United Nations Development Programme
Global Environment Facility

South Africa

GEF full-sized project
"Securing multiple ecosystems benefit through SLM in the productive but degraded landscapes of South Africa"

MID-TERM REVIEW

Mid Term Review Consultant:
Mr. Giacomo Morelli

Date:
19/03/2020

Basic Project Information

Title of the UNDP supported GEF financed project

"Securing multiple ecosystems benefit through SLM in the productive but degraded landscapes of South Africa"

Project type

GEF full-sized project

Project ID#s

Atlas Award ID: 00088758

Project ID: 00095288

GEF ID: 5327

PIMS: 5054

Project period

March 2017 – April 2022

Total resources required

US$ 45,414,233.46

Total resources allocated

GEF	US$ 4,237,900.00
UNDP	US$ 1,000,000.00
Government	US$ 38,729,082.18
EWT	US$ 332,000.00
Rhodes University	US$ 1,115,251.28

GEF Operational Program/Strategic Program

Land degradation

Executing Partner/Implementing Partner:

Department of Environmental Affairs (DEFF)

Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DALRRD)

Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT)

Rhodes University (RU)

Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)

Agricultural Research Council (ARC)

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List of abbreviations

ARC	Agricultural Research Council
CSIR	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
DALRRD	Department of Land Reform and Rural Development
DEDEAT	Department of Economic Development, Environmental Affairs and Tourism
DEFF	Department of Environment, Forestry and Fishery
DRDAR	Department of Rural Development and Agrarian Reform
DWS	Department of Water and Sanitation
EWT	Endangered Wildlife Trust
GEF	Global Environment Facility
LDN	Land Degradation Neutrality
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MMF	Masibambisane Multistakeholder Forum
MRV	Measuring, Reporting and Verification
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NIM	National Implementation Modality
NSBA	National Spatial Biodiversity Assessment
PDD	Project Design Document
PMERL	Participatory Monitoring, Evaluation, Reflection & Learning
PMU	Project Management Unit
RU	Rhodes University
RP	Responsible Parties
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
UFSED	Ubuntu Forum for Social Economic Development
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WOCAT	World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

1. Executive Summary

Project Information Table

Project Title	Securing multiple ecosystems benefit through SLM in the productive but degraded landscapes of South Africa"		
UNDP Project ID (PIMS #):	5054	PIF Approval Date:	April 23 2013
GEF Project ID (PMIS #):	5327	CEO Endorsement Date:	July 1 2015
ATLAS Business Unit, Award # Proj. ID:	BU: ZAF10 Award: 00088758 Project: 00095288	Project Document (ProDoc) Signature Date (date project began):	April 22 2017
Country(ies):	South Africa	Date project manager hired:	July 6 2016
Region:	Africa	Inception Workshop date:	July 22 2017
Focal Area:	Land degradation	Midterm Review completion date:	March 29 2020
GEF Focal Area Strategic Objective:	LD3 - Reduce pressures on natural resources by managing competing land uses in broader landscapes	Planned planed closing date:	April 22 2022
Trust Fund [indicate GEF TF, LDCF, SCCF, NPIF]:	GEF Trust Fund	If revised, proposed op. closing date:	
Executing Agency/ Implementing Partner:	Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF)		
Other execution partners:	Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD); Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT); Rhodes University (RU); Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR); Agricultural Research Council (ARC)		

Project Financing	*at CEO endorsement (US$)*	*at Midterm Review (US$)*
[1] GEF financing:	4,237,900.00	2,098,247.23
[2] UNDP contribution:	1,000,000.00	Not available at stage of MTR
[3] Government:	38,729,082.18	Not available at stage of MTR
[4] Rhodes University	1,115,251.28	Not available at stage of MTR
[5] Endangered Wildlife Trust	332,000.00	256,488.00
[6] Total co-financing [2+3+4+5]:	41,176,333,46	---
PROJECT TOTAL COSTS [1+6]	45,414,233.46	---

Project Description (brief)

South Africa's long-term vision is to establish a "green economy" underpinned by healthy and functioning ecosystems. The key rationale of the project is to support the national efforts in addressing land degradation, effects of drought and desertification processes, and achieving sustainable land management (SLM), which are essential for achieving this vision.

The objective of the project is "to strengthen the enabling environment for the adoption of knowledge-based SLM models for land management and land/ecosystem rehabilitation in support of the green economy and resilient livelihoods through capacity building, improved governance and financial incentives demonstrated in the Karoo, Eastern Cape and Olifants landscapes."

The design of the project includes four outcomes:

1. "Economically viable, climate-smart land/ecosystem rehabilitation and management practices operationalised across 67,300 hectares of the Karoo, Eastern Cape and Olifants landscapes (with potential for upscaling to cover 150,000 hectares)";
2. "Increased knowledge and institutional capacity of DEFF DAFF, DWA, relevant departments and local communities to reduce degradation from livestock and crop production and to restore currently degraded lands through the application of knowledge-based land management practices.";

3. “Enabling environment for promoting rehabilitation of degraded land through carbon sequestration (including accessing and capitalising on carbon markets and the preparation of MRV documentation) in the Eastern Cape strengthened”; and
4. “Financing and governance frameworks strengthened to support the adoption of SLM approaches.”

Project Progress Summary

OUTCOME 1

The preliminary work aiming at laying the groundwork for the actual implementation of SLM practises can be considered substantially done in all three project landscapes.

In Machubeni landscape, implementation has been initiated in the form of homegardens and soil erosion control activities. The realization of the rotational grazing system, which is the one relatively more significant, has not yet been initiated. In Olifants, activities related to homegarden agroforestry and homestead rainwater harvesting have been initiated. Instead, the actual implementation of SLM practises in the field has not yet started in the Karoo.

OUTCOME 2

In the landscape of Karoo, a capacity development strategy is in place. EWT has already started implementing its strategy. In the Karoo 12 training sessions on different topics have been conducted. Furthermore, EWT is developing a website, whose principal aim is to provide a repository of all relevant material, in different media formats, for project beneficiaries and other stakeholders. Finally, EWT aims at mainstreaming the training material produced, including a one-week course, in the existing training curriculum available at the provincial department of agriculture.

In Machubeni landscape, 22 training sessions on different topics have been conducted. Furthermore, RU has promoted the creation of MMF, which intends to be the institutional platform that will guide the capacity development component for public officials and traditional leaders in the landscape and support the monitoring of activities. RU is in the process of producing several handbooks (g., community gardens and restoration) for local farmers. Guidelines on rangeland management have already been produced in isiXhosa.

In Olifants, trainings did not take place yet. However, as part of the implementation of each SLM practice identified, there is a capacity development component.

It is acknowledged that RU is manages most of the budget available for the capacity development component of the whole project.

OUTCOME 3

The rehabilitation of 800 ha of degraded thicket through simple erosion control is being implemented. Instead, the revegetative agriculture component has not started yet.

The part of the simplified methodology for calculation of certified emissions reductions/carbon credit related to remote sensing has been already completed. A simplified monitoring methodology, which is acceptable under the Voluntary Carbon Standards without requiring review, and therefore eligible under the South African National Carbon Tax Act, has been completed.

OUTCOME 4

The mainstreaming exercise related to outcome 4 has not been substantially initiated yet, although some networking activities to engage with stakeholders have been carried out.

MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table (refer to annex 3 for rating scales)

Measure	MTR Rating	Justification for rating
Project Strategy	Not be to rated	The project design is aligned with the South Africa National Development Plan 2030 and contributes directly to the implementation of the National Action Plan (NAP) of the United Nations Conventions to Combat Desertification. The formulation of the objective constitutes a sort of concise summary of the four outcomes, while its indicator is a duplication of the indicator of Outcome 2. The lack of intermediate target levels for all indicators does not permit an on-going monitoring of project achievement. The definition of clear milestones is left in its completeness to the hands of those who implement the project. Searching solutions to land degradation problems in a consultative and participatory manner is a common feature of the implementation of all project components. The project engages with communities and interested authorities at field level, taking into consideration the perception of challenges from the perspectives of the different types of stakeholders involved. Consensus is at the base of the implementation decision-making process in each project landscape.
Progress Towards Results	**Objective:** Moderately Unsatisfactory	The formulation of the objective constitutes a sort of concise summary of the formulation of the four outcomes, while the formulation of indicator at objective level is a duplication of the indicator of Outcome 2. As such, the indicator does not cover any relevant information to measure the achievement of the objective. The achievement of project objective substantially coincides with the achievement of each project outcome. Hence, the rating is a sort of average of the rating of the four outcomes.
	Outcome 1: Moderately Unsatisfactory	In Machubeni landscape implementation has been initiated in a form of homegardens and soil erosion control activities. The realization of the rotational grazing system, which is the one relatively more significant, has not yet initiated. In Olifants, activities related to homegarden agroforestry and homestead rainwater harvesting have been initiated. Instead, the actual implementation of SLM practises in the field has not yet started in the Karoo. The MTR mission has recorded concerns about having SLM practices implemented by the end of the project. Concerns are mainly related to the lack of landscape implementation plans and M&E systems (Machubeni and Olifants), a smooth release of the small grants (all landscapes) and to the capacity of herders to cooperate effectively to implement the rotational grazing system, which is necessarily a collective effort (Machubeni) be supported in doing this by traditional leaders and local institutions.
	Outcome 2: Moderately Unsatisfactory	The foreseen Capacity Development Assessment has been conducted so far only in the Eastern Cape landscape. Concerns are mainly related to the discontinuous participation of local institutions in project activities (Machubeni), to the fact that training activities have not yet started (Olifants), and to the degree of understanding of the project by traditional leaders and officers of local institutions (Olifants and Machubeni).
	Outcome 3: Satisfactory	Any concern has been recorded around activities in Baviaanskloof. The project has already achieved the goal of developing a simplified methodology for carbon monitoring to reduce costs for landowners who want to access carbon offsets projects related to subtropical thicket restoration.
	Outcome 4: Not applicable	The implementation of this component has not yet substantially started. The rationale for the rating NA is represented by the fact that the MTR consultant is not in a position to assess a process that is not yet in place. The MTR consultant could not meet any stakeholder because they will be involved in a later stage of project implementation.
Project Implementation & Adaptive Management	Moderately Satisfactory	The project is implemented in a consultative and participatory way. The flow of funds has allowed so far a smooth implementation of activities. There four main elements of concern: a) there is no implementation plan and M&E system in place in Machubeni and Olifants landscapes; b) management arrangements in Machubeni landscape seem not to be fully conducive to project achievements; c) the PSC did not reach the quorum to make decisions in the two meetings held in 2019; and d) PMU and DEFF do not always promote a common understanding about what is considered strategic and what is considered day-to-day project management.
Sustainability	Moderately Likely	Concerns are mainly related to the sustainability of outcome 1 and 2 in the landscapes of Machubeni and Olifants, which is deemed very low. The quality of achievement of outcome 1 and 2 can also have a negative effect on outcome 4 as the activities to achieve it should be informed by emerging issues and lessons learned derived from the activities implemented at field level.

		Outcome 1 and 2 in Karoo landscape and outcome 3, instead, present a higher level of sustainability. The quality of achievement is deemed satisfactory.

Concise summary of conclusions

The MTR exercise has drawn 28 conclusions. The most important are the following:

⇒ In order to be successful, the project must be implemented in a consultative and participatory way. Effective consultation and active participation of all stakeholders is of paramount importance for the successful implementation of activities, for achieving project outcomes and for ensuring a high degree of sustainability.

⇒ The grants scheme is expected to play an important role for the roll out of the implementation of SLM practices in the three landscapes. It is important to ensure a smooth mechanism of approval and release of the grants with well-defined timelines so that RPs can plan the work accordingly.

⇒ The performance of the PSC has been hampered in two occasions and the process to agree on the details of the functioning of the grants scheme could not have been approved. The number of participants did not reach the requested quorum. Moreover, the format of the report utilized to inform the PSC member prior to their meetings is not easily readable.

⇒ There is the necessity to promote a better common understanding between the PMU and its counterpart at DEFF.

⇒ The communication between PMU and RPs cannot count on a consolidated implementation plans and M&E systems at landscape level. Hence, the discussions and reflections between PMU and RPs on project implementation result not always effective in terms of project progress.

⇒ CSIR and RU have not yet formulated a project landscape implementation plan and related M&E system.

⇒ A delayed implementation of the SLM practices will reduce the time available to identify emerging problems and to promote the learning-by-doing component necessary for a good understanding of the SLM practices.

⇒ The management arrangements at RU seem not to be fully conducive to project achievements. The main impediment is represented by the double role of the RU Hub Leaders/PhD or MSc students, who ideally should report project-related issues to the RU Project Coordinator and study-related issues to the RU Project Leader, who is the Professor responsible for their course of study. This two-line reporting mechanism does not seem to be effective, and, therefore, the capacities of the RU Project Coordinator and the whole RU Team to coordinate an effective implementation results affected.

Recommendation Summary Table

N°	Recommendation	Suggested Timeline	Responsible entity/ies
1	Delegate to a small working team, composed of five individuals, the approval process of the small grants. The suggested composition of such a team is the following: 1) a member from DEFF; 2) a member from DALRRD; and 3) a member from SANBI or DWA. Participation of high-level officials from those organizations is deemed not necessary by the MTR exercise. A small grant mechanism to support the implementation of activities is foreseen in the project document and the decision to adopt it has already been taken. It is also suggested to appoint deputy members from the same departments so to bestow to the working team more operational flexibility. It is furthermore suggested to appoint the PMU as coordinator of the working group. The presence of RPs - in person or by teleconference - is proposed in order to have the possibility to agree on minor modifications in real time and fast track the implementation of the small grants.	During an extraordinary PSC meeting to take place just after the present MTR exercise.	PSC

2	Develop an additional format for reporting to PSC members in collaboration with RPs. The new format should include straight-to-the-point information organized in a two-pager for each landscape. Ideally, it should contain key information such as short description of project status, challenges, ways forward and required support from the PSC, if needed. It should constitute a working annex to the annual work plans.	In sight of the next ordinary PSC meeting.	PMU
3	Plan at least one meeting per month to facilitate a fruitful discussion in which ideas and project needs are shared and discussed, a common understanding of project actions developed, and agreements about what is strategic and what is ordinary project management are reached. DEFF as Implementing Partner should restrict their inputs to issues of strategic nature.	March 2020	PMU, DEFF
4	Ensure that there is a periodical flow of information between RPs and PMU, aiming at keeping the PMU updated on project status. The updates should ideally be reported against the landscape M&E system. In addition to the already existing quarterly reports, it is suggested to add a formal communication, done via email, in the middle of every quarter, presenting concise updates against the key indicators and risks identified in each landscape M&E system.	Just after the development of the project landscape implementation plans and M&E systems.	RPs, PMU
5	Include in the quarterly report format the relevant indicators as per each landscape M&E system.	May 2020	PMU
6	Describe/summarize the issues encountered in having the municipalities involved in project activities and in a two-page document. Submit the document to the PSC members for acknowledgement and officially stop to engage with the municipalities. In other words, formalize the fact that municipalities will no longer be a target group of the project in the Karoo landscape.	In sight of the next ordinary PSC meeting.	EWT (Karoo landscape)
7	Draft and submit to the PSC for acknowledgement a short document in which the new outcome, which replaces the original included in the project document, is clearly formulated and broken down into three components (home-gardening, water harvesting techniques and contours) and accompanied by pertinent indicators and realistic target levels, time and budget wise. The document will then present the new component of CSIR in the frame of outcome 1. Its formulation and insertion in a revised Results Framework is important to ensure transparency and accountability.	In sight of the next ordinary PSC meeting.	CSIR (Olifants landscape)
8	Develop a landscape project implementation plan, including an M&E system. In doing this, the CSIR may ask the collaboration of RU who has drafted the PMERL document to support PMU and RPs to develop their M&E system in their landscape of competence.	April 2020	CSIR (Olifants landscape)
9	Develop a partnership with an organization, ideally an NGO, with intensive project management experience to support the implementation of activities at field level. The partnership should ideally take advantage of the relevant technical knowledge available at the university and generated throughout the groundwork conducted so far, and of the capacity of NGOs to mobilize communities and implement activities in the field. In this way, RU can focus on the technical issues and produce relevant scientifically sound knowledge for upscaling activities, whereas the partner NGO is in charge of the project implementation and M&E aspects.		RU (Machubeni landscape)
10	Develop a landscape project implementation plan, including an M&E system. Prioritize the implementation of the activities related to the grazing land restoration and to the MMF component.	April 2020	RU (Machubeni landscape)
11	Negotiate with relevant local authorities a quarterly calendar of meetings of the MMF and field visits. Identify relevant focal points within each institution available to engage with the project. Ideally, the participation in MMF meetings should become an institutional task of the officials involved, ensuring the alignment of the project to the way of doing business of each institution.	Following the execution of previous recommendation.	RU/DEFF/ DALRRD/PMU (Machubeni landscape)
12	Draft and submit to the PSC for acknowledgement a short document in which the new outcome, which replaces the original included in the project document, is clearly formulated and broken down into two components (rehabilitation of degraded thicket through simple erosion control and regenerative agriculture) and accompanied by pertinent indicators and realistic target levels, time and budget wise. The document will then present the new component of RU/Living Lands in the frame of outcome 3. Its formulation and insertion in a revised Results Framework is important to ensure transparency and accountability.	In sight of the next ordinary PSC meeting.	RU and Living Lands (Baviaanskloof landscape)

2. Introduction

2.1. Purpose of the MTR and objectives

The MTR assesses the progress towards the achievement of the project objectives and outcomes as specified in the Project Document and assesses early signs of project success or failure with the ultimate goal of identifying the necessary changes in order to set the project on track to achieve its intended results. The MTR also considers the project's strategy and its risks to sustainability.

The MTR Consultant assessed the following four categories of project progress:

1. Project Strategy
   - Project design
   - Results Framework/Logframe

2. Progress towards results
   - Progress Towards Outcomes Analysis
   - Comparison and analyse the GEF Tracking Tool at the Baseline with the one completed right before the Midterm Review
   - Remaining barriers to achieving the project objective in the remainder of the project

3. Project Implementation and Adaptive Management
   - Management Arrangements
   - Work Planning
   - Finance and co-finance
   - Project-level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems
   - Stakeholder Engagement
   - Reporting
   - Communications

4. Sustainability
   - Financial risks to sustainability
   - Socio-economic risks to sustainability
   - Institutional Framework and Governance risks to sustainability:
   - Environmental risks to sustainability

The MTR Consultant applied a collaborative and participatory approach, ensuring close engagement with the Implementing Partner, UNDP Country Office, the Project Management Unit (PMU) and the Responsible Parties (RPs).

The MTR Terms of Reference are available in Annex 1.

2.2. Scope and Methodology

Approach

A theory-based and utilization-focused approach was used for the MTR.

A theory-based review focuses on analysing a project's underlying logic and causal linkages. Indeed, projects are built on assumptions on how and why they are supposed to achieve the agreed results through the selected strategy; this set of assumptions constitutes the 'program theory' or 'theory of change'. The MTR was based on the theory of change analysing the strategy underpinning the project, including objectives and assumptions, and assessing its robustness and realism.

A utilization-focused approach is based on the principle that formative evaluations and reviews should be judged on their usefulness to their intended users; therefore, they should be planned and conducted in ways that enhance the likely utilization of both the findings and of the process itself to inform decisions. In fact, the MTR provides a set of actionable recommendations.

Principles of design and execution of the MTR

Purposeful sampling was utilised to identify stakeholders for interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs). The MTR design was formulated in consultation with the Project Management Unit (PMU).

The sampling and the consequent mission itinerary necessarily took into account the availability of stakeholders to participate in the MTR process.

Data collection methods

The MTR exercise has utilized the following primary and secondary data collection methods:

- Desk-based review of project documents and reports;
- Interviews;
- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs); and
- Field visits.

Different methodological approaches to data analysis were applied to identify key findings from the collected data as well as to draw conclusions and make recommendations. These approaches included:

- Contribution analysis: to assess causal questions and infer causality in project evaluations;
- Trend analysis: to understand - both within the project's lifespan and possibly beyond - how activities and outputs contribute to common objectives over time; and
- Comparative analysis: to compare the perceptions and opinions of stakeholders and stakeholder groups towards the different achievements of the project.

The MTR Evaluative Matrix is included in Annex 2.

MTR Phases

The MTR exercise took place over four months between December 2019 and February 2020. It was conducted in three different phases:

Phase One: Inception Phase (home-based)
⇒ From 19th November to 18th December 2019 – During the inception phase the MTR Consultant reviewed the project documents and reports made available by the PMU. At the end of this phase, the MTR Consultant submitted an MTR Inception Report to UNDP.

Phase Two: MTR Mission in South Africa
⇒ From 13th January to 4th February 2020 – The mission schedule was organized by the PMU in collaboration with RPs and was included in the Inception Report.

Whilst in country, the MTR Consultant met stakeholders from the following organizations, institutions and communities:

In Pretoria:

- UNDP
- DALRRD
- DEFF

In Eastern Cape Province (Machubeni landscape)

- RU
- Emalahleni Municipality
- DEDEAT
- DRDAR
- Traditional leaders
- 33 Project beneficiaries, including 18 women and 15 men

In Eastern Cape Province (Baviaanskloof)

- Living Lands
- 3 residents (3 men) of Seven Fountains Farm
- 2 residents (2 women) of the Tchnuganoo Farm

In Northern Cape Province (Karoo landscape):

- EWT
- Northern Cape Department of Agriculture
- UFSED
- 2 Commercial farmers
- 11 Project beneficiaries, including 4 women and 7 men

In Limpopo Province (Olifants landscape):

- CSIR
- ARC
- Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality
- Greater Tubatse – Fetakgomo Local Municiplaity
- Province Department of Agriculture
- A traditional officer
- 4 project beneficiaries including 3 women and 1 man

Field visits to project sites were conducted in each project landscape.

The UNDP Project Manager accompanied the MTR consultant during the MTR mission. In order to ensure the independence of the MTR exercise and allow stakeholders to express freely their views on the project, the UNDP Project Manager did not take part in any of the meetings. RPs staff did also not take part in any meeting conducted with other institutions and with communities. Finally, the MTR consultant, at the beginning of each meeting, explained briefly the objectives of the MTR exercise and ensured that every participant felt free to answer to questions freely.

Phase Three: Reporting Phase (home-based)

⇒ From 5th February to 20th March 2020 – The MTR consultant submitted a draft MTR report to UNDP on 12th February 2020. Following the receipt of an annotated draft from UNDP (2nd March 2020), the MTR consultant finalised the report for submission on 20th March 2020.

Annex 4 includes the MTR mission itinerary; annex 5 the list of persons met during the in-country mission; and Annex 6 the list of documents reviewed.

2.3. Structure of the MTR report

The MTR report consists of three core sections:

- *Project Description and Background Context*
  The section briefly describes the project and the context in which it was designed and is being implemented in.

- *Findings*
  This section provides answers to the four categories of project progress, i.e. Project Strategy, Progress towards results, Project Implementation and Adaptive Management, and Sustainability.

- *Conclusion & Recommendations*
  The section includes an evidence-based conclusion and offers key recommendations that are specific, achievable and relevant.

3. Project Description and Background Context

3.1. Development context

Over 80% of South Africa's land is used for agriculture, with livestock herding being the dominant rural land use. Approximately 1.5 million hectares of land in South Africa are degraded. The primary cause of degradation are inappropriate land management practices related to agriculture. Land degradation on the productive landscapes is contributing to the loss of ecosystem services and commensurate declines in water quality and quantity, biodiversity and agricultural productivity. Although the actual costs of land degradation are not well known, it is generally acknowledged that land degradation has considerable economic consequences.

Development pressure and land use change are additional causes of habitat modification and loss. Land degradation and poor land management practices are estimated to cost the country billions of Rands per year as a consequence of; i) reduced production; ii) loss of soil and soil nutrients; iii) pollution of rivers; iv) poor water quality; and v) flooding, amongst other impacts.

Although land degradation is prevalent on both private and communal lands, the former homeland areas of the Eastern Cape, Limpopo, North West, Northern Cape, and Mpumalanga Provinces are amongst the most severely degraded in the country. Agricultural land in the former homelands is often overgrazed and over-cropped with extreme land degradation occurring. Consequently, these areas have decreasing vegetative cover, bush encroachment, alien plant invasions, and changes in plant species composition.

Land and ecosystem degradation is likely to be exacerbated by the effects of climate change, which will exacerbate existing droughts and natural disasters. South Africa has been about hotter and at least 6% drier over the ten years between 1997 and 2006 compared with the 1970s. Droughts are a frequent occurrence and often have serious ecological and economic consequences. According to the South African Second National Communication to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), rising temperatures and variable rainfall patterns are currently having negative impacts on water resources and will likely result in more droughts and significant reduction in groundwater recharge in the semi-arid parts of the Interior and the West. Predicted and observed impacts include: i) erratic and unseasonal rainfall; ii) higher temperatures; iii) increased evapotranspiration; iv) changes in vegetation composition; v) increase in flooding and drought events; and vi) overstocking during critical periods as a result of increased economic pressure posed by increasingly difficult farming conditions in marginal arid areas.

Arresting land degradation and achieving sustainable land management (SLM) is critical for ensuring ecosystem integrity, as well as continued productivity and benefits to livelihoods.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa creates an overall framework for environmental governance in South Africa by establishing the right to an environment that is not harmful to health and well-being. Moreover, the Constitution balances the right to have the environment protected with rights to valid social and economic development and allocates environmental functions to a wide range of governmental agencies in all spheres. Therefore, the Constitution places emphasis on cooperative governance, which is a departure from the traditional hierarchical tiers of government with ultimate control vested in the national government.

In South Africa, biodiversity conservation is well established. Although the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) is the primary custodian, several ministries and departments share the responsibility: the Department of Water Affairs (DWA), Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF), South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) and other public and private institutions.

The project has identified four sites – in the Karoo, Eastern Cape and the Olifants landscapes – within which innovative pilot approaches to addressing land degradation are implemented.

3.2. Problems that the project sought to address

South Africa's long-term vision is to establish a "green economy" underpinned by healthy, functioning ecosystems. Arresting land degradation and achieving sustainable land management are essential for achieving this goal. The preferred solution is a scenario wherein national, provincial and municipal level investments are strategically aligned to support SLM across broad landscapes. As a result, SLM is mainstreamed into municipal land use planning, provincial development planning as well as annual work plans at all levels of government and national SLM programmes are coordinated to generate appropriate landscape level impacts.

There are two primary barriers to attaining this long-term preferred solution. First, under the existing scenario, the relevant authorities and stakeholders do not have coordinated access to the knowledge and information required to make informed decisions. Second, South Africa lacks an integrated and coherent framework to support the identification and strategic implementation of SLM initiatives. The first barrier speaks to the need to build the capacity necessary to generate and monitor successful examples of SLM practices. Whilst the second barrier speaks to the need to strategically finance, implement and govern the application of SLM best practices to achieve landscape-level results.

The long-term preferred solution is to reduce the costs of ecological restoration in South Africa and increase the productivity of the land. This requires an innovative approach to SLM entailing: i) enhancing the capacity of government, institutions and local communities to mainstream SLM into policies, plans and programmes; and ii) implementing climate-smart ecosystem rehabilitation and management measures.

The project contributes to the above by focusing on building capacity for the integration of SLM into development planning. This includes developing tools for the analysis of vulnerability and the development of innovative SLM interventions. The identified activities are demonstrated at the local level and build on existing knowledge and best available technologies. These activities address land degradation, which eventually increase the ecological functioning and resilience in the Karoo, Eastern Cape and the Olifants project target landscapes.

3.3. Project Description and Strategy

Project Objective: to strengthen the enabling environment for the adoption of knowledge-based SLM models for land management and land/ecosystem rehabilitation in support of the green economy and resilient livelihoods through capacity building, improved governance and financial incentives demonstrated in the Karoo, Eastern Cape and Olifants landscapes.

Outcome 1: Economically viable, climate-smart land/ecosystem rehabilitation and management practices operationalised across 67,300 hectares of the Karoo, Eastern Cape and Olifants landscapes (with potential for upscaling to cover 150,000 hectares).

Output 1.1: Improved land-use and livestock/range management practices implemented in two critical riverine systems in the Karoo.

Output 1.2: Ecologically-viable livestock farming, vegetative cover and range resources management practices adopted in the Eastern Cape.

Output 1.3: Watershed management practices adopted by farmers in the Olifants landscape.

Output 1.4: A strategy for upscaling SLM practices within the Karoo, Eastern Cape and Olifants landscapes.

Output 1.5: A long-term strategy for participatory monitoring and evaluation by stakeholders (including lands users) of the effectiveness of SLM approaches in the Karoo, Eastern Cape and the Olifants landscapes.

Outcome 2: Increased knowledge and institutional capacity of DEA, DAFF, DWA, relevant departments and local communities to reduce degradation from livestock and crop production and to restore currently degraded lands through the application of knowledge-based land management practices.

Output 2.1: Capacity-building and -development programme for improving SLM knowledge and awareness at local, provincial and national level, including the establishment of multi-stakeholder forums for facilitating a dialogue on SLM and mainstreaming SLM into municipal, provincial and national policy programmes and processes.

Output 2.2: Core staff of technical ministries, regional and local extension support departments and land users in the Nama-Karoo, Thicket and Savanna biomes trained on the use of improved data, tools and methods of ecosystem livelihood and vulnerability assessments as the basis of decision-making on land use within the context of a green economy.

Output 2.3: Structures for coordinated land-use planning and land/ecosystem rehabilitation practices (including operational bodies such as Conservation Committees) between municipal, provincial and national institutions in the Karoo, Eastern Cape and Olifants landscapes established.

Output 2.4: Best practices and lessons learned on SLM in the Karoo, Eastern Cape and Olifants landscapes captured and disseminated nationwide.

Output 2.5: A comprehensive GIS-based assessment of socio-ecological resilience to inform ecosystem restoration and SLM in the Karoo, Eastern Cape and Olifants landscapes.

Outcome 3: Enabling environment for promoting rehabilitation of degraded land through carbon sequestration (including accessing and capitalising on carbon markets and the preparation of MRV documentation) in the Eastern Cape strengthened.

Output 3.1: Government-approved methodology developed for the generation of carbon credits through restoration of spekboomveld.

Output 3.2: Carbon baseline sampling and assessments undertaken for 3,500 hectares in the Baviaanskloof.

Output 3.3: Project Design Documents for a Baviaanskloof Programme of Activities/Grouped Project prepared and verified.

Output 3.4: 1,000 hectares of degraded spekboomveld restored in the Baviaanskloof to deliver multiple ecosystem benefits including reduced soil erosion, enhanced water infiltration and increased vegetation cover.

Outcome 4: Financing and governance frameworks strengthened to support the adoption of SLM approaches.

Output 4.1: Comprehensive analysis of SLM options, including financial modelling, investigation of market opportunities, cost-benefits analyses and a public expenditure review undertaken.

Output 4.2: National and sub-national strategies for mainstreaming of SLM into provincial development and municipal land-use planning policies developed.

Output 4.3: Policy recommendations to mainstream SLM objectives into public expenditure, agricultural subsidies and land reform incentives.

Output 4.4: A national platform on SLM, finance and land/ecosystem rehabilitation in place for national dialogue on the role of SLM in the green economy to support the National Coordinating Body for UNCCD to engage more strategically in SLM, finance and land, ecosystem rehabilitation debate.

3.4. Project Implementation Arrangements

Three national entities are the project Responsible Parties (RPs): Rhodes University (RU), the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), and the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT). Each of these entities is responsible for rolling out project activities in the identified project sites.

The UNDP Country Office supports the project implementation by maintaining the project budget and project expenditures, contracting project personnel, experts and subcontractors, carrying out procurement, and providing other assistance, as so required and in so doing, applying the cost recovery principle (through the DPC – Direct Project Costs). Full UNDP cost-recovery policy is applied to those recruitments, procurement processes and services requested. The UNDP Country Office also monitors project outputs and ensures the proper use of UNDP/GEF funds. Financial transactions, reporting and auditing are carried out in compliance with the national regulations and UNDP rules and procedures.

Project activities are undertaken by the Responsible Parties in collaboration with the relevant governmental, non-governmental, parastatal, private sector and community-based entities. The Implementing Partner's remains accountable to UNDP for the delivery of agreed outputs, and for financial management, including the cost-effectiveness of project activities. Since the project is fairly large and involves substantial coordination of different stakeholders from a variety of land use sectors in the project sites, a small Project Management Unit (PMU) coordinates the implementation of the project on a day-to-day basis. The PMU is composed of a Project Manager who is also responsible for coordinating the delivery of technical project outputs and a Project Assistant to provide administrative, financial, and technical and knowledge management support.

A Project Steering Committee with strategic decision-making and non-executive powers is chaired by DEFF and co-chired by DALRRD and composed by the following representatives of key project partners:

- Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF)
- Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD)
- Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS)
- United Nations Development Nations (UNDP)
- Rhodes University
- Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT)
- Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)
- Agricultural Research Council (ARC)
- South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI)

3.5. Project timing and milestones

The MTR exercise took place after approximately 2 and a half years of implementation, with other two and a half years remaining before closure. No specific milestones are described neither in the Project Document nor in the Results Framework.

3.6. Main stakeholders: summary list

Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries

The Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA), the implementing partner (IP) of the project, was renamed the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF) in June 2019, incorporating the forestry and fisheries functions from the previous Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

DEFF is mandated to give effect to the right of citizens to an environment that is not harmful to their health or well-being, and to have the environment protected for the benefit of present and future generations. To this end, the Department provides leadership in environmental management, conservation and protection towards sustainability for the benefit of South Africans and the global community.

Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development
The Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) was disestablished in June 2019. The agriculture function was incorporated into the new Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD), while the forestry and fisheries functions were incorporated into the new DEFF.

The mission of DALRRD is to initiate, facilitate, coordinate, catalyse and implement an integrated rural development programme.

Endangered Wildlife Trust
Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) is a South African non-governmental organisation for the conservation of threatened species and ecosystems in southern Africa. Founded in 1973, the EWT implements conservation research and action programmes, supports biodiversity and ecosystem functioning and advocates for the sustainable use of natural resources.

Rhodes University
Rhodes University (RU) is a public research university located in Grahamstown in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. Founded in 1904, RU strives, through teaching, research and community service, to contribute to the advancement of international scholarship and the development of the Eastern Cape and South Africa by making available the university's expertise, resources and facilities whenever it is appropriate.

Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) is a leading scientific and technology research, development and implementation organisation. It undertakes directed research and development for socio-economic growth, technological innovation as well as industrial and scientific development to improve the quality of life of the country's people.

Agricultural Research Council
The Agricultural Research Council is a science institution that conducts research with partners, develops human capital and fosters innovation to support and develop the agricultural sector. Its core business is agricultural economics and capacity development, animal sciences, crop sciences and research and innovation systems.

Living Lands
Living Lands is a South African environmental organisation for the conservation of landscapes. Founded in 2008, Living Lands facilitates social learning and change processes with stakeholders, develops knowledge systems for landscape transformation and implements new ways of thinking and doing in socio-ecological rehabilitation.

Provincial and municipal authorities
The authorities, namely the provincial department of environment and agriculture, of the provinces of Eastern Cape, Northern Cape and Limpopo and relevant municipalities are involved in project activities in the three project landscapes (Karoo, Eastern Cape and Olifants).

Communities
The communities living in the three project landscapes are the target population of the project.

4. Findings

4.1. Project Strategy

4.1.1. Project Design

The project is certainly relevant: all stakeholders encountered during the MTR mission in South Africa have raised concerns about land degradation and its consequences and long-term impacts on the livelihoods of those living in the project areas. Indeed, the project document derives from a collation of information stemming from the RPs.

The MTR exercise considers the strategy of implementation as well relevant to move towards the expected achievements. At field level, activities are implemented by four different organizations in four distinct landscapes: RU in Machubeni, Living Lands (in partnership with RU) in Baviaanskloof, EWT in the Karoo and CSIR in Olifants. This guarantees that each organization puts at the service of the project its own expertise and takes responsibility of activities in the project area.

The four organizations intervene with a different approach in their respective project areas. EWT and Living Lands are physically present with offices and teams. Moreover, for EWT and Living Lands the project constitutes a component of their larger programme, which both NGOs carry out with other funds. RU and CSIR instead do not operate with a physical office in the project area. They are based in their HQ, mobilize their staff to conduct activities at field level, whenever necessary, and do not have other initiatives implemented in the project area.

Searching solutions to land degradation problems in a consultative and participatory manner is a common feature of the implementation in all project components. The project engages with communities and interested authorities at field level, taking into consideration the perception of challenges from the perspectives of the different types of stakeholders involved. Consensus is at the base of the implementation decision-making process in each project landscape. The same approach is applied at national level.

The project is aligned with the South Africa National Development Plan 2030, which includes, amongst others, the objectives ‘promotion of environmental sustainability’ and ‘integrated and inclusive rural economy’.

Furthermore, it contributes directly to the implementation of the National Action Plan (NAP), i.e. the main document that guides the implementation of the UNCCD at country level, as it supports the national efforts to achieve the targets for land degradation neutrality (LDN) as part of the UNCCD obligations.

The intervention supports two UNDP focus areas at global level, i.e. sustainable development and climate change.

The MTR acknowledges that no gender issues were raised in the project design: the formulation of objective, outcomes and outputs does not mention gender or gender-related issues. Furthermore, none of the indicators has a gender dimension. Nevertheless, EWT tracks gender impact in this project and RU team includes a gender specialist to ensure that gender equity is considered throughout the project implementation.

Regarding gender issues, the MTR notes that opportunities to promote women empowerment in the urban area of the town of Loxton in the Karoo landscape have been identified during a project visit of the UNDP Gender Focal Point and later reflected in a small project implemented with UNDP CO TRACK 2 funding. The small project aimed at reducing pressure on the environment caused by the collection of fuelwood through the promotion of the use of alternative stoves and at empowering women by supporting four cooperatives.

4.1.2. Results Framework

Project design includes one objective and four outcomes.

The four outcomes converge, from different perspectives, towards achieving the main objective. Outcome 1 refers to the actual operationalisation of rehabilitation of land/ecosystem and management practices; outcome 2 to the strengthening of capacities at institutional level; outcome 3 to an enabling environment for rehabilitation of degraded land through carbon sequestration; and outcome 4 to the strengthening of financing and governance frameworks to promote SLM approaches. The convergence towards the project objective is self-evident. Indeed, the formulation of the objective includes elements of each outcome; it constitutes a sort of concise summary of the four outcomes.

Outputs are well formulated.

Outcome 1 "Economically viable, climate-smart land/ecosystem rehabilitation and management practices operationalised across 67,300 hectares of the Karoo, Eastern Cape and Olifants landscapes (with potential for upscaling to cover 150,000 hectares)". Outputs refer to the adoption of rehabilitation and management practices and the formulation of strategies for upscaling activities and participatory M&E. In brief, an applied exercise at field level as a starting point to generate practical upscaling strategies.

Outputs are logically interrelated and may lead to the achievement of Outcome 1.

Outcome 2 "Increased knowledge and institutional capacity of DEA, DAFF, DWA, relevant departments and local communities to reduce degradation from livestock and crop production and to restore currently degraded lands through the application of knowledge-based land management practices". Outputs refer to the establishment of forums; trainings of staff of relevant institutions; establishment of institutional structures; documentation of best practices and lessons learned; and development of a GIS-based assessment. In brief, a set of elements that constitute a solid capacity development process at individual and institutional level.

Outputs are logically interrelated and may lead to the achievement of Outcome 2.

Outcome 3 "Enabling environment for promoting rehabilitation of degraded land through carbon sequestration (including accessing and capitalising on carbon markets and the preparation of measuring, reporting and verification (MRV) documentation) in the Eastern Cape strengthened". In its intentions, outcome 3 is an exercise aiming at creating a new tool to support the implementation of SLM practices beyond the project. A way to equip South Africa to have at hand a financial tool to finance land restoration activities.

Outputs are logically interrelated and may lead to the achievement of Outcome 3.

Outcome 4 "Financing and governance frameworks strengthened to support the adoption of SLM approaches". Outputs refer to knowledge generation; formulation of strategies and policy recommendations; and the creation of national platform on SLM. In brief, an applied exercise at institutional level to establish the relevant frameworks for the adoption of SLM approaches at national level.

Outputs are logically interrelated and may lead to the achievement of Outcome 4.

In conclusion, the pathway to achieve the project objective is clear and straightforward: working on SLM practices with communities and local authorities, formulation of financial instruments and institutionalization of SLM approaches. These features are typical of technical cooperation support projects that aim at improving the quality of aid effectiveness in the long term. Under this perspective, the MTR ercise

suggests that ensuring a high degree of sustainability of the project is essential to consider the implementation successful.

Indicators analysis

Objective indicator: this indicator is the conventional indicator utilized by UNDP for capacity development. It has been adjusted by a consultant hired by RU in order to be able to capture the capacities of all the diverse types of stakeholders involved in the project. It is SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound) and it captures only the dimension of capacity development/strengthening. It is the same indicator used for outcome 2. This occurrence does not represent a problem because, as mentioned, the formulation of the objective is substantially a brief summary of the formulation of the four outcomes. The achievement of the project objective substantially coincides with the achievement of each project outcome

Indicator of Outcome 1: it is SMART. It captures the area of land where SLM practices are implemented. There is no mentioning of a mid-term value of achievement, just the baseline and the target value at the end of the project.

Note: The Project Document reports different number in relation to the indicator of Outcome 1. Paragraph 140 mentions 167,300 ha with potential upscaling to 417 132 ha. Paragraph 265, in the Table under Outcome 1, states 117,300 ha with potential upscaling to 417 312 ha. The MTR considers the following target levels for each landscape: Karoo 50,000 ha; Olifants 16,000 ha, and Machubeni 1,300 ha (with potential for upscaling to cover 150,000 hectares). The rationale behind this choice is given by the fact that these are the number included in the contracts with each RPs.

Indicator of Outcome 2: it is SMART. There is no mentioning of any mid-term value of achievement, just the baseline and the target value at the end of the project.

Indicators of Outcome 3: they are SMART. The first one refers to the area of *spekboomveld* restoration (carbon stock assessment); the second one to the formulation of a methodology for calculation of certified emission reductions/carbon credits from *spekboomveld* restoration; and the third one to the number of land users willing to engage in the carbon credits scheme. There is no mentioning of any mid-term value of achievement, just the baseline and the target value at the end of the project for each of the three indicators.

Indicators of Outcome 4: they are SMART. The first one refers to the formulation of a strategy to mainstream SLM; and the second one to the formulation of policy recommendations to support the mainstreaming exercise.

The MTR exercise notes that, on one hand, the set of indicators at outcome level captures all relevant information to understand project achievements, including at objective level. On the other hand, instead, the lack of intermediate target levels does not permit to have a clear understanding on how the project should move forward to achieve its final targets. As a result, the adoption of a clear M&E system to define milestones is left in the hands of those who implement the project, i.e. PMU and RPs.

Target levels are feasible within the timeframe of the project, with the exception of the target levels of the indicator of Outcome 1 in Olifants landscape. i.e. “16.000 ha of land under SLM” and the indicator of Outcome 3, i.e. “1,000 ha of *speekboomveld* restored by the end of the project”.

In Olifants, the project assumption does not hold true. CSIR and its partner ARC have concluded that the rehabilitation of the grazing land within the communal land is not feasible. The MTR confirms this occurrence: traditional leaders are hesitant to make relevant changes to the *status quo* of the grazing land and beneficiaries prefer to work on their own, in their own homestead, to control what they do.

Currently there is no arrangement in place to manage the grazing land at community level, which results overgrazed by animals. CSIR and ARC have consequently decided to use homestead activities (home gardening, rainwater harvesting and fodder production) and contours as an entry point to promote the interest of local communities towards a better management of their natural resources. As a result, the target level will not be achieved. There is the need that the project formally reformulates the component in Olifants including new indicators.

During the MTR exercise, it has emerged that restoration of 1000 ha of *spekboomveld*, one of the indicator of achievement of outcome 3, is definitively not achievable. As a fact, the on-going drought, which has been affecting the landscape of Baviaanskloof during the last five years, makes the restoration of *spekboomveld* agro-ecologically not feasible.

There is the need for the project to formally reformulate the component in Baviaanskloof including new indicators.

4.2. Progress towards Results

4.2.1. Progress towards outcomes analysis

Objective: To strengthen the enabling environment for the adoption of knowledge-based SLM models for land management and land/ecosystem rehabilitation in support of the green economy and resilient livelihoods through capacity building, improved governance and financial incentives demonstrated in the Karoo, Eastern Cape and Olifants landscapes.							
Indicator	**Baseline Level**	**Mid Term target**	**End of project target level**	**Second PIR (30 June 2019)**	**MTR Level and Assessment**	**Achievement rating**	**Justification for rating**
Capacity strengthening to enhance cross-sector enabling environment	Score: 2 (some initial awareness has been raised on SLM models for land management and land/ecosystem rehabilitation)	Not set	Score: 4 (knowledge has been effectively transferred through workshops, multi-stakeholder dialogue, a national platform on SLM, a capacity-building and development programme and practical implementation of SLM practices across three landscapes)			**MU Moderately Unsatisfactory**	The formulation of the objective constitutes a sort of concise summary of the four outcomes, while its indicator is a duplication of the indicator of Outcome 2. As such, the indicator does not capture any relevant information to measure the achievement of the objective. The achievement of the project objective substantially coincides with the achievement of each project outcome. Hence, the rating is in a way an average of the rating of the outcomes.
Outcome 1: Economically viable, climate-smart land/ecosystem rehabilitation and management practices operationalised across 67,300 hectares of the Karoo, Eastern Cape and Olifants landscapes (with potential for upscaling to cover 150,000 hectares).							
Indicator	**Baseline Level**	**Mid term target**	**End of project target level**	**Second PIR (30 June 2019)**	**MTR Level and Assessment**	**Achievement rating**	**Justification for rating**
Area of degraded land under improved SLM practices in three landscapes	- Karoo: 500,000 hectares of degraded land - Olifants: 41,300 hectares of degraded land - Eastern Cape: 11,733 hectares of degraded land	Not set	- Karoo: At least 50,000 hectares under SLM practices - Olifants: 16,000 hectares under SLM practices - Eastern Cape: 1,300 ha under SLM practices	- Karoo landscape (EWT): ⇒ **Identify cost-effective SLM rangeland and restoration practises in the Karoo – 90% completed** ⇒ Two best practice manuals completed and peer reviewed (one on range land management and one on rehabilitation in the Karoo. Translated also in Afrikaans – main language spoken in Karoo landscape ⇒ **Stakeholder engagement for implementing SLM – 50% completed** ⇒ 2 Planning and implementation meetings with institutional stakeholders ⇒ IFP course developed and 2 courses presented ⇒ Engagement with relevant local municipalities – letters send to relevant line function departments to introduce the project High level delegation, including Premier of Northern Cape and Departmental and Local Municipality staff visited project landscape 28 November 2018 to discuss potential project involvement	- Karoo landscape (EWT): ⇒ **Activity 1.To ensure that the background knowledge generated are incorporated into the Theory of Change – 100% completed** ⇒ Baseline drone surveys on 3 farms (15 sites) for monitoring veld condition ⇒ **Activity 2: To ensure best practice guidelines are produced, distributed and promoted with a variety of institutional, industry and community stakeholders. This will include information days and training where necessary - 100% completed** ⇒ a) Both Best Practice Guidelines (BPG) documents were launched at the Kimberly Biodiversity Research Symposium (85 people, 18 September) representing Universities, non-Governmental organisations and Gov Departments. The guidelines were also launched at the Natural Resource Management Symposium (Cape	**Overall MU Moderately Unsatisfactory** **Karoo Landscape S Satisfactory** **Olifants landscape NA Not Apply**	In the three landscapes, the implementation of SLM practices has not yet started. The project in the three landscapes has produced information and knowledge through baselines, assessments and studies conducted in a participatory way. There is a solid bulk of information to build upon for the rest of project implementation. In addition, in the three landscapes, the work of engagement with the target communities has led to a general enthusiasm around and for the project. All community members encountered during the MTR mission have express their appreciation towards the commitment of RPs and their will to move ahead with the project activities. The MTR mission has recorded certain concerns about having SLM practices implemented by the end of the project.

				PSC and PMU team and members of UNDP had field visit to Karoo landscape 28 – 31 May 2019. Both Commercial (Champion farmers) and communal farmers were involved in the site visits and discussions. ⇒ **Operational Management System Operational implemented within EWT – 100% completed** ⇒ Baseline assessment of the bio-physical socio-ecological and economic status of two conservancies to develop a Karoo specific SLM and M&E protocol and catchment restoration priorities – 90% complete ⇒ Draft document reviewing the socio-economic factors affecting SLM in Nama Karoo complete Partnership established with Conservation South Africa on management of municipal commonages ⇒ Completed technical exchange visit to commonage farmers in Kamieskroon 19 – 22 November 2018 on rangeland management in commonages ⇒ Ecological condition of 110 confluences across 3 river systems assessed and report completed ⇒ Comprehensive survey-based report describing barriers towards adopting SLM and possible context specific solutions ⇒ Report on general veld condition on selected farms in the landscape and effectiveness of restoration techniques and consultant vs drone effectiveness. (S Todd) ⇒ Pre-course assessment for Integrated Farm Planning and Management Course for potential course participants (13 male and 10 female) from Loxton commonage ⇒ Drone monitoring on 8 SLM Project sites in the landscape as well as fixed point photography Protocol / methodology for fine scale monitoring of vegetation cover and condition, vegetation structure (height) using drone-borne multispectral cameras developed ⇒ **Identify critical landscapes and appropriate measures for landscape rehabilitation – 80 % completed** ⇒ 3 SLM Champion Farmers has been identified and agreements signed with them ⇒ Farm audit and SLM self-assessment scorecard has been developed – 13 self-evaluation surveys with IFP Course participants and 2 Champion SLM Farmers completed - Olifants landscape (CSIR): ⇒ **Stakeholder analysis 100% completed** ⇒ Report on engagement with tribal authorities	Town / September). We shared the BPG with ProAgri (website). The Guidelines were also shared with the Graaff Reinet and Baviaanskloof Farmers Associations. ⇒ b) During the Integrated Farm Planning Training course in Prieska we shared the BPG with course participants as well as government officials from the DALRRD including two District Managers, the Director of Training and five agricultural advisors and the president of NAFO (National African Farmers Union). The Senior delegates were invited to attend the second last day of training to familiarise them with the course and so that they could also interact with the course participants. They were also present during the launch of the BPG documents, held on the same day, and received copies of the documents. ⇒ **Activity 3 To assist SLM Champions to play a meaningful role in the promotion and implementation of the SLM project. This includes empowering them to implement SLM flagship projects aimed at SLM ha, generation of promotional content, playing a role in training and mentorship roles - 55% completed** ⇒ Meetings with two of the champions regarding their SLM projects in Q 3. Landcare has produced a report on the feasibility of the proposed project on Herman Hugo's farm. We have scoped for a SGP on Papkuils Fontein - a Mountain bike trail network is planned for the small grant programme in exchange for the farmers declaring his farm a protected environment ⇒ **Activity 4 To provide quality Integrated Farm Planning courses and other relevant & targeted learning and skills strengthening experiences to a variety of SLM audiences and SLM Pathfinder participants -65% completed** ⇒ The second IFP course was conducted in Prieska in Q3 ⇒A Financial Management training course was conducted in collaboration with the National Wool Growers Association	**Machubeni landscape Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)**	- Karoo landscape (EWT) ⇒ Preparation phase for the implementation of SLM practices is substantially done. It is time to start with practical work on the ground, which will, at the same time, constitute a learning-by-doing exercise for all stakeholders in the landscape. ⇒ Concerns are mainly related to the necessity to have a smooth release of the grants. The MTR did not record any other critical element. ⇒ Anecdotal evidence confirms that project beneficiaries have a grasp of the main concepts of self-reliance and resilience to adapt to climate change: they are aware that climatic conditions in their area are changing and they are conscious about the fact that their objective should be to constantly improve their technical knowledge and skills to apply solutions to emerging problems. ⇒ The MTR has as well recorded a high level of enthusiasm of the officials of the provincial department of agriculture, which are constantly involved in activities of their pertinence. - Olifants landscape (CSIR) ⇒ Activities related to homegarden agroforestry (98 households) and homestead rainwater harvesting (86 households) have been initiated. ⇒ The project has faced some constraints mainly due the fact that the project area was very vast. The identification of problems and proposed solutions took almost two years since CSIR and ARC had to deal with 48 villages, 2 towns and 27 traditional leaders. To make the implementation feasible, CSIR and ARC have reduce the area of intervention to two villages belonging to the same municipality, where there are only two traditional leaders. The village of Mphanama has been chosen because it has been identified as very degraded by the DAFF land degradation assessment. Whereas the village of Ga-Radingwana is a good site to demonstrate the effectiveness of contours as SLM practise.

				⇒ Three workshops have been held as part of a series of stakeholder engagement workshops planned for this landscape. ⇒ **Selection of sustainable land management options - 90% completed** ⇒ Draft report on best bet technologies to use in SLM interventions and possible field testing/ demonstration areas ⇒ Selection of SLM Options completed in close collaboration with key stakeholders and local community (Workshop report) ⇒ **On site demonstration of SLM practices - 15% completed** On site demonstration of SLM Practices is greatly delayed and will commence at the start of the rainy season again (Oct/Nov 2019) ⇒ Progress with SLM interventions at demonstration sites: ⇒ A - Agroforestry: The household survey commenced in June 2019 and will be completed in August 2019. 42 out of 98 household have been surveyed. ⇒ B - Fodder production: Project team is investigating the use of rainwater harvested to supplement fodder production ⇒ C - Contours: Will commence in next reporting period ⇒ D - Spatial planning: Will commence in next reporting period Project team identified, mapped and narrated illegal sand mining activities in the Lepellane catchment and gave through to Department of Environmental Affairs and Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries for action ⇒ Selection of intervention site (demonstration site) – implementation of short-listed SLM interventions **⇒ Development of a typology of Smallholder Farming in Greater Sekhukhune District 80% completed** ⇒Identification of homogenous group of farmers to guide implementation and out scaling of SLM practices in landscape Eastern Cape (RU): **⇒ Agrograssing and land rehabilitation training and implementation in Machubeni 40% completed** – led by Land Conservation Activists (LCA) Group, Machubeni – Champions in land rehabilitation (Rain water tank installation, micro-nursery development for vetiver and grass plugs, agro-grazing plan developed.	⇒ Google Earth Mapping Training course at the e-learning centre **⇒ Activity 6: To provide quality Integrated Farm Planning courses and other relevant & targeted learning and skills strengthening experiences to a variety of SLM audiences and SLM Pathfinder participants - 20% completed** ⇒ Visited 5 farms with an external agricultural extension officer together with the DALRRD Agricultural Advisor for the Loxton commonage. ⇒ **Activity 7: To provide and coordinate extension support to farmers that are implementing SLM grants or projects. This ensures proper implementations and monitoring and ensures early warning signal for project issues -20% completed** ⇒ Working on 11 Small Grant Proposals for the Karoo ⇒ GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN SLM - UNDP CO with TRACK 2 funding initiated in Q4 2019 the Loxton Women Empowerment Project together with Ubuntu Forum and EWT as Responsible Party. The project was completed December 2019 Olifants landscape (CSIR): ⇒ **On-site demonstration of selected SLM practices -35% completed** ⇒ **Agroforestry -** baseline study was conducted to gather information on the biophysical and social factors of relevance to the implementation of SLM interventions based on homegarden agrofestry at the pilot site (Mphanama Village). The baseline study entailed engagement with relevant stakeholders, field observation, and a questionnaire survey. ⇒ **Fodder production** <u>In home garden using rooftop RWH</u> Most households of Mphanama village already have rooftop rainwater harvesting systems, although most systems were poorly designed. The residents of Mphanama are very water savvy and indications are that harvested rainwater is primarily used for domestic use.		⇒ There is a stringent need to have a landscape project implementation plan and an M&E system in place. ⇒ SLM practices will be implement at household level (homegardening and rain water harvesting) and on identified slopes (contours), being the work on communal grazing land not deemed feasible. The MTR cannot assess the likelihood of achievement of the project targets in Olifants landscape because the project component in Olifants has been subjected to substantial changes (refer to section 4.1.2. "Results Framework" for details). The target level identified in the project document is no longer valid. - Eastern Cape, Machubeni Landscape (RU) ⇒ Preparation phase for the implementation of SLM practices is substantially done. It is time to start with practical work on the ground to implement the rotational grazing system on communal land, which will, at the same time constitute a learning-by-doing exercise for all stakeholders in the landscape. ⇒ The work in Machubeni includes a vast array of activities. A comprehensive landscape project implementation plan including an M&E system is missing. ⇒ Soil erosion control, homegardening and educational (schools) activities have started. The capacity of the project to engage in this kind of activities has been recorded as satisfactory during the MTR missions in South Africa. ⇒ The work in Machubeni implies a high degree of cooperation between herders for the component related to the grazing area on communal land, which is the relatively more significant component as it is about bringing a change in the main economic asset of the community, the grazing land. Indeed, the community did never work and coordinate the sustainable management of its main asset, i.e. the communal land. The project represents a first attempt to have this collective approach to SLM: the capacity of herders to cooperate one with each other, the capacity of the

				Monthly meetings of LCA Group – community buy-in and ownership ⇒ **Draft Land rehabilitation guidelines document developed 60% completed** ⇒ Erosion control work by LCA groups – in all 5 project villages spend 2 days per week implementing erosion control structures in new areas and maintaining interventions that were implemented during 2018 and early 2019 ⇒ Draft rehabilitation manual for erosion control developed ⇒ **Conservation climate smart agriculture (CA) training & implementation Machubeni - 55% completed** ⇒ Training completed for 25 Machubeni CA Home Garden Champions (HGC's) and 5 CA Youth Group on introductory CA techniques and First Aid Training ⇒ CA development and implementation – Each HGC received from project seedlings and rainwater tank to start drip irrigation and to demonstrate SLM practices related to CA – ⇒ Monitoring of CA implementation ongoing ⇒ Complete report on current crop farming practices and recommendations for supporting CA ⇒ The RU team established firmer relations with the Amanzi for Food Project (AFP)- a local project implementing community-based agroecology/conservation agriculture near King Williams Town**;** website at http://amanziforfood.co.za/ ⇒ **Livelihoods resilience – vulnerability assessment and measures for improving resilience - 30% completed** ⇒ Two tools for vulnerability assessment have been identified and training provided in use of tools Networking and partnership between GEF 5 SLM project and Climate Systems Analysis Group (CSAG) at University of Cape Town to use Eastern Cape landscape as case study for a government funded project. ⇒ Review report developed on baseline livelihoods data for Machubeni and recommendations for filling gaps. ⇒ **Rangeland management training and implementation - 50% completed** ⇒ Conduct sheep farmers training. ⇒ Finalize baseline data on livestock numbers to support planning of improved grazing and livestock management. ⇒ Grazing areas map in process of finalization. ⇒ Networking and partnerships with Meat Naturally Ltd to develop conservation agreements to implement grazing-resting model in landscape and support livestock	<u>In fenced communal cropland</u> On recommendation of the ARC, fodder will be cultivated in part of the 6 km fence adjacent to Mphanama village, without half-moon bunds. Another site identified in Mphanama is a 10 ha Phela O Phediše cooperative. In Ga-Radingwana, fodder will be grown on part of the 15 ha of land of the Baroka cooperative. For each sites, SLM champions have been identified. ⇒ **Contours -** Contours are constructed in relatively low rainfall areas like Mphanama - having annual rainfall of less than 600 mm, particularly in the areas having light textured soils. The bund spacing and height as well as the tie spacing are being dimensioned. ⇒ **Spatial Planning -** The assessment of the spatio-temporal changes in land use and cover will commence in November 2019 and will carry through until 2020. ⇒ **Smallholder farmer typology - 100% completed** ⇒ **WOCAT mapping - 95% completed** Participatory Expert Assessment done. Eastern Cape (RU) ⇒ **Livelihoods diversification - 50% completed** ⇒ Identify livelihoods streams that will increase household resilience ⇒ Support these streams: partnerships, capacity building for local enterprises ⇒ **Rangeland rehabilitation - 55% completed** ⇒ Erosion control& agrograssing: capacitate, demonstrate, implement ⇒Fodder flow programme: capacitate & implement with leading farmers ⇒ **Improved livestock and grazing management - 55% completed** ⇒ Rotational grazing-resting model instituted ⇒ Livestock veterinary & nutrition care programme ⇒ Livestock offtake- local market		traditional leaders to support the collective work to put in place a rotational grazing system, and the capacity of local institutions at provincial and municipality level to support such a change were never tested. ⇒ Anecdotal evidence collected during the MTR mission raises the following elements of concern about the capacity to achieve project targets, securing a significant level of sustainability: a) no regular involvement of public officials in project activities and characterized by a high degree of turnover; b) traditional leaders do not feel to have been empowered, they do not understand the concepts guiding project implementation and, in addition, they do not feel their authority recognized in the MMF; c) all community members met seem not to have understood the core concept of self-reliance and resilience, which represent the key principles of development work to promote climate change adaptation and SLM. ⇒ The management arrangements at RU seem to be not fully conducive to the achievement of this indicator (refer to section "Management Arrangements" for details). ⇒ Finally, the MTR exercise acknowledges that the landscape of Machubeni is the most challenging amongst the three: it is the only landscape in which community and collective work in the field is expected to happen.

				auctions to reduce animal numbers and pressure from grazing. ⇒ Complete final model for improved rangeland livestock management for Machubeni in collaboration with community stakeholders ⇒ **M&E implementation of participatory system for SLM hubs 30% completed** ⇒ Investigating two apps that can support field-based monitoring of SLM Hub activities. ⇒ Monitoring LCA Erosion control interventions report developed ⇒ Draft Participatory Monitoring Evaluation Reflection and Learning (PMERL) case study plan developed for Machubeni ⇒ Literature survey on local based monitoring theory completed ⇒ An introductory session on fixed point photography as a tool for monitoring land rehabilitation interventions was held with Macubeni Land Conservation Champions (LCAs). ⇒ A workshop was held with the LCA group to identify monitoring indicators that they feel important for monitoring impacts of land rehabilitation (erosion control) interventions at Macubeni. These indicators were incorporated into the PMERL Plan for Macubeni	⇒ **Conservation agriculture - 45% completed** ⇒ 30 leading farmers capacitated & practicing Fodder growing programme ⇒ **Monitor SLM and impacts - 25% completed** ⇒ Develop a participatory monitoring, evaluation and learning framework for project ⇒ Assist three landscapes to implement the PMERL ⇒ Implement PMERL at Machubeni for SLM activities		
Outcome 2: Increased knowledge and institutional capacity of DEA, DAFF, DWA, relevant departments and local communities to reduce degradation from livestock and crop production and to restore currently degraded lands through the application of knowledge-based land management practices.							
Indicator	**Baseline Level**	**Mid term target**	**End of project target level**	**Second PIR (30 June 2019)**	**MTR Level and Assessment**	**Achievement rating**	**Justification for rating**
Increased capacity of government officials, restoration practitioners and other stakeholders related to SLM practices as measured by capacity	Score: 2 (there is some capacity for design and implementation of SLM practices, but this is nascent)	Not set	Score: at least 4 (there is widespread but not comprehensive capacity for design and implementation of SLM practices)	- Karoo landscape (EWT): ⇒ **Information sharing, training and capacity building workshops to address barriers towards SLM – 30 % completed** ⇒ 4 Emerging farmers have sheep rams tested by state vet ⇒ Stock selection training day attended by 27 farmers ⇒ 11 Famers, 1 extension officer and 1 state veterinarian attend an ewe herd reproduction course (consist of a series of modules) in partnership with National Wool Growers Association. ⇒ Permaculture course for 13 participants from Loxton 5 – 9 November 2018	⇒ **UNDP PMU SLM: Co host with EWT and Western Cape Department of Agriculture a Drone Users Conference for Agriculture and Conservation in November 2019. 105 people attend workshop** - Karoo landscape (EWT): ⇒ **Activity: To support and involve e.g. departments, municipalities and academic institutions in the project - 50% completed** ⇒ Q 3 EWT shared information and provided project updates with the	**Overall MU Moderately unsatisfactory** **Karoo Landscape S Satisfactory** **Olifants Landscape**	As mentioned, in the three landscapes, SLM practices have not yet been implemented. Furthermore, the Capacity Development Assessment has been conducted only in the Eastern Cape landscape. The MTR highlights that RU manages 68% of the budget available at project level for the capacity development component, which cover the following broad areas: - Institutional capacities; - Training to be delivered to NGOs, CBOs, CSO and local user groups (e.g. through Farmer's Associations) on the appropriate SLM

assessment scorecard				⇒ First Integrated Farm Management and Planning Course presented 25 Feb 2019 – 1 March 2019 in close collaboration with Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. 10 Emerging farmers, 4 Extension officers attend course ⇒ 8 AGRISETA learners (youth) doing National Certificate: Animal Production are hosted in the Karoo Landscape. The online courses are conducted by i3A and funded by AgriSeta. Five students are based in Loxton and three in Nieuwoudtville. **⇒ Create awareness, coordinate technical and extension support to farmers to implement SLM in project landscape and participate in Biodiversity Stewardship Programme (Improved rangeland management in 50 000 ha) - 10 % completed** ⇒ Initiated Biodiversity Stewardship negotiations with one farmer - 30 000 ha. ⇒ Five interviews were conducted with Loxton Commonage farmers and five draft Small Grant Proposals were submitted (20 March 2018) to the EWT. ⇒ Three Krom River farmers who are managing five land reform farms are submitting three SGP proposals. ⇒ To date 11 proposals are in process of development for Karoo Landscape. The EWT is working closely with the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Land Reform in the Northern Cape and also closely with LandCare Officials from the Provincial Departments in Western and Northern Cape Provinces. ⇒ Seven articles published in popular media ⇒ 3 presentations at Arid Zone Ecology Forum 2018: 1) Towards rapid veld condition assessment - Comparing results of in situ vs remote sensing; 2) Nama Karoo restoration evaluation; 3) The use of servitudes to secure habitat and drive SLM in key resource areas. ⇒ Promotional materials on Karoo for Ever initiative and to promote SLM principles: SLM Jackets, Lanyards, Licence disk holders, branded notebooks and pens, thermal coffee mugs Chitter Chatter (Nov 2018 Issue): 1) Showing off livestock for sustainable farming; 2) Unravelling the Mystery of Riverine Rabbit behavior; 3) Opening up the world of technology (e-learning centre article). ⇒ Facebook notice of publication reached 2 674 people. ⇒ Instagram (7 Nov 2018): Permaculture photos and text ⇒ Facebook (9 Nov 2018): Permaculture photos and text, reached 1 923 people	Sneeuberg Farmers Association (Nieu Bethesda), Members of the Graaff Reinet farming community (Graaff Reinet) and an update with the Wagenaarskraal Farmers Association (Victoria West). EWT participated in a stakeholder meeting, organised by UFSED in Loxton, sharing our project information with the DALRRD, Ubuntu District Manager, various social development agencies and the DA LandCare Northern Cape; also attended by the co-operative members and commonage farmers. - Olifants landscape (CSIR): ⇒ Stewardship within the community (Agency) Homegarden Agroforestry (98 hhs, 80 women) Rainwater harvesting (99 people, Women) Participatory mapping (Extension officers) *System Thinking course (Project team)* *Ecosystem Based Adaptation (Training of Trainers)* - Eastern Cape landscape (UR): ⇒ **Baseline knowledge for SLM toward context specific practices** ⇒ **Land degradation baselines - 95% completed** Veld condition Land degradation assessment State transition model developed ⇒ **Key resources & current farming practices baselines - 80% completed** Participatory mapping of key resources & priority areas for rehab Livestock to crop farming practices ⇒ **Stakeholder analysis - 100% completed** Key stakeholders analysis and connectivity for engagement	**U Unsatisfactory** **Machubeni landscape MU Moderately unsatisfactory**	techniques to each landscape and land degradation problem; - Cooordinated planning at landscape and municipal level; and - Collection and collation of GIS data and the integration of this into landscape level maps on land degradation and climate-sensitive ecosystems and landscapes to feed into existing databases at provincial and national levels to inform future modelling and guide management decisions for land rehabilitation and restoration. - Karoo landscape (EWT) EWT's training strategy in the Karoo includes: ⇒ Farmers' training ⇒ Support to farmers to develop their farming plans ⇒ Training of Provincial Department of Agriculture officers (extension services) ⇒ Support to the Provincial Department of Agriculture officers to conduct trainings, utilizing the material developed by EWT ⇒ Support to young people, daughters and sons of communal farmers, in order to increase the capacity of the whole household through formal training (on-line certificate in agriculture and animal husbandry, approved by competent authorities in South Africa) ⇒ Exchange of experiences between communal farmers and commercial farmers ⇒ Support to local farmers via the National Wool Growers Association ⇒ EWT is developing a website, denominated "Karoo For Ever" whose principal aim is constituting a repository of all relevant material, in different media formats, for project beneficiaries and other stakeholders and to create a space for communication between project stakeholders. ⇒ Finally, EWT aims at mainstreaming the training material produced in the existing training curriculum available at the provincial department of agriculture. ⇒ EWT's approach to capacity development is articulated and builds on the possibility of collaboration between stakeholders in the landscape.

				⇒ Two SLM videos were developed for the Karoo landscape ⇒ **Detailed guide to diversification in arid areas - 5 % completed** ⇒ Work has started Draft Diversification Approach for the Karoo has been developed - Olifants landscape (CSIR): ⇒ **Stakeholder analysis – 100% completed** ⇒ Specialist baseline reports on the hydrology, ecology, socio-economic, enabling environment, climate and land degradation in the Lepellane catchment ⇒ **Land degradation mapping - 50% completed** ⇒ Land Degradation Risk assessment – 100% complete ⇒ actual WOCAT land degradation and SLM assessment need to be completed July 2019 - Eastern Cape landscape (UR): ⇒ **Government engagement for collaboration - 40% completed** ⇒ Host local Government stakeholder collaboration workshop – plan way forward for integration of GEF 5 Machubeni Project into local Integrated Development Plan (IDP) ⇒ The RU team have initiated a partnership with the Office of the Premier (OTP), EC and FAO RU team met with DRDAR Land Care Directorate to discuss possible technical and financial support of land management and rehabilitation activities at Macubeni ⇒ **Capacity assessment methodology and planning (led by Rhodes – for all 3 SLM Project landscapes)- 40% completed** ⇒ Capacity assessment scorecard developed and tested by all three Responsible Parties – Capacity assessments for mid-way through project implementation will be conducted in Q3 2019. ⇒ **Government technical support through Masibambisane Multistakeholder Forum (MMF) – 50% completed** ⇒ 4 MMF multi-stakeholder meetings were held. Dept of Rural Development and Agriculture expressed excitement over progress of the project regarding community engagement and participation. ⇒ **Environmental education at Machubeni Project Schools – 40% completed**			⇒ The project is playing a catalysing role within the landscape. The anecdotal evidences collected confirms the appreciation of the way of doing business by all stakeholders encountered. ⇒ NOTE: Local municipalities are not taking part in the project. The MTR consultant did not have the chance to meet any of their representatives. The MTR exercise acknowledges the fact that those officials are and will not be targeted by the project. - Olifants landscape (CSIR) ⇒ Training activities have not yet started. ⇒ CSIR does not have a strategy for capacity building. ⇒ Anecdotal evidence collected during interviews in the landscape highlights two great challenges for the remaining time of implementation. Public officers do not seem to have understood their double role as support to the implemention and target group of capacity building initiatives. They are not aware that they will/should be targeted as project beneficiaries. Their commitment is mainly limited to facilitate the work of project staff belonging to CSIR and ARC before and during their field visits. - Eastern Cape landscape (RU) ⇒ 22 training sessions on different aspects of the project have been realized by the RU Team ⇒ RU has promoted the creation of MMF, which intends to be the institutional platform that will guide the capacity development component for public officials and traditional leaders in the landscape and support the monitoring of activities. ⇒ RU does not have a strategy for capacity building. Each Hub leader identifies the training needs for his/her specific hub on an annual basis: Trainings can then either be conducted by Hub leaders or outsourced to local government or NGO partners.

				⇒ During 2-4 April 2019 an Enviro Education week was held for Machubeni GEF 5 Enviro Schools and environmental club was established at each school. ⇒ Learners start engaging in SLM activities such as gardening, training their dogs and caring for animals, composting, planting trees and teaching others. **⇒ Natural resources management groups set-up and operational - 50% completed** ⇒ Two day bookkeeping course was held for local MMF Forums to support their organizational development towards improved resource governance. See summary report on participatory mapping of key resources and eco-infrastructure. **⇒ Consolidation of data on land degradation and key resources map - 40% completed** ⇒ Baseline information database is currently being created summarizing existing information on the Macubeni landscape: natural resources, livelihoods activities, demographics and more.			⇒ Three significant concerns have been recorded during the MTR field trip to Machubeni: a) Herders are aware about their lack of capacity in regard to be able to implement collectively a rotational system in their communal land . b) Traditional leaders do not feel enough capacitated and empowered. They do not understand their role in the project, especially within the MMF. a) Anecdotal evidence collected during the focus group discussions show that the involvement of public officials in project activities is not regular and characterized by a high degree of turnover. Their contribution to the project is very low.
Outcome 3: Enabling environment for promoting rehabilitation of degraded land through carbon sequestration (including accessing and capitalising on carbon markets and the preparation of MRV documentation) in the Eastern Cape strengthened.							
Indicator	**Baseline Level**	**Midterm target**	**End of project target level**	**Second PIR (30 June 2019)**	**MTR Level and Assessment**	**Achievement rating**	**Justification for rating**
Number of hectares of restored spekboomveld in the Baviaanskloof	9,081 hectares of degraded spekboomveld	Not set	1000 hectares of restored spekboomveld	⇒ **Rehabilitation implemented on 800 ha in Baviaanskloof - 30% completed** ⇒ **Improved planting** protocols - 70% complete ⇒ Draft 1 of Revegetation (Spekboom) planting protocol completed ⇒ Continued field work for data collection on planting protocol experiment ⇒ **Training manual on land rehabilitation - 100% completed** ⇒ Training manual to guide thicket veld rehabilitation training of communal land owners in the Baviaanskloof has been completed ⇒ **Draft rehabilitation plan for Baviaans - 95% completed** ⇒ LivingLands received comments back from GEF5 RU team on the thicket rehabilitation action plan for the Baviaanskloof communal farms. LivingLands are busy processing the comments and edits to prepare the final document in Q3 2019 ⇒ **Engagement and implementation plan for supporting and diversifying livelihoods - 30% completed** ⇒ Engagement with two communal farms Sewefontein and Tchnuganoo and update stakeholder analysis report	⇒ **Rehabilitation of 800 ha degraded trough simple erosion control and revegetation on communal farms - 22% completed** ⇒ **Revised protocol for planting spekboom and other species for survival - 100% completed** ⇒ **42 ha revegetated on communal farms**	**S Satisfactory**	The rehabilitation of 800 ha of degraded thicket through simple erosion control does not present any critical element. Measures of erosion control are being implemented by the Living Lands team. With the revegetation of 200 ha of spekboomveld being not feasible at present, RU and Living Lands have decided to explore the potential of diverting funds under this component to developing regenerative agriculture opportunities on the communal farms. No regenerative agriculture work has started to date. It also does not present any critical element. This measure has been agreed by the trust of the farm: the team of Living Lands will implement it in collaboration with the farmers. At the moment of the MTR mission, Living Lands had not defined yet the number of ha to be destined to regenerative agriculture. This missing element in their plan is not a reason for concern as it is anticipated that the area to be impacted will not be large-between 30 and 50 ha.

							The MTR exercise acknowledges that the achievement of the indicator as stated in the project document, i.e. 1000 hectares of restored spekboomveld is not entirely feasible because of the harsh climatic conditions (refer to section 4.1.2 "Results Framework" for details), which is affecting the area of the Baviaanskloof. Under these circumstances, the MTR reputes that the rehabilitation of 800 ha of degraded thicket through simple erosion control and the activities of regenerative agriculture are to be considered as the actual targets of the project. Thus, under this perspective, the achievement is satisfactory.
Existence of a government-endorsed, simplified methodology for calculation of certified emissions reductions/carbon credits from spekboomveld restoration	N/A	Not set	Existence of a government-endorsed, simplified methodology for calculation of certified emissions reductions/carbon credits from spekboomveld restoration	⇒ **New carbon stocks methodology – 90% completed** ⇒Progress report on new carbon methodology with remote sensed imagery. ⇒ **Government engagement for uptake of new carbon methodology - 40% completed** ⇒ Facilitated DEA/DHEST meeting around soil carbon, timelines established for interaction with DEA and other line departments, develop and presented a proposal for funding and implementing soil carbon model. ⇒ **Carbon stocks baseline - 95% completed** ⇒ Field carbon stocks measurements for degraded spekboom thicket on communal farms are complete, final data analyses are being completed and carbon stocks report for Baviaanskloof spekboom thicket will be submitted in Q3 2019 Carbon baseline report ⇒ Final Standard operating Procedures for baseline sampling of carbon in sub-tropical thicket completed	⇒ **Carbon stocks methodology and offsetting opportunities for communal farms – 100% completed** **New carbon stocks methodology integrated into SA Carbon Standard - 70% completed** ⇒ Remote sensing new methodology for quantifying C in subtropical thicket ⇒ Engagement with key government departments to integrate new methodology in SA Carbon Standard ⇒ Alternative plan if new methodology not accepted ⇒ **Carbon baselines for 200 ha offset project & SOPs for monitoring & measuring - 75% completed** ⇒ Carbon baselines for severely degraded to intact thicket ⇒ Integration of data into new methodology- correlation with remote sensed imagery	**S Satisfactory**	Due to budget limitations RU, in consultation with the PMU and WWF consultant, decided to focus on delivering an above-ground carbon monitoring mechanism, which has been completed. The project has delivered a simplified monitoring methodology that is acceptable under the Voluntary Carbon Standards without requiring review, and is therefore eligible under the South African National Carbon Tax Act. The project has achieved the goal of developing a simplified methodology for carbon monitoring to reduce costs for landowners who want to access carbon offsets projects linked to subtropical thicket restoration.
Number of land users signing MoUs to form a Baviaanskloof Programme of Activities/Grouped Project	0	Not set	At least 30 land users in the Baviaanskloof sign an MoU to participate as proponents in a Programme of Activities/Grouped Project	⇒ **Carbon offsetting project design document (PDD) - 20% completed** ⇒ Conducted an initial scoping of potential carbon offsetting bundling options toward the development of guidelines for project partners to ensure project readiness in the Baviaanskloof- options were scoped and initial guidance provided on site to LivingLands NGO, Baviaanskloof as the project partner. ⇒ Developed go/no go and risks document for 200 ha carbon planting toward carbon offsets for Baviaanskloof. ⇒ Agreed on the approach to move forward in the project area with the carbon offsetting business case. ⇒ See 200 ha Planting Options Summarized with Risks	⇒ **Institutions for accessing carbon market and other streams identified for communal farms - 55% completed** ⇒ Engage with communal farmers- gain buy-in to project objectives and develop livelihoods options ⇒ Strengthen existing institutions on farms Identify context suitable livelihoods streams outside of C market and support farmers to access ⇒ **Develop carbon offsets project according to 200 ha planting - 10% completed** ⇒ Develop project design doc and validate	**S Satisfactory**	The project has time to develop the carbon project without revegetating any hectares. However, there is still a need for local landowners to sign MOUs to agree to participate in the proposed carbon project in the Baviaanskloof. These landowners can then conduct planting and access carbon market after GEF5 Project has ended. The local institution will be the Baviaanskloof Hartland Conservancy through which to manage this carbon project. If the documentation and necessary validation is completed before end

				Baviaanskloof ⇒ Literature review completed of carbon offsetting methodologies ⇒ Evaluate existing institutions for assessing green economy - 70% completed ⇒ Living Lands conducted a survey of institutions currently operative in the Baviaanskloof. The results are being processed and will be reported on Q3 2019. The information which has been gathered so far indicates that the current institutions in Baviaanskloof are not ready for formal business strategies such as the carbon offsetting market.	ID carbon purchasers & register credits on relevant market		of GEF5 (which is currently foreseeable) it will ensure that the actual planting and carbon offsets will be a potential sustained activity beyond GEF5 Project.
Outcome 4: Financing and governance frameworks strengthened to support the adoption of SLM approaches.							
Indicator	**Baseline Level**	**Mid term target**	**End of project target level**	**Second PIR (30 June 2019)**	**MTR Level and Assessment**	**Achievement rating**	**Justification for rating**
SLM practices are mainstreamed into national and sub-national strategies for development and land-use planning	There is little integration of SLM practices into national and sub-national strategies for development and land-use planning. Where these do exist, they are seldom based on up-do-date scientific knowledge on SLM best practices and do not always incorporate a diverse range of stakeholder priorities.	Not set	A strategy for integrating SLM into development and land-use planning has been developed and implemented at the national and sub-national levels.	*National level:* ⇒ Project engagement with mainly Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Land Reform as well as Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries. *Landscape level:* ⇒ Project engagement with Provincial Departments of Agriculture, Rural Development and Land Reform as well as Environmental Affairs and Nature Conservation. Responsible Parties also communicate and engage with local municipalities in project landscape. ⇒ *"Partnerships for SLM change"* PMU driven initiative together with RP's, DEA and DAFF to involve private sector more in out scaling of SLM at national level, within and beyond boundaries of project landscapes. Interactions include: - Small scale cattle farmer development in the Free State with Sernic Group, in close collaboration with I3A a private Training Company and Department of Agriculture LandCare Programme. - Building SLM principles into Agricultural High School curriculum together with Department of Education in Free State and Sernic Group. - Key technical stakeholder for SIZA (Sustainability Initiative of South Africa), a platform to ensure ethical and environmentally sustainable trade. - Technical and strategic inputs towards Groot Marico Biosphere Reserve. Main engagement and inputs towards year 3, 4 and 5 of project implementation	*National level:* ⇒ Project engagement with mainly Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Land Reform as well as Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries. *Landscape level:* ⇒ Project engagement with Provincial Departments of Agriculture, Rural Development and Land Reform as well as Environmental Affairs and Nature Conservation. Responsible Parties also communicate and engage with local municipalities in project landscape. ⇒ *"Partnerships for SLM change"* PMU driven initiative together with RP's, DEA and DAFF to involve private sector more in out scaling of SLM at national level, within and beyond boundaries of project landscapes. Interactions include: - Small scale cattle farmer development in the Free State with Sernic Group, in close collaboration with I3A a private Training Company and Department of Agriculture LandCare Programme. - Building SLM principles into Agricultural High School curriculum together with Department of Education in Free State and Sernic Group. - Key technical stakeholder for SIZA (Sustainability Initiative of South Africa), a	**NA** **Not applicable**	⇒ The MTR could not collect much information in regard to the development of activities related to Outcome 4. Indeed, the mainstreaming exercise has not yet started. Available information at project level are the following: - A consultant will be hired by RU to run the process. The pathway to have strategy for integrating SLM into development and land-use planning and comprehensive set of policy recommendations that mainstream long-term SLM objectives into policies in place is intended to be inclusive and consultative, to build on existing national and provincial institutional process and to be informed by emerging issues and lessons learned derived from the activities implemented at field level. - The work of the consultant will be informed as well by the work done on the ground by the RPs. - The rationale for the rating NA is represented by the fact that the MTR consultant could not assess a process that is not yet in place and could not meet any stakeholders other than RU and PMU.

					platform to ensure ethical and environmentally sustainable trade. - Technical and strategic inputs towards Groot Marico Biosphere Reserve.		
SLM objectives are mainstreamed into public expenditure, agricultural subsidies and land reform incentives	Agricultural and related policies do not incentivise the implementation of SLM practices. Consequently, land users are unable to take advantage of opportunities for implementation of SLM practices in currently degraded landscapes.	Not set	A comprehensive set of policy recommendations that mainstream long-term SLM objectives into policies related to inter alia agriculture, rangeland management, biodiversity, soil and water conservation and land reform.	⇒ PMU and certain Responsible Parties are involved and members of the following SLM and Land Degradation related Forums to promote SLM principles through these forums: - UNCCD National Coordinating Body - National Natural Resource Management Working Group for Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Land Reform - Reference Group Member for DEA: Working for Land Rehabilitation Programme - Steering Committee member for Tsitsa Project, DEA: NRM's biggest land rehabilitation project in the country (Eastern Cape) Main inputs foresee for year 4 and 5 of project implementation	⇒ PMU and certain Responsible Parties are involved and members of the following SLM and Land Degradation related Forums to promote SLM principles through these forums: - UNCCD National Coordinating Body - National Natural Resource Management Working Group for Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Land Reform - Reference Group Member for DEA: Working for Land Rehabilitation Programme - Steering Committee member for Tsitsa Project, DEA: NRM's biggest land rehabilitation project in the country (Eastern Cape) Main inputs foresee for year 4 and 5 of project implementation	**NA** **Not applicable**	⇒ Refer to previous indicator.

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

Rating scales are exposed in annex 3

4.2.2. Analysis the GEF Tracking Tool at the Baseline with the one completed right before the Midterm Review.

The GEF Tracking Tool at the Baseline, i.e. included as annex in the Project Document, and the one completed for the MTR, do not differ in content. This occurrence is not surprising as project activities have mainly been focusing on activities that were not implemented at field level.

The baseline values were adapted as the overall project area was overestimated during the project design phase.

4.2.3. Remaining barriers to achieving the project objective

The MTR exercise identified the following main barriers to achieving the project objective.

General

The capacity of the PSC members to discuss effectively and reach quick consensus on how to move on with the implementation of activities at field level does seem to be partly lacking. The reporting system in place to inform the PSC meetings may contribute negatively to the low readiness of the PSC members to respond to project needs (refer to section 4.3.1. “Management Arrangements” for details). Indeed, during the last two PSC meetings, i.e. those of 2019, the quorum to decisions was missing.

Karoo landscape

The preliminary work aiming at laying the groundwork for the actual implementation of activities in the field at farm level can be considered substantially done. Activities should start as soon as possible to achieve the main outcome.

The main barrier for the implementation relates to concerns about a smooth and rapid approval of the grants and consequent disbursement of funds to successfully implement SLM practices on the ground (Outcome 1).

Olifants landscape

The rehabilitation of the grazing land within the communal land has resulted not feasible (refer to section 4.1.2. ”Results Framework” for details).

A landscape project implementation plan and M&E system is not yet in place and target levels for the new component (home gardening, rainwater harvesting and contours) are not yet set. Therefore, the MTR exercise cannot anticipate any barrier to achieving results.

It is self-evident that the lack of a landscape project implementation plan and M&E system is a critical element for the implementation of activities in the landscape in relation to both the Outcome 1 and 2.

Machubeni landscape

The capacities of traditional leaders to support the implementation of the rotational grazing system in the project area are not well developed. This statement arises from anecdotal evidence collected during the FGD held with the leaders during the MTR mission in Machubeni. All leaders attending the FGD expressed their concern regarding their role in the project. They have not yet been substantially empowered as part of the Masibambisane Multistakeholder Forum (MMF). Moreover, they were not familiar with the concepts of self-reliance and resilience, which are at the core of any climate change adaptation process.

An additional concern raised was related to the fact that even though a substantial and almost unanimous consensus to move to a rotational grazing system has been achieved with the herders and a set of rules discussed and agreed. However, the actual management of the resolution of conflicts, which may occur during the implementation of the identified SLM practice, specifically the rotational grazing system, have not been tested yet.

Participation of local authorities (at municipal and provincial level) is not regular. Participants in relevant MMF meetings vary and, as a result, there is no continuity in place. Although ToRs for the MMF were prepared and delivered to the relevant authorities, the officials who eventually take part in the MMF meetings are not necessarily aware of them.

Baviaanskloof landscape

The MTR exercise did not identify any barrier to achieve the new results formulated by RU and Living Lands, following the acknowledgement that the restoration of spekboomveld was not feasible.

Outcome 4

No major barriers to the achievement of outcome 4 were identified by the MTR. RU, will lead the process in collaboration with the PMU, through the recruitment of a consultant. The pathway to achieve the outcome is intended to be inclusive and consultative, to build on existing national and provincial institutional processes and to be informed by emerging issues and lessons learned derived from the activities implemented at field level.

4.3. Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

4.3.1. Management Arrangements

Management arrangements are clear: the PMU, supported by the UNDP Country Office, is in charge of the work on a day-to-day work basis. It coordinates the implementation of the project with the RPs, who ultimately are those in charge of implementing activities and monitoring project progress in the field (Outcomes 1, 2 and 3). In addition, the RU is in charge of managing the activities related to Outcome 4, with the support of the PMU.

Responsibilities and reporting lines are organized according to a clear division of roles. Each RP reports to the PMU. The formal reporting, i.e. the quarterly reports related to the contractual arrangements between UNDP and the RPs then follow the UNDP procedures to have payments released to the RPs, i.e. they are shared with the Programme Energy and Environment Unit, namely its Focal Point, with the Financial Department and finally with the Operations Manager.

Finally, the PMU is in charge of consolidate the information coming from each RP (quarterly narrative and financial reports) into a summary report then distributed to the members of the Project Steering Committee, usually around two weeks before the PSC meeting takes place. In its principle, the consolidation should allow all PSC members to participate in meetings, which take place twice per year, with an updated overview on project implementation and disbursements. This way of proceeding ideally allows the PSC members to participate with a solid background knowledge and to be able to make informed decisions.

However, the MTR has recorded that the consolidated information on project status and progress arrives to PSC members in a format that is not easily readable: the document is not concise and does not allow a quick reading. The format is believed to serve rather the UNDP requirements than to constitute an easy tool to inform PSC members.

So far, the PSC did not make any substantial adaptive decision. Project implementation did follow the project document and the results framework. No reallocation between budget lines did materialize. Decision-making was limited to approval of annual work plans, allocations of annual funds to RPs and drafting of terms of reference for consultants. When the MTR mission took place, CSIR had not yet communicated to the PSC the changes to its component within Outcome 1. Also, RU had not yet reported officially to the PSC the changes occurring within Outcome 3.

RPs have different management arrangements at landscape level:

EWT in Karoo landscape

The daily work at field level is coordinated by the NamaNama Karoo Coordinator/GEF Project Responsible and supported by a Conservation Specialist. She reports to the Dryland Conservation Programme Manager. Finally, the organization has recently added an additional staff member to support the Team, with special focus on the implementation of SLM practises.

CSIR in Olifants

The work is coordinated by CSIR, namely by the GEF 5 Coordinator. Activities at field level are conducted by CSIR and ARC staff in close coordination with the extension staff of the Department of Limpopo of Agriculture, who organizes the agenda and the logistics of CSIR and ARC staff each time they visit the project area from Pretoria.

RU in Machubeni

The overall work is supervised by the RU Project Leader and the daily work is under the responsibility of the RU Project Coordinator. The work with the community is done by the so-called RU Hub Leaders, who are at the same time project staff under the direct supervision of the Project Coordinator and PhD and MSc students, whose supervisor is the Project Leader. The Hub Leaders work in close collaboration with Project Focal Points who reside in the community.

RU and Living Lands in Baviaanskloof

The overall work is supervised by the RU Project Leader. The actual work is carried out in the landscape by the staff of Living Lands, specifically by the GEF 5 Project Coordinator and the GEF 5 Project Land Rehabilitation Manager. The latter is in charge of a team of 15 employees, who actual do the rehabilitation work on the ground.

The management arrangements at RU seem not to be fully conducive to the project achievements. The main impediment is represented by the double role of the RU Hub Leaders/PhD/MSc students, who ideally should report project-related issues to the RU Project Coordinator and study-related ones to the RU Project Leader, who is the Professor responsible for their course of study. This two-line reporting mechanism does not seem to be effective, and, therefore, the capacities of the RU Project Coordinator and all RU Team to coordinate the implementation result affected. The role of RU is also of paramount importance for the project as the university is deeply involved in activities in all four outcomes and across all project landscapes. In this regard, it is important to report that the bulk of the capacity building budget is allocated to RU. The university is responsible for implementing training programmes in the three landscapes. i.e. Karoo, Machubeni and Olifants along with the other RPs.

DEFF as IP is leading the PSC. At nationally level, it chairs the PSC and provides its inputs on project implementation by communicating with the PMU. The consultant had the chance to meet only two staff of DEFF at provincial level in Machubeni landscape. In the two other provinces, the involvement of DEFF staff seems not to be there.

DALRRD participates in project activities through the engagement of staff both at national and provincial level. The support of the national staff covers pertinent elements of the project including GIS support for landscape unit identification, landscape degradation assessment by applying WOCAT methodologies, and contributions for developing training materials.

At provincial level, the staff of the department instead play a double role. On one hand, they are supporting the implementation of the project and, on the other hand, they are a beneficiary of the project (outcome 2). In Olifants, the staff of the department is crucial, they act as focal points of the project in the area of implementation; in Karoo they participate actively in the capacity development and extension component

of the project. Instead, in Machubeni, the role of the department has not clearly emerged during the MTR exercise. The occurrence is most probably due to the fact that engagement of local stakeholders in the MMF is not regular and characterized by a high degree of turnover of public officers.

The different relative involvement in the three provinces of DEFF and DALRRD staff highlights the high level of relevance of the project for the agricultural sector.

It is important to highlight that the approach to discussion between the PMU and DEFF does not always promote a common understanding about what is considered strategic and what is considered day-to-day project management by both parties. The MTR anticipates that these different points of view may affect negatively the implementation of the two last year and half of the project.

PMU reported feedback to the IP during DEFF Chief Director's Meetings, DEFF Biodiversity and Conservation Branch Annual Strategic Planning meetings and special feedback meetings as requested by DEFF.

UNDP PMU is engaged in the day-to-day coordination of activities. It communicates with RPs both formally through exchange of emails and documents and informally through phone calls. Ideas are discussed, however, the final decisions on how to engage at field level is ultimately a decision of the RPs. As a result, the independence and autonomy of the RPs is protected and the respective roles are acknowledged and respected. The MTR noted that this way of engagement between PMU and RPs has not always facilitated the support and supervision work of the PMU.

In the course of the implementation, PMU has presented the project in different forums, meetings, workshops and conferences to align our activities with existing strategies/activities and initiatives in the Land Degradation and SLM field, and to foster partnerships to allow for the out scaling of SLM best practices.

4.3.2. Work planning

As highlighted, there is no mention of any mid-term value of achievement for none of the project indicators (refer to section "4.1.2." Results Framework for details). The MTR could not identify any delay in the implementation.

However, the exercise has recorded a sense of urgency for the SLM practises implementation on the ground in Karoo, Machubeni and Olifants. This sense of urgency is substantially confirmed by all project beneficiaries encountered by the MTR consultant and shared by most of all other stakeholders.

Work-planning is outputs-based: the transfer of funds from UNDP and each RP is based on the actual expenditure of each RP. Each tranche of payment is released once the RP has spent at least 80% of the previous payment and when agreed activities are completed.

4.3.3. Finance and co-finance

The project's disbursement rates up to December 2019 have been as follows:

Project	Allocated (project proposal) (US$)	Spent (end Dec. 2019) (US$)	Balance (end of Dec. 2019 (US$)	Percentage spend (%)
Outcome 1	2.565.568,00	1.433.991,02	1.131.576,98	55,89
Outcome 2	362.526,00	263.739,75	98.786,25	72,75
Outcome 3	807.645,00	317.177,29	490.467,71	39,27
Outcome 4	300.357,00	1.211,19	299.145,81	0,40
PMU	201.804,00	82.127,98	119.676,02	40,70

Total	**4.237.900,00**	**2.098.247,23**	**2.139.652,77**	**49,51**

Due to the nature of the project, the control of financial expenditure is quite straightforward: expenses are mainly related to the contracts of RPs and no major procurement actions are foreseen. As mentioned earlier in the report (refer to section 4.3.1 "Management Arrangements" for details), the annual work plans are approved by the PSC. Each RP drafts and submits its own work plan to the PMU who is responsible for consolidating it into a project work plan and get the approval from the PSC. Work plans are then reviewed and approved by the financial and operations staff in the UNDP CO.

The MTR exercise acknowledges that since the beginning of the implementation the project has not registered any disbursement problems, or any delays related to the timely flow of funds, and decisions about the course of implementation were never postponed because of financial issues.

Note: as the MTR consultant did not receive the relevant information, the MTR cannot address issues related to co-finance from UNDP, the Government of South Africa and RU. Whereas, EWT disbursed US$ 256,488, which equal to 77% of its expected contribution by the end of the project.

Source of Co-financing	Co-financer	Type of Co-financing	Amount Confirmed at CEO endorsement (US$)	Actual Amount Contributed at stage of MTR (US$)	Actual % of Expected Amount
---	UNDP	---	1,000,000.00	Not available at stage of MTR	---
---	Government	---	38,729,082.18	Not available at stage of MTR	---
---	RU	---	1,115,251.28	Not available at stage of MTR	---
Private sector & Trusts	EWT	Cash	332,000.00	256,488.00	77%
		Total	41,176,333,46	**---**	**---**

The MTR exercise acknowledges that CSIR has, as well, co-funded the intervention with a sum of US$ 311,067.

4.3.4. Project-level monitoring and evaluation systems

In two landscapes, i.e. Karoo and Olifants, the work done so far has been laying the groundwork (engagement with communities and local authorities and to a certain extent training) for the implementation of those activities. In Baviaanskloof and Machubeni, instead, the actual implementation of SLM practise has begun. In Machubeni these activities relate to the soil erosion control and conservation agriculture (home garden), while those related to rangeland management have not yet started. With the exception of Baviaanskloof landscape, this work has been carried out without the support of an M&E system.

In the Karoo landscape, although indicators and activities were not monitored through a formal M&E system, EWT kept systematically track of the activities conducted by the formulation of fact sheets on project activities: the most relevant activities were, indeed, reported into a standard fact sheet format including relevant information to understand the implementation progress. EWT staff was formulating an implementation plan and M&E system during the MTR mission.

In the landscapes of Olifants and Machubeni, no systemic approach to M&E was in place.

In Machubeni, short documents to monitor the development of each component are available. They are not proper implementation plans and M&E systems, as they lack some important elements, being the most important milestones, risks and assumptions, and mitigation measures.

In the Olifants landscape, an implementation plan and M&E system are missing.

Finally, Living Lands in Baviaanskloof is having at its disposal a monitoring system keeping track of activity progress at ground level. The MTR exercise acknowledges that in this landscape the simple monitoring of activities is enough to implement the project. The activities are fully under the supervision of Living Lands, as the very same organization does the actual land conservation work with its staff on the ground. There is no involvement of other stakeholders.

The lack of comprehensive M&E systems at landscape level is reflected by a lack of a general M&E system at PMU level, which in turn affects the capacity of the PMU to play at its full capacity its coordination and supervision role.

4.3.5. Stakeholder engagement

The project mainly involves institutional stakeholders who belong to national, provincial and municipal level public institutions, and NGOs, along with the communities. Private sector is engaged exclusively in the Karoo landscape.

The engagement of the State of South Africa is evident. The project is implemented within its own governmental institutions in Pretoria and through the engagement with its provincial and district peripheral terminals in three landscapes, i.e. Karoo, Machubeni and Olifants. The contribution of all public institutions to the project's performance is deemed fundamental by the present MTR exercise. They are involved through a consultative and participatory process.

The institutional members of the PSC, i.e. DEFF, DALRRD, DWA, DAFF and SANBI are the national institution that are NAP/UNCCD contributing partners, being the project part of the government effort to move forward the implementation of the convention at national level.

<u>Karoo landscape</u>

The project is well engaging with the Provincial Departments of Agriculture of Northern Cape and Western Cape Provincial. Moreover, the project has been engaging with the private sector, represented by large commercial farmers and the National Wool Growers Association.

<u>Olifants landscape</u>

The project is well engaging with the Provincial Department of Agriculture of Limpopo. All work with the communities is coordinated by this Department. The traditional leaders of the two villages where the activities will be implemented are as well aware of the project.

The public officers encountered during the MTR mission reported that their engagement with the project is limited to liaising the communities with the project staff, i.e. CSIR and ARC and to logistic arrangements.

<u>Machubeni landscape</u>

Public institutions are formally involved through the establishment of a MMF. However, their involvement has not been allowing a continuity of engagement of officials throughout the implementation. Anecdotal evidence collected during the MTR mission indicates that the project is not aligned with the way of doing business of the organizations. Within the organizations, officials are requested to submit a monthly work plan to their direct supervisors, whereas their participation to project activities is not organized on a monthly basis. This lack of alignment with their internal procedure results in an erratic participation of each individual

to project activities and in a high degree of turnover of officials who actually take part in the activities. As mentioned, continuity of engagement is not secured.

Baviaanskloof

Baviaansloof constitutes a singularity in the project under review. Living Lands is a member of the trust that governs the conservancy. Living Lands represents a sort of extension service for the whole conservancy whose engagement with the residents of the conservancy is built on a day-to-day basis; it is part of their institutional role in the conservancy. External extension services simply do not operate within the boundaries of the conservancy. In addition, outcome 3 does not include a capacity development component of communities living in the conservancy. Living Lands executes the works on the ground directly with its employees.

Finally, PMU is involving a variety of national stakeholders in Pretoria. Their involvement and participation during the last two years and a half of project implementation will be fundamental for achieving Outcome 4. On this regard, it is important to highlight that PMU has already started to engage with existing initiatives existing in the country, which may contribute positively to project achievements, e.g. Sustainability Initiative of South Africa (SIZA) and Tsitsa Project (biggest land rehabilitation project in the country), amongst others.

4.3.6. Reporting

Adaptive changes to the project design which emerged in Oilfants (outcome 1) and in Baviaanskloof have not yet been officially reported to the PMU and the PSC. No other adaptive change occurred; the project has been implemented according to its original project design.

There have been two project implementation reviews (PIR) produced to date, one for 2018 and the most recent one for 2019. The 2018 PIR was rated as moderately satisfactory. Instead, UNDP and PMU has not yet received any feedback on the 2019 PIR. The comments on the rating of the 2018 PIR did not highlight any significant element to be addressed.

4.3.7. Communications

Internal project communication is coordinated by PMU: RPs communicate with the PMU in charge to provide feedback to DEFF on project progress. Finally, DEFF circulate the relevant information to the PSC members before each PSC takes place. In this was the information of about project status is available to all project internal stakeholders in Pretoria.

In each project landscape, the RPs liaise with local authorities and communities. In Machubeni, the liaison is ensured by local project focal points who resides in the communities. In the Karoo, the project coordinator is in charge of the communication with all stakeholders. Finally, the provincial officers of the agricultural department are the focal points in charge of linking the communities with the CSIR and ARC project staff that is based in Pretoria.

The project internal communication is effective. Stakeholders receive information around the project and communities members know who to address in order to get in touch with the relevant project staff in the three landscapes.

The project has developed a communication strategy which is not yet been implemented. The strategy includes the identification of target groups, the tools for information dissemination and a short monitoring protocol to understand the success of the communication strategy on target groups.

PMU is leading the process to have a project website. The website is intended to make information about project activities available to broader public and project stakeholders, following the idea that has been applied by EWT in Karoo. i.e. a website as a tool for SLM knowledge management.

The website will be used as well as interactive project management tool to submit reports, track project progress, apply for small grants and communicate to PSC members and other key stakeholders.

EWT has developed communication material with key messages about SLM such as notebooks, pens, jackets, insulated mugs and memory sticks and lanyards with the best practice guidelines loaded for distribution. These items are distributed to people who participate in the project in various capacities.

4.4. Sustainability

The core idea of the project is to have capacities in place in the four project landscapes (outcomes 1, 2 and 3) and at country level (outcomes 3 and 4) in order to give continuity and build on project achievements. Ultimately, the project is a capacity development project for a variety of stakeholders, i.e. individual land users, communities and relevant local and national authorities, and the mainstreaming of SLM at institutional level. Based on such a holistic approach, the risks related to the four dimensions of sustainability, i.e. financial, socio-economic, institutional and environmental, should be addressed, at least in principle, throughout the whole period of project implementation. In other words, addressing sustainability is at the core of the project idea.

All risks identified in the Project Document are still appropriate with the exception of the environmental risk "climate change will increase the probability of failure of project activities". Indeed, its ratings - 2 for impact and 2 for likelihood - should be increased to 5 and 5. The variation of weather conditions in the recent years, in terms of annual precipitation and distribution, renders the restoration of spekboomveld unfeasible (outcome 3) and intensified land degradation processes.

4.4.1. Financial risks to sustainability

In the landscapes of Machubeni and Olifants it is very likely that after the GEF assistance ends, the communities living in the two landscapes will not receive any significant external funds to build on project accomplishments. RU is engaging with NGOs such as Meat Naturally Ltd. (for the rangeland component) and Zingisa Educational (for the agro-ecology component, i.e. homegardens). They may ensure a continuity of support after the completion of the project. However, their capacity to ensure continuity of support could not be assessed because representatives of the two organizations were not met during the consultant's mission to South Africa.

The same would probably apply to the other two landscapes. However, in Karoo and Baviaanskloof, the NGOs EWT and Living Lands follow a programme approach, i.e. the UNDP/GEF activities constitute an individual project in the frame of their overarching conservation programmes. Communities will continue to receive financial support from EWT and Living Lands. An institutional donor of Living Lands, i.e. Common Land, committed to a twenty years long support of the NGO's work in the Baviaanskloof.

4.4.2. Socio-economic risks to sustainability

The socio-economic risks to sustainability are related to the capacities that the project will be able to develop in the three landscapes.

<u>Karoo landscape</u>

The risks are strictly related to the achievement of outcome 2 in the landscape. The risks are deemed as low. Each beneficiary works on a specific plot of land of the commonage area, and commercial farmers work on their own farms. They do not compete over the same resource and, consequently, the reasons for conflict are not significant.

Furthermore, EWT has a clear training strategy that includes a different array of intervention, which goes beyond the simple implementation of training sessions (refer to section 4.2.1. "Progress towards outcomes analysis" for details). In addition, there is an active involvement of the private sector, through the National

Wool Growers Association, which has the capacities and the interest to push for a sustainable production of wool, starting with the herding activities including the sustainable management of rangelands.

Olifants landscape
The risks relate to the achievement of outcome 2 in the landscape. The risks are deemed as high. They coincide with what is reported in relation to the likelihood to reach solid achievements of outcome 2 (refer to the section 4.2.1. “Progress towards outcomes analysis” for details).

Machubeni landscape
The risks relate to the achievement of outcome 2 in the landscape. The risks are deemed as high. They coincide with what is reported in relation to the likelihood to reach solid achievements of outcome 2 (refer to the section 4.2.1. “Progress towards outcomes analysis” for details).

Therefore, the socio-economic risks to sustainability are strictly related to the capacity of RU in the last two years of implementation to realize the project´s capacity development component. In light of the present MTR exercise, this becomes of paramount importance.

Baviaanskloofs
The socio-economic risks of the intervention are not significant. The erosion control measures are being implemented in areas where currently there are no grazing activities. In addition, the work on the cropland of the Sewefontein farm will cover only a few hectares, namely between 30 and 50 ha.

4.4.3. Institutional framework and governance risks to sustainability
The achievement of all project outcomes will guarantee a high level of sustainability. The non-achievement of some of them, on the contrary, will determine a low level of sustainability. In fact, the aim of the project is to set up a series of interventions at different levels, from community to government, to enable an effective mainstreaming of SLM nationwide. Consequently, the risks coincide with identified barriers to achieving the project objective (refer section 4.2.3 “Remaining barriers to achieving the project objective” for details).

4.4.4. Environmental risks to sustainability
The environmental sustainability is at the core of the project.

The project aims at creating an enabling environment for the adoption of knowledge-based SLM models in the Karoo, Eastern Cape and Olifants. As such, the environmental risks coincide fully with the socio-economic risks to sustainability, which are substantially linked to the level of capacities developed at community level.

In the three landscapes, the annual precipitation and the rainfall distribution have changed dramatically over the last five years: it is clearly understood that the different SLM practices promoted in the three landscapes may only be considered as sustainable if there is no significant worsening of the climate conditions. SLM practices enhance the resilience of the land and communities to climate change. However, there is a certain threshold, e.g. prolonged dry-spells, after which an SML practice fails and a complete change of land management, including land use, becomes necessary.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1. Conclusions

MTR Conclusion n° 1

⇒ There is a unanimous agreement amongst all stakeholders met during the MTR mission in South Africa about the high degree of relevance of the project as it poses an opportunity to develop capacity at different levels, from communities to national institutions, to promote the adoption of SLM practices and as such fostering sustainable development in degraded productive landscapes.

MTR Conclusion n° 2

⇒ The project design is aligned with the South Africa National Development Plan 2030 and contributes directly to the implementation of the National Action Plan (NAP).

MTR Conclusion n° 3

⇒ The project design does not allow to obtain a clear understanding on how the project should move forward to achieve its final targets. The set of indicators at outcome level captures all relevant information to understand project achievements but the lack of intermediate target levels does not permit an on-going monitoring of project achievement. The definition of clear milestones is left in the hands of those who implement the project, i.e. PMU and RPs.

MTR Conclusion n° 4

⇒ The indicator to measure the achievement of the project objective is the same as of outcome 2. This occurrence does not represent a problem as the formulation of the objective is substantially a brief summary of the formulation of the four outcomes. The achievement of the project objective therewith substantially coincides with the achievement of each project outcome.

MTR Conclusion n° 5

⇒ The project document reports confusing targets levels for the indicator of outcome 1. The MTR considers the following target levels for each landscape: Karoo 50,000 ha; Olifants 16,000 ha, and Machubeni 1,300 ha (with potential for upscaling to cover 150,000 hectares). The rationale behind this choice is given by the fact that these are the number included in the contracts with each RPs.

MTR Conclusion n° 6

⇒ Working on SLM practices with communities and local authorities, formulation of financial instruments, and institutionalization of SLM approaches are the elements that constitute the three pillars of the project design. These features are typical of technical cooperation support projects that aim at improving the quality of aid effectiveness in the long term. In this perspective, the MTR exercise considers that ensuring a high degree of sustainability of the project is essential to consider the implementation successful.

MTR Conclusion n° 7

⇒ The project is implemented in a consultative and participative way:

- PSC meetings represent the formal platform for exchange of information and ideas and for taking decisions.
- In each project landscape, RPs are promoting the engagement with communities and local authorities to generate agreed solutions/options to tackle land degradation. Channels of communication between communities and project staff are accessible.
- The involvement of relevant parties and the collaboration with existing initiatives at country level is the strategic focus of Outcome 4.

In this regard, it is important to highlight that the project must be implemented in a consultative and participatory way. Effective consultation and active participation of all stakeholders is of paramount

importance for the successful implementation of activities, for achieving project outcomes and for ensuring a high degree of sustainability.

MTR Conclusion n° 8

⇒ There is a stringent necessity to promote a better common understanding between the PMU and its counterpart at DEFF of what are to be considered strategic decisions and what is considered day-to-day project management.

MTR Conclusion n° 9

⇒ The communication between PMU and RPs that cannot count on a consolidated implementation plans and M&E systems at landscape level. Hence, the discussions and reflections around project implementation between PMU and RPs result not always effective in terms of project progress.

MTR Conclusion n° 10

⇒ Effective consultation and active participation of all stakeholders is of paramount importance for the successful implementation of activities, for achieving project outcomes, and for ensuring a high degree of sustainability. The MTR has recorded enthusiasm for the project, however, effective involvement of stakeholders is not yet fully ensured both at national (the two last PSC meeting did not reach the quorum of participants for decision-making) and provincial level (in Olifants and Machubeni public officials and traditional leaders are not fully aware of their role in the project).

MTR Conclusion n° 11

⇒ The grants scheme is expected to play an important role for the rollout of the implementation of SLM practices in the three landscapes. It is important to ensure a smooth mechanism of approval and release of the grants with well-defined timelines so that RPs can plan the work accordingly.

MTR Conclusion n° 12

⇒ The performance of the PSC has been hampered in two occasions and the process to agree on the details of the functioning of the grants scheme could not be approved. The number of participants did not reach the requested quorum. Moreover, the format of the report utilized to inform the PSC members prior to their meetings is not easily readable. The difficult readability of the report may lead to long discussions about the progress status of the project, which ultimately affects the quality of support to implementation that the PSC members should, instead, provide. The format of the quarterly report is a formal contractual requirement included in the contract between UNDP and RPs, and responds to the necessity to adhere to the UNDP procedures.

MTR Conclusion n° 13

⇒ The implementation of the project has suffered from a punctual problem. The consultant hired by RU to conduct the Capacity Development Assessment of public stakeholders within the three project landscapes could not yet conduct the assignment in the landscapes of Karoo and Olifants.

MTR Conclusion n° 14 (Karoo landscape)

⇒ The groundwork for implementation of SLM practices is considered done by all stakeholders met during the MTR mission. Both beneficiaries and officials of the Department of Agriculture of Northern Cape Province show enthusiasm and are ready to start with SLM activities in the field. However, the project did not encounter any interest at municipality level. Beneficiaries encountered during the focus group discussions are eager to start. Moreover, the SLM practices should not be implemented too late. A late implementation of the project will also reduce the time to identify emerging problems and to promote the learning-by-doing component necessary for a good understanding of the SLM practices.

MTR Conclusion n° 15 (Karoo landscape)

⇒ The capacity development component is well appreciated by all stakeholders encountered by the consultant during the MTR mission in South Africa. It entails a comprehensive strategy aiming at supporting the farming/herding sector with different tools, such as peer-to-peer trainings, collaboration between communal farmers and commercial farmers, development of the technical capacities of the provincial department of agriculture at personal and institutional level. through the improvement of the curriculum of trainings already available at the department. The component also builds on the existing capacities of the communal farmers who have access to internet as individuals, or through younger family members, and is planning to put at their disposal a project website where the main elements for a sustainable management of farming and herding will be available in different media formats.

MTR Conclusion n° 16 (Olifants landscape)

⇒ CSIR and ARC concluded that the restoration of the communal grazing land in the landscape is not feasible. There would be the necessity to deal with 48 villages and a great number of traditional leaders, i.e. 27, who are as well hesitant to change the *status quo* on the communal land where animals are freely grazing with no particular care from the side of the herders. For this reason, CSIR and ARC have thought to implement activities at household level to, at least, introduce elements of rational management of natural resources at individual level, which does not foresee a commitment in terms of coordination from the traditional leaders and the community itself. Moreover, there will be the implementation of contours in selected slopes in the two villages. The MTR acknowledges the logic and the realism of such a decision. Indeed, the MTR has encountered a lot of enthusiasm of the community around the homestead-based activities.

MTR Conclusion n° 17 (Olifants landscape)

⇒ CSIR has not yet formulated a landscape project implementation plan and associated M&E system. The lack of the two management tools may have negative effects on the implementation of the newly identified SLM practises in the remainder of the project. It may not allow the CSIR and ARC to have the full understanding of the activities on the ground and may not facilitate a fruitful exchange of information with the PMU.

MTR Conclusion n° 18 (Olifants landscape)

⇒ Beneficiaries and officials from the Department of Agriculture of Limpopo Province are ready and willing to initiate the SLM activities in the field. As for the Karoo landscape, there is the necessity to profit from the momentum the project has generated. Furthermore, time is running and there is the necessity to move forward. Neither training nor SLM practices have been implemented yet. There is the stringent need to move ahead with the capacity development activities for all stakeholders involved.

MTR Conclusion n° 19 (Machubeni landscape)

⇒ The management arrangements at RU seem not to be fully conducive to the project achievements. The main impediment is represented by the double role of the RU Hub Leaders/PhD students, who ideally should report project-related issues to the RU Project Coordinator and study-related issues to the RU Project Leader, who is the Professor responsible for their course of study. This two-line reporting mechanism does not seem to be effective, and, therefore, the capacities of the RU Project Manager and all RU Team to coordinate an effective implementation results affected. The role of RU is also of paramount importance for the project as the university is deeply involved in activities in all four outcomes and across all project landscapes. In this regard, it is important to report that the bulk of the capacity building budget is allocated to RU. The university is responsible for implementing training programmes in the three landscapes. i.e. Karoo, Machubeni and Olifants along with the other RPs.

MTR Conclusion n° 20 (Machubeni landscape)
⇒ The capacities of traditional leaders to support the implementation of the rotational grazing system in the project area are not well developed. They are not familiar with the core concepts of self-reliance and resilience, which are at the core of any climate change adaptation process.

MTR Conclusion n° 21 (Machubeni landscape)
⇒ A substantial and almost unanimous consensus to move to a rotational grazing system has been achieved with the herders and a set of rules has been discussed and agreed. However, the management of potential conflicts, which may occur during the implementation of the identified SLM practice, have not been tested yet.

MTR Conclusion n° 22 (Machubeni landscape)
⇒ Participation of local authorities (at municipal and provincial level) is not regular. The MMF component is characterized by a high turnover of officials of the institutions involved and by discontinuous participation of local authorities.

MTR Conclusion n° 23 (Machubeni landscape)
⇒ RU has not yet formulated a landscape project implementation plan and associated M&E system. This lack of management system may lead to an under-performance of the components related to the rotational grazing system and the MMF. There are short documents describing the technical and M&E requirements for each hub, however, the information in not consolidated in an overall implementation plan.

MTR Conclusion n° 24 (Machubeni landscape)
⇒ Two documents are still not completed, i.e. the PMERL is still in its draft form and the key resources & current farming practices baselines are expected to be completed in 2020. In addition, the support from RU to other RPs for PMERL purposes did not yet materialize; it is expected to happen in April 2020.

MTR Conclusion n° 25 (Machubeni landscape)
⇒ The MTR identifies a certain fatigue, reflected in the previous six conclusions, that characterizes the capacity of RU to move ahead effectively with the implementation of the project.

MTR Conclusion n° 26 (Baviaanskloof)
⇒ Living Lands and RU are rehabilitating 800 ha of degraded thicket through simple erosion control and implementing measures of regenerative agriculture instead of restoring 200 ha of spekboomveld.

MTR Conclusion n° 27
⇒ The project has delivered a simplified monitoring methodology that is acceptable under the Voluntary Carbon Standards without requiring review, and is therefore eligible under the South African National Carbon Tax Act

MTR Conclusion n° 28
⇒ The MTR could not collect sufficient information about the development of activities related to Outcome 4. Indeed, the mainstreaming exercise has not yet started. Available information at project level is the following:

- The pathway to mainstream long-term SLM objectives into policies in place is intended to be inclusive and consultative, to build on existing national and provincial institutional processes, and to be informed by emerging issues and lessons learned derived from the activities implemented at field level.
- The work of the consultant will be informed by the emerging issues and activities done by the RPs on the ground.

5.2. Recommendations

MTR Recommendation n° 1

PSC ⇒ Delegate to a small working team, composed of five individuals, the approval process of the small grants. The suggested composition of such a team is the following:

- A member form DEFF
- A member from DAFF
- A member from SANBI or DWS

Participation of high-level officials from those organizations is deemed not necessary by the MTR exercise. A small grant mechanism to support the implementation of activities is foreseen in the project document and the decision to adopt it has already been taken. It is also suggested to appoint deputy members from the same departments so to bestow to the working team more operational flexibility.

It is furthermore suggested to appoint the PMU as coordinator of the working group. The presence of RPs - in person or by teleconference - is proposed in order to have the possibility to agree on minor modifications in real time and fast track the implementation of the small grants.

Suggested timeline: during an extraordinary PSC meeting to take place just after the present MTR exercise.

MTR Recommendation n° 2

PSC/UNDP ⇒ Acknowledge officially the target levels of the indicator of outcome 1 as those defined in the present MTR exercise. Such acknowledgement is important for accountability purposes and to avoid misinterpretations s if an audit or another review exercise will take place at any time before the project ends.

Suggested timeline: during an extraordinary PSC meeting to take place just after the present MTR exercise.

MTR Recommendation n° 3

PMU ⇒ Develop an additional format for reporting to PSC members in collaboration with RPs. The new format should include straight-to-the-point information organized in a two-pager for each landscape. Ideally, it should contain key information such as short description of project status, challenges, ways forward and required support from the PSC, if needed. It should constitute a working annex to the annual work plans, whose format cannot be substantially modified, as they constitute UNDP working tools and an integral part of the contract between RPs and UNDP.

Suggested timeline: in sight of the next ordinary PSC meeting.

MTR Recommendation n° 4

PMU/DEFF ⇒ Plan at least one meeting per month to facilitate a fruitful discussion in which ideas and project needs are shared and discussed, a common understanding of project actions developed, and agreements about what is strategic and what is ordinary project management are reached.

Suggested timeline: March 2020.

MTR Recommendation n° 5

RPs/PMU ⇒ Ensure that there is a periodical flow of information between RPs and PMU, aiming at keeping the PMU updated on project status. The updates should ideally be reported against the landscape M&E system. In addition to the already existing quarterly reports, it is suggested to add a formal communication, done via email, in the middle of every quarter, presenting concise updates against the key indicators and risks identified in each landscape M&E system.

Suggested timeline: just after the development of the project landscape implementation plans and related M&E systems.

MTR Recommendation n° 6
PMU ⇒ Include in the quarterly report format the relevant indicators as per each landscape M&E system.

Suggested timeline: May 2020.

MTR Recommendation n° 7 (Karoo landscape)
EWT ⇒ Describe/summarize the issues encountered in having the municipalities involved in project activities and in a two-page document. Submit the document to the PSC members for acknowledgement and officially stop to engage with the municipalities. In other words, formalize the fact that municipalities will no longer be a target group of the project in the Karoo landscape.

Suggested timeline: in sight of the next ordinary PSC meeting.

MTR Recommendation n° 8 (Olifants landscape)
CSIR ⇒ Draft and submit to the PSC for acknowledgement a short document in which the new outcome, which replaces the original included in the project document, is clearly formulated and broken down into three components (home-gardening, water harvesting techniques and contours) and accompanied by pertinent indicators and realistic target levels, time and budget wise. The document will then present the new component of CSIR in the frame of outcome 1. Its formulation and insertion in a revised Results Framework is important to ensure transparency and accountability.

Suggested timeline: In sight of the next ordinary PSC meeting.

MTR Recommendation n° 9 (Olifants landscape)
CSIR/RU ⇒ Develop a landscape project implementation plan, including an M&E system. In doing this, the CSIR may ask the collaboration of RU who has drafted the PMERL document to support PMU and RPs to develop their M&E system in their landscape of competence.

Suggested timeline: April 2020.

MTR Recommendation n° 10 (Machubeni landscape)
RU ⇒ Develop a partnership with an organization, ideally an NGO, with intensive project management experience to support the implementation of activities at field level in Machubeni. The partnership should ideally take advantage of the relevant technical knowledge available at the university and generated throughout the groundwork conducted so far, and of the capacity of NGOs to mobilize communities and implement activities in the field. In this way, RU can focus on the technical issues, produce relevant scientifically sound knowledge for upscaling activities, whereas the partner NGO is in charge of the project implementation and M&E aspects. In addition, the university can focus better on the implementation of activities related to other project outcomes.

Suggested timeline: April 2020.

MTR Recommendation n° 11 (Machubeni landscape)
RU ⇒ Develop a landscape project implementation plan, including an M&E system. Prioritize the implementation of the activities related to the grazing land restoration and to the MMF component.

Suggested timeline: April 2020

MTR Recommendation n° 12 (Machubeni landscape)
RU ⇒ Negotiate with relevant local authorities a quarterly calendar of meetings of the MMF and field visits. Identify relevant focal points within each institution available to engage with the project. Ideally, the participation in MMF meetings should become an institutional task of the officials involved, ensuring the alignment of the project to the way of doing business of each institution.

Suggested timeline: following the execution of previous recommendation.

MTR Recommendation n° 13 (Baviaanskloof landscape)
RU/Living Lands ⇒ Draft and submit to the PSC for acknowledgement a short document in which the new outcome, which replaces the original included in the project document, is clearly formulated and broken down into two components (rehabilitation of degraded thicket through simple erosion control and regenerative agriculture) and accompanied by pertinent indicators and realistic target levels, time and budget wise. The document will then present the new component of RU/Living Lands in the frame of outcome 3. Its formulation and insertion in a revised Results Framework is important to ensure transparency and accountability.

Suggested timeline: in sight of the next ordinary PSC meeting.

Annex 1 – Terms of reference of the MTR

1. INTRODUCTION

This is the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the UNDP-GEF Midterm Review (MTR) of the *full-sized* project titled *Securing multiple ecosystems benefit through SLM in the productive but degraded landscapes of South Africa* (PIMS 5054) implemented through the *Department of Environmental Affairs, Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF)*, which is to be undertaken in *2019*. The project started on the *19 April 2017* and is in its *third* year of implementation. In line with the UNDP-GEF Guidance on MTRs, this MTR process was initiated before the submission of the second Project Implementation Report (PIR). This ToR sets out the expectations for this MTR. The MTR process must follow the guidance outlined in the document *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* (*insert hyperlink*).

2. PROJECT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The project was designed to reduce the costs of ecological restoration in South Africa and increase the productivity of the land. This requires an innovative approach to SLM and will entail: i) enhancing the capacity of government, institutions and local communities to mainstream SLM into policies, plans and programmes; and ii) implementing climate-smart ecosystem rehabilitation and management measures. The project will build capacity for the integration of SLM into development planning. This will include developing tools for the analysis of vulnerability and the development of innovative SLM interventions. The identified activities will be demonstrated at the local level and will build on existing knowledge and best available technologies. These activities will address soil erosion and land degradation. Consequently, the ecological functioning and resilience in the Karoo, Eastern Cape and the Olifants landscapes will increase.

There are two primary barriers to attaining the long-term preferred solution. Firstly, under the existing scenario, the relevant authorities and stakeholders do not have coordinated access to the knowledge and information required to make informed decisions. Secondly, South Africa lacks an integrated and coherent framework to support the identification and strategic implementation of SLM initiatives. The first barrier speaks to the need to build the capacity necessary to generate and monitor successful examples of SLM practices. Whist the second barrier speaks to the need to strategically finance, implement and govern the application of SLM best practices to achieve landscape-level results.

The proposed project has four outcomes which are envisaged to decrease land degradation and improve ecosystem services in the Karoo, Eastern Cape and the Olifants landscapes.

- Outcome 1 will result in improved natural resource management. Local communities and land users will be responsible for the implementation of climate-smart land/ecosystem rehabilitation and management measures. Furthermore, a long-term strategy will be developed for monitoring and evaluating the success of the climate-smart ecosystem rehabilitation and management measures.
- Outcome 2 will result in increased technical capacity and management of land degradation risks and uncertainties. The availability of land degradation data will be increased through the establishment of a geo-based, climatic, agro-ecological, hydrological information system. This

information will be used to inform the analysis of climate-driven vulnerabilities, as well as the cost-effective planning of climate-smart ecosystem rehabilitation and management measures. In addition, training programmes and skills development will be established for officials at the national, provincial and local level, including local communities. The training and skills development will enable the implementation of climate-smart land/ecosystem rehabilitation and management measures in degraded areas.

- Outcome 3 will create an enabling environment and facilitate access to the carbon market as an incentive for the adoption of SLM. A methodology for collecting baseline data will be developed. In addition, the project will build capacities to ensure that the requisite Project Documents are developed and farmers have access to the carbon market. Furthermore, ~1,000 hectares of Spekboomveld in the Eastern Cape will be restored.
- Outcome 4 will result in financial and governance frameworks. These will support the adoption of SLM approaches. In addition, strategies will be developed for the integration of land degradation considerations into provincial development and municipal land-use plans and policies. Proven measures to reduce land degradation will inform the adoption of climate-smart ecosystem rehabilitation and management measures nationwide.

The project will be implemented between June 2017 and April 2022. The total project budget is US $ 4,237,900 with co-funding from UNDP, Government, the EWT and Rhodes University to the total value of US $ 41 176 333.46

The Responsible Parties to the project are The Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT), Rhodes University, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) working closely with the Agricultural Research Council (ARC), Living Lands, World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Land Reform.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE MTR

The MTR will assess progress towards the achievement of the project objectives and outcomes as specified in the Project Document and assess early signs of project success or failure with the goal 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, its risks to sustainability.

4. MTR APPROACH & METHODOLOGY

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

The MTR consultant is expected to follow a collaborative and participatory approach[1] ensuring close engagement with the Project Consultant, government counterparts (the GEF Operational Focal Point), the UNDP Country Office(s), UNDP-GEF Regional Technical Advisers, and other key stakeholders.

Engagement of stakeholders is vital to a successful MTR.[2] Stakeholder involvement should include interviews with stakeholders who have project responsibilities, including but not limited to Project Management Unit staff, Responsible Parties, sub-contractors, stakeholders at national, provincial and local government level, executing agencies, senior officials and task consultant/ component leaders, key experts and consultants in the subject area, Project Board, project stakeholders, academia, local government and CSOs, etc. Additionally, the MTR consultant is expected to conduct field missions/site visits to the four project landscapes, including the following project sites Machubeni and Baviaanskloof in the Eastern Cape, Sekhukhuneland in Limpopo Province and Loxton in the Nama Karoo.

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

5. DETAILED SCOPE OF THE MTR

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

i. Project Strategy

Project design:

- Review the problem addressed by the project and the underlying assumptions. Review the effect of any incorrect assumptions or changes to the context to achieving the project results as outlined in the Project Document.
- Review the relevance of the project strategy and assess whether it provides the most effective route towards expected/intended results. Were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated into the project design?
- Review how the project addresses country priorities. Review country ownership. Was the project concept in line with the national sector development priorities and plans of the country (or of participating countries in the case of multi-country projects)?
- Review decision-making processes: were perspectives of those who would be affected by project decisions (contribution to human rights, gender equality and women empowerment), those who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the process, considered 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.
- Are the project's objectives and outcomes or components clear, practical, and feasible within its time frame?
- Examine if progress so far has led to or could in the future catalyse beneficial development effects (i.e. income generation, gender equality and women's empowerment, improved governance etc...) that should be included in the project results framework and monitored on an annual basis.

- Ensure broader development and gender aspects of the project are being monitored effectively. Develop and recommend SMART 'development' indicators, including sex-disaggregated indicators and indicators that capture development benefits.

ii. Progress Towards Results

Progress Towards Outcomes Analysis:

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

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

Project Strategy	Indicator[3]	Baseline Level[4]	Level in 1st PIR (self-reported)	Midterm Target[5]	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment[6]	Achievement Rating[7]	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

In addition to the progress towards outcomes analysis:

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

iii. Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

Management Arrangements:

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

Work Planning:

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

Finance and co-finance:

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

Project-level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems:

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

Stakeholder Engagement:

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

Reporting:

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

Communications:

- Review internal project communication with stakeholders: Is communication regular and effective? Are there key stakeholders left out of communication? Are there feedback mechanisms when

communication is received? Does this communication with stakeholders contribute to their awareness of project outcomes and activities and investment in the sustainability of project results?

- Review external project communication: Are proper means of communication established or being established to express the project progress and intended impact to the public (is there a web presence, for example? Or did the project implement appropriate outreach and public awareness campaigns?)
- For reporting purposes, write one half-page paragraph that summarizes the project's progress towards results in terms of contribution to sustainable development benefits, as well as global environmental benefits.

iv. Sustainability

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

Financial risks to sustainability:

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

Socio-economic risks to sustainability:

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

Institutional Framework and Governance risks to sustainability:

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

Environmental risks to sustainability:

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

Human rights and gender equity

Are there any contribution to promotion of human rights and gender equity that may affect land utility, food production, livelihoods, and the production and provision of other ecosystem goods and services?

Conclusions & Recommendations

The MTR consultant will include a section of the report setting out the MTR's evidence-based conclusions, considering the findings.[8]

Recommendations should be succinct suggestions for critical intervention that are specific, measurable, achievable, and relevant. A recommendation table should be put in the report's executive summary. See the *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* for guidance on a recommendation table.

The MTR consultant should make no more than 15 recommendations in total.

Ratings

The MTR consultant will include its ratings of the project's results and brief descriptions of the associated achievements in a *MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table* in the Executive Summary of the MTR report. See Annex E for ratings scales. No rating on Project Strategy and no overall project rating is required.

Table. MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table for (*Securing multiple ecosystems benefit through SLM in the productive but degraded landscapes of South Africa*)

Measure	MTR Rating	Achievement Description
Project Strategy	N/A	
Progress Towards Results	Objective Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale)	
	Outcome 1 Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale)	
	Outcome 2 Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale)	
	Outcome 3 Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale)	
	Etc.	
Project Implementation & Adaptive Management	(rate 6 pt. scale)	
Sustainability	(rate 4 pt. scale)	

Annex 2 - MTR evaluative matrix

Evaluative questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
Project strategy: to what extent is the project strategy relevant to country priorities, country ownership, and the best route towards expected results?			
Project design - Review the problem addressed by the project and the underlying assumptions. Review the effect of any incorrect assumptions or changes to the context to achieving the project results as outlined in the Project Document. - Review the relevance of the project strategy and assess whether it provides the most effective route towards expected/intended results. Were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated into the project design? - Review how the project addresses country priorities. Review country ownership. Was the project concept in line with the national sector development priorities and plans of the country? - 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.	- Relationships established within project levels (long term goal, objective, outcomes and outputs) - Coherence project design vs implementation approach - Degree of involvement and inclusiveness of stakeholders in Project design - Perceptions of stakeholders as to whether Project responds to national priorities and existing capacities	- Project documents - National policies and strategies - Websites (if any) - Project staff - Project partners - Project beneficiaries (communities)	- Review of project documents - Review of national policies or strategies - Review of websites - Interviews with project staff - Interviews with project partners - Focus group discussion with project communities (target groups) - Data analysis - Theory of change reconstruction
Results Framework/Logframe: - Undertake a critical analysis of the project's logframe indicators and targets, assess how "SMART" the midterm and end-of-project targets are (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound), and suggest specific amendments/revisions to the targets and indicators as necessary. - Are the project's objectives and outcomes or components clear, practical, and feasible within its time frame? - Examine if progress so far has led to, or could in the future catalyse beneficial development effects (i.e. income generation, gender equality and women's empowerment, improved governance etc…) that should be included in the project results framework and monitored on an annual basis. - Ensure broader development and gender aspects of the project are being monitored effectively. Develop and recommend SMART 'development' indicators, including sex-disaggregated indicators and indicators that capture development benefits.	- Relationships established within the project levels (long term goal, objective, outcomes and outputs) - Quality of identified indicators - Evidence of adjustment of activities during the implementation due to newly available information on challenges or concerns	- Project documents - National policies and strategies - Project staff - Project partners - Project beneficiaries (communities)	- Review of project documents - Review of national policies or strategies - Interviews with project staff - Interviews with project partners - Focus group discussion with project communities (target groups) - Data analysis - Theory of change reconstruction
Progress Towards Results: to what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved thus far?			
Progress Towards Outcomes Analysis: - Review the log frame indicators against progress made towards the end-of-project targets using the Progress Towards Results Matrix and following the Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects; colour code progress in a "traffic light system" based on the level of progress achieved; assign a rating on progress for each outcome; make	- Results framework indicators - Perceptions of stakeholders and evidences as to whether the project achieves its intended outcomes	- Project documents - Project staff - Project partners - Project beneficiaries (communities)	- Review of project documents - Interviews with project staff - Interviews with project partners - Interviews with communities representatives

recommendations from the areas marked as "Not on target to be achieved" (red). In addition to the progress towards outcomes analysis: - Compare and analyse the GEF Tracking Tool at the Baseline with the one completed right before the Midterm Review. - Identify remaining barriers to achieving the project objective in the remainder of the project. - By reviewing the aspects of the project that have already been successful, identify ways in which the project can further expand these benefits.			- Focus group discussion with project communities (target groups) - Data analysis - Theory of change reconstruction
Project Implementation and Adaptive Management: has the project been implemented efficiently, cost- effectively, and been able to adapt to any changing conditions thus far? To what extent are project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, reporting, and project communications supporting the project's implementation?			
<u>Management Arrangements:</u> - Review overall effectiveness of project management as outlined in the Project Document. Have changes been made and are they effective? Are responsibilities and reporting lines clear? Is decision-making transparent and undertaken in a timely manner? Recommend areas for improvement. - Review the quality of execution of the Executing Agency/Implementing Partner(s) and recommend areas for improvement. - Review the quality of support provided by the GEF Partner Agency (UNDP) and recommend areas for improvement.	- Evidence of clear roles and responsibilities for operational and management structure - Degree of fulfilment of goals according to results framework - Stakeholder satisfaction with project staff: accessibility, capabilities & skills, expertise applicable knowledge, efficiency and timeliness	- Project documents - Project staff - Project partners - Project beneficiaries (communities)	- Review of project documents - Interviews with project staff - Interviews with project partners - Focus group discussion with project communities (target groups)
<u>Work Planning:</u> - Review any delays in project start-up and implementation, identify the causes and examine if they have been resolved. - Are work-planning processes results-based? If not, suggest ways to re-orientate work planning to focus on results? - Examine the use of the project's results framework as a management tool and review any changes made to it since project start.	- Evidence of the use of the results framework as management tool - Perceptions of stakeholders and evidences as to whether the project activities are on track - Extent of compliance with the expected work plan	- Project documents - Project staff - Project partners - Project beneficiaries (communities)	- Review of project documents - Interviews with project staff - Interviews with project partners - Focus group discussion with project communities (target groups
<u>Finance and co-finance:</u> - Consider the financial management of the project, with specific reference to the cost-effectiveness of interventions. - Review the changes to fund allocations as a result of budget revisions and assess the appropriateness and relevance of such revisions. - Does the project have the appropriate financial controls, including reporting and planning, that allow management to make informed decisions regarding the budget and allow for timely flow of funds? - Informed by the co-financing monitoring table to be filled out, provide commentary on co-financing: is co-financing being used strategically to help the objectives of the project? Is the Project Team meeting with all co-financing partners regularly in order to align financing priorities and annual work plans?	- Perceptions as to cost-effectiveness of program - Level of execution of program budget - Evidence of use of finance resources to make management decisions/adaptive management - Level of execution of program budget - Evidence of use of finance resources to make management decisions/adaptive management	- Project documents - Project staff - Project partners	- Review of project documents - Interviews with project staff - Interviews with project partners
<u>Project-level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems:</u> - Review the monitoring tools currently being used: Do they provide the necessary information? Do they involve key partners? Are they aligned or mainstreamed with national systems? Do they use existing information? Are	- Evidence of use of M&E information to make management decisions/adaptive management, inform strategy and planning - Percentage of budget spent on M&E systems	- Project documents - Project staff - Project partners	- Review of project documents - Interviews with project staff - Interviews with project partners

they efficient? Are they cost-effective? Are additional tools required? How could they be made more participatory and inclusive? - Examine the financial management of the project monitoring and evaluation budget. Are sufficient resources being allocated to monitoring and evaluation? Are these resources being allocated effectively?			
<u>Stakeholder Engagement:</u> - Project management: Has the project developed and leveraged the necessary and appropriate partnerships with direct and tangential stakeholders? - Participation and country-driven processes: Do local and national government stakeholders support the objectives of the project? Do they continue to have an active role in project decision-making that supports efficient and effective project implementation? - Participation and public awareness: To what extent has stakeholder involvement and public awareness contributed to the progress towards achievement of project objectives?	- Extent to which the implementation of the Project has been inclusive of stakeholders and collaboration with partners - Stakeholder satisfaction with the level of their engagement in project decision making mechanism	- Project documents - Project staff - Project partners - Project beneficiaries (communities)	- Review of project documents - Interviews with project staff - Interviews with project partners - Focus group discussion with project communities (target groups)
<u>Reporting:</u> - Assess how adaptive management changes have been reported by the project management and shared with the Project Board. - Assess how well the Project Team and partners undertake and fulfil GEF reporting requirements (i.e. how have they addressed poorly-rated PIRs, if applicable?) - Assess how lessons derived from the adaptive management process have been documented, shared with key partners and internalized by partners.	- Extent to which lessons learnt have been communicated to project stakeholders - Evidence of use of reporting information to make management decisions/adaptive management, inform strategy and inform planning - Percentage of budget spent on reporting systems	- Project documents - Project staff - Project partners	- Review of project documents - Interviews with project staff - Interviews with project partners
<u>Communications:</u> - Review internal project communication with stakeholders: Is communication regular and effective? Are there key stakeholders left out of communication? Are there feedback mechanisms when communication is received? Does this communication with stakeholders contribute to their awareness of project outcomes and activities and investment in the sustainability of project results? - Review external project communication: Are proper means of communication established or being established to express the project progress and intended impact to the public (is there a web presence, for example? Or did the project implement appropriate outreach and public awareness campaigns?) - For reporting purposes, write one half-page paragraph that summarizes the project's progress towards results in terms of contribution to sustainable development benefits, as well as global environmental benefits.	- Project internal communication and feedback loops generating information useable in decision making - Project information, internal and external, is effectively managed and disseminated.	- Project documents - National policies and strategies - Project staff - Project partners - Project beneficiaries (communities)	- Review of project documents - Interviews with project staff - Interviews with project partners - Focus group discussion with project communities (target groups)

Annex 3 – Rating scales

Ratings for Progress Towards Results: (one rating for each outcome and for the objective)	
Highly Satisfactory (HS)	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".
Satisfactory (S)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets, with only minor shortcomings.
Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets but with significant shortcomings.
Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve its end-of-project targets with major shortcomings.
Unsatisfactory (U)	The objective/outcome is expected not to achieve most of its end-of-project targets.
Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	The objective/outcome has failed to achieve its midterm targets, and is not expected to achieve any of its end-of-project targets.

Ratings for Project Implementation & Adaptive Management: (one overall rating)	
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".
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.
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.
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.
Unsatisfactory (U)	Implementation of most of the seven components is not leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management.
Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	Implementation of none of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management.

Ratings for Sustainability: (one overall rating)	
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
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
Moderately Unlikely (ML)	Significant risk that key outcomes will not carry on after project closure, although some outputs and activities should carry on
Unlikely (U)	Severe risks that project outcomes as well as key outputs will not be sustained

Annex 4 – MTR mission itinerary

Monday, January 20th 2020

Morning: arrival of the MTR Consultant in South Africa

Monday, January 20th 2020

Pretoria

10:00 -11:30: Kick-off meeting with UNDP Country Office, including Dr. Janice Morén Golding, Ms. Kyra Lunderstedt, Mr. Frederick Mbundzuka Shikweni, and Mr. Lehman Lindeque

14:50 – 17:00 Meeting with Ms. Kyra Lunderstedt

Tuesday, January 21st 2020

9:00 – 10:20: Meeting with Mr. Theunis Morganthal and Mr. Paul Avenant

Afternoon: flight to Port Elizabeth and car trip to Grahamstown

Wednesday, January 22nd 2020

Grahamstown

8:50 – 10:10: Meeting with Prof. James Gambiza

10:20 – 12:00: Meeting with Ms. Rebecca Powell

12:10 – 13.15: Meeting with Ms. Rebecca Powell, Mr. Monde Duma, Mr. Charles Chackoma, Ms. Buhle Francis and Mr. Menelisi Falayi

13:45 – 14:25: Meeting with Mr. Mike Powell

Afternoon: car trip to Queenstown

Thursday, January 23rd 2020

Machubeni

10:20 – 10:40: Introduction to the community by Prof. James Gambiza

10:45 – 11:15: Focus Group Discussion with 3 members (1 woman and 2 men) of the Masibambisane Multistakeholder Forum (MMF) committee

11:15 – 11:35: Focus Group Discussion with 5 members (4 women and 1 men) belonging to the Land Conservation Activists (LAC)

11:35 – 11:55: Focus Group Discussion with participants to the Environmental Education Programme (3 pupils and 2 teachers)

11:55 – 12:15: Interview with Ms. Helen Fox

12:15 – 12:45: Focus Group Discussion with 8 representatives (2 women and 6 men) of the Livestock and Grazing Associations

12:45 – 13:10: Focus Group Discussion with 8 members of the Conservation Agriculture Group (7 women and 1 men)

14:30- 14:45: Field visit to the Boomplaas/Helushe Community Youth Garden

15:00 – 15.45: Field visit to the grazing area in Platkop village

16:15 – 16:30: Field visit to a project home garden in Platkop village

16:45 – 17:10: Filed visit to a soil erosion control site in Platkop village

Friday, January 24th 2020

Queenstown

9:50 – 10:50: Focus Group Discussion with 7 Community Leaders (3 women and 4 men)

11:00 – 11:40: Focus Group Discussion with Ms. Kwasa Ntongana, Mr. Huthando Namgana, Mr. Phetiso Machafa, Ms. Nabahle Mjamba, Mr. Nick Mujhia, and Ms. Lusanda Mtyotywa

Afternoon: car trip to Loxton

Saturday, January 25th 2020

Loxton

9:00 – 10:15: Field visit to two farms located in the commonage area of Loxton

10:20 – 11:40: Focus Group Discussion with 7 commonage farmers (2 women and 5 men)

11:45 – 12:30: with Ms. Bonnie Schumann

13:30 – 14:35: Continuation of the interview with Ms. Bonnie Schumann

14:40 – 15:20: Interview with Mr. Cobus Theron

15:20 – 16:00: Interview with three e-learning students (2 women and 1 men)

16:20 – 17:45: Interview with Mr. Cobus Theron and Ms. Esther Matthews

Sunday, January 26th 2020

Loxton

14:00 – 16:30: Interview with Mr. Lehman Lindeque

Monday, January 27th 2020

Loxton

8:30 – 9:30: Interview with two commercial farmers (2 men)

11:00 – 12:00: Interview with Mr. Amogelang Mentor and Ms. Desmé Nooqo

12:00 – 12:20: Interview (by phone) with a commercial farmer

13:15 – 13:45: Interview with Ms. Ingrid Brigitte Schöfmann

Afternoon: car trip to Willowmore

Tuesday, January 28th 2020

Bavianskloof

9:00 – 9:45: Car trip through the landscape

10:00 – 11:25: Interview with Mr. Justin Gird

11:25 – 12: 15: Interview with Mr. Otto Beukes

12:30 – 13:00: Interview with three members (3 men) of the Seven Fountain Farm

13:40 – 14:10: Interview with two member (2 women) of the Tchnuganoo Farm

14:15 – 15:00: Interview with Prof. James Gambiza

15:00 – 16:15: Field visits to three erosion control sites

Wednesday, January 29th 2020

Morning: car trip from Willowmore to George

Afternoon: flight to Pretoria

Thursday, January 30th 2020

Morning: car trip to Jane Furse

Jane Furse

12:40 – 13:40: Interview with Dr. Jean Marc Mwenge KahindaKahinda

13:40 – 14:00: Interview with Ms. Happy Mashifane and Mr. Kgobise Manasoe

Ga-Nchabeleng village

17:00 – 17:30: Interview with Dr. Jean Marc Mwenge KahindaKahinda

17:30 – 18:00: Interview with Dr. Constansia Musvoto

Friday, January 30th 2020
Mphanama village
8:30 – 9:30: Interview with Ms. Judith Seopa and Dr. Macdex Mutema

9:30 – 10:00: Interview with a Traditional Authority

10:00 – 10: 50: Interview with Mr. Tisane Tsere and KCooper Sebesebe

10:50 – 11:40: Focus Group Discussion with 4 project beneficiaries (3 women and 1 man)

Afternoon: car trip to Pretoria

Saturday, February 1st 2020
Rest

Sunday, February 2nd 2020
Rest

Monday, February 3rd 2020
Pretoria
9:00 – 9:30: Phone interview with Ms. Rebecca Powell

9:50 – 11:00: Interview with Mr. Lehman Lindeque

11:00 – 12.15: Interview with Dr. Janice Morén Golding

14:15 – 15:00: Interview with Ms. Machuene Tshepape and Mr. Ashivhanzhi Makhale

15:00 – 15:20: Interview with Ms. Thizwi Rambau

Tuesday, February 4th 2020
Pretoria
11:00 – 12:00: Phone interview with Mr. James Reeler

Afternoon: departure of the MTR Consultant from South Africa

Annex 5 - List of persons interviewed

Dr. Janice Morén Golding, Energy & Environment Focal Point, UNDP

Ms. Kyra Lunderstedt, GEF5 SLM Project Assistant, UNDP

Mr. Lehman Lindeque, GEF5 SLM Project Manager, UNDP

Mr. Frederick Mbundzuka Shikweni, National Monitoring and Evaluation, UNDP

Mr. Theunis Morganthal, Scientist, DAFF

Mr. Paul Avenant, Scientist, DAFF

Prof. James Gambiza, Project Leader, Rhodes University

Ms. Rebecca Powell, Project Manager, Rhodes University

Mr. Monde Duma, Participatory Rehabilitation Hub Leader, Rhodes University

Mr. Charles Chakoma, Livestock and Rangelands Hub Leader, Rhodes University

Ms. Buhle Francis, Conservation Agriculture Hub Leader, Rhodes University

Mr. Menelisi Faloyi, Governance Hub, Rhodes University

Mr. Mike Powell, Restoration Ecologist, Rhodes University

Ms. Helen Fox, Environmental Educator, Rhodes University

Ms. Kwasