

## UNDP-GEF MIDTERM REVIEW

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

**BACKGROUND**

**A. Project Title**

Biodiversity Conservation in the Multiple Use Forest Landscapes in Sabah, Malaysia

##### **B. Project Description**

This is the Terms of Reference for the UNDP-GEF Midterm Review (MTR) of the full-sized project titled *Biodiversity Conservation in the Multiple Use Forest Landscapes in Sabah, Malaysia* (PIMS#4186) (also knowns as Sabah MFL project) implemented by the Sabah Forestry Department in Malaysia, which is to be undertaken in September 2016 – March 2017. The project started on 22 June 2012 and is in its fifth year of implementation. The project is scheduled to end on 31 December 2018. In line with the UNDP-GEF Guidance on MTRs, this MTR process was initiated before the submission of the fourth Project Implementation Report (PIR). The MTR process must follow the guidance outlined in the document *Guidance for Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* (see <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/guidance/GEF/mid-term/Guidance_Midterm%20Review%20_EN_2014.pdf>).

The Sabah MFL project was designed to institutionalize a multiple-use forest landscape planning and management model which brings the management of critical protected areas and connecting landscapes located in the Yayasan Sabah Sustainable Forest Management License Agreement (SFMLA) area under a common and integrated management umbrella strategy in order to mainstream biodiversity, ecosystem functions and resilience, while enabling ongoing sustainable uses. The 261,264 ha project landscape located in the eastern part of Sabah is a contiguous block that forms an important connecting land mass between three sizeable and renowned protected areas in Sabah. These are: Maliau Basin Conservation Area (58,840 ha), located to the west of the project area; Danum Valley Conservation Areas (43,800 ha) to the east and Imbak Canyon Conservation Areas (16,750 ha) to the north.

The project aims to achieve this objective through delivery of three interconnected components:

1. An enabling environment for optimized, multiple use planning, financing, management and protected of forest landscapes;
2. Demonstration of multiple-use forest landscape planning and management system; and
3. Sustainable financing of protected areas and associated forest landscape areas demonstrated at the pilot site.

An inception workshop in July 2013 and a follow up strategic framework workshop in October 2013 revealed that there had been significant changes in the land use allocations within the project landscape. Stakeholders expressed concern that proposed changes within the project landscape would have major impacts on biodiversity and on the viability of key conservation areas and financing mechanisms that the project had been planning to support.

In response to these changes, a Technical Working Group consisting of government officials and civil society stakeholders was established and subsequently, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between UNDP and Sabah Forestry Department (SFD) on 12 November 2014 on the agreed actions and principles to be adhered with regards to the land use allocations in the project landscape.

Relevant project documentation can be referred below:

* Signed project document at <http://www.my.undp.org/content/malaysia/en/home/operations/projects/environment_and_energy/80468_forestlandscapes.html>
* Signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between United Nations Development Programme and Sabah Forestry Department dated 12 November 2014 at <http://www.forest.sabah.gov.my/undpgefproject/publication>
* Inception report dated 31 December 2014 at <http://www.forest.sabah.gov.my/undpgefproject/publication>

**DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

##### **C. Scope of Work and Key Tasks**

The MTR will assess progress towards the achievement of the project objectives and outcomes as specified in the Project Document, MOU between UNDP and SFD, Inception Report and programme outcomes as stipulated in the Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) 2016 – 2020 between UNDP and the Government of Malaysia, and assess early signs of project success or failure with the purpose of identifying the necessary changes to be made in order to set the project on-track to achieve its intended results. The MTR will also review the project’s strategy and its risks to sustainability. The MTR must provide evidence based information that is credible, reliable and useful.

1. **Project Strategy**

*Project Design:*

* Review the problem addressed by the project and the underlying assumptions. Review the effect of any incorrect assumptions or changes to the context to achieving the project results as outlined in the Project Document and Inception Report.
* Review the relevance of the project strategy and assess whether it provides the most effective route towards expected/intended results stipulated in the project document/inception report and the CPAP 2016 – 2020.
* Review how the project addresses country priorities. Review country ownership. Was the project concept in line with the national and sector development priorities and plans in Malaysia?
* Review decision-making processes: were perspectives of those who would be affected by project decisions, those who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the process, taken into account during project design processes?
* Review the extent to which relevant gender issues were raised in the project design. See Annex 9 of *Guidance for Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* for further guidelines.
* If there are major areas of concern, recommend areas for improvement.

*Results Framework/Logframe:*

* Undertake a critical analysis of the project’s logframe indicators and targets, assess how “SMART” the midterm and end-of-project targets are (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound), and suggest specific amendments/revisions to the targets and indicators as necessary.
* Examine if progress so far has led to, or could in the future catalyze beneficial development effects (i.e. income generation, gender equality and women’s empowerment, improved governance etc.) that should be included in the project results framework and monitored on an annual basis.

1. **Progress Towards Results**

* Review the logframe indicators against progress made towards the end-of-project targets; populate the Progress Towards Results Matrix, as described in the *Guidance for Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects*; colour code progress in a “traffic light system” based on the level of progress achieved; assign a rating on progress for the project objective and each outcome; make recommendations from the areas marked as “not on target to be achieved” (red).
* Compare and analyze the GEF Tracking Tool at the Baseline with the one completed right before the Midterm Review.
* Identify remaining barriers to achieving the project objective.
* Review the aspects of the project that have already been successful and identify ways in which the project can further expand these benefits.

Table. Progress Towards Results Matrix (Achievement of outcomes against End-of-project Targets)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Project Strategy** | **Indicator[[1]](#footnote-1)** | **Baseline Level[[2]](#footnote-2)** | **Level in 1st PIR (self- reported)** | **Midterm Target[[3]](#footnote-3)** | **End-of-project Target** | **Midterm Level & Assessment[[4]](#footnote-4)** | **Achievement Rating[[5]](#footnote-5)** | **Justification for Rating** |
| **Objective:** | Indicator (if applicable): |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Outcome 1:** | Indicator 1: |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Indicator 2: |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Outcome 2:** | Indicator 3: |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Indicator 4: |  |  |  |  |  |
| Etc. |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Etc.** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Indicator Assessment Key**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Green= Achieved | Yellow= On target to be achieved | Red= Not on target to be achieved |

1. **Project Implementation and Adaptive Management**

Using the *Guidance for Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects*; assess the following categories of project progress:

* Management Arrangements
* Work Planning
* Finance and co-finance
* Project-level monitoring and evaluation systems
* Stakeholder Engagement particularly local and indigenous communities
* Reporting
* Communications

1. **Sustainability**

Assess overall risks to sustainability factors of the project in terms of the following four categories:

* Financial risks to sustainability
* Socio-economic risks to sustainability
* Institutional framework and governance risks to sustainability
* Environmental risks to sustainability

The MTR team will include a section in the MTR report setting out the MTR’s evidence-based conclusions, in light of the findings.

Additionally, the MTR team is expected to makerecommendations to the Implementing Partners and Project Team. Recommendations should be succinct suggestions for critical intervention that are specific, measurable, achievable, and relevant. A recommendation table should be put in the report’s executive summary. The MTR team should make no more than 15 recommendations in total.

##### **D. Expected Outputs and Deliverables**

* MTR Inception Report: MTR team clarifies objectives and methods of the Midterm Review no later than 2 weeks before the MTR mission. To be sent to UNDP Malaysia Country Office and project management. Approximate due date: 15 May 2017
* MTR Field Mission: 12 – 23 June 2017
* Presentation: Initial Findings presented to project management and UNDP Malaysia at the end of the MTR mission. Approximate due date: 22 June 2017
* Draft Final Report: Full report with annexes within 4 weeks of the MTR mission. Approximate due date: 15 July 2017
* Final Report\*: Revised report with annexed audit trail detailing how all received comments have (and have not) been addressed in the final MTR report. To be sent to the UNDP Malaysia within 6 weeks of receiving UNDP and stakeholders’ comments on draft. Approximate due date: 30 November 2017

\*The final MTR report must be in English. If applicable, UNDP Malaysia may choose to arrange for a translation of the report into Malay language – the official language more widely shared by national stakeholders.

**E. Institutional Arrangement**

The Commissioning Unit for this project’s MTR is UNDP Malaysia Country Office. UNDP Malaysia will contract the MTR team and ensure the timely provision of per diems and travel arrangements within the country for the MTR team. The Project Team will be responsible for liaising with the MTR team to provide all relevant documents, set up stakeholder interviews, and arrange field visits.

**F. Duration of the Work**

The total duration of the MTR will be starting from 15 April to 30 November 2017.

1. Populate with data from the Logframe and scorecards [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Populate with data from the Project Document [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. If available [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Colour code this column only [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Use the 6 point Progress Towards Results Rating Scale: HS, S, MS, MU, U, HU [↑](#footnote-ref-5)