures Identified at the Formulation Phase

Project Risks	Level of Impact	Mitigation Measures
1. Insurance of long-term sustainability (financial and technical) of the established monitoring system	Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-sectoral consultations among ministries, with engagement of key researchers and scientists to ensure the development of a streamlined monitoring system that meets the needs of the Government to fulfill its commitments under the Rio Conventions. • The integration of existing data collection systems will maximize the rational use of financial and technical resources. Broad stakeholder involvement will secure ownership of monitoring systems at different levels (researchers, government agencies, civil society) to establish long-term commitment. Moreover, the scientific inputs will be calibrated to incorporate projections of longer-term data and information needs in order to ensure technical relevance of the monitoring system in the years to come.
2. Sectoral agencies show lack of cooperation and initiative	Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working groups and consultations conducted within the project will be conducted to strengthen the understanding of the socio-economic and other benefits to be gained from policy and environmental data harmonization.
3. Possible difficulties to technically harmonize existing information systems and align them to the requirements of Rio Conventions.	Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the synthesis of appropriate technical expertise throughout project implementation- database experts, statisticians, programmers, environmental indicator experts, etc. The first step will be a comprehensive identification of these experts and their capacities (and technologies, methodologies currently in use), based upon this inventory, maintain high ownership of project results through their involvement at critical stages
4. Decreased interest to and ownership of the project outputs due to the changes of staff in MENRP after elections	?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building cooperation by demonstrating benefits of the project outputs for the reduction of overall workload; improvement of service to public; improvement of meeting international obligations; improvement of image due to more transparency and accountability.
5. New legislative package proposed by the project not approved by the MENRP to be presented to the Parliament of Georgia for adoption by the Parliament	?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corresponding units of the Ministry informed on the developments and involved in the consultations as early as possible.
6. Lack of relevant expertise or low interest to participate in the software development at local level	?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement of service widely advertised, possible providers informed well in advance on the possible tender, sufficient time provided for forming joint ventures and also open for international companies to participate. Sufficient time in the project life span for having opportunity for repeating procurement procedure

Source: Project Document and Inception Report.

31. The review of these risks indicates that there are essentially covering all risks linked to the implementation of the project. It includes the risk that agencies would not cooperate (#2) in developing a better accessibility to relevant and reliable environmental data; the risk that this new common platform would not be

sustained over the long term (#1) due to the lack of resources available (financial and technical); the technical risk to harmonize and align existing information systems (#3); the lack of interest and ownership of the project due to changes of staff (#4); difficulties to approve the necessary legislation to formalize the new common platform (#5); and lack of national expertise to develop this new system (#6).

32. It was noted that the second and fourth risks are somewhat similar and only one would be sufficient to manage the risk of a lack of cooperation from the targeted agencies. However, the second one could have been kept and be more specific on the risk due to elections, which could have resulted in a change of priorities and interest in the project.

33. Additionally, the Evaluation Team also noted that detailed assumptions were identified and presented in the *Project Logical Framework Matrix*, which is part of the project document. Under each outcome (2) and output (5), indicators to measure the performance of the project were identified and for each one an assumption was made to mitigate the risk that the target set by the end of the project would not be met.

34. In summary, risks were well identified during the formulation of the project. However, according to the information collected for this evaluation, only the three initial risks identified during the development of the project have been monitored regularly and reported in the UNDP-Atlas system. Regarding the progress reported in the annual Project Implementation Reviews (PIRs), a critical operational risk was reported in the first report (beginning of project to June 30, 2017). Due to a delay in developing the system, there was a risk of not being able to fully implement the project in the set timeline. As a result, the procedure for a time extension was undertaken and approved to allow all activities to be completed by the end of 2018. No other critical risks were reported in the PIRs.

3.1.3. Linkages between the Project and Other Interventions

35. This Cross-Cutting Capacity Development (CCCD) project has been part of numerous projects implemented in Georgia, seeking to raise environmental awareness and protect the national environment. An extensive list of projects was identified during the formulation stage and presented in the project document. However, these initiatives are mostly thematically focusing on one environmental area such as the Regional Environmental Centre (REC-Caucasus), which implemented a GEF funded project on the alignment of the National Action Programme in Georgia with the UNCCD 10-year Strategy; GIZ has been implementing a project to integrate erosion control in mountainous regions of the South Caucasus as well as a project focusing on the sustainable biodiversity management in the South Caucasus; a Czech funded project focusing on strengthening the capacity of national environmental agency toward hydro-meteorological hazards in Georgia.

36. Several initiatives were more related to this project. It included the European Environmental Agency (EEA) funded project “*Environmental Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI)-Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS)*” (2010-2014), a European Union (EU) initiative to modernize and simplify the collection, exchange and use of data and information required for designing and implementing environmental policy. It also included a German government funded project to establish a *National Biodiversity Monitoring System (NBMS)*, which was a component of the “*Sustainable Management of Biodiversity in South Caucasus*” a regional project implemented by GIZ. Finally, the USAID funded project “*Institutionalization of Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation in Georgian Regions*” was seeking to integrate environmental and climate change considerations into policy priorities of local authorities through the establishment of special units on climate change, environment and sustainable agriculture.

37. It is also important to note that this CCCD project is a continuous support from the GEF to Georgia. It is a follow up project to the GEF funded NCSA conducted in Georgia during the period 2003-2005. The NCSA was an innovative approach through which a GEF recipient country would assess its own capacity needs to implement the Rio conventions; and prepare an over-arching national capacity development action plan to maximize synergies between them and address global environmental issues. The process to conduct a NCSA included a set of five steps: (i) Inception; (ii) Stocktaking Exercise; (iii) Thematic Assessments; (iv) Cross-Cutting Analysis; and, (v) Capacity Development Action Plan and NCSA Final Report. In the case of Georgia, the assessment was concluded with a strategy and action plan for cross-cutting capacity building across the

three Rio Conventions⁶.

38. The NCSA conducted three thematic assessments (biodiversity, climate change and land degradation). Based on these assessments, five cross-cutting issues related to the implementation of the Rio Conventions were identified, including the monitoring and information resource management in the field of environmental protection. It was recognized that all three Rio Conventions share a commitment to gather, assess and make information available to diagnose environmental problems and to provide adequate support for policy making and planning. However, it was also found that no comprehensive monitoring processes could provide ongoing and historical data on climate change, biodiversity and desertification. Furthermore, no legislation identified the institutions responsible for environmental monitoring and most institutions engaged in environmental monitoring were deciding independently what kind of monitoring they should conduct. As a result, overlapping of functions and duplication of measures often took place. It was found that during the Soviet period, more environmental monitoring activities were conducted based on scientifically proven methods and with impressive financial and technical resources to conduct these activities. However, following Georgia's independence the overall environmental monitoring system in place was completely disrupted and degraded over the years to a point where in some cases environmental observations were interrupted. It goes without saying that the opportunity for Georgia to formulate and get funding for this project was a clear need and priority.

3.1.4. Lessons from other Relevant Projects/Initiatives

39. As discussed in the above section, this CCCD project was developed based on the steps process undertaken under the NCSA, which assessed capacity gaps, and prioritized issues. The need to address the issue of monitoring and information resource management in the field of environmental protection was selected as the main priority to address within the context of this project. As a result, it is a demand driven project that is clearly addressing a national priority.

40. It is also a flexible mechanism funded by the GEF to address critical capacity issues related to the implementation of MEAs in countries. The concept of this GEF mechanism is to build on existing mechanisms and structures, addressing national priorities, and using a unique inter-sectoral/inter-ministerial approach. The project is part of a set of projects funded by the GEF under the "*Strategic Approach to Enhance Capacity Building*" policy. Under GEF6⁷, the strategy for this cross-cutting capacity development programme (CCCD) states that "*it will facilitate the acquisition, exchange and use of knowledge, skills, good practices, behavior necessary to shape and influence national planning and budgeting processes and implementation in support of global environmental benefits*". It had five objectives (a) to integrate global environmental needs into management information systems; (b) to strengthen consultative and management structures and mechanisms; (c) to integrate Multilateral Environmental Agreements' provisions within national policy, legislative, and regulatory frameworks; (d) to pilot innovative economic and financial tools for Convention implementation; and (e) to update NCSAs.

41. The Evaluation Team noted that despite the implementation of over 30 similar projects to this one under the category "*Improving Environmental Information, Monitoring and Reporting*", no linkages nor exchanges were developed with other similar projects in other countries. Some of these other projects included: developing an environmental indicator model and a comprehensive data flow system in Croatia; strengthening the monitoring and reporting system for MEAs in Egypt; developing and implementing an integrated multi-convention information and reporting system in Kenya; aligning Albania's environmental information management and monitoring system with the global environmental reporting; improving the generation, access, and use of environmental information and knowledge related to the MEAs in Cambodia; and increasing St. Lucia's capacity to monitor MEAs implementation of MEAs and sustainable development. When considering that this project has been a success (*see Section 4.3*), the linkages with some of these other projects may have helped the implementation of these other projects.

6 UNDP, GEF, Government of Georgia, September 2005, *Strategy and Action Plan for Capacity Building in the Areas of Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use, Climate Change and Combating Desertification*.

7 It was noted that the funding of this programme under GEF7 was discontinued.

3.1.5. Planned Stakeholder Participation

42. As described in the project document, this type of project specifically structured to build and enhance institutional and technical capacities of stakeholder organizations. The formulation phase of the project placed a good emphasis on stakeholder participation, seeking active and early stakeholder involvement in the implementation of the project, and including government and non-governmental stakeholders. Several consultations events took place during the development of the project concept and during the formulation stage of the project funded by a GEF Project Preparation Grant (PPG). These consultations culminated in October and November 2014 with the endorsement by stakeholders of the project document submitted to GEF.

43. The anticipated organizations targeted by the project included MEPA and its subordinates: EIEC, National Environmental Agency (NEA), Agency of Protected Areas (APA), National Forestry Agency (NFA) as key institutions which would coordinate project activities and also become the custodian of project achievements, particularly of the system developed by the project and hosted by EIEC. Other targeted governmental institutions included representatives from relevant government institutions, such as the Ministry of Energy, Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure and their subordinate agencies. It was planned that a linkage with these other institutions would strengthen the socio-economic value of environmental monitoring and strengthen linkages among key sectors.

44. In addition to the government sector, the project planned to target non-governmental stakeholders from research and academic institutions. The involvement of these stakeholders in the implementation of the project was seen as crucial to ensure quality assurance of data analysis, processing and monitoring systems. It was anticipated that they will be consulted and invited to share their comparative expertise, but also to undertake selected project activities.

45. The Evaluation Team noted that project stakeholders were clearly identified during the formulation phase and the review conducted for this evaluation confirms that most of these stakeholders were involved in the project. Below is a table indicating the anticipating roles for key Stakeholders identified during the formulation stage:

Table 6: Initial Stakeholders Involvement Plan

Stakeholder	Role in Project
Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for the conservation, management, development, and proper use of the country's environment and natural resources, including those protected areas, forest, watershed areas and lands of the public domain, as well as the licensing and regulation of all-natural resources utilization • The MEPA will be the project responsible party
Ministry of Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for revitalizing agriculture, animal, and responsible for sector policies on agricultural biodiversity and natural resource management • Will provide the needed environmental data. • Participate in the working groups and project's committee
Ministry of Finance of Georgia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An important implementing partner and responsible for: • Designing and building the environmental data collection and management systems for the EIEC • Training EIEC's concerned team on the use of the systems • Performing a periodically maintenance as needed
Environmental Information and Education and Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the main beneficiaries and a key partner. • Will be hosting the systems and providing all the human resources needed to ensure the success of the project

Stakeholder	Role in Project
National Environment Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the main beneficiaries and a key partner. • It will coordinate with EIEC on the establishment of the two information systems within MEPA and provide the needed logistical support.
Information and Analysis Units at different ministries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main beneficiaries and key partners to ensure proper data is collected and shared. Within all concerned stakeholders, a unit or a division for data collection, or analysis or management is there. The project needs to work with all of them, based on the results of the institutional assessment, and help them improving their data collection, analysis and sharing with the EIEC.
NGOs and academic sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representatives of the two sectors will be involved in the project's implementation as part of the project's committee, national UNFCCC and/or UNCCD committees

Source: project document

46. The Evaluation Team also noted that the gender dimension was considered when consultations with Stakeholders took place during the formulation stage. The project has been seeking to ensure that a gender balance be considered throughout the implementation of the project. During the formulation stage, it found that in addition to high level of migration, unemployment, and poverty, the deeply rooted stereotypes that favor men over women was a common problem affecting the status and condition of many women in Georgia. Fewer women were represented in decision-making positions. Furthermore, one of the greatest challenges to formulate an effective gender policy in Georgia was the lack of reliable information, data and statistics and that in general, national statistics were not gender-specific, and gender analyses were either lacking or very weak in policies and plans. Additionally, the National Statistics Office also disclosed that there was virtually no gender-disaggregated environmental data.

47. Poverty has also weighed heavily on rural women in Georgia and has contributed to gender inequality. Women bear a large share of farm work, cultivating crops and tending livestock. Traditionally they contribute to household income by processing agricultural and dairy products. However, breakdown in social services and the unreliable nature of public utilities make women's burden even heavier.

48. In order to address this inequality, the government of Georgia ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1994. From a project perspective, it was anticipated that project activities would be gender inclusive. The project would seek the participation of women in activities supported by the project and wherever appropriate, gender considerations would be included such as in drafting new legislation, developing a new system to collect and store data and improving the environmental reporting. Finally, when developing an inter-ministerial cooperation mechanism, the project will ensure that women representatives will be included.

3.1.6. Planned Replication Approach

49. The planned replication strategy described in the project document was that the project will generate practices for replication at various levels and through various mechanisms. It was assumed that the investments made for knowledge generation and harmonization would create an interest with stakeholders for greater consolidated data sets in the long run. Additionally, trainings in data and knowledge management systems would establish a new threshold of skills, while disseminating this data would create new demand by end-users and stakeholders. Furthermore, it stated that project activities could be replicated to support other focal areas within the environmental sectors or any other developmental areas and that enhancing inter-ministerial cooperation and developing the capacity for a national coordination mechanism could also be replicated by other projects if proved successful.

50. Based on interviews and observations conducted for this evaluation, the replication of project

achievements should be ensured. However, a better concept to discuss the long-term sustainability of these achievements is up-scaling. The project has succeeded in building the foundation blocks for a platform for more effective and sustainable ways of cooperating on land, biodiversity and climate change issues (*see Section 4.3*). There are now sets of indicators in place, norms and standards to collect and store this data, an online system to provide access to this data and a coordination mechanism to develop more collaborative decision and policy-making processes using the available environmental data. This foundation blocks are now in place; they now need to be consolidated and up-scaled to cover all environmental areas and be used by other sectors in Georgia, particularly the development sectors, including regional and local development planning.

3.1.7. UNDP Comparative Advantage

51. The interventions of the UN system in Georgia were developed under the umbrella of the “2016-2020 United Nations Partnership for Sustainable Development (UNPSD)” that is a collective strategic response of the UN system for a five-year period to national development priorities in Georgia. The framework is structured around five focus areas, which were prioritized through extensive multi-sectoral consultations between the Government, the UN system, civil society and other partners: (i) Democratic Governance; (ii) Jobs, Livelihood and Social Protection; (iii) Education; (iv) Health; and (v) Human Security and Community Resilience. This framework document was validated at a high-level meeting in February 2015 and signed by the Prime Minister of Georgia and the UN Resident Coordinator on November 20, 2015.

52. Under the fifth focal area “Human Security and Community Resilience”, one expected outcome is “By 2020 communities enjoy greater resilience through enhanced institutional and legislative systems for environment protection, sustainable management of natural resources and disaster risk reduction”. A total financial resource needs for this outcome and for the period 2016-2020 was estimated at just over USD 13M, which represents about 8.3% of the total financial resource needs for the entire UNPSD. UNDP estimated needs to fulfill its commitments under this outcome and for this period was USD 6M.

53. UNDP is the leading development organization in Georgia. It established and signed a Standard Basic Assistance Agreement between the Republic of Georgia and UNDP in June 1994. Since then, UNDP has been part of the country’s success in many fields, including its democratic reforms, inclusive growth, conflict transformation, green solutions and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Its UN identity ensures neutrality and respect for the country’s control over the future. UNDP commitment to development makes it the advocates of change. Transparency and accountability of its operation makes it the trusted partner for national and international development stakeholders. And its wide, international presence keeps UNDP close to development issues, resources and thinking.

54. UNDP plays a crucial role in helping the Government of Georgia meet its obligations for environmental protection, providing technical and advisory support for biodiversity conservation, sustainable use and management of natural resources, reduction of hazardous chemical waste, climate change-related risks, and other thematic areas, including support to national parks. UNDP interventions in Georgia are guided by its Country Programme Document (CPD) 2016-2020, which contains four programme priorities. The fourth programme priority has been contributing to the outcome 8 of the UNPSD described above. The CCCD project is part of this programme priority, which has the following indicative country programme output: “By 2020, environmental knowledge and information systems enhanced, including capacities for regular reporting to international treaties”.

3.1.8. Management Arrangements

55. The management arrangements planned at the onset of the project included:

- *GEF Implementing Agency:* UNDP serves as the GEF implementing agency for the project.
- *Executing Agency in Georgia:* The Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture (MEPA)⁸ acts as the executing agency and has overall responsibility for timely achieving the project

⁸ Formerly the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia (MENRP).

objective and outcomes. MEPA designated a senior official to act as the *National Project Director (NPD)*, whom provides the strategic oversight and guidance to project implementation.

- *Project Executive Board (PEB)*: A PEB was constituted to serve as the executive decision-making body for the project. It includes representatives from key partners to the project. The PEB provides strategic directions and management guidance for the implementation of the project. The PEB ensures that the project remains on course to deliver the desired outcomes of the required quality. The PEB approves the Annual Work Plans (AWPs), reviews the Annual Progress Reports/Project Implementation Reports (PIRs), and reviews/approves corrective measures when needed. It met 6 times over the course of the project.
- *Project Management Unit (PMU)*: A PMU was established at MEPA in Tbilisi to carry out the coordination and day-to-day management of the project with due time and diligence including preparation of annual work-plans and progress reports. It is headed by a Project Manager (PM) full time and supported by a Project Assistant part time.
- *Project Manager (PM)*: The PM has the responsibility to coordinate and manage the day-to-day implementation of the project on behalf of MEPA, within the guidelines laid down by the Project Executive Board (PEB). The PM is accountable to the project board for the quality, timeliness and effectiveness of activities carried out, as well as for the use of funds.
- *Chief Technical Advisor (CTA)*: The CTA had the responsibility to ensure that the project produces the results specified in the project document, to the required standards of quality and within the specified constraints of time and cost.
- *Part time Consultants/Experts*: As required the project implementation team hires technical expertise to provide technical support for the different components of the project and create knowledge products as needed.
- *Management Procedures*: The financial arrangements and procedures for the project were governed by the UNDP rules and regulations applicable for project implemented through the National Implementation Modality (NIM). All procurement and financial transactions were governed by applicable UNDP regulations, including the recruitment of staff and consultants/experts using standard UNDP recruitment procedures.

56. The Evaluation Team found that the management arrangements were adequate and effective for the implementation of the project. They provided the project with clear roles and responsibilities for all parties including clear reporting lines of authority. The PEB met regularly to monitor the implementation of the project and approve the AWPs. The good functioning of the Project Board provided an effective way to communicate and keep stakeholders engaged, contributing to an effective use of project resources and a good national ownership of project achievements.

3.2. Project Implementation

57. This section discusses the assessment of how the project has been implemented. It assessed how efficient the management of the project was and how conducive it was to contribute to a successful project.

3.2.1. Adaptive Management

58. The project has been well managed. The Project Team followed UNDP and government of Georgia procedures for the implementation of the project and used adaptive management extensively to secure project deliverables while maintaining adherence to the overall project design. The review indicates that project achievements are well aligned with the project document that was endorsed by stakeholders. The *Project Logical Framework Matrix* included in the project document has been used as a guide to implement the project (see Section 4.1.1). An efficient implementation team has been in place, detailed work plans have been guiding the implementation, assignments were conducted with the required participation of relevant stakeholders and the project progress was well monitored.

59. Overall, activities supported by the project benefited from a good participation of stakeholders. Each assignment was conducted following well-defined terms of reference and/or feasibility studies. The project

was implemented with a good logical process. Comprehensive assessments and analyzes were conducted at the beginning of the project to identify environmental data needs but also to assess the existing government instruments and their respective capacities. Then, based on these analyses, capacity gaps were identified and a plan of actions to harmonize a data collection, storing and monitoring was developed and implemented.

60. In the meantime, adaptive management has been used regularly to adapt to a changing environment. The project has been able to navigate through several government changes, including working with three different Deputy Ministers and the merger of ministries when in 2017, MENRP merged with the Ministry of Agriculture to form a new ministry MEPA. On the operational side, the implementation of activities by Partners and supported by the project under several agreements was carefully monitored by the Project Management Team. In mid-2017, two of these agreements necessitated a no-cost extension, which, based on the recommendation of the project management team was approved by the PEB.

61. Another case of adaptive management was the delay in implementing one of the main outputs of the project: the establishment of a web-based information/ knowledge management system. This delay was mostly due to the complexity of developing and operationalizing such system as well as the difficulties to identify the necessary requirements, which were part of the Terms of Reference (TORs). As a result, the announcement of the tender was postponed; hence delaying the entire schedule to develop the system, which also took somewhat longer than expected. Faced with this delay, the project management team monitored the issue carefully, documenting the progress in each quarterly progress report and raised this issue at the June 20, 2017 Project Board meeting with the request for a no-cost extension of the project to end of December 2018. This seven-month extension (June to December 2018) was unanimously approved by the PEB and further by UNDP Headquarters. It gave the project the necessary time to consolidate activities and deliverables before the closure of the project.

62. The review conducted for this evaluation indicates that the implementation team was excellent at managing and adapting to these changes over time. When reviewing the expected outcomes, particularly outcome 1, which seek to improve the environmental monitoring in Georgia with the development of a system accompanied by the necessary legislation and the harmonization of norms and procedures for better data exchange, it is obvious that it was a complex project and that it would not be an easy project to implement. The experience of reforming this area of environmental monitoring show that it is not an easy and linear process. It is often mixed with political agendas and a certain resistance to change in these existing institutions. It was a difficult project to implement and the implementation team demonstrated its capacity to adapt to these changes and secure the delivery of expected results while maintaining adherence to the overall project strategy approved by GEF.

3.2.2. Partnership Arrangements

63. As discussed in Section 4.1.5 and 4.1.8, stakeholder engagement and management arrangements of the project were adequate for the implementation of the project; they provided the project with clear roles and responsibilities for each party. In addition, the collaboration with other related projects (*see Section 4.1.3*) were good and provided good synergies among these projects; particularly with GIZ, which funded similar initiatives in the biodiversity and climate change area as well as the support for a new forestry monitoring system.

64. The project has been implemented through few partnership arrangements following UNDP procedures. Clear TORs were always drafted before any arrangements were made with a partner, then an agreement – or in some cases contracts - would be signed. One key agreement for implementing the project was a Letter of Agreement (LOA) established between UNDP and the Environmental Information and Education Center (EIEC), a key Partner for the project. Under this agreement several assessments and studies were conducted to assess national environmental monitoring needs such as needs to monitor biodiversity and climate change but also to develop the concept of an environmental information/knowledge management system. This partnership arrangement was critical for the success of the project. The fact that most project activities were overseen by the EIEC contributed to the development of a good country ownership and prepared the center to become the custodian of most project achievements, particularly the system that was developed by a Tbilisi-based IT firm to organize and provide access to this environmental information. The Evaluation Team found that the cooperation between the project management team and EIEC has been excellent and will certainly

contribute to the long-term sustainability of project achievements.

65. Overall, the project management team enjoyed an excellent collaboration with all stakeholders; particularly key stakeholders such as EIEC and the various agencies under MEPA such as the Agency of Protected Areas (APA), the National Environmental Agency (NEA), the National Forest Agency (NFA), etc. and also the consultants and experts whom provided their expertise throughout the implementation of the project. The collaboration happened through formal meetings, workshops but also through regular more informal communications among each other to keep everybody abreast of the progress made. Throughout the implementation of project activities, the flow of communications kept all stakeholders engaged in the project. The PMU, a small unit composed of only a Project Manager full time and an Assistant part time, fulfilled its coordination role, provided a good collaboration approach, and communicated well the progress made by the project to keep all Stakeholders up-to-date and engaged in the project. This support was recognized by stakeholders interviewed during this evaluation.

3.2.3. Project Finance

66. As indicated in Section 4.1.8, the implementation modality of the project to allocate, administer and report on project resources is the UNDP support to NIM⁹ (National Implementation Modality) approach; that is project activities are carried out by the project management team in partnership with the MEPA-EIEC, the national executing agency for the project.

67. The financial records are consolidated into the UNDP-ATLAS system as the accounting and financial system for all UNDP projects. It allows the project management team to obtain financial reports to the last point of data entry. These reports - Combined Delivery Reports (CDRs) - produce financial information broken down by line items such as local consultant fees, travel tickets, printing and publications, utilities, etc. and presented by outcome (two + project management). A financial audit of the overall operations of UNDP in Georgia was conducted in 2017. Regarding the project finances, no questions were raised by the Auditors and the financial records maintained in the Atlas system were accepted as accurate and reflecting the financial status of the project.

68. The total approved investment in the project was estimated at USD 2,541,938, of which USD 1,200,000 constituted the grant funding from GEF and USD 1,341,938 to be co-financed.

GEF Funds

69. The review of financial records as recorded in the UNDP Atlas system indicates that over 95% of the GEF grant is already expended and it is expected that 100% of the GEF grant will be expended by the end of project in May 2019. The breakdown of project expenditures by outcome and by year is presented in the table below.

Table 7: UNDP-GEF Project Funds Disbursement Status (in USD)

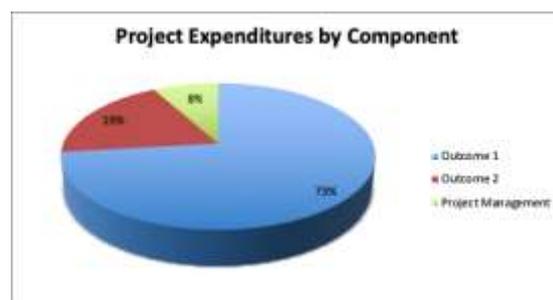
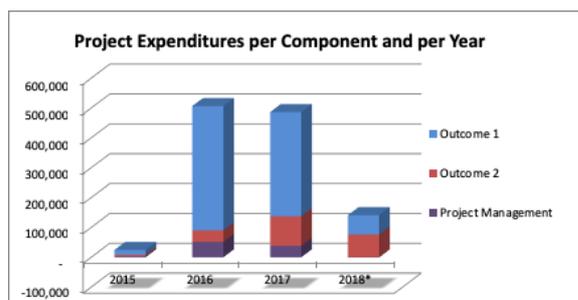
Component	Budget (USD)	2015	2016	2017	2018 ¹⁰	Total (USD)	Outcome/ Total Expenses
Outcome 1	732,000	16,559	416,783	348,768	65,232	847,342	73%
Outcome 2	366,000	5,000	38,459	99,299	76,296	219,054	19%
Project Management	102,000	3,012	51,466	38,339	-419	92,398	8%

9 UNDP defines NIM (National Implementation Modality) as the management of UNDP programme activities in a specific programme country carried out by an eligible national entity of that country. It is expected to contribute most effectively to: (i) greater national self-reliance by effective use and strengthening of the management capabilities, and technical expertise of national institutions and individuals, through learning by doing; (ii) enhanced sustainability of development programmes and projects by increasing national ownership of, and commitment to development activities; and (iii) reduced workload and integration with national programmes through greater use of appropriate national systems and procedures. (Source: UNDP Financial Resources)

10 It includes actual expenditures to End of October 2018

Component	Budget (USD)	2015	2016	2017	2018 ¹⁰	Total (USD)	Outcome/ Total Expenses
TOTAL	1,200,000	24,570	506,709	486,406	141,109	1,158,794	100%

Sources: UNDP Atlas Financial Reports (Combined Delivery Reports to October 2018 (CDRs)) and information collected from the project management team.



70. The financial figures presented above indicate that so far 73% of the total GEF grant was expended on outcome 1 that was to “enable capacities for environmental monitoring”. Another 19% of the total GEF grant was expended on outcome 2 that was to “train technical and management staff in monitoring and data analysis, and linkage to decision-making process”. The remaining expenditures (8%) were expended on project management. When comparing the actual expenditures (USD 1,158,794) to the original budget per outcome, which was developed during the formulation of the project, a slight deviation is observed. So far, project expenditures recorded under outcome 1 are USD 115,342 over the initial budget (+16%); those recorded under outcome 2 are USD 146,946 under the initial budget (-40%) and project management expenditures are USD 9,602 under budget (-9%).

71. These financial figures indicate disbursements that are much aligned with the implementation timeline of the project: 2015 (2% of total grant expenditures) was the inception phase of the project which was completed with the July 2015 inception workshop; then 2016 and 2017 were the peak years in term of project expenditures (respectively 44% and 42% of total grant expenditures) to conduct assessments, analyses and to develop the system to address environmental monitoring needs; finally 2018 (12% of total grant expenditures) is a year of consolidation of project achievements.

72. As of end of October 2018 actual project expenditures are USD 1,158,794 or just under 97% of the total GEF grant. A remaining amount of USD 41,206 (3.4% of the GEF grant) is left to be disbursed/expended during the period October 1 to May 2019. According to the project management team, this amount is totally committed; it is a matter of finalizing the procurement processes and processing payments to expend this remaining amount. Based on the review of project financial reports, it is expected that the GEF grant of USD 1,200,000 will be fully expended by the end of the project.

73. The review of AWP budgets against the yearly actual expenditures (GEF grant) confirms the good financial management of this project. The table below indicates that for the first year, the project spent 80% of the AWP budgets, followed by 100% and 98% for the peak years of 2016 and 2017. Finally, so far 77% of the 2018 budget has been expended but it is calculated only with disbursement to end of October 2018.

Table 8: Annual Work Plans versus Actual Expenditures (GEF grant)

Years	AWP Budgets	Actual Expenditures	% Spent
2015	30,747	24,570	80%
2016	507,532	506,709	100%
2017	495,361	486,406	98%

Years	AWP Budgets	Actual Expenditures	% Spent
2018	182,315	141,109 ¹¹	77%

Sources: Project AWP and UNDP-Atlas CDR Reports

Co-financing

74. The co-financing commitments at the outset of the project totaled the amount of USD 1,341,938 with 89% in-kind from MEPA and the rest (USD 150,000) from UNDP in cash and in-kind. The review noted that these two commitments were confirmed by official letters at the outset of this project. The table below indicates the breakdown of this co-financing.

Table 9: Co-financing Status

Partner	Type	Commitments (USD)	Actuals (USD)
Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture (MEPA) - EIEC	In-kind	1,191,938	1,191,938
UNDP	Cash	80,000	76,406
UNDP	In-kind	70,000	70,000
Total (USD)		1,341,938	1,338,344

Source: Project Document and information collected from the project management team.

75. According to the co-financing letter from the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia (now MEPA) Legal Entity of Public Law EIEC, the co-financing committed amount was composed of USD 442,795 for development costs and USD 749,143 for capital and operational costs. According to the co-financing letter from UNDP, USD 80,000 was a cash contribution to the project and USD 70,000 was an in-kind contribution to cover project management costs.

76. As of end of October 2018, the UNDP cash co-financing contribution to the project recorded in the UNDP Atlas system was USD 76,406 or 96% of the initial cash co-financing commitment. Regarding the in-kind co-financing contributions from UNDP and MEPA, no reported figures were found by the Evaluation Team. However, despite that no reporting on these co-financing commitments was available, the Evaluation Team confirmed that both Partners have contributed critical in-kind resources to the implementation of this project. The project was actively supported by the senior management of the UNDP CO, Energy and Environment Team leader and Associate as well as the PR office by being involved in project activities such as PEB meetings, workshops, and conferences and also by overseeing the planning and implementation of the project. Moreover, the project used UNDP CO office and equipment for arrangement of PEB meetings, in the process of recruiting experts or procuring the services.

77. As for the Government's contribution, the project benefitted from advisory support of government representatives through the PEB, and the use of an office space for the project management team. In addition, in parallel to the development of the EIKMS, existing data collection systems on forests, air, wastes as well as energy and agriculture statistics that are essential data providers for the EIKMS were maintained and expended by the EIEC, the Financial Analytical Service, and the National Statistics Office. Associated expenditures from the state budget included the development, operational and capital costs. Furthermore, beyond activities planned within the project, the EIEC staff continuously conducted training activities on how to use the system and met with EIKMS users to adjust/customize the system.

78. As discussed in section 4.1.5, 4.1.7 and 4.1.8, the project has benefited from a strong partnership with MEPA and its subordinate entities, including EIEC who has become the custodian of key project achievements such as the EIKMS system developed to manage environmental information and knowledge. These entities have been fully committed and engaged in the implementation of the project. Despite that no specific figures were available on in-kind contributions to the project, the review conducted by the Evaluation Team indicates

11 to End of October 2018 (as per Atlas CDR)

that the committed in-kind contributions estimated during the formulation of the project were certainly expended through a good participation in the implementation of the project.

3.2.4. Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Approach

79. A Monitoring Framework and Evaluation Plan was developed during the formulation of the project in accordance with UNDP and GEF procedures. A total indicative cost of USD 40,000 was budgeted, representing about 3.3% of the total GEF grant. This plan listed monitoring and evaluation activities that were to be implemented during the lifetime of the project, including a mid-term evaluation and a terminal evaluation. The plan was based on the *Project Logical Framework Matrix* that included a set of performance monitoring indicators along with their corresponding sources of verification.

80. The M&E plan was reviewed during the inception phase and no changes were made to it. A summary of the operating modalities of the M&E plan is as follows:

- Performance indicators: A set of 6 indicators with their respective baselines and 9 targets by the end of the project were identified and documented in the *Project Logical Framework Matrix*. They have been used to monitor/measure the performance of the project and this information has been reported in the annual progress report;
- An inception phase where the M&E plan was reviewed and discussed at an inception workshop (November 12, 2015). No changes to the M&E plan were done during the inception phase;
- The Project Manager ensured the day-to-day monitoring, particularly to monitor the implementation of annual work plans;
- The PMU has had the responsibility to produce progress reports documenting/measuring the progress made by the project for any given period and to report the progress made by the project to the Project Board. The reporting function has included two main types of progress reports:
 - Quarterly Progress Reports: This is a UNDP requirement. Recorded in Atlas, the progress has been monitored and risks have been reviewed and logged in the Atlas system;
 - Annual Project Reports / Project Implementation Reports (APR/PIRs): These reports are both UNDP and GEF requirements, following specific guidelines. They are annual progress report measuring the progress made by the project during the past year and overall since its inception. They include a review of the development objective, measuring the progress made - using the performance indicators - to achieve the overall expected objective and outcomes; and a review of the implementation measuring the progress made during the past year;
- Mid-term and Final Evaluations: The project was to be subjected to two independent external evaluations. A mid-term evaluation and a terminal evaluation to determine the progress made at specific points in time, including progress made against expected results; reviewing the implementation modalities; identify any need for corrective actions; and finally, to identify any lessons learned. The Evaluation Team noted that no mid-term evaluation was conducted by the project. As the implementation of the project was satisfactory with no particular implementation issue and considering that mid-term evaluations for medium size project are optional, it was decided not necessary to conduct a mid-term evaluation.
- Learning and Knowledge Sharing: Results from the project were to be disseminated within and beyond the project intervention zone through existing information sharing networks and forums.
- Financial Audit: The audit was to be conducted by the legally recognized auditor of UNDP Georgia, following UNDP Financial Regulations and Rules and applicable Audit policies.

81. The set of indicators to measure the progress of the project was reviewed by the Evaluation Team. The project was approved with a set of 6 indicators, which were presented in the *Project Logical Framework Matrix* with their respective baselines and 9 related targets to be achieved by the end of the project. These indicators were reviewed during the inception phase, but no changes were made. The list of indicators and their respective targets are presented in the table below:

Table 10: List of Performance Indicators

Project Outcomes	Indicators	Targets
<p>Objective - To develop individual and organizational capacities in the MENRP and EIEC for improved monitoring of environmental impacts and trends for elaboration of collaborative environmental management.</p>	1. Establishment of a system for collaborative environmental planning and monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planners and decision-makers at different levels have immediate access to the relevant, reliable, timely, accurate, and up-to-date existing information for environmental planning and monitoring through the common system
<p>Outcome 1 - Capacities for environmental monitoring are better enabled</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Output 1.1: System of information exchange among relevant departments in key ministries and the EIEC to support environmental monitoring in implementing Rio Conventions improved Output 1.2: Clear legal framework established to facilitate monitoring in implementing Rio Conventions Output 1.3: Data collection, analysis and monitoring system developed at the EIEC with optimal linkages to local authorities 	2. Strengthened environmental information management and decisions support system for improved implementation and monitoring of the Rio Conventions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A unified system for monitoring the implementation of Rio Conventions and reporting on them is established by the end of the second year of the project
	3. Development of a legislative and institutional framework for environmental management at national level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a minimum of 50% increase in acceptance by government representatives and other stakeholder representatives of the legitimacy of the new information management system at EIEC by the end of the year 2 of the project Managers will document references to environmental legislation show an improvement in institutional responses to monitoring and enforcing environmental legislation for the Rio Conventions
	4. Existence of an agreed environmental information collection, analysis and sharing system for improved implementation of the Rio Conventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A unified system for data collection, analysis and sharing established at EIEC by the end of the year 2 of the project Sectoral environmental data is accessible to end users in a comprehensive and policy-relevant way by the end of the project
	5. Strengthened institutional and technical capacities to create knowledge and monitor the implementation of Rio Conventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual dialogues held by quarters 4,6,8,12 Capacities of at least 4 institutions and 100 females and males are enhanced by the end of month 33
<p>Outcome 2 – Technical and management staff sufficiently trained in monitoring and data analysis, and linkage to decision-making process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Output 2.1: Convention monitoring and reporting capacities developed Output 2.2: Inter-ministerial cooperation for collaborative decision-making among policy makers achieved 	6. Enhanced inter-ministerial cooperation on the implementation of Rio Conventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # Of training workshops per year, for technical staff, decision-makers and key stakeholders

Source: Project Document and PIRs

82. It was also noted that in addition to performance indicators to measure the progress of the project at the objective and outcomes level, a set of 20 indicators was also identified and documented in the project document for monitoring the progress toward the five outputs (see Annex 10). These indicators and their respective targets have been used to monitor the project deliverables (outputs). The review of these indicators and targets indicates that they are progressive and sequential that is they allow the measurement of the project progressively. For instance, to measure how well output 1.1 - that is to improve the system of information exchange among relevant departments - is being delivered, the first indicator measure if a mapping of relevant stakeholders has been done (target by month 6), then if a draft design of an improved information exchange system has been developed (target by month 12), then if consultations of stakeholders have been conducted (target by month 12), then if the system has been approved (target by month 16) and finally if the information exchange system has been developed (target by month 24). The same logic can be found for other outputs. It reflects the good design of this project, including the *Project Logical Framework Matrix*, which has been as a “blueprint” to guide the implementation of the project (see also Section 4.1.1).

83. The indicators presented in the table above have been those used to measure the progress of the project

and to report the progress made in the APR/PIR reports. The review of these indicators and their respective targets reveals that they are SMART¹² indicators. It is a good set of indicators that has been used to measure how well the project progresses. With clear baselines and targets, it makes them unambiguous indicators that are specific, measurable, available and relevant for the project in a timely manner.

84. The Evaluation Team also noted that the project management team also monitored the overall progress made to develop the related capacities in Georgia using a capacity development scorecard. This scorecard was completed at the outset of the project to establish a baseline and was reviewed near the end of the project (October 2018). It provided another set of performance indicators to measure the progress made in developing the capacities needed for maintaining the environmental information management exchange system developed with the support of the project.

85. The M&E plan – including its set of performance indicators and the capacity development scorecard - provided the project with a good framework to measure its progress/performance with an adequate budget. APR/PIRs were produced timely as well as Quarterly Progress Reports. These reports were presented and endorsed at each PEB meetings. The review of annual PIRs reveals that they are comprehensive reports that provide good monitoring information documenting the project's progress year over year. Additionally, the scorecard was completed as required and provides useful additional information to the government on how effective the management of the environmental information exchange has improved over time.

86. The assessment conducted by the Evaluation Team revealed that the project was well monitored and that this information was used to plan and implement day-to-day activities, including the need to adapt the implementation approach when corrective actions were needed. Reports were endorsed by the PEB and PEB meetings were opportunities to discuss issues and solutions. A good example is the decision to recruit a large legal firm as opposed to individual legal experts to carry out the planned activities to review the related legal aspects of environmental monitoring. This issue was discussed at the PEB meeting of April 7, 2016, including the review of the implementation timeline of the project and the budget, and the decision was taken to go ahead with this approach.

87. Finally, the ratings given in each PIR were reviewed by the Evaluation Team and compared to those given in this terminal evaluation. In both PIR 2017 and 2018, ratings for progress toward the development objective and yearly implementation progress were all rated as *Satisfactory*. This terminal evaluation was concluded with an overall rating of *Highly Satisfactory*, which is one step higher than ratings in both PIRs. These ratings are consistent; the project has been satisfactorily implemented since its outset. As discussed in this report, the project was a response to a clear national priority, was very relevant with the context of the Association Agreement with the EU and, despite an ambitious set of expected results, it delivered a good foundation to improve environmental monitoring and the management of environmental information in Georgia. By the end of the project, all expected results came together and Georgia is now well equipped with a good infrastructure in place to better monitor and report on the environment and to give access to environmental information to decision-makers. A satisfactory implementation led to a highly satisfactory set of results.

3.2.5. Contribution of UNDP and Implementing Partner

88. The quality of UNDP implementation and the quality of execution of the MEPA- as respectively the GEF implementing agency and the national executing agency of the project - to support the implementation of the project was satisfactory. In their respective area of responsibility, they provided good support to the implementation team to ensure an efficient use of GEF resources and an effective implementation of the project. Both institutions participated actively in the design and the implementation of the project.

89. UNDP provided the required guidance to apply UNDP project management procedures such as procurement, hiring and contracting as well as guidance for reporting project progress. UNDP played a role of quality assurance over the implementation of the project, ensuring that the required qualities for project activities were fulfilled. Overall, UNDP backstopped the project with its own resources, supported the project

12 SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound

management team throughout the implementation including the participation in the decision-making process for implementing the project through the PEB.

90. MEPA, as the national executing agency, played an important role in the implementation of this project as the main government anchor point of the project. The Deputy Minister of the Ministry chaired the PEB; providing good leadership in guiding the implementation of the project. Overall, MEPA and particularly its subordinate agency EIEC played an important facilitator role for the project, providing the government/institutional context for the legitimization of project-supported activities; particularly for reforming the institutional and legislative framework of the environmental information management exchange. It is also worth noting that during the lifetime of this project, Georgia had three different Deputy Ministers and one merger of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection with the Ministry of Agriculture following elections. It is worthwhile to note that overall, the project was able to perform well throughout these changes.

91. In addition to the role of EIEC, which played a key role in the implementation of the project, it is also important to note the positive role and engagement played by other agencies of MEPA and other government ministries. They satisfactorily fulfilled their project obligations/responsibilities by collaborating with the project and participated in project activities when appropriate. They also played a major role in legitimizing the achievements of the project in their respective areas; hence contributing to the long-term sustainability of project achievements.

3.3. Project Results

92. This section discusses the assessment of project results; how effective was the project to deliver its expected results, how sustainable these achievements will be over the long-term, and what are the remaining barriers limiting the effectiveness of the project.

3.3.1. Overall Achievements/Results

93. As presented in Sections 4.1, the project has been implemented through two (2) components. The implementation progress is measured through a set of 6 indicators, each one with its respective target(s) to be achieved by the end of the project. Below is a table listing key results achieved by the project against each expected outcome, using the corresponding targets to measure the progress made. Additionally, a color “*traffic light system*” code was used to represent the level of progress achieved by the project.

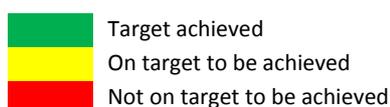


Table 11: List of Achievements vs. Expected Outcomes

Expected Results	Project Targets	Results	TE Assess.
Outcome 1 - Capacities for environmental monitoring are better enabled <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Output 1.1: System of information exchange among relevant departments in key ministries and the EIEC to support environmental monitoring in implementing Rio Conventions improved Output 1.2: Clear legal framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A unified system for monitoring the implementation of Rio Conventions and reporting on them is established by the end of the second year of the project Sectoral environmental data is accessible to end users in a comprehensive and policy-relevant way by the end of the project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of software including web-portal that should serve the platform for collection, processing/analysis, visualization and sharing of the Rio Conventions' related data/information is in its final stage of development. MEPA and other stakeholders agreed to regard the system operational in case of fulfillment of pre-defined eighty tasks totally in all target areas. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a minimum of 50% increase in acceptance by government representatives and other stakeholder representatives of the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The legal framework that is to support the smooth operation of the unified system for monitoring the implementation of Rio Conventions has been drafted and submitted to MEPA to initiate the 	

Expected Results	Project Targets	Results	TE Assess.
<p>established to facilitate monitoring in implementing Rio Conventions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Output 1.3: Data collection, analysis and monitoring system developed at the EIEC with optimal linkages to local authorities 	<p>legitimacy of the new information management system at EIEC by the end of the year 2 of the project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Managers will document references to environmental legislation show an improvement in institutional responses to monitoring and enforcing environmental legislation for the Rio Conventions 	<p>government approval procedure. The drafted legislation is now under review by the government before being approved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The proposed Decree to approve the rule on accessibility of environmental information includes a description for an environmental information and knowledge management system supported by a list of information/data entities to be fed into this system and the agencies responsible for supplying this information. It also includes instructions for validating these information/data entities (verification and validation). ● A second Decree is proposed to change the Law on Soil Protection and to include national land degradation indicators and the methodology to monitor these indicators. 	
<p>Outcome 2 – Technical and management staff sufficiently trained in monitoring and data analysis, and linkage to decision-making process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Output 2.1: Convention monitoring and reporting capacities developed ● Output 2.2: Inter-ministerial cooperation for collaborative decision-making among policy makers achieved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Annual dialogues held by quarters 4,6,8,12 ● Capacities of at least 4 institutions and 100 females and males are enhanced by the end of month 33. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implementation of prioritized activities in each thematic area (climate change, biodiversity conservation and land degradation) under the capacity development plan is in its final stage. In total 73 participants were trained (21 females and 52 males representing 7 agencies). ● In order to increase understanding of obligations under Multilateral Agreements and particular roles of various stakeholders for the implementation of Rio Conventions, a number of awareness raising seminars were held all over Georgia targeting academic and media sectors, business and local authorities and non-governmental organizations. In total 461 participants were trained (168 females and 293 males representing 26 agencies). 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● # Of training workshops per year, for technical staff, decision-makers and key stakeholders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The inter-ministerial cooperation mechanism has been developed in close cooperation with stakeholders and a proposed Decree was submitted to MEPA for initiating the approval procedure by the Government 	

Source: Adapted from project progress reports and information collected during the mission in Georgia.

94. The review of achievements of the project indicates a successful and effective project; it should meet all its targets by December 31, 2018. The project was able to achieve what it was intended to achieve. As discussed in Section 4.2.1 the project used adaptive management extensively to provide flexibility in the project's approach working with partners and related government institutions and adapting to changing conditions. As a result, the project has been seen as a response to national needs and, with stakeholders engaged in all project activities, the project enjoyed a good national ownership.

95. The implementation of the project has been divided into four main pathways: (1) developing a web-portal and a web-based system to collect, process/analyze, visualize and share environmental monitoring information, including technical solutions for information exchange between agencies and tools for data collection, processing and analysis; (2) preparing the legal framework for this web-portal/web-based system; (3) developing individual and institutional capacities to collect, process and analyze environmental data and information relevant to the implementation of the Rio Conventions in Georgia; and (4) developing an inter-ministerial cooperation mechanism for collaborative decision-making, using environmental information for

mainstreaming environmental issues in policies, strategies, plans and programmes.

96. The assessment conducted for this TE identified four critical success factors that explain this effectiveness: (i) the project was well designed, responding to national needs and benefitting from a good engagement and participation of stakeholders. It became part of the government response to improve environmental monitoring and management of environmental information; hence part of national priorities to render this area more effective, including the access to this information; (ii) an excellent implementation team – including highly skilled experts and consultants - to implement this project. They implemented the project with good participative and collaborative principles and provided each activity with the required skills and knowledge. It includes the Georgian IT company (FINA), which was recruited through a tender process and which was able to develop the required IT system to support the objective and expected outcomes of the project; (iii) the existence of the *Association Agreement between the EU and Georgia* as a key driver to mobilize the government agenda in harmonizing its environmental governance framework with the EU, including the need to develop a shared environmental information system (SEIS) (see Section 4.3.3); and (iv) a good flexibility in allocating project resources and implementing activities to be able to respond to stakeholders needs and changes. It is worth noting here that despite three different Deputy Ministers and a merger of two ministries (MERNP and MOA), the project was still able to deliver its expected results on time and on budget.

97. As a result of the implementation of activities supported by the project, Georgia is now better equipped to monitor and report on the state of its environment. It now has a web-portal and a web-based system to collect, process/analyze, visualize and share environmental monitoring information. It also has norms and standards for information exchange between agencies and tools for data collection, processing and analysis. Finally, through capacity development activities, skills and knowledge were transferred to staff involved in the maintenance and use of the system and the enabling environment has been strengthened with a soon-to-be approved legislation and also a soon-to-be approved inter-ministerial cooperation mechanism. Considering the list of results presented above, the project certainly delivered the results expected at the outset of the project; on time and on budget. It is also important to note that in addition to these tangible outputs, the project provided numerous assessments, analyses, studies and proposals necessary to develop such a system.

3.3.2. Attainment of Project Objective / Impact

98. The review of project achievements presented in the previous section 4.3.1 reveals that the implementation was successful and met the expected outcomes planned at the outset of the project. Georgia is now better equipped to monitor and report on the state of its environment. The table below presents the key results of this project against the objective and its performance indicator/target.

Table 12: List of Achievements vs. Objective

Expected Result	Project Target	Results	TE Assess.
Project Objective: To develop individual and organizational capacities in the MENRP and EIEC for improved monitoring of environmental impacts and trends for elaboration of collaborative environmental management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planners and decision-makers at different levels have immediate access to the relevant, reliable, timely, accurate, and up-to-date existing information for environmental planning and monitoring through the common system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The web-based platform for monitoring environmental impacts and trends is in piloting phase; Capacities within EIEC for maintaining the web-based system have been developed through training focusing on the required skills and knowledge to administer the system; The legal framework that supports the establishment of the system has been drafted/prepared and handed over to the MEPA for initiating the adoption process; An inter-ministerial cooperation mechanism has been developed and is currently going through a review by the government. 	

Source: Adapted from project progress reports and information collected during the field mission

99. When comparing key results with the objective, the project certainly contributed “to develop individual and organizational capacities in the MENRP and EIEC for improved monitoring of environmental impacts and trends for elaboration of collaborative environmental management”. The project will definitely have a

long-term positive impact on strengthening the environmental monitoring and the management of environmental data functions in Georgia. MEPA and its subordinate agency EIEC are now equipped with an infrastructure to collect, process/analyze, visualize and share environmental monitoring information; including norms, standards, procedures, and web-based system to store and share environmental information.

100. However, despite the good progress made by the project throughout its three-year duration, the task of addressing the issue of monitoring and information resource management in the field of environmental protection as it was identified during the NCSA (*see Section 4.1.3*), is only a beginning. The project has been able to make a good contribution toward building some good foundations. As said above, a good infrastructure is now in place to better monitor and report on the environment and to give access to environmental information to decision-makers.

101. However, more efforts and resources are needed to consolidate these achievements. At the time of this evaluation, the testing of the web-based system was almost completed; the next big step is to populate the system with existing data. In the meantime, it is expected that the legislation drafted with the support of the project will be soon promulgated by the government; it will provide a legal framework for strengthening the management of environmental information, including the list of environmental indicators to be monitored. Relevant staff in government agencies and other stakeholders have acquired skills and knowledge through training; they should be able to collect, process/analyze, visualize and share environmental information. Finally, the concept for an inter-ministerial council has been developed under the leadership of EIEC; a Decree was drafted to define the membership to this council and the regulations of this body (goal, functions, authority, and procedures). It is expected that this Decree formalizing the council be approved in the coming months; it will provide a national coordination mechanism for more collaborative decision-making processes among policy makers. Strengthening monitoring and information resource management in the field of environmental protection is a work in progress. When considering the project resources and its timeline, good “*building blocks*” have been put in place; however, much more is needed to consolidate these achievements.

102. Nevertheless, in addition to the infrastructure that was built, the project has also increased the awareness of Stakeholders on the need for better accessibility to environmental information. In other words, it has been a two-pronged strategy: on one hand the project improved the supply of environmental information and on the other hand it has increased the demand for environmental information, including the need to report progress made against the obligations committed by the government of Georgia when signing/ratifying the multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). As a result, this approach to develop the supply AND the demand for environmental information should contribute to the long-term sustainability of the achievements of the project. Requirements for environmental information keep coming; Georgia is currently drafting its fourth national communication and second Biennial Update Report (BUR) to UNFCCC; it also committed in 2017 to update its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) report. Georgia will also need to report regularly on forest conservation, biodiversity (CBD, Ramsar, Bern convention/Emerald network) and land degradation. It is just a matter of time for all to recognize the benefits of such system and continue to be active in uploading and/or accessing this environmental information as well as keep the political pressure for allocating sufficient financial resources for the continued development of this system. As stated in the project document it is “*assumed that the investments made for knowledge generation and harmonization will also create an appetite with stakeholders for greater consolidated data sets in the long run*”.

103. From a capacity development point of view, a scorecard was used to monitor the progress made in strengthening capacities against a baseline determined at the outset of the project. As part of the GEF CCCD programme, measuring the performance of this type of project does not lend itself readily to programme indicators, such as improving the estimation of greenhouse gas emissions, reducing the percentage of people to the impact of climate change, or percentage increase of protected areas containing endangered endemic species. Instead, CCCD projects are measured by output, process, and performance indicators that are proxies to the framework indicators of improved capacities for the global environment. To this end, a scorecard has been developed by UNDP, UNEP and GEF to measure the progress made in strengthening crosscutting capacities in five major areas: stakeholder engagement; information and knowledge; policy and legislation development; management and implementation; and monitoring and evaluation. The result of this scorecard is presented in the table below.

Table 13: Scorecard on Capacity Results

Capacity Results	Score at beginning of project	Score at end of project
CR 1: Capacities for engagement	4/9	6/9
CR 2: Capacities to generate, access and use information and knowledge	5/15	7/15
CR 3: Capacities for strategy, policy and legislation development	5/9	7/9
CR 4: Capacities for management and implementation	3/6	4/6
CR 5: Capacities to monitor and evaluate	0/6	0/6
Total:	17/45	24/45

104. The results show that capacities increased by over 40% (17 to 24) over the lifetime of the project; but much remain to be developed with an overall capacity score of 24 out of a maximum of 45 (53%). Progress was made in capacities to engage stakeholders, to generate, access and use information and knowledge, and in strategy, policy and legislation development.

105. In addition, in October 2018, the project conducted a survey on the progress made in developing capacities of stakeholders who benefited from project activities. The aim of the survey was to assess how project activities improve the understanding and skills for monitoring global environmental issues: 110 stakeholders completed a questionnaire; 153 stakeholders were interviewed; and 2 focus groups were organized. Through this survey, it was found that, due to project activities, over half of respondents increased their engagement in environmental monitoring and that almost 90% see better the connection between global environmental issues and national priorities. For those who took part previously in activities to demonstrate the new system, between 2/3 and ¾ of respondents found the system flexible, easy to manage and simplifying the management of environmental data. In the meantime, the survey also found some limitations in developing the system, including: some data does not exist yet, no clear parties are responsible to collect some data and some information is paper-based and in written form.

Remaining barriers to achieve the project objective

106. As discussed in section 2 of this report, the rationale of this project was based on addressing some key barriers. One barrier that the project has been addressing is *“Technical implementation barriers such as lack of financial resources; lack of experienced personnel familiar with sustainable environmental management practices; lack of guidelines or manuals for planning, implementing and monitoring measures on combating land degradation, climate change and effective biodiversity management; etc.”*. The project has also addressed more specifically a cross-cutting issue identified through the NCSA process that was environmental monitoring and data management issues at systemic, institutional, and individual levels. The NCSA concluded that there was a need to modernize and develop a sustainable national system of environmental monitoring and data collection for global environmental management. Based on this conclusion, specific strategies were proposed such as enhancing the MENRP’s coordination role in designing and developing environmental monitoring system countrywide; developing priority indicators for monitoring; developing standardized methodologies for monitoring; developing regulations and assign responsibilities to different institutions based on their competitive advantage; and mobilizing internal and external financial resources and building sustainable financial mechanism for monitoring.

107. Despite that it is difficult to measure the contribution of the project in removing this key issue, the assessment conducted for this terminal evaluation confirms that project activities contributed in the partial removal of this issue. As discussed above and in the previous section 4.3.1, the project supported the development of an infrastructure to collect, process/analyze, visualize and share environmental monitoring information; including norms, standards, procedures, and web-based system to store and share environmental information. It also developed required capacities to maintain the system, supported the development of legislation to formalize this system and of an inter-ministerial council to provide a national coordination mechanism. Georgia has now a good infrastructure in place to better monitor and report on the environment and to give access to environmental information to decision-makers.

108. In the meantime, interviews conducted during this evaluation reveal that to move ahead in this area, few barriers may still hinder future progress. It includes the lack of financial and human resources. Few interviewees estimated that to function, one additional person full time would be needed in each agency mandated to collect and upload environmental data. In addition, as indicators are being formally approved by the government, there is still a large gap between an identified list of indicators and a monitoring system to track, collect and record the related data. Currently, lot of environmental reporting is done on an ad-hoc basis, mostly responding to international and national obligations such as the national communications required by UNFCCC. The challenge is to move toward a more systemic approach of monitoring the environment, collecting data, storing it in appropriate databases, analyzing it and sharing it, including the capacity to produce required reports. Finally, despite the good ownership of project achievements, there is still the need to politically “anchor” the subject of environmental information management at a higher level, such as Prime Minister and/or Parliament levels. It would ensure a good political visibility for decision-makers of the need to have access to accurate and timely environmental information.

3.3.3. Relevance

109. As discussed in chapter 4.1, the project has been highly relevant for Georgia. Its timing was excellent; it provided the government with extra resources to develop capacities seeking to improve the monitoring of the environment and to make environmental information available to decision-makers. The project concept emerged from clear national priorities to strengthen this area.

110. The project was formulated on the basis of a good review of barriers, issues, capacity gaps and priorities, which were identified during the PPG phase. The formulation process also benefited from the NCSA, which was conducted during the period 2003-2005. This assessment found that the monitoring and information resource management in the field of environmental protection was a barrier to the management of natural resources. Furthermore, in the context of international obligations committed by Georgia when signing/ratifying MEAs, it was found that no comprehensive monitoring processes could provide ongoing and historical data on climate change, biodiversity and desertification. The result was the design of a project that was a direct response to national prioritized needs and the participative process to design and implement project activities also contributed to a good stakeholder ownership and made this project all the more relevant.

111. The review also found that the project has been highly relevant for several national policies. Environmental monitoring and information management is a recurring theme to be addressed in the environmental policy framework in Georgia. The National Environmental Action Programme (NEAP) of Georgia 2012-2016 states environmental monitoring as a cross-cutting issue, particularly for water management, air quality, biodiversity conservation, natural hazards, and mineral resources including ground waters. It also states that in the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) 2012-2015 “*monitoring ecological balance in the environment*” is among priorities in the environmental sector and recognize that environmental monitoring provides essential data for planning purposes. In the most recent NEAP 2017-2021, environmental monitoring is also part of priority actions. It states that monitoring is an essential part of the information system that provides data on the status of the environment and on the potential and existing sources of pollution. Furthermore, it recognizes that monitoring capacity has been increased over the last few years and that monitoring resources are growing steadily. The same areas as in the previous NEAP are still priorities in the current action plan with the addition of forest protection and soil protection.

112. Relevance of this project can also be found in the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan of Georgia (NBSAP) 2014-2020, which states that “*the national biodiversity monitoring system has been established only recently and is not yet fully operational.*” The creation of a national biodiversity monitoring system is a priority but also recognizing that the effective implementation of this system is hampered by the lack of capacity and financial resources. Under the third strategic goal, the first national target is that “*by 2020, the status of biodiversity has been assessed through the improvement of scientific and baseline knowledge and the establishment of an effective monitoring system*”. Finally, in the third review of UNECE Environmental Performance Reviews (EPR) of Georgia conducted in 2016, it states that the NEA has succeeded in improving environmental and hydrometeorological monitoring networks, particularly in surface water monitoring; however, it also states that soil and geological surveillance remain very limited and that water quality monitoring has worsened since the second review. The review recommended that efforts should continue to optimize the monitoring network and further enhance the capacity for data analysis.

113. The project has also been highly relevant within the context of implementing the “*Association Agenda between the European Union and Georgia*”. Both parties began negotiating an association agreement in 2010, which was signed on June 27, 2014. The aim of this agreement was to create a free trade area and ultimately a political association and economic integration of Georgia within the EU. The first such agreement contained an association agenda for the period 2014-2016. Environment and climate change were part of this agenda stating that the parties will cooperate to prepare the implementation of EU environmental acquis¹³ and international standards. More related to the project, this agenda stated the need for the “*development of a coherent method of environmental data collection across the different ministries under the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS), and public access to environmental information*”.

114. This relevance was also noted against the new *Association Agenda 2016-2020*, which updated and refocused the initial agenda. Regarding the environment and climate change, this second agenda kept the focus on the need to “*improve the environmental information sharing in line with the principles of the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS)*” and the need for “*public access to environmental information*” but also added the need for public participation in decision-making, as well as the need to integrate environment into other policy areas. A roadmap was also stated as a priority for the ratification and implementation of multilateral environmental agreements. The review found that these agendas have been a key driver throughout the implementation of the project. Most interviews if not all conducted for this evaluation referred to the Association Agenda as a key driver for implementing the project

115. The Evaluation Team also noted that the achievements of the project should also be highly relevant in the context of the soon-to-be established *National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI)* in Georgia, which will function at government, sectoral and municipal levels. This initiative will support the optimal planning of resource use and efficient management of processes, as well as the increase of the quality of decisions made by state institutions and municipal administrations on the basis of standardized, systematized, valid, reliable and current information. It will also promote the development of electronic governance, which is viewed as another step towards the integration with European structures. The key element of NSDI is data sharing to provide a reduction of costs of spatial data and an increase of data quality.

116. Finally, the project is also highly relevant within the GEF Cross-Cutting Capacity Development (CCCD) programme. As discussed in section 4.1.4, the CCCD programme is a flexible mechanism funded by the GEF to address critical capacity issues related to the implementation of MEAs in countries. The concept of this mechanism is to build on existing mechanisms and structures, addressing national priorities, and using a unique inter-sectoral/inter-ministerial approach. This project is part of a set of projects funded by the GEF under the “*Strategic Approach to Enhance Capacity Building*” policy. Under GEF6¹⁴, the strategy for this CCCD programme states that “*it will facilitate the acquisition, exchange and use of knowledge, skills, good practices, behavior necessary to shape and influence national planning and budgeting processes and implementation in support of global environmental benefits*”. It had five objectives (a) to integrate global environmental needs into management information systems; (b) to strengthen consultative and management structures and mechanisms; (c) to integrate Multilateral Environmental Agreements' provisions within national policy, legislative, and regulatory frameworks; (d) to pilot innovative economic and financial tools for Convention implementation; and (e) to update NCSAs. The review found that this project, seeking to strengthen the underlying information and knowledge management foundations upon which Georgia can undertake a more holistic and comprehensive approach for analyzing policy interventions from a Rio Convention perspective, is perfectly aligned with the CCCD programme strategy.

3.3.4. Efficiency

117. As discussed in some sections above, the project has been efficiently implemented. The review of the management and the partnership arrangements revealed that the project enjoyed a good collaboration with all

13 EU environmental acquis are the collection of all EU environmental laws (‘acquis communautaire’) and is one of the most important parts of the EU legislation when it comes to the accession of new countries to the EU. The term *acquis* in French means “that which has been agreed upon”, and *communautaire* means “of the community”.

14 It was noted that the funding of this programme under GEF7 was discontinued.

key stakeholders with a good participative approach through the PEB, as well as constant informal communications through phone, emails, and visits. The project management team prudently allocated project resources, stretching every single dollar as much as possible to get “*more bang for the buck*”.

118. Furthermore, as discussed in section 4.2.1, the review revealed that the project management team used adaptive management to secure project deliverables while maintaining adherence to the overall project design. Adaptive management have been used regularly to adapt to a constantly changing environment; including the change of leadership for the project with three different Deputy Ministers during the lifetime of the project and one merger of lead ministry with the ministry of agriculture. Through this type of adaptation, the project demonstrated its ability to adapt to changing environment.

119. The efficiency of the project was also the result of a high-quality implementation team, which was confirmed by several interviewees during the field mission. Using a participative approach and a good transparent communication approach, project activities were implemented with a good engagement of stakeholders. The excellent relationship of the implementation team with stakeholders also contributed to an efficient implementation.

120. In addition to a good project management team, it is worth noting that at the outset of the project, the Deputy Ministry of MERNP as the *National Project Director* was a driving force/champion for starting the project and particularly for overseeing the process to recruit an IT firm to develop the web-based system. Coming from the Data Exchange Agency at the Ministry of Justice¹⁵, the Deputy Minister had a deep knowledge of information system development and provided valuable guidance to the project management team and EIEC in preparing the tender process to recruit the best IT firm to build the required system.

121. Finally, external expertise and contractors were hired as needed to ensure the implementation of activities. An emphasis was on hiring national experts and contractors. Based on information received from the implementation team, most expenditures spent on consultants and contractors went to national entities (individuals and contractors); only one contract was signed with an international consultant as a Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) to the project. Considering the complexity of some project activities, the high percentage of national expertise/contractors indicates a good level of expertise and specialization in Georgia, including IT expertise. The project was able to take advantage of that, contributing to its efficiency.

122. Despite the fact that it is always difficult to analyze the cost-benefit of such projects, the review of all management elements of the project confirm that the implementation of the project was an efficient operation that created a good value for money. The prudent approach to engage project funds was translated into good value for money and the use of adaptive management allowed for the identification and implementation of activities that were very responsive to immediate needs of stakeholders, and the need to develop a web-based environmental information platform.

3.3.5. Country Ownership

123. As discussed in other sections of this report, the country ownership is excellent. The project has addressed a key national priority that is to strengthen the monitoring of the environment and to make environmental information available to decision-makers. It was designed on the basis of a good contextual review – including national priorities - and it has been implemented through a good participative approach engaging stakeholders all the way from the design to the implementation of project activities. It became de facto a key project of EIEC to strengthen comprehensive environmental monitoring processes including the sharing of environmental information through a web-based platform.

124. As discussed in section 4.3.3, the timing of the project was also excellent. The project was designed during the period that Georgia negotiated an *Association Agreement* with the EU, which acted as a “*change agent*” to transform the way Georgia has been monitoring the environment and to harmonize its environmental

¹⁵ The Data Exchange Agency of the Ministry of Justice is the leading agency of the “*Open Data Portal*”. The Open Data Portal is a resource for the publication of open data (data which can be freely accessed, used and reused) owned by government of Georgia institutions in the open formats enabling business, nongovernmental and governmental organizations to use those data freely, create applications and e-services based on the data and get economic benefits.

legislation with EU environmental acquis. This agreement became a key driver to put the priority addressed by the project on top of the national environmental agenda. Other national policies were also conducive to the success of the project by setting environmental monitoring and sharing environmental information as priorities such as both NEAPs and the NBSAP. One indicator of this good country ownership is that despite the three changes of Deputy Ministers during the lifetime of this project, the project management team was able to keep stakeholders engaged and overall to develop a good country ownership.

125. It is expected that this good country ownership will contribute to the long-term sustainability of project achievements. These achievements are already well mainstreamed into the management systems and instruments used by EIEC; they should be sustained over the long-term. The web-based platform was tested and is now ready to be populated with existing environmental data. Based on observations collected during the field mission for this evaluation, the building blocks developed with the support of the project should be sustained over the long term; it has been a successful first phase in developing a new environmental monitoring system in Georgia, which will provide accurate and timely information to decision-makers.

3.3.6. Mainstreaming

126. The review of project achievements indicates that most of them are already institutionalized and mainstreamed within appropriate entities. The key entity is EIEC that is the custodian of the web-based environmental information platform. Pieces of legislation that are currently under review will – once promulgated - reside with the legislative framework of Georgia and the inter-ministerial council will be part of the government instruments to collaborate and coordinate the management of the environment in the country.

127. Due to the nature of this project, the project would not have succeeded in implementing its activities without a strong engagement and collaboration among stakeholders. Indeed, stakeholders from key organizations fully supported the development of studies, analyses, assessments, etc. and participated in the development of the system and the drafting of legislation.

128. This project - as a direct response to national priorities with limited time and resources - was to develop capacities in environmental monitoring and information management within the ministry of environment, including EIEC. It contributed to building the foundations for a national environmental monitoring system. Georgia is now equipped with the building blocks for such as a system; the project has played a catalytic role in developing this first phase. It should now move to the next phase that is the consolidation of the building blocks with the population of the system with existing environmental data and the promotion of this shared information to be used by policy- and decision-makers.

129. Finally, the project management team ensured a gender balance in all project activities by optimizing the participation of men and women in project activities, and by ensuring that the collect of environmental data be segregated by gender. The project approach to gender equality is also part of the UNDAF 2016-2020 strategy that is to mainstream gender in national laws, policies, budgets and programmes. The project has contributed to develop capacities in gender- and evidence-based policy making by improving access to gender segregated environmental information. This is part of the UNDP Country Programme 2016-2020 that is focusing on gender mainstreaming throughout its programme, including gender considerations to be integrated into some environmental policies such as disaster risks reduction strategy and adaptation strategy.

3.3.7. Sustainability

130. The sustainability strategy detailed in the project document focuses mostly on the analysis of how environmental, institutional, financial, and social risks should be mitigated by project activities. It details how environmental sustainability will be promoted, and how institutional, financial and social sustainability will be achieved. It is a valid strategy though somewhat passive and relying mostly on the fact that project achievements should be sustained over the long-term if these risks are mitigated.

131. Before discussing the various risks below, the Evaluation Team noted that overall project achievements are already well institutionalized within the institutions engaged in monitoring the environment in Georgia, particularly EIEC that is already the custodian of the web-based environmental information platform. In

addition, as discussed in section 4.3.5, the good participation of stakeholders throughout the implementation of the project led to a good ownership of the results achieved by the project; which will certainly contribute to the long-term sustainability of these achievements. The system and the related norms, standards and procedures are within the institutions engaged in environmental monitoring, the Decrees under review will be part of the national legislative framework once approved and the national coordination mechanism under review should also become part of the strategic government instruments to ensure that the environment is properly monitored, and that accurate and timely environmental information be available to decision-makers.

Financial risk to Sustainability

132. Financial risk is an area where some questions related to the long-term sustainability of project achievements need some attention. As discussed throughout this report, the project has delivered “*building blocks*” for improving the monitoring of the environment and sharing this information through a web-based platform. This is a good first phase; an infrastructure is now in place to better monitor and report on the environment and to give access to environmental information to decision-makers. However, as discussed in section 4.3.2, much more efforts and resources are needed to consolidate these achievements. The government will need to continue to allocate sufficient budgetary resources to allow the continuation of strengthening this area in Georgia. The good news is that so far, the review confirms the government’s commitment to strengthen the monitoring of the environment and the sharing of this information. It has been a priority for the government and all indicators are that this priority will stay on the government agenda for the foreseeable future, including in the MTEF, a critical framework for the allocation of governmental budgetary resources to any government supported activities. In the meantime, it is recommended that the project identified a roadmap for the way forward after the end of the project. This roadmap should particularly focus on the critical milestones to be met in the future and needed for keeping the priority on the government agenda, including in the MTEF.

Socio-economic risk to Sustainability

133. The review indicates that there is no socio-economic risk to sustainability. In the worst-case scenario which would be that the project has a limited impact over the long term, no negative effect is anticipated other than the continuation of the “*business as usual*” scenario, which would keep the priority needs to provide better environmental information at the forefront of the government agenda. Nevertheless, the current scenario is that the project has progressed adequately, and it is expected that project achievements will be sustained over the long term. As discussed in section 4.3.2, the two-pronged approach to strengthen the supply and demand for environmental information should keep the pressure on the government and other non-governmental actors to continue improving the monitoring of the environment and sharing this information, which in turn will be a response to an expected greater “*appetite*” for environmental data sets from stakeholders.

Institutional framework and governance risk to Sustainability

134. Similar to above, no institutional framework and governance risk to sustainability are anticipated. As discussed earlier, the project is a direct response to address a set of underlying barriers to environmental management, which hampered the goal of meeting and sustaining global environmental outcomes. Its main focus has been the development of an environmental monitoring and information management system, which was accompanied by capacity development of staff focusing on transfer of skills and knowledge but also of institutions focusing on norms, standards and procedures. The project also contributed to improving the enabling environment for such a system through adequate legislation. It is anticipated that the government will continue in the same direction in the foreseeable future building on the foundations created with the support of the project.

Environmental risk to Sustainability

135. The review did not find any environmental risks to the sustainability of project outcomes. The project has supported the development of a better environmental monitoring approach and sharing this information. Ultimately, the achievements of the project that is “*to develop individual and organizational capacities in the MENRP and EIEC for improved monitoring of environmental impacts and trends for elaboration of collaborative environmental management*”, should have medium and long-term positive environmental impacts over the natural resources in Georgia. The monitoring of the environment and the development of a web-based platform to share this information should provide better environmental information and contribute to a more sustainable approach for managing natural resources in Georgia.

3.3.8. Catalytic Role

136. The GEF defines the catalytic role of projects as one of the ten operational principles for the development and implementation of the GEF work program. The GEF hopes to fund projects in such a way so as to attract additional resources, pursue strategies that have a greater result than the project itself, and/or accelerate a process of development or change. The review of the catalytic role of the CCCD project is to consider the extent to which the project has demonstrated: a) production of a public good, b) demonstration, c) replication, and d) scaling up.

137. Considering the GEF definition of the catalytic role, the CCCD project has had a good catalytic role so far. The project produced a public good with the development of a web-based environmental information platform and its related norms, standards and procedures to collect, upload, analyze and share. So far, this public good has been tested and interviews and observations conducted during the mission in Georgia for this evaluation confirm the need for such information. The system was demonstrated to key stakeholders through workshops and available features appreciated. The building blocks developed with the support of the project have demonstrated the usefulness of such an approach. Georgia is now better equipped with instruments to better monitor the environment and share this information. The project is ending but the national agenda to improve the monitoring of the environment and sharing this information will go on and move forward to the next phase, which should be the consolidation of these building blocks.

138. Regarding replication and scaling up, since the beginning, the project has collaborated with the government of Germany funded and implemented by GIZ project *Integrated Biodiversity Management in the South Caucasus*. It is a 21M euros project running from December 2015 to November 2019 and implemented in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. One component of this project is to develop capacities of Partners to gather, analyze and communicate robust data based on recognized scientific methods in order to develop national environmental information systems focusing on biodiversity monitoring and forest monitoring. Considering the similarity of the two projects' interventions in Georgia, a collaboration was established to avoid overlaps and search for synergies. Overall, the CCCD project focused on developing the web-based environmental information platform and GIZ has been focusing on biodiversity indicators and forest monitoring. This project has one more year to go and will contribute to consolidating the achievements of the CCCD project. It is anticipated that they will finance some costs to upload existing data in the new system, once it will be fully tested.

139. The next steps, following the completion of these two projects will be to scale up this environmental monitoring and information management system. Populating the system with existing data is the next critical step but it should also be followed by regular upload of environmental data collected in the field. Following the promulgation of the legislative pieces under review, more training may be needed to ensure that the new mandates for environmental monitoring are well understood. Finally, once the system is ready to provide accurate and timely environmental information, it should be used by decision and policy-makers. It is anticipated that the international reporting obligations be a strong driver to use the system when drafting these required reports. It is currently happening with the drafting of the fourth National Communications to UNFCCC and the second BUR. Hopefully, more of these reports as well as future environmental policies and development plans will use this information/analyzes in the future.

4. Conclusions, Recommendations and Lessons

4.1. Conclusions

Project Formulation

a) A good project document detailing a good and logical *Project Logical Framework Matrix* with adequate management arrangements.

140. The project document is well written and presents a clear implementation strategy for the project. There is a good logical "*chain of results*" – activities, outputs, outcomes, and objective - to reach the expected results. This project is a response to capacity gaps and priorities that were initially identified through the NCSA, which was conducted during the period 2003-2005. It was found that environmental monitoring and environmental

data management were a key cross-cutting issue hindering development and implementation of effective policies for the management of global environmental resources in Georgia. It concluded that there was a need to modernize and develop a sustainable national system of environmental monitoring and data collection for global environmental management. This priority has also been on the list of national priorities in the environmental area in the NEAPs and the MTEF. The capacity needs were well captured in the project document and used to identify the adequate strategy to address these needs. Additionally, through a good engagement of stakeholders, proper management arrangements were identified. As a result, the project document reflects well what was needed and why and it integrated national priorities well. The implementation strategy formulated in the document has been used as a “*blueprint*” to guide the implementation of the project.

b) Despite a successful project, opportunities were missed for other similar projects in other countries funded by the GEF to benefits from this experience, best practices and lessons learned.

141. This project is part of the GEF CCCD programme funded by GEF6. It includes a portfolio of 30 similar projects throughout the world, which are all focused on “*facilitating the acquisition, exchange and use of knowledge, skills, good practices, behavior necessary to shape and influence national planning and budgeting processes and implementation in support of global environmental benefits*” and, particularly for these 30 projects, focusing on “*integrating global environmental needs into management information systems*”. When considering the success of this project focusing on environmental monitoring and information management, a development area that is known as complex, involving many players and lots of coordination needs, opportunities were missed from a global perspective to share, link and exchange best practices and lessons learned. Other projects may have benefitted from this experience and possibly some “*economies of scale*” may have been found such as using the expertise developed around this project.

Project Implementation

c) The project has used adaptive management to secure project deliverables while maintaining adherence to the overall project design.

142. Adaptive management has been used regularly to adapt to changing environments. The project has been able to navigate through several government changes, and a merger of ministries. On the operational side, agreements with Partners necessitated in some cases to be extended (at no cost) to allow the completion of tasks under these agreements. The implementation team has been excellent at managing and adapting to these changes over time. When considering the expected outcomes, particularly outcome 1, which seek to improve the environmental monitoring in Georgia with the development of a system accompanied by the necessary legislation and the harmonization of norms and procedures for better data exchange, it is obvious that it would not be an easy project to implement. Reforming the environmental monitoring function is complex and it is not a linear process. It is often mixed with political agendas and a certain resistance to change in existing institutions. It was a difficult project to implement and the implementation team demonstrated its capacity to adapt to these changes and secure the delivery of expected results while maintaining adherence to the overall project strategy approved by GEF.

d) The implementation of the project was efficient and cost effective

143. As discussed in some sections above, the project has been efficiently implemented. Using a good participative approach and constant informal communications through phone, emails and visits, the project enjoyed a good collaboration with all key stakeholders. The project management team prudently allocated project resources, stretching every single dollar as much as possible to get “*more bang for the buck*”. The efficiency of the project was also the result of a high-quality implementation team. Quality experts and consultants were hired as needed to ensure the implementation of activities with an emphasis on sourcing this expertise nationally; including the IT firm recruited to develop the web-based platform.

144. It is worth noting that at the outset of the project, the Deputy Ministry of MERNP as the National Project Director was a *driving force/champion* for starting the project and particularly for overseeing the process to recruit an IT firm to develop the web-based system. Coming from the Data Exchange Agency at the Ministry of Justice – the leading agency of the “*Open Data Portal*” which is a resource to publish free government owned data - the Deputy Minister had a deep knowledge of information system development and data access

and provided valuable guidance to the project management team and EIEC in preparing the tender process to recruit the best IT firm to build the required system.

145. Despite the fact that it is always difficult to analyze the cost-benefit of such projects, the project was an efficient operation that created a good value for money, providing Georgia with good “*building blocks*” to modernize the environmental monitoring and information management functions.

e) The project performance has been well monitored and measured using a good set of indicators and targets.

146. The M&E approach – including its set of performance indicators and the capacity development scorecard – has provided the project with a good framework to measure its progress/performance. APR/PIRs were produced timely as well as Quarterly Progress Reports. These reports are comprehensive reports providing good monitoring information and documenting the project’s progress year over year. Additionally, the capacity development scorecard was completed as required and has provided useful additional information to the government on how effective the management of the environmental information exchange has improved over time. The project has been well monitored and this information has been used to plan and implement day-to-day activities, including the need to adapt the implementation approach when corrective actions were needed.

Project Results

f) The project has been effective in delivering its expected results.

147. The targets set for this project should be all met by the end of the project in December 2018. The project was able to achieve what it was intended to achieve. Georgia is now better equipped to monitor and report on the state of its environment. It now has a web-portal and a web-based system to collect, process/analyze, visualize and share environmental monitoring information. It also has norms and standards for information exchange between agencies and tools for data collection, processing and analysis. Through capacity development activities, skills and knowledge were transferred to staff involved in the maintenance and use of the system and the enabling environment has been strengthened with a soon-to-be approved legislation and also a soon-to-be approved inter-ministerial cooperation mechanism. Considering the list of results presented above, the project certainly delivered the results expected at the outset of the project; on time and on budget. It is also important to note that in addition to these tangible outputs, the project provided numerous assessments, analyses, studies and proposals necessary to develop such a system.

148. However, despite a good infrastructure in place to better monitor and report on the environment and to give access to environmental information to decision-makers, more efforts and resources are needed to consolidate these achievements. It includes: the need to populate the system with existing data; once promulgated, the legislation will provide a legal framework for strengthening the management of environmental information, including the list of environmental indicators to be monitored; relevant staff in government agencies and other stakeholders should use their acquired skills and knowledge to collect, process/analyze, visualize and share environmental information; and finally, once approved by the government, the inter-ministerial council will provide a national coordination mechanism for more collaborative decision-making processes among policy makers. Strengthening monitoring and information resource management in the field of environmental protection is a work in progress. When considering the project resources and its timeline, good “*building blocks*” have been put in place; however, more efforts are needed to consolidate these achievements.

g) Four critical success factors contributed to this effectiveness.

149. The effectiveness of the project is mostly due to four critical success factors: (i) the project was well designed, responding to national needs and benefitting from a good engagement and participation of stakeholders. It became part of the government response to improve environmental monitoring and management of environmental information; hence part of national priorities to render this area more effective, including the access to this information; (ii) an excellent implementation team – including highly skilled experts and consultants - to implement this project. It includes the Georgian IT company, which was recruited

through a tender process and which was able to develop the required IT system, a key product for the success of the project; (iii) the existence of the Association Agreement between the EU and Georgia as a key driver to mobilize the government agenda in harmonizing its environmental governance framework with the EU, including the need to develop a shared environmental information system (SEIS); and (iv) a good flexibility in allocating project resources and implementing activities to be able to respond to stakeholders needs and changes.

h) The project has been highly relevant for Georgia by addressing a key national priority.

150. The project has been highly relevant for Georgia. Its timing was excellent; it provided the government with extra resources to develop capacities seeking to improve the monitoring of the environment and to make environmental information available to decision-makers. The project concept emerged from clear national priorities to strengthen this area. The NCSA (2005) found that no comprehensive monitoring processes could provide ongoing and historical data on climate change, biodiversity and desertification. Environmental monitoring has been clearly stated in the NEAP 2012-2016 as a cross-cutting issue, particularly for water management, air quality, biodiversity conservation, natural hazards, and mineral resources including ground waters. This action plan also states that in the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) 2012-2015 “*monitoring ecological balance in the environment*” is among priorities in the environmental sector and recognize that environmental monitoring provides essential data for planning purposes. The NBSAP 2014-2020, states that “*the national biodiversity monitoring system has been established only recently and is not yet fully operational.*” Furthermore, it states that the creation of a national biodiversity monitoring system is a priority, but it also recognizes that the effective implementation of this system is hampered by the lack of capacity and financial resources.

151. The project has also been highly relevant within the context of implementing the “*Association Agenda between the European Union and Georgia*”. Both parties signed an association agreement on June 27, 2014, which set an agenda to create a free trade area and ultimately a political association and economic integration of Georgia within the EU. The Association Agenda for the period 2014-2016 included environment and climate change and stated that the parties will cooperate to prepare the implementation of EU environmental acquis and international standards. More related to the project, this agenda stated the need for the “*development of a coherent method of environmental data collection across the different ministries under the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS), and public access to environmental information*”. This agenda has been a key driver for implementing the project in Georgia.

Sustainability

j) Project achievements should be sustained over the long term, but a following phase is needed to consolidate these achievements.

152. Project achievements are already well institutionalized within the institutions engaged in monitoring the environment in Georgia, particularly EIEC that is already the custodian of the web-based environmental information platform. The good participation of stakeholders throughout the implementation of the project led to a good ownership of results achieved by the project. The system and the related norms, standards and procedures are within the institutions engaged in environmental monitoring. Once promulgated, the pieces of legislation will be part of the national legislative framework. Finally, the national coordination mechanism under review should also become part of the strategic government instruments to ensure that the environment is properly monitored, and that accurate and timely environmental information be available to decision-makers.

153. Added to that is the fact that the project focused on supply AND demand for environmental information: on one hand the project improved the supply of environmental information and on the other it has increased the demand for environmental information, including the need to report progress made against the international obligations committed by the government of Georgia. In the next few years, reporting requirements under MEAs will only increase and add pressure on the need for environmental information; hence keeping pressure for these achievements to be sustained and scaled up.

154. Finally, the *Association Agenda* with the EU is also a key driver to sustain and scaled up these achievements. The current agenda directs the need for “*improving the environmental information sharing in*

line with the principles of the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS)” and the need for “public access to environmental information”. Overall, as stakeholders recognize the benefits of such system, pressure will remain on the need to continue to upload and/or make environmental information available as well as political pressure for allocating sufficient financial resources for the continued development of this system.

k) The project played a good catalytic role to modernize environmental monitoring in Georgia.

155. As per the GEF definition of the catalytic role, the project produced a *public good* with the development of a web-based environmental information platform and its related norms, standards and procedures to collect, upload, analyze and share environmental information. The building blocks developed with the support of the project have demonstrated the usefulness of such an approach. The project has also closely collaborated with the *Integrated Biodiversity Management in the South Caucasus* project, a regional project implemented by GIZ focusing on biodiversity indicators and forest monitoring. Together, more financial resources were available to conduct activities in an area that is still facing a lack of governmental resources. Georgia is now equipped with instruments to better monitor the environment and share this information. The project is ending but the national agenda to improve the monitoring of the environment and sharing this information will go on and move forward to the next phase, which should be the consolidation of these building blocks.

4.2. Recommendations

156. Based on the findings of this terminal evaluation, the following recommendations are suggested.

Recommendation 1: It is recommended to develop a roadmap for the way forward before the end of the project.

Issue to Address

157. The project will end soon. It will leave the foundations for a modern environmental monitoring and information management system including a web-based environmental information platform and its related norms, standards and procedures to collect, upload, analyze and share environmental information. However, despite a good infrastructure in place to better monitor and report on the environment and to give access to environmental information to decision-makers, more efforts and resources are needed to consolidate these achievements. In the meantime, it is, and it should stay a government priority to strengthen the monitoring of the environment and the sharing of this information, including as priority in the MTEF, a critical framework for the allocation of budgetary resources to any government supported activities.

158. In order to help with the exit of the project, it is recommended to formulate a roadmap as a guide for the way forward after the end of the project. This roadmap should particularly focus on the critical milestones to be met in the future and also the necessary steps for keeping the priority on the government agenda, including in the MTEF. This roadmap should also include a quick review of feedback received on the system including the need to revise/improve the analysis and online visualization of environmental data

Recommendation 2: It is recommended to document which environmental areas is now covered by the system and which areas are not.

Issue to Address

159. Key environmental areas are now covered by the system such as biodiversity, climate and some sub-areas of land degradation. Indicators are part of the draft legislation that is currently under review. However, not all environmental areas have been covered by the project; due mostly to its limited resources and time. It is recommended as part of the roadmap recommended above to insert a brief review to document which environmental areas can now be monitored and the information to be uploaded in the system; AND which areas are not included such as some sub-areas to measure/monitor soil quality and water quality.

Recommendation 3: It is recommended to develop a project concept focusing on land degradation and soil conservation, including a component on monitoring this area in relation to UNCCCD reporting obligations.

Issue to Address

160. Related to the project, land degradation is an area that is poorly monitored in Georgia including soil conservation and soil quality. Good progress was made under this project to strengthen land degradation monitoring, particularly the proposal to amend the Law on soil protection of 1994 to include a new set of indicators to monitor land degradation and the methodology to use them. There are needs to expand what was started under this project to strengthen land degradation monitoring in Georgia, including the consolidation of achievements of this project such as capacities of data producers/collectors, capacities to analyze and visualize environmental information, etc. Two main funding entities may be possible: GEF and Adaptation Fund.

GEF

161. GEF has now started its 7th funding cycle (GEF-7). One key concept within the land degradation area under GEF-7 is Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN). It was recognized by UNCCD (COP12) as a tool that can help interested parties to manage their land more sustainably and mobilize resources for doing so. LDN is defined as defined as “a state whereby the amount and quality of land resources necessary to support ecosystem function and services and enhance food security remain stable or increase within specified temporal and spatial scales and ecosystems”. Under GEF-7, the land degradation strategy has three main goals: 1) aligning GEF support to promote UNCCD’s Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) concept through an appropriate mix of investments; 2) seeking effective integration within the Impact Programs for generation of multiple benefits; and 3) harnessing private capital and expertise to finance investments in sustainable land management, in particular in co-operation with the LDN fund and other innovative financing mechanisms. To access funding from GEF within the LDN strategy, a checklist was formulated¹⁶.

162. A second feature under GEF-7 are the *Impact Programmes*. The concept is to help countries pursue holistic and integrated approaches for greater transformational change in key economic systems, and in line with their national development priorities. The impact programmes collectively address major drivers of environmental degradation and/or deliver multiple benefits across the many thematic dimensions the GEF is mandated to deliver. The main targets for these impact programmes are *Food Systems, Land Use, and Restoration Programs*. The focus is on reducing the threats from where and how food is produced. In order to do that, key land management obstacles have to be tackled in an holistic way and at ecologically relevant scales. Landscape-scale interventions based on comprehensive land use planning are necessary to foster a transformational change in food systems and land use that is more environmentally sustainable.

163. The GEF STAR allocation for Georgia under GEF-7 is about USD 5.5M of which USD 2M are already allocated to a Government of Georgia – FAO project. The remaining USD 3.5M includes USD 1.5M for biodiversity and USD 2M for Climate Change Adaptation; it could be used (or a portion of this amount) to fund such a project.

Adaptation Fund

164. The Adaptation Fund (AF) finances projects and programmes that help vulnerable communities in developing countries adapt to climate change. Initiatives are based on country needs, views and priorities; they include resilience activities. To access the AF resources a project has to be in compliance with eligibility criteria and use relevant templates¹⁷.

Recommendation 4: It is recommended that all funded activities to prepare multilateral convention reports use the web-based environmental information platform.

Issue to Address

165. Considering that Georgia is now equipped with instruments to better monitor the environment and share this information. It is recommended that all funded activities to prepare convention reports use the web-based environmental information platform. It includes the GEF funding for enabling activities and funding from other donors to prepare convention reports in the biodiversity and land degradation areas as well as the National Communications, the Biennial Update Reports (BURs), and the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) report to UNFCCC. The use of the system will reinforce/demonstrate the usefulness and consolidate/validate

16 <https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/LDN%20TPP%20checklist%20final%20draft%20040918.pdf>

17 <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/OPG-amended-in-October-2017-1.pdf>

the system.

4.3. Lessons Learnt

166. Several lessons learned are presented below. There are based on the review of project documents, interviews with key informants and analysis of the information collected for this evaluation:

- A good design leads to a good implementation, which in turn leads to good project results. There is more chance for a project well designed to be a success. Every steps of the way count in the success of a project and it is a lot easier to succeed when all these steps are relevant and implemented effectively and efficiently.
- A project that is a response to national needs and priorities is often highly relevant for beneficiaries and its chance of being implemented effectively are maximized.
- A good assessment of needs and priorities of targeted beneficiaries facilitates the implementation of interventions. It provides a response to national priorities and lead to realistic solutions well adapted to the local context. It ensures a greater “ownership” of these interventions by the beneficiaries and by extension a greater chance for the long-term sustainability of these achievements.
- Flexibility is a necessary management mechanism when implementing a project. It allows to better respond to beneficiaries' needs and priorities and align the implementation of activities in an efficient way. It provides the project with the capacity to adapt to changes, including disruptive events and yet keep its overall efficiency and effectiveness. It also allows the flexibility to share additional sources of funding if available and align procedures and agendas with other Partners.
- In order to ensure the mainstreaming of gender considerations in a project, it is important that gender-based expected results, indicators and targets be identified during the formulation of the project. Once it is part of the project strategy (log-frame) and of the monitoring framework, mainstreaming gender considerations becomes part of the implementation of the project as well as part of reporting project progress.
- This type of projects needs to use highly skilled expertise, particularly IT skills; it is critical that assessments, analyses, studies, recommendations and proposals be developed in close collaboration and participation of key stakeholders to “ground” project activities to local realities. It will ensure the delivery of outputs, which will be grounded in existing policy, legal and institutional frameworks and which should be sustained over the long term.
- The development of a system to respond partly to a national priority provides a "*Proof-of-Concept*" of the innovative interventions. It provides lots of lessons and best practices and should be ready to be scaled up and sustained over the long term.
- The application of the UNDP NIM modality is an effective management tool to develop national ownership of projects funded by international donors.
- This type of project should include the development of an exit strategy in their overall strategy (log-frame) to become a mandatory step before closing these projects.
- A project of this nature implemented successfully provides a lot of lessons and best practices that are important to document. Conducting a technical review of such project near its end would be an excellent way to document/detail the achievements of the project. It would provide a body of knowledge – approaches, methodologies, lessons learned and best practices - that should be made available and used worldwide.
- Reforming the environmental monitoring function in a country is complex and it is not a linear process. It is often mixed with political agendas and a certain resistance to change in existing institutions. A 3-year project timeframe is too short; it does not provide any time contingency for operational and political risks linked to elections, change of government, and change of Ministers but also time to consolidate project achievements before the end of the project.

Annex 1: Project Expected Results and Planned Activities

The table below was compiled from the list of expected results and planned activities as anticipated in the project document. It was used during the assignment by the Evaluation Team as a succinct summary of what is expected from this project. Progress made against these expected results and expected targets was assessed during this evaluation and reported in the TE report.

Long-term goal: To make the best practices and innovative approaches for meeting and sustaining the Rio Conventions are available and accessible for implementing through national development policies and programmes

Project Objective: To develop individual and organizational capacities in the MENRP and EIEC for improved monitoring of environmental impacts and trends for elaboration of collaborative environmental management.

Intended Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Budget per Outcome	Indicative Activities
Outcome 1 – Capacities for environmental monitoring are better enabled	Output 1.1: System of information exchange among relevant departments in key ministries (Environment and natural resources protection, economy and sustainable development, regional development and infrastructure, agriculture, etc) and the EIEC to support environmental monitoring in implementing Rio Conventions improved	GEF \$732,000 Co-financing \$1,091,938	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a comprehensive assessment within relevant Ministries and agencies on their needs for environmental data; • Carry out an assessment of the relevant national agencies, with special focus on the EIEC, on their roles on environmental information management and monitoring; • Reconcile and harmonize the various mandates and operational plans of the relevant national agencies to integrate Rio Convention obligations and determine roles and responsibilities pertaining to information sharing; • Forge strategic partnerships to enhance the flow of information between different agencies and the MENRP; • Develop a plan for addressing content gaps; • Organize national stakeholders' meetings to discuss and recommend best practices for sharing environmental data, information and knowledge; • Establish a system of information exchange among relevant departments in key ministries and the EIEC to support environmental monitoring in implementing Rio Conventions; and • Conduct a series of trainings for expert institutions identified as entry points for the system on data collection, databases operation, equipment handling, and data quality validation.
	Output 1.2: Clear legal framework established to facilitate monitoring in implementing Rio Conventions		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake an analysis of Georgia's environmental legislation and compliance, using the Rio Convention legal analytical framework; the three conventions and the cross-cutting area. • Undertake an analysis of the MENRP, EIEC and NEA's statute and the legislations pertaining to monitoring in implementing Rio Conventions; • Establish a clear legal framework to facilitate monitoring in implementing Rio Conventions; and • Organize and convene a series of stakeholders meetings for discussing/reviewing the proposed legal framework.

Intended Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Budget per Outcome	Indicative Activities
	<p>Output 1.3: Data collection, analysis and monitoring system developed at the EIEC with optimal linkages to local authorities</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake institutional mapping of existing stakeholders involved in the implementation of the Rio Conventions, and analyze their respective roles and responsibilities, including legal mandates as well as institutional overlaps and/or gaps. • Identify key databases that need to be linked to the environmental information management system; • Prepare detailed data collection, sharing and reporting mechanism scheme, in line with the Rio Convention Reporting, to be adopted by the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection for an improved Rio Conventions reporting system; • Develop mechanisms for managing information flows from identified sources (government, multilateral, NGOs, indigenous organizations, academic, corporate and other) accessing data online, through a communication and training strategy; • Develop quality control/validation procedures and identify responsible scientific and institutional correspondents; • Support EIEC's team in the development of the environmental information management system and submit for consideration by respective responsible state committee and Parliament; • Organize an official testing event followed by a demonstration session to stakeholders in order to build awareness; and • Create an outreach plan (communication plan) that includes selecting and accruing strategic partners, and defining the levels and types of contribution from each partner.
<p>Outcome 2 – Technical and management staff sufficiently trained in monitoring and data analysis, and linkage to decision-making process</p>	<p>Output 2.1: Convention monitoring and reporting capacities developed</p>	<p>GEF \$366,000</p> <p>Co-financing \$100,000</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake in-depth capacity needs assessment among officers in charge, respective committee members and convention focal points on the Rio Conventions reporting and monitoring in Georgia; • Develop a capacity development plan based on the assessment, and present to relevant authorities for validation through peer review of experts and stakeholders; • Design a targeted capacity development program and modules to build the capacity of relevant stakeholders, which will be carried out within the structure of the national, regional and local environmental data collection, processing and delivery in the context of the Rio Convention; • Provide the proposed capacity development plan and document the capacity development progress through the capacity scorecards and events' evaluation; and • Organize cross-cutting awareness raising meetings with stakeholders on the importance of integrating environmental management into planning and monitoring processes.

Intended Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Budget per Outcome	Indicative Activities
	Output 2.2: Inter-ministerial cooperation for collaborative decision-making among policy makers achieved		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a comprehensive assessment within concerned stakeholders and institutions on their roles pertaining to the implementation of the Rio Conventions; • Conduct an institutional analysis of challenges and barriers for inter-ministerial cooperation in relation to managing environmental data and monitoring of Rio Conventions implementation and reporting; • Propose and recommend appropriate inter-ministerial cooperation mechanisms, and define the structure, mandate, and governance structure of the proposed mechanisms to make informed decisions on the global environmental conventions; • Organize and convene stakeholder dialogues to present the proposed mechanisms and to exchange experiences on strengthening available practice for monitoring and reporting on the Rio Conventions; • Develop the selected inter-ministerial cooperation mechanisms in close cooperation with all stakeholders.
Project Management		GEF: \$102,000 + Co-financing: \$150,000	
	Total Budget	GEF: \$1,200,000 + Co-financing: \$1,341,938 = <u>Total: \$2,541,938</u>	

Source: Project Document

Annex 2: Terms of Reference

TERMINAL EVALUATION TERMS OF REFERENCE

Project name:	Harmonization of Information Management for Improved Knowledge and Monitoring of the Global Environment in Georgia (CCCD in Georgia)
Post title:	International Consultant for the Terminal Evaluation (TE) of medium-sized UNDP-GEF project
Type of contract:	Individual Contract (IC)
Assignment type:	International Consultant
Country / Duty Station:	Home Based Consultancy with one (1) mission of five (5) working days (totally 7 days that envisages 2 travel days) to Georgia
Expected places of travel (if applicable):	Tbilisi, Georgia
Languages required:	English
Starting date of assignment:	1 October 2018
Duration of Contract:	1 October – 21 December, 2018
Duration of Assignment:	20 working days (with Up to 7 travel days out of which 5 should be working days spent in Georgia)
Administrative arrangements:	UNDP Georgia will provide administrative and logistical support while traveling to Georgia (including transportation outside Tbilisi in field trips).
Evaluation method:	Desk review with validation interviews.

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with UNDP and GEF M&E policies and procedures, all full and medium-sized UNDP support GEF financed projects are required to undergo a terminal evaluation upon completion of implementation. These terms of reference (TOR) sets out the expectations for the Terminal Evaluation (TE) of the Harmonization of Information Management for Improved Knowledge and Monitoring of the Global Environment in Georgia (CCCD in Georgia) (PIMS #4883). This ToR also sets out the scope of work, deliverables, timeframe and payment terms for International Evaluator, Team Leader. The essentials of the project to be evaluated are as follows:

PROJECT SUMMARY TABLE

Project Title:		Harmonization of Information Management for Improved Knowledge and Monitoring of the Global En		
GEF Project ID:	5467		<i>at endorsement (Million US\$)</i>	<i>at completion (Million US\$)</i>
UNDP Project ID:	4883	GEF financing:	1.200	1.200
Country:	Georgia	IA/EA own (UNDP Trac):	0.08	0.150
		Cash	0.07	
		In kind		
Region:	Europe and Central Asia	Government (in kind):	1.191.938	1.191.938
Focal Area:	Multi-focal Areas	Other:	0	0
FA Objectives, (OP/SP):	CD2: To generate, access and use information and knowledge CD5: To enhance capacities to monitor and evaluate environmental impacts and trends	Total co-financing:	1.341938	1.341938
Executing Agency:	Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture of Georgia (MEPA)	Total Project Cost:	2.541.938	2.541.938
Other Partners involved:	N/A	ProDoc Signature (date project began):		22/07/2015
		(Operational) Closing Date:	Proposed: 21/07/2018	Actual: 31/05/2019 (no-cost - extension)

OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

The project was designed to promote Georgia's commitment to meet its obligations under the Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) by facilitating developing the capacities for an effective national environmental management framework.

The **goal** of the project is to make the best practices and innovative approaches available and accessible for implementation through national development policies and programmes for meeting and sustaining the Rio Conventions – UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, UN Convention to Combat Desertification and UN Convention on Biological Diversity. The project's **objective** is to develop individual and organizational capacities at the Environmental Information and Education Centre (EIEC) for improved monitoring of environmental impacts and trends for elaboration of collaborative environmental management.

The objective of the Project is to be achieved through the following two main outcomes:

Outcome 1: Capacities for environmental monitoring are better enabled.

Outcome 2: Technical and management staff sufficiently trained in monitoring and data analysis, and linkage to decision-making process

This project contributes to this objective and expected outcomes by strengthening a set of targeted individual and organizational capacities among stakeholder agencies and organizations. Specifically, the project supports:

On Systemic level

- Strengthening of the regulatory basis for improved functioning of monitoring institutions to avoid unnecessary duplication and ensure the exchange of data and information.
- Development of coordinated and compatible systems for data gathering, validation, analysis and dissemination.
- Development of mechanisms for data exchange.
- Strengthening of a culture of information sharing and communication.

On Institutional level

- Establishment of a system for the provision, analysis and visualization of information related to climate change, biodiversity protection and land degradation for monitoring of implementation of obligations under Rio Conventions.

On Individual level

- Ensuring of delivery of critical information to policy-makers.
- Increasing of awareness and understanding of decision makers, local authorities, representatives of academic and business sectors about the commitments made by the country as a signatory of the conventions, and the implications on national development policies and programs.
- Continuous awareness-raising of environmental and sustainable development issues among political representatives, decision makers and general public.
- Development of skills for monitoring, data processing and information management and data organization of relevant experts.

At the end of the project, an integrated and coordinated information management system is to be developed that helps to institutionalize commitments under the Rio Conventions and responds to national need for improved capacities of analyzing environmental trends.

The Terminal Evaluation will be conducted according to the guidance, rules and procedures established by UNDP and GEF as reflected in the UNDP Evaluation Guidance for GEF Financed Projects.

The objectives of the evaluation are to assess the achievement of project results, to assess the extent to which the project has successfully carried out adaptive management following the mid-term review, and to draw lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project, and aid in the overall enhancement of future UNDP programming.

Evaluation approach and method

An overall approach and method¹⁸ for conducting project terminal evaluations of UNDP supported GEF financed projects has developed over time. The evaluator is expected to frame the evaluation effort using the criteria of **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact**, as defined and explained in the UNDP Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed Projects¹⁹. A set of questions covering each of these criteria will be provided to the selected evaluator (see Annex C). The evaluator is expected to amend, complete and submit this matrix as part of an evaluation inception report, and shall include it as an annex to the final report.

The evaluation must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful. The evaluator is expected to follow a participatory and consultative approach ensuring close engagement with government counterparts, in particular the GEF operational focal point and Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, as well as UNDP Country Office, project team including project Chief Technical Advisor, UNDP GEF Regional Technical Adviser and other key stakeholders. The Evaluator is expected to conduct a field mission to Tbilisi. The list of organizations/individuals for interviews will be provided by UNDP Georgia during the inception phase though at a minimum it should include following: UNDP Georgia, UNDP Istanbul Regional Centre, Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Environmental Information and Education Centre, Agency of Protected Areas of Georgia, National Environmental Agency, National Forestry Agency, Tbilisi City Hall, Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia, Institute of Geography of Georgia, Ilia State University, Iv. Javakhsishvili Tbilisi State University, NGO "GEO", NGO "Green Alternative", NGO "REC Caucasus".

The evaluator will review all relevant sources of information, such as the project document, project reports – including Annual APR/PIR, project budget revisions, progress reports, GEF focal area tracking tools, project files, national strategies and legal documents and any other materials that the evaluator considers useful for this evidence-based assessment. A list of documents that the project team will provide to the evaluator for review is included in Annex B of this Terms of Reference.

EVALUATION CRITERIA & RATINGS

An assessment of project performance will be carried out, based against expectations set out in the Project Logical Framework/Results Framework (see Annex A), which provides performance and impact indicators for project implementation along with their corresponding means of verification. The evaluation will at a minimum cover the criteria of: **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact**. Ratings must be provided on the following performance criteria. The completed table must be included in the evaluation executive summary. The obligatory rating scales are included in Annex D.

Evaluation Ratings:			
1. Monitoring and Evaluation	<i>rating</i>	2. IA& EA Execution	<i>rating</i>
M&E design at entry		Quality of UNDP Implementation	
M&E Plan Implementation		Quality of Execution - Executing Agency	
Overall quality of M&E		Overall quality of Implementation / Execution	
3. Assessment of Outcomes	<i>rating</i>	4. Sustainability	<i>rating</i>
Relevance		Financial resources:	
Effectiveness		Socio-political:	
Efficiency		Institutional framework and governance:	
Overall Project Outcome Rating		Environmental:	
		Overall likelihood of sustainability:	

PROJECT FINANCE / COFINANCE

The Evaluation will assess the key financial aspects of the project, including the extent of co-financing planned and realized. Project cost and funding data will be required, including annual expenditures. Variances between planned and actual expenditures will need to be assessed and explained. Results from recent financial audits, as available, should be taken into consideration. The evaluator(s) will receive assistance from the Country Office (CO) and Project Team to obtain financial data in order to complete the co-financing table below, which will be included in the terminal evaluation report.

¹⁸ For additional information on methods, see the [Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results](#), Chapter 7, pg. 163

¹⁹ See the [link for the Guidance](#)

Co-financing (type/source)	UNDP own financing (mill. US\$)		Government (mill. US\$)		Partner Agency (mill. US\$)		Total (mill. US\$)	
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Actual	Actual
Grants								
Loans/Concessions								
• In-kind support								
• Other								
Totals								

MAINSTREAMING

UNDP supported GEF financed projects are key components in UNDP country programming, as well as regional and global programmes. The evaluation will assess the extent to which the project was successfully mainstreamed with other UNDP priorities, including poverty alleviation, improved governance, the prevention and recovery from natural disasters, and gender.

IMPACT

The evaluators will assess the extent to which the project is achieving impacts or progressing towards the achievement of impacts. Key findings that should be brought out in the evaluations include whether the project has demonstrated: a) verifiable improvements in ecological status, b) verifiable reductions in stress on ecological systems, and/or c) demonstrated progress towards these impact achievements.²⁰

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS & LESSONS

The evaluation report must include a chapter providing a set of **conclusions, recommendations** and **lessons learned**.

IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

The principal responsibility for managing this evaluation resides with the UNDP CO in Georgia. The UNDP CO will contract the evaluators and ensure the timely provision of per diems and travel arrangements within the country for the evaluation team. The Project Team will be responsible for liaising with the Evaluators team to set up stakeholder interviews, arrange field visits, coordinate with the Government etc.

EVALUATION TIMEFRAME

The total duration of the evaluation will be 20 working days including one (1) mission with up to 7 travel days envisaging 5 working days to Georgia (not including travel days or weekend days spent in Georgia) according to the following plan

Activity	Timing	Completion Date
Preparation	3 work days	15 October, 2018
Evaluation Mission	5 work days (with up to 7 days including travel days)	9 November, 2018
Draft Evaluation Report	7 work days	22 November, 2018
Final Report	5 work days	19 December, 2018
Total	20 work days	

EVALUATION DELIVERABLES

The evaluation team is expected to deliver the following :

Deliverable	Content	Timing	Responsibilities
Inception Report	Evaluator provides methodology, timing, and approach to final evaluation and initial observations based upon desk review of materials	No later than 15 October, 2018	Evaluator submits to UNDP CO
Presentation	Initial Findings	End of evaluation mission	To project management, UNDP CO and to national partners, as

²⁰ A useful tool for gauging progress to impact is the Review of Outcomes to Impacts (ROI) method developed by the GEF Evaluation Office: [ROTI Handbook 2009](#)

Deliverable	Content	Timing	Responsibilities
		9 November, 2018	appropriate
Draft Final Report	Full report, (per annexed template, Annex F) with annexes	Within 2 weeks of the evaluation mission 26 November, 2018	Sent to UNDP CO, reviewed by UNDP RTA, PCU, GEF OFPs
Final Report*	Revised report	Within 1 week of receiving UNDP comments on draft 19 December, 2018	Sent to UNDP for uploading to UNDP ERC.

*When submitting the final evaluation report, the evaluator is required also to provide an 'audit trail', detailing how all received comments have (and have not) been addressed in the final evaluation report.

TEAM COMPOSITION

The terminal evaluation will be undertaken and led by independent International Evaluator, Team Leader and will be assisted by the National Consultant, Team Member. The consultants shall have prior experience in evaluating similar projects (cross-cutting capacity development, environment data and information management, biodiversity, land degradation, climate change) either for UNDP or for other donors. Experience with GEF financed projects is an advantage. The evaluators selected should not have participated in the project preparation and/or implementation and should not have conflict of interest with project related activities.

The Team leader must present the following qualifications:

- A master's degree in environmental, biodiversity, development, social sciences and/or other related fields; (min requirement)
- Experience/proven record in project evaluation (at least 5 projects) with result-based management and/or adaptive management frameworks; (min requirement)
- Experience/proven record in undertaking evaluations in multi-focal area capacity development projects (at least 3 projects); (min requirement)
- Experience/proven record in undertaking evaluations with international organizations (at least 3 projects); (min requirement)
- Experience/proven record in undertaking evaluations for UNDP or for GEF will be an advantage;
- Fluency in written and spoken English (min requirement).

EVALUATOR ETHICS

Evaluation consultants will be held to the highest ethical standards and are required to sign a Code of Conduct (Annex E) upon acceptance of the assignment. UNDP evaluations are conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the [UNEP 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluations'](#)

PAYMENT MODALITIES AND SPECIFICATIONS

Payment terms are as follows:

%	Milestone
10% of consultancy fee	upon submission and approval of the final Inception Report
% of consultancy fee	upon submission and approval of the draft Terminal Evaluation report following the mission to Georgia
% of consultancy fee	upon finalization, submission and approval of the Terminal Evaluation report including consideration of all of the comments on the draft report
100% of travel costs	Upon arrival in Tbilisi, Georgia (including living allowance fee, ticket cost and any other travel related transfer costs)

APPLICATION PROCESS

Applicants are requested to apply online at <http://jobs.undp.org> by 12/09/2018. Individual consultants are invited to submit applications together with their CV for these positions. The application should contain a current and complete C.V. in English with indication of the e-mail and phone contact. Shortlisted candidates will be requested to submit a price offer indicating the total cost of the assignment (including daily fee, per diem and travel costs).

UNDP applies a fair and transparent selection process that will take into account the competencies/skills of the applicants as well as their financial proposals.

. *Qualified women and members of social minorities are encouraged to apply.*

TOR ANNEXES:

TOR-Annex A: Project Logical Framework

TOR-Annex B: List of Documents to be Reviewed by the Evaluators

TOR-Annex C: Evaluation Questions

TOR-Annex D: Rating Scales

TOR-Annex E: Evaluation Consultant Code of Conduct and Agreement Form

TOR-Annex F: Evaluation Report Outline

TOR-Annex G: Evaluation Report Clearance Form

Annex 3: Evaluation Matrix

The evaluation matrix below served as a general guide for the evaluation. It provided directions for the evaluation; particularly for the collection of relevant data. It was used as a basis for interviewing people and reviewing project documents. It also provided a basis for structuring the evaluation report as a whole.

Reviewed Component	Sub-Question	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
Review criteria: Relevance - How does the project relate to the main objectives of the GEF, UNDP and to environmental management and monitoring strategies of Georgia?				
<i>Is the Project relevant to GEF objectives?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does the Project support the related strategic priorities of the GEF? Were GEF criteria for project identification adequate in view of actual needs? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of coherence between project objectives and those of the GEF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents GEF policies and strategies GEF web site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documents analyses Interviews with government officials and other partners
<i>Is the Project relevant to UNDP objectives?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does the project support the objectives of UNDP in this sector? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existence of a clear relationship between project objectives and country programme objectives of UNDP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents UNDP strategies and programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documents analyses Interviews with government officials and other partners
<i>Is the Project relevant to Georgia's environmental management and monitoring strategies?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the project follow the government's stated priorities? How does the Project improve Georgia's environmental management and monitoring within the environmental management framework in Georgia? Does the project address the identified problem? How country-driven is the Project? Does the Project adequately take into account national realities, both in terms of institutional framework and programming, in its design and its implementation? To what extent were national partners involved in the design of the Project? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Degree to which the project improved Georgia's environmental management and monitoring Degree of coherence between the project and national priorities, policies and strategies; particularly related to environmental management and monitoring Appreciation from national stakeholders with respect to adequacy of project design and implementation to national realities and existing capacities? Level of involvement of Government officials and other partners into the project Coherence between needs expressed by national stakeholders and UNDP criteria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents National policies, strategies and programmes Key government officials and other partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documents analyses Interviews with government officials and other partners
<i>Does the Project address the needs of target beneficiaries?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does the project support the needs of target beneficiaries? Is the implementation of the project being inclusive of all relevant Stakeholders? Are local beneficiaries and stakeholders adequately involved in project formulation and implementation? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strength of the link between project expected results and the needs of target beneficiaries Degree of involvement and inclusiveness of beneficiaries and stakeholders in project design and implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beneficiaries and stakeholders Needs assessment studies Project documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analysis Interviews with beneficiaries and stakeholders
<i>Is the Project internally</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was the project sourced through a demand-driven approach? Is there a direct and strong link between project expected results (Result and Resources Framework) and the project design (in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of coherence between project expected results and internal project design logic Level of coherence between project design and project implementation approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program and project documents Key project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analysis Key Interviews

Reviewed Component	Sub-Question	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
<i>coherent in its design?</i>	<p>terms of project components, choice of partners, structure, delivery mechanism, scope, budget, use of resources etc.)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the length of the project conducive to achieve project outcomes? 			
<i>How is the Project relevant in light of other donors?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With regards to Georgia, does the project remain relevant in terms of areas of focus and targeting of key activities? How does GEF help to fill gaps (or give additional stimulus) that are crucial but are not covered by other donors? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Degree to which the project was coherent and complementary to other donors programming in Georgia List of programs and funds in which future developments, ideas and partnerships of the project are eligible? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other Donors' policies and programming documents Other Donor representatives Project documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documents analyses Interviews with other Donors
Future directions for similar Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What lessons have been learnt and what changes could have been made to the project in order to strengthen the alignment between the project and the Partners' priorities and areas of focus? How could the project better target and address priorities and development challenges of targeted beneficiaries? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data collected throughout evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data analysis
Review criteria: Effectiveness – To what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved?				
<i>How is the Project effective in achieving its expected outcomes?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How is the project being effective in achieving its expected outcomes? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacities for environmental monitoring are better enabled Technical and management staff sufficiently trained in monitoring and data analysis, and linkage to decision-making process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New methodologies, skills and knowledge Change in capacity for information management: knowledge acquisition and sharing; effective data gathering, methods and procedures for reporting. Change in capacity for awareness raising <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder involvement and government awareness Change in local stakeholder behavior Change in capacity in policy making and planning to improve the management and monitoring of the environment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy reform Legislation/regulation change Development of national and local strategies and plans Change in capacity in implementation and enforcement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and implementation of risk assessments Implementation of national and local strategies and action plans through adequate institutional frameworks and their maintenance Monitoring and evaluation Change in capacity in mobilizing resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leverage of resources Human resources Appropriate practices Mobilization of advisory services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Key stakeholders including UNDP, Project Team, Representatives of Gov. and other Partners Research findings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documents analysis Meetings with main Project Partners Interviews with project beneficiaries

Reviewed Component	Sub-Question	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
<i>How is risk and risk mitigation being managed?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How well are risks and assumptions being managed? ▪ What is the quality of risk mitigation strategies developed? Are they sufficient? ▪ Are there clear strategies for risk mitigation related with long-term sustainability of the project? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Completeness of risk identification and assumptions during project planning ▪ Quality of existing information systems in place to identify emerging risks and other issues? ▪ Quality of risk mitigations strategies developed and followed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Atlas risk log ▪ Project documents and evaluations ▪ UNDP, Project Staff and Project Partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Document analysis ▪ Interviews
Future directions for similar Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What lessons have been learnt for the project to achieve its outcomes? ▪ What changes could have been made (if any) to the formulation of the project in order to improve the achievement of project's expected results? ▪ How could the project be more effective in achieving its results? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Data collected throughout evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Data analysis
Review criteria: Efficiency – Has the project been implemented efficiently, cost-effectively and in-line with international and national norms and standards?				
<i>Is Project support channeled in an efficient way?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is adaptive management used or needed to ensure efficient resource use? ▪ Does the Project Results Framework and work plans and any changes made to them used as management tools during implementation? ▪ Are accounting and financial systems in place adequate for project management and producing accurate and timely financial information? ▪ How adequate is the M&E framework (indicators & targets)? ▪ Are progress reports produced accurately, timely and responded to reporting requirements including adaptive management changes? ▪ Is project implementation as cost effective as originally proposed (planned vs. actual) ▪ Is the leveraging of funds (co-financing) happened as planned? ▪ Are financial resources utilized efficiently? Could financial resources have been used more efficiently? ▪ How is RBM used during project implementation? ▪ Is the project decision-making effective? ▪ Does the government provide continuous strategic directions to the project's formulation and implementation? ▪ Have these directions provided by the government guided the activities and outcomes of the project? ▪ Are there an institutionalized or informal feedback or dissemination mechanisms to ensure that findings, lessons learned and recommendations pertaining to project formulation and implementation effectiveness were shared among project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Availability and quality of financial and progress reports ▪ Timeliness and adequacy of reporting provided ▪ Level of discrepancy between planned and utilized financial expenditures ▪ Planned vs. actual funds leveraged ▪ Cost in view of results achieved compared to costs of similar projects from other organizations ▪ Adequacy of project choices in view of existing context, infrastructure and cost ▪ Quality of RBM reporting (progress reporting, monitoring and evaluation) ▪ Occurrence of change in project formulation/ implementation approach (i.e. restructuring) when needed to improve project efficiency ▪ Existence, quality and use of M&E, feedback and dissemination mechanism to share findings, lessons learned and recommendation on effectiveness of project design. ▪ Cost associated with delivery mechanism and management structure compare to alternatives ▪ Gender disaggregated data in project documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project documents and evaluations ▪ UNDP, Representatives of Gov. and Project Staff ▪ Beneficiaries and Project partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Document analysis ▪ Key Interviews

Reviewed Component	Sub-Question	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
	<p>stakeholders, UNDP staff and other relevant organizations for ongoing project adjustment and improvement?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the project mainstream gender considerations into its implementation? 			
<i>How efficient are partnership arrangements for the Project?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the government engaged? How does the government demonstrate its ownership of the projects? Did the government provide a counterpart to the project? To what extent partnerships/linkages between institutions/organizations are encouraged and supported? Which partnerships/linkages are facilitated? Which one can be considered sustainable? What is the level of efficiency of cooperation and collaboration arrangements? (between local actors, UNDP and relevant government entities) Which methods were successful or not and why? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific activities conducted to support the development of cooperative arrangements between partners, Examples of supported partnerships Evidence that particular partnerships/linkages will be sustained Types/quality of partnership cooperation methods utilized 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents and evaluations Project Partners UNDP, Representatives of Gov. and Project Staff Beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analysis Interviews
<i>Does the Project efficiently utilize local capacity in implementation?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was an appropriate balance struck between utilization of international expertise and local capacity? Does the project support mutual benefits through sharing of knowledge and experiences, training, technology transfer among developing countries? Did the Project take into account local capacity in formulation and implementation of the project? Was there an effective collaboration with scientific institutions with competence in environmental management and monitoring? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of total expertise utilized taken from Georgia Number/quality of analyses done to assess local capacity potential and absorptive capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents and evaluations UNDP, Project Team and Project partners Beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analysis Interviews
Future directions for similar Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What lessons can be learnt from the project on efficiency? How could the project have more efficiently addressed its key priorities (in terms of management structures and procedures, partnerships arrangements etc...)? What changes could have been made (if any) to the project in order to improve its efficiency? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data collected throughout evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data analysis
Review criteria: Impacts - Are there indications that the project has contributed to making the best practices and innovative approaches for meeting and sustaining the Rio Conventions available and accessible and implemented through national development policies and programmes?				
<i>How is the Project effective in achieving its long-term objective?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will the project achieve its objective that is to develop individual and organizational capacities in the MENRP and EIEC for improved monitoring of environmental impacts and trends for elaboration of collaborative environmental management? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes in capacity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To pool/mobilize resources To provide an enabling environment, For implementation of related strategies and programmes through adequate institutional frameworks and their maintenance, Changes in use and implementation of sustainable alternatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Key Stakeholders Research findings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documents analysis Meetings with UNDP, Project Team and project Partners Interviews with project beneficiaries and other stakeholders

Reviewed Component	Sub-Question	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Changes to the quantity and strength of barriers such as change in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Institutional barriers: absent role of local authorities, overriding licencing and environmental approval, processing imperatives, etc. ○ Legal and regulatory barriers: overlaps, conflicts and gaps ○ Low level of Information and awareness related to environmental management and monitoring. ○ Deficits in technical capacity and supporting infrastructure ○ Lack of effective financial resources 		
<i>How is the Project impacting the local environment?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What are the impacts or likely impacts of the project on? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Local environment; ○ Poverty; and, ○ Other socio-economic issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide specific examples of impacts at those three levels, as relevant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project documents ▪ Key Stakeholders ▪ Research findings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Data analysis ▪ Interviews with key stakeholders
Future directions for the Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How could the project build on its successes and learn from its weaknesses in order to enhance the potential for impact of ongoing and future initiatives? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Data collected throughout evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Data analysis
Review criteria: Sustainability - To what extent are there financial, institutional, social-economic, and/or environmental risks to sustaining long-term project results?				
<i>Are sustainability issues adequately integrated in Project design?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Were sustainability issues integrated into the formulation and implementation of the project? ▪ Does the project employ government implementing and/or monitoring systems? ▪ Is the government involved in the sustainability strategy for project outcomes? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evidence/Quality of sustainability strategy ▪ Evidence/Quality of steps taken to address sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project documents and evaluations ▪ UNDP, project staff and project Partners ▪ Beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Document analysis ▪ Interviews
<i>Did the project adequately address financial and economic</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Did the project adequately address financial and economic sustainability issues? ▪ Are the recurrent costs after project completion sustainable? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Level and source of future financial support to be provided to relevant sectors and activities after project end? ▪ Evidence of commitments from international partners, governments or other stakeholders to financially support relevant sectors of activities after project end 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project documents and evaluations ▪ UNDP, project staff and project Partners ▪ Beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Document analysis ▪ Interviews

Reviewed Component	Sub-Question	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
<i>sustainability issues?</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of recurrent costs after completion of project and funding sources for those recurrent costs 		
<i>Are there organizational arrangements and continuation of activities issues?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are project results well assimilated by organizations and their internal systems and procedures? Is there evidence that project partners will continue their activities beyond project support? Has there been a buy-in process, or was there no need to sell the project and buy support? What degree is there of local ownership of initiatives and results? Were appropriate ‘champions’ being identified and/or supported? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Degree to which project activities and results have been taken over by local counterparts or institutions/organizations Level of financial support to be provided to relevant sectors and activities by in-country actors after project end Number/quality of champions identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents and evaluations UNDP, project staff and project Partners Beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analysis Interviews
<i>Is there an adequate enabling environment to sustain the project achievements?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are laws, policies and frameworks addressed through the project, in order to address sustainability of key initiatives and reforms? Are the necessary related capacities for lawmaking and enforcement built? What is the level of political commitment to build on the results of the project? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efforts to support the development of relevant laws and policies State of enforcement and law making capacity Evidence of commitment by the political class through speeches, enactment of laws and resource allocation to priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents and evaluations UNDP, project staff and project Partners Beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analysis Interviews
<i>Will institutional and individual capacities adequate at the end of the project</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the capacity in place at the national, and local level adequate to ensure sustainability of results achieved to date? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elements in place in those different management functions, at appropriate levels (national and local) in terms of adequate structures, strategies, systems, skills, incentives and interrelationships with other key actors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents and evaluations UNDP, Project staff and project Partners Beneficiaries Capacity assessments available, if any 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews Documentation review
<i>Are there any social and/or political sustainability issues?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did the project contribute to key building blocks for social and political sustainability? Did the project contribute to local Stakeholders’ acceptance of the new practices? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Example of contributions to sustainable political and social change with regard to the management and monitoring of the environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents and evaluations UNDP, project staff and project Partners Beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews Documentation review
<i>Will achievements be replicable?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Were project activities and results replicated elsewhere and/or scaled up? What was the project contribution to replication or scaling up of innovative practices or mechanisms to improve the management of chemicals? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number/quality of replicated initiatives Number/quality of replicated innovative initiatives Volume of additional investment leveraged 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other donor programming documents Beneficiaries UNDP, project staff and project Partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analysis Interviews

Reviewed Component	Sub-Question	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Does the project has a catalytic role? 			
<i>Are there any challenges to sustainability of the Project</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What are the main challenges that may hinder sustainability of efforts? ▪ Have any of these been addressed through project management? ▪ What could be the possible measures to further contribute to the sustainability of efforts achieved with the project? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Challenges in view of building blocks of sustainability as presented above ▪ Recent changes which may present new challenges to the project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project documents and evaluations ▪ Beneficiaries ▪ UNDP, project staff and project Partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Document analysis ▪ Interviews
Future directions for the Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Which areas/arrangements under the project show the strongest potential for lasting long-term results? ▪ What are the key challenges and obstacles to the sustainability of results of project initiatives that must be directly and quickly addressed? ▪ How can the experience and good project practices influence the strategies to transform the management and monitoring of the environment in Georgia? ▪ Are national decision-making institutions (Parliament, Government etc.) ready to improve their measures to transform the management and monitoring of the environment in Georgia? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Data collected throughout evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Data analysis

Annex 4: UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation Consultants

Evaluators / Consultants:

1. Must present information that is complete and fair in its assessment of strengths and weaknesses so that decisions or actions taken are well founded.
2. Must disclose the full set of evaluation findings along with information on their limitations and have this accessible to all affected by the evaluation with expressed legal rights to receive results.
3. Should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual informants. They should provide maximum notice, minimize demands on time, and respect people's right not to engage. Evaluators must respect people's right to provide information in confidence, and must ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source. Evaluators are not expected to evaluate individuals, and must balance an evaluation of management functions with this general principle.
4. Sometimes uncover evidence of wrongdoing while conducting evaluations. Such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body. Evaluators should consult with other relevant oversight entities when there is any doubt about if and how issues should be reported.
5. Should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty in their relations with all stakeholders. In line with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evaluators must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender equality. They should avoid offending the dignity and self-respect of those persons with whom they come in contact in the course of the evaluation. Knowing that evaluation might negatively affect the interests of some stakeholders, evaluators should conduct the evaluation and communicate its purpose and results in a way that clearly respects the stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.
6. Are responsible for their performance and their product(s). They are responsible for the clear, accurate and fair written and/or oral presentation of study imitations, findings and recommendations.
7. Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation.

Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form

Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System

We confirm that we have received and understood and will abide by the United Nations Code of Conduct for Evaluation.

Name of Consultant:
Jean-Joseph Bellamy

Signed in: Ottawa on October 25, 2018

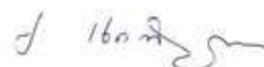
Signature: _____



Name of Consultant:
Kate Skhireli

Signed in: Tbilisi on October 25, 2018

Signature: _____



Annex 5: List of Documents Reviewed

ACT, October 2018, *Survey of Capacity Development Progress of the CCCD Project in Georgia*

Ana Rukhadze, April 2016, *Assessment of the Relevant National Agencies on their Roles on Environmental Information Management and Monitoring*

Ana Rukhadze, January 12, 2015, *Analysis of Data Required for Monitoring and Reporting on the Implementation of Biodiversity Convention at National Level*

APA, GEF, UNDP, 2018, *Monitoring Emerald Sites*

CCCD Project, *AWP 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018*

CCCD Project, *Legislation Review (in Georgian)*

EIEC, GEF, UNDP, *Environmental Information and Knowledge Management System*

EIEC, MENRP, GEF, UNDP, *Communication Strategy: Environmental Information and Knowledge Management System*

EIEC, MENRP, GEF, UNDP, *General Guidance on Data Verification and Data Validation for the Environmental Information/Knowledge Management System*

EIEC, MENRP, GEF, UNDP, *Potential Requests to the System from the Climate Change (UNFCCC) Module*

EIEC, MENRP, GEF, UNDP, *Potential Requests to the System from the Desertification Combat (UNCCD) Module*

EIEC, MENRP, GEF, UNDP, 2016, *Assessment of National Needs for Monitoring Climate Change Related Trends*

EIEC, MENRP, GEF, UNDP, 2016, *Assessment of National Needs for Monitoring Impacts Land and Land Degradation/Desertification Trends*

EIEC, MENRP, GEF, UNDP, 2016, *Harmonization of a Set of Indicators for Monitoring of UN Convention on Biological Diversity*

EIEC, MENRP, GEF, UNDP, 2016, *Harmonization of roles and responsibilities of relevant national agencies to integrate obligations of three Rio conventions for improved knowledge and monitoring of the global environment in Georgia*

EIEC, MENRP, GEF, UNDP, 2016, *Harmonization of the Roles and Responsibilities of National Institutions involved in the Implementation and Monitoring of the Convention on Biodiversity*

EIEC, MENRP, GEF, UNDP, 2016, *Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity in Georgia - Institutional mapping & Assessment of capacity needs for monitoring and reporting*

EIEC, MENRP, GEF, UNDP, 2016, *Implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification in Georgia - Institutional mapping & Assessment of capacity needs for monitoring and reporting*

EIEC, MENRP, GEF, UNDP, 2016, *Implementation of the Framework Convention on Climate Change in Georgia - Institutional mapping & Assessment of capacity needs for monitoring and reporting*

EIEC, MENRP, GEF, UNDP, 2016, *National Needs Assessment for Monitoring the Biodiversity Trends and Impacts*

EIEC, MENRP, GEF, UNDP, 2016, *Plan for Addressing Content Gaps According to National Needs and Global Commitments to Convention on Biodiversity*

EIEC, MENRP, GEF, UNDP, 2016, *Plan for Addressing Content Gaps According to National Needs and Global Commitments for Improved Knowledge and Monitoring of the Global Environment in Georgia*

EIEC, MENRP, GEF, UNDP, 2016, *Roles and Responsibilities of relevant national agencies for implementation of the commitments under the UNCCD to carry out monitoring*

EIEC, MENRP, GEF, UNDP, 2016, *Vision for Improved Knowledge and Monitoring of the Global Environment in Georgia*

EIEC, MENRP, GEF, UNDP, 2017, *Environmental Management and Decision-Making for Improved Monitoring of Implementation of the Rio Conventions*

EIEC, October 2016, *Terms of Reference: Environmental Information and Knowledge Management System Scalable Infrastructure (AEKI)*

EU, Government of Georgia, *Association Agenda Between the European Union and Georgia 2014-2016*

EU, Government of Georgia, *Association Agenda Between the European Union and Georgia 2017-2020*

European Environment Agency, *Towards a Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) in the European Neighborhood – The ENPI-SEIS Project*

GEF, *Project Identification Form (PIF): Harmonization of information management for improved knowledge and monitoring of the global environment in Georgia*

GEF, SGP, UNDP, 2016, *Country Programme Strategy for OP6 – Georgia – 2016-2018*

GEF, UNDP, November 2017, *Terminal Evaluation of GEF Project: Strengthening capacity for an environmental information management and monitoring system in Tajikistan*

GEF, World Bank, April 2, 2018, *GEF-7 Replenishment – Programming Directions*

Giorgi Mukhigulishvili, *Assessment of the Baseline Capacities to Create, Manage, and Analyze Data to Catalyze National Implementation of UNFCCC and Preparation of Capacity Development Plan*

GIZ, August 2018, *Integrated Biodiversity Management in the South Caucasus*

GIZ, *Integrated Biodiversity Management in the South Caucasus - Results Matrix*

Government of Georgia, *Resolution #742: Approval of the Second National Program of Action Against Desertification - Georgia*

Government of Georgia, *Social-Economic Development Strategy of Georgia - Georgia 2020*

Green Alternative, *The reforms related to environmental protection and climate change under EU – Georgia Association Agreement November 2016 – June 2017*

Gvantsa Davitashvili, 2018, *Inter-Agency Cooperation Mechanism for monitoring and reporting of environmental information management and implementation of Rio Conventions*

Ina Vachiberidze, December 1, 2015, *Analysis of Data Required for Monitoring and Reporting of the Implementation of UN Framework Convention on Climate Change*

Irakli Macharashvili, April 2016, *The Analyses of the Role of Appropriate Agencies in the Management and Monitoring of Environmental Information: The Tasks/Functions Optimization Models*

Irakli Shavgulidze, *Stakeholder Participation in the NBSAP Review Process: Georgia*

Kakha Artsivadze, *Assessment of the Baseline Capacities to Create, Manage, and Analyze Data to Catalyze National Implementation of UNCBD and Preparation of Capacity Development Plan*

Kakha Artsivadze, *Assessment of the relevant national agencies on their roles on environmental information management and monitoring*

Kety Tsereteli, 2016, *Assessment of the Baseline Capacities to Create, Manage, and Analyze Data to Catalyze National Implementation of UNFCCD and Preparation of Capacity Development Plan*

Maka Manjavidze, December 1, 2015, *Analysis of Data Required for Monitoring and Reporting of the Implementation of Convention to Combat Desertification at National Level*

MENRP, 2016, *First Biennial Update Report on Climate Change*

MENRP, CENN, *Austrian Development Cooperation, National Forest Concept for Georgia*

MENRP, *Donor Coordination Meeting Presentation*

MENRP, GEF, UNDP, January 2016, *Project Inception Report*

MENRP, GEF, UNDP, *Minutes of Project Executive Board Meetings (6 meetings)*

MENRP, GEO, GEF, UNDP, *Academic and Media Toolkits*

MENRP, October 12, 2015, *Third Environmental Performance Review of Georgia*

MEPA, 2018, *Third National Environmental Action Programme of Georgia – 2017-2021*

Nacres, GEF, World Bank, Government of Georgia, 2015, *National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan – Georgia*

Tamar Bakuradze, December 20, 2016, *Mechanisms for Data Flow from Non-State Actors*

UNCCD, The Global Mechanism, *Checklist for Land Degradation Neutrality Transformative Projects and Programmes (LDN TPP)*

UN, Government of Georgia, 2016, *United Nations Partnership for Sustainable Development (Framework Document) – Georgia – 2016-2020*

UN, June 27, 2015, *UNDP Country Programme Document for Georgia (2016-2020)*

UNCT, *UNDAF 2011-2015*

UNDP, *Combined Delivery Reports (CDRs) 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018*

UNDP, January 2016, *Individual Consultant Procurement Notice: Invitation to express an interest in position of Chief Technical Advisor*

UNDP, GEF, Government of Georgia, *Project Document: Harmonization of information management for improved knowledge and monitoring of the global environment in Georgia*

UNDP, GEF, Government of Georgia, September 2005, *Strategy and Action Plan for Capacity Building in the Areas of Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use, Climate Change and Combating Desertification*

UNDP, GEF, *Monitoring Habitats*

UNDP, GEF, *Project Implementation Reviews (PIRs) 2017, 2018*

UNECE, 2016, *Environmental Performance Reviews – Georgia Third Review Synopsis*

_____, 2012, *National Environmental Action Programme of Georgia 2012 –2016*

_____, 2014, *National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan of Georgia - 2014 – 2020*

_____, 2017, *Monitoring Phytopatogenes*

_____, *Annex I: Capacity Development Scorecard*

_____, *Appendix 1 Approval of Technical Rules of Soil Protection Level*

_____, *Atlas, Risks Log*

_____, *Biodiversity Module #1 – Species and Habitats*

_____, *Biodiversity Module #7 - Biosafety*

_____, *Data Templates: Biodiversity Indicators, Agriculture, Air, Energy, Hydromet, Municipalities, Waste, Health and Social sectors,*

_____, *(draft) Decree of the Government of Georgia On Approval of Regulation and Establishment of the Interagency Coordination Council for Environmental Information Management and Monitoring*

_____, *Draft Decree of the Government of Georgia: On Approval of the Rule on Accessibility of Environmental Information*

_____, *(draft) Law of Georgia on Changes to the Law on Soil Protection*

_____, *Forest Module*

_____, *Future Forecast for the Napchis sector and forest and land use sectors*

_____, *Introduction to ArcGIS*

_____, *Quarterly Progress Reports (from October-December 2015 to April-June 2018 (10))*

Website Consulted

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https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/georgia_en/35934/EU%20and%20Georgia%20adopt%20revised%20Association%20Agenda

<http://nsdi.gov.ge/en/e-services>

<https://www.opengovpartnership.org/countries/georgia>

<https://www.opengovpartnership.org/commitment/09-open-data-portal-datagovge>

<https://www.opengovpartnership.org/16-adoption-of-environmental-assessment-code>

<https://eims.eiec.gov.ge/en-us/app/>

http://www.ge.undp.org/content/georgia/en/home/library/environment_energy.html

http://www.ungeorgia.ge/eng/publications/joint_publications_reports_strategic_documents?info_id=440#.XBf3zS0ZPUI

Annex 6: Interview Protocol

Note: This is a guide for Interviewers (a simplified version of the evaluation matrix). Not all questions were asked to each interviewee; it was a reminder for the Interviewers about the type of information required to complete the evaluation and a guide to prepare the semi-structured interviews. Confidentiality was guaranteed to the Interviewees and the findings once “triangulated” were incorporated in the report.

I. RELEVANCE - *How does the project relate to the main objectives of the GEF, UNDP and to environmental management and monitoring strategies of Georgia?*

- I.1. Is the Project relevant to GEF objectives?
- I.2. Is the Project relevant to UNDP objectives?
- I.3. Is the Project relevant to Georgia’s environmental management and monitoring strategies?
- I.4. Does the Project address the needs of target beneficiaries?
- I.5. Is the Project internally coherent in its design?
- I.6. How is the Project relevant in light of other donors?

Future directions for similar projects

- I.7. What lessons have been learnt and what changes could have been made to the project in order to strengthen the alignment between the project and the Partners’ priorities and areas of focus?
- I.8. How could the project better target and address priorities and development challenges of targeted beneficiaries?

II. EFFECTIVENESS – *To what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved?*

- II.1. How is the Project effective in achieving its expected outcomes?
 - o Capacities for environmental monitoring are better enabled
 - o Technical and management staff sufficiently trained in monitoring and data analysis, and linkage to decision-making process
- II.2. How is risk and risk mitigation being managed?

Future directions for similar projects

- II.3. What lessons have been learnt for the project to achieve its outcomes?
- II.4. What changes could have been made (if any) to the formulation of the project in order to improve the achievement of project’s expected results?
- II.5. How could the project be more effective in achieving its results?

III. EFFICIENCY - *Has the project been implemented efficiently, cost-effectively and in-line with international and national norms and standards?*

- III.1. Is adaptive management used or needed to ensure efficient resource use?
- III.2. Do the *Project Results Framework* and work plans and any changes made to them used as management tools during implementation?
- III.3. Are accounting and financial systems in place adequate for project management and producing accurate and timely financial information?
- III.4. How adequate is the M&E framework (indicators & targets)?
- III.5. Are progress reports produced accurately, timely and respond to reporting requirements including adaptive management changes?
- III.6. Is project implementation as cost effective as originally proposed (planned vs. actual)
- III.7. Is the leveraging of funds (co-financing) happening as planned?
- III.8. Are financial resources utilized efficiently? Could financial resources have been used more efficiently?
- III.9. How is RBM used during project implementation?
- III.10. Are there an institutionalized or informal feedback or dissemination mechanism for lessons learned for ongoing project adjustment and improvement?

- III.11. Does the project mainstream gender considerations into its implementation?
- III.12. Is the government engaged?
- III.13. To what extent are partnerships/ linkages between institutions/ organizations encouraged and supported?
- III.14. Which partnerships/linkages are facilitated? Which one can be considered sustainable?
- III.15. What is the level of efficiency of cooperation and collaboration arrangements? (between local actors, UNDP, and relevant government entities)
- III.16. Is an appropriate balance struck between utilization of international expertise and local capacity?
- III.17. Did the project take into account local capacity in design and implementation of the project?

Future directions for the project

- III.18. What lessons can be learnt from the project on efficiency?
- III.19. How could the project have more efficiently addressed its key priorities (in terms of management structures and procedures, partnerships arrangements, etc., ...)?

IV. IMPACTS - *Are there indications that the project has contributed to making the best practices and innovative approaches for meeting and sustaining the Rio Conventions available and accessible and implemented through national development policies and programmes?*

- IV.1. Will the project achieve its objective that is to develop individual and organizational capacities in the MENRP and EIEC for improved monitoring of environmental impacts and trends for elaboration of collaborative environmental management?
- IV.2. How is the Project impacting local environment and socio-economic issues?

Future directions for the project

- IV.3. How could the project build on its successes and learn from its weaknesses in order to enhance the potential for impact of ongoing and future initiatives?

V. SUSTAINABILITY - *To what extent are there financial, institutional, social-economic, and/or environmental risks to sustaining long-term project results?*

- V.1. Were sustainability issues adequately integrated in project formulation?
- V.2. Does the project adequately address financial and economic sustainability issues?
- V.3. Is there evidence that project partners will continue their activities beyond project support?
- V.4. Are laws, policies and frameworks being addressed through the project, in order to address sustainability of key initiatives and reforms?
- V.5. Is the capacity in place at the national and local levels adequate to ensure sustainability of results achieved to date?
- V.6. Does the project contribute to key building blocks for social and political sustainability?
- V.7. Are project activities and results being replicated elsewhere and/or scaled up?
- V.8. What are the main challenges that may hinder sustainability of efforts?

Future directions for the project

- V.9. Which areas/arrangements under the project show the strongest potential for lasting long-term results?
- V.10. What are the key challenges and obstacles to the sustainability of results of project initiatives that must be directly and quickly addressed?

Annex 7: Evaluation Mission Agenda

Project Terminal Evaluation
(Team Leader: Jean-Joseph Bellamy - Team Member: Ketevan Skhireli)

Agenda for Nov 5-9, 2018

November 5					
<i>Time</i>	<i>Organization/Event</i>	<i>Person/Position</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Contact</i>	<i>Comment</i>
9:30-10:30	Briefing with UNDP Country Office Management	Ms. Nino Antadze – Energy and Environment Team Leader	9 Eristavi str, UN House	(995) 599 09 39 89 nino.antadze@undp.org	
11:00-12:30	Project team	Nino Gvazava – Project Manager	2 floor, 6 Marshal Gelovani str.		
12:30-13:30	Land Unit	Nino Chikovani- Head of the Land Unit Maka Manjavidze – Specialist in Land resources Protection	3 floor, 6 Marshal Gelovani str.	599 51 77 33 ninochikovani@gmail.com	
13:30-14:00	Break				
14:00-16:00	EIEC	Tamar Aladashvili – Head of the Centre Nikoloz Turashvili – Coordinator of the information systems Elene Didebulidze- Advisor to the EIEC Irakli Balanchivadze – Information System Specialist	3 floor, 6 Marshal Gelovani str.	593122428 aladashvilitamar@gmail.com	
16:00	Biodiversity and Forest Policy Department (MEPA)	Nona Khelasia – Head of Biodiversity Division	3 floor, 6 Marshal Gelovani str.	595 11 97 83 nonakhelia@yahoo.com	
17:00	Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture (MEPA)	Nino Tandilashvili – Deputy Minister Nino Tkhilava GEF Focal Point (MEPA)	6 Marshal Gelovani str.	lika.pkhoelishvili@gmail.com 595 50 30 08 (Lika-Assistant) 595 119 745 nino.tkhilava@mepa.gov.ge	

November 6					
Time	Organization/Event	Person/Position	Address	Contact	
10:00	Project Team	Nino Gvazava – Project Manager	2 floor, 6 Marshal Gelovani str.		
11:00	Unit of Soil management Department of Melioration and Land	Eka Sanadze – Head of Hydromelioration Unit	6 Marshal Gelovani str. Central Building, 405 room	599141410 ekasanadze@yahoo.com	
12:00-13:00	Climate Department MEPA	Grigol Lazrievi – Head of the Unit (last day in the office, resigned) Kakha Mdivani – Deputy Head	3 floor, 6 Marshal Gelovani str.	593244944 grigol.lazriev@mepa.gov.ge	
13:00-13:30	Break				
14:00-15:00	Soil Fertility Research Service Scientific-Research Centre of Agriculture	Giorgi Ghambashidze-Head of Lab	Mtskheta, Tsilkani 3319	577 75 94 52 g.ghambashidze@gmail.com	
16:00	National Environmental Agency (NEA)	Gizo Gogichaishvili – Soil erosion	150 Agmashenebeli	591 40 41 58 ggizo@hotmail.com	
17:00	NEA	Lia Megrelidze – Climate change	150 Agmashenebeli	591 40 41 39 l.megrelidze@hotmail.com	

November 7					
Time	Organization/Event	Person/Position	Address	Contact	
12:30-13:30	WEG	Giorgi Mukhigulishvili	Paliashvili 15, near the Mrgvali Bagi	598 23 21 20 g.mukhigulishvili@weg.ge	
16:40	National Forestry Agency (NFA)	Natia Iordanishvili – Deputy Head of the NFA	6 Gulua str.	595 300991 iordanishvili.n@gmail.com	
17:30	Agency of Protected Areas (APA)	Nato Sultanishvili – Head of the Planning Division	6 Gulua str.	natosultanishvili@gmail.com 595 99 99 08	

November 8					
Time	Organization/Event	Person/Position	Address	Contact	Comment
13:30-14:30	Ilia State University	Zura Javakhishvili		599 12 51 19 zura.javakhishvili.1@iliauni.edu.ge	
15:00-16:00	Remisia	Marina Shvangiradze – Head of Remisia	UNDP Office, 9 Eristavi str. 2 floor	599 19 12 75 mshvangiradze@hotmail.com	
17:00	Green Alternative	Irakli Macharashvili – conservation projects coordinator	Paliashvili and Arakishvili str corner, 4 th floor	550 519 298 imacharashvili@greens.org	
18:00	Georgian Environmental Outlook (GEO)	Inga Nikagosian –Eco-education and awareness raising	10 Odesa str. 2 floor		

November 9					
Time	Organization/Event	Person/Position	Address	Contact	Comment
9:30	Nacres SKYPE	Kakha Artsivadze	skype from project office, 2 floor, 6 Marshal Gelovani str.		
10:45-11:10	MEPA – Forest Policy and Biodiversity Department	Karlo Amirgulashvili –Head of the department		591819613 karlo.amirgulashvili@mepa.gov.ge	
14:30-15:30	Project Team	Nino Gvazava			
16:00	Debriefing UNDP	Nino Antadze Tamar Aladashvili Nino Gvazava			
18:00	Fina –Skype				

Ana Rukhadze	SKYPE	593 90 51 58 anarukhadze@yahoo.com	November 15, 2018
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Annex 8: List of People Interviewed

#	Name	Position	Organization
Ms.	Ana Rukhadze	Biodiversity expert	
Ms.	Ekaterine (Eka) Sanadze	Head of Hydromelioration Unit	Hydromelioration and Land Management Department, MEPA
Ms.	Elene Didebulidze	Advisor to the Head	Environmental Information and Education Centre
Mr.	Giorgi Ghambashidze	Head of Lab	Soil Fertility Research Service Scientific-Research Centre of Agriculture
Mr.	Giorgi Mukhigulishvili	Energy and climate change specialist	WEG (NGO)
Mr.	Gizo Gogichaishvili	Soil erosion specialist	National Environmental Agency (NEA)
Mr.	Grigol Lazrievi	Head of the Climate Change Division	Environment and Climate Department, MEPA
Ms.	Inga Nikagosian	Eco-education and awareness raising	Georgia's Environmental Outlook - GEO (NGO)
Mr.	Irakli Balanchivadze	Information System Specialist	Environmental Information and Education Centre
Mr.	Irakli Macharashvili	Conservation projects coordinator	Green Alternative (NGO)
Mr.	Kakha Artsivadze	Biodiversity Conservation expert	NACRES (NGO)
Mr.	Kakha Mdivani	Deputy Head of the Climate Change Division	Environment and Climate Department, MEPA
Mr.	Kakhaber Kheladze	Director	FINA
Dr.	Christian Goenner	Biodiversity Team Leader	GIZ
Mr.	Karlo Amirgulashvili	Head of the Department	Department of Biodiversity and Forest Policy (MEPA)
Mr.	Kevin Hill	Consultant	Consultant
Ms.	Lia Megrelidze	Climate change specialist	National Environmental Agency (NEA)
Ms.	Maka Manjavidze	Specialist in Land Resources Protection	Land Resources Protection Division at the MEPA
Ms.	Mariam Urdia	Advisor on Result-Based Monitoring & Biodiversity Monitoring	GIZ
Ms.	Marina Shvangiradze	Head of Remisia	REMISIA (NGO)
Ms.	Natia Lordanishvili	Deputy Head of the NFA	National Forestry Agency (NFA)
Ms.	Nato Sultanishvili	Head of the Planning Division	Agency of Protected Areas (APA)
Mr.	Nikoloz Turashvili	Coordinator of the information systems	Environmental Information and Education Centre
Ms.	Nino Antadze	Energy and Environment Team Leader	UNDP
Ms.	Nino Chikovani	Head of the Division	Land Resources Protection Division at the MEPA
Ms.	Nino Gvazava	Project manager	UNDP
Ms.	Nino Tandilashvili	Deputy Minister	Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture (MEPA)
Ms.	Nino Tkilava	Head of the Department/GEF Focal Point	Environment and Climate Change Department at MEPA
Ms.	Nona Khelaia	Head of the Division	Biodiversity Division under Department of Biodiversity and Forest Policy (MEPA)
Ms.	Tamar Aladashvili	Head of the Centre	Environmental Information and Education Centre
Mr.	Tom Twining-Ward	Senior Technical Advisor	UNDP
Mr.	Zura Javakhishvili		Ilia State University

Met 32 people (17 women and 15 men)

Annex 9: Rating Scales

As per UNDP-GEF guidance, the TE Evaluation Team used the following scales to rate the project:

- A 6-point scale to rate the project effectiveness, efficiency, overall project outcome Rating, M&E, IA & EA Execution
- A 4-point scale to rate the sustainability of project achievements
- A 2-point scale to rate the relevance of the project

Ratings for Project effectiveness, efficiency, overall project outcome Rating, M&E, IA & EA Execution		
6	Highly Satisfactory (HS)	Implementation of all seven components – management arrangements, work planning, finance and co-finance, project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, stakeholder engagement, reporting, and communications – is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management. The project can be presented as “good practice”.
5	Satisfactory (S)	Implementation of most of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management except for only few that are subject to remedial action.
4	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	Implementation of some of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management, with some components requiring remedial action.
3	Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	Implementation of some of the seven components is not leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive, with most components requiring remedial action.
2	Unsatisfactory (U)	Implementation of most of the seven components is not leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management.
1	Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	Implementation of none of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management.

Ratings for Sustainability		
4	Likely (L)	Negligible risks to sustainability, with key outcomes on track to be achieved by the project’s closure and expected to continue into the foreseeable future
3	Moderately Likely (ML)	Moderate risks, but expectations that at least some outcomes will be sustained due to the progress towards results on outcomes at the Midterm Review
2	Moderately Unlikely (MU)	Significant risk that key outcomes will not carry on after project closure, although some outputs and activities should carry on
1	Unlikely (U)	Severe risks that project outcomes as well as key outputs will not be sustained

Ratings for Progress Relevance		
2	Relevant (R)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve or exceed all its end-of-project targets, without major shortcomings. The progress towards the objective/outcome can be presented as “good practice”.
1	Not Relevant (NR)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets, with only minor shortcomings.

Ratings for Impact: Improvement, Environmental Stress Reduction, Progress Towards Stress/Status Change	
3	Significant
2	Minimal
1	Negligible
Overall Project results	(rate 6pt. scale as rating scale above)

Annex 10: Output Indicators and Targets

Outputs	Indicators	Targets
Output 1.1: System of information exchange among relevant departments in key ministries and the EIEC to support environmental monitoring in implementing Rio Conventions improved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mapping of relevant national stakeholders Draft design of the system of information exchange among different stakeholders. Stakeholder consultations and validation workshop Approval of the design of the system of information exchange System of information exchange 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mapping exercise drafted by month 6. Draft design of the system ready by month 12. Draft design is peer reviewed by at least 20 national experts by month 14. At least 40 representatives from key stakeholder are consulted on the draft design of the system, with validation workshop held by month 12. Final design is nationally approved and endorsed by month 16. Mapping exercise and System's design submitted for approval by responsible authorities by month 16. Proposed system is built and operational by month 24.
Output 1.2: Clear legal framework established to facilitate monitoring in implementing Rio Conventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis of environmental legislation and compliance from Rio Conventions perspective A clear legal framework of Rio Conventions monitoring and implementation Distribution of new legal framework pertaining to environmental data collection, analysis and sharing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-depth analyses of Rio Conventions and environmental governance (BD, CC, and CD) completed by month 12, endorsed by MENRP by month 14. Legal framework completed by month 10. Framework is approved by at least 5 independent peer reviewers A new legal framework is developed and nationally approved
Output 1.3: Data collection, analysis and monitoring system developed at the EIEC with optimal linkages to local authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft design of a system of data collection, analysis and monitoring at the EIEC and linked to local authorities Stakeholder consultations and validation workshop for the design and governance structure of the System Approved design of the new system of data collection and management Established system of information collection and monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft design of the system ready by month 12. Draft design is peer reviewed by at least 20 national experts by month 13. At least 40 female and male representatives from key stakeholder constituencies are consulted on the draft design of the system, with validation workshop held by month 13. Final design is nationally approved and endorsed month 15 System's design submitted for approval by responsible authorities by month 16. Proposed system is built and operational by month 24
Output 2.1: Convention monitoring and reporting capacities developed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity assessment conducted for concerned technical and management staff. Targeted training programme for data collection, processing and delivery from Rio Conventions lens Training and workshops for staff and key stakeholders on monitoring and measuring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training needs assessment is conducted by month 10 Capacity development plan is drafted and shared with all responsible decision makers by month 14 Capacity development programme is designed and approved by month 16. Capacity development programme implemented by month 26 and involved at least 20 agencies in each. Capacity development programmes rated as high quality by participants at the end of each training programme. At least 100 female and males participated in the capacity development programmes
Output 2.2: Inter-ministerial cooperation for collaborative decision-making among policy makers achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institutional analysis of challenges and best practices for inter-ministerial cooperation for collaborative decision-making among policy makers Analysis and recommendations for strengthening of inter-ministerial cooperation. Memoranda of Agreement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organization analysis completed by month 6. Proposed cooperation mechanisms are developed by month 8. Mechanisms are discussed, approved by stakeholders by month 10. Mechanisms are established and fully operational by month 14. Memoranda of Agreement signed by key stakeholder institutions by month 18

Outputs	Indicators	Targets
	<p>(MOA) to collaborate and share data and information among key stakeholder institutions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequency of Inter-ministerial committee and the 3 Rio Conventions Committees meetings. • Policy and technical recommendations submitted by the Inter-ministerial committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three (3) Rio Conventions technical committees (CBD, CCD, and FCC) are created by month 6 with a membership of expert stakeholder representation of at least 12 different stakeholders (government, NGOs, academia, private sector, and civil society). • Rio Conventions committees meet at least three (3) times per year. • Rio Conventions Committees submit policy and technical recommendations to relevant ministries and agencies twice (2) a year, the first by month 9. • Recommendations for institutional revisions by month 20.

Source: Project Document

Annex 11: Audit Trail

The audit trail is presented in a separate file.

Annex 12: Evaluation Report Clearance Form

EVALUATION REPORT CLEARANCE FORM

Evaluation Report Reviewed and Cleared by

UNDP Country Office

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

UNDP RTA

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____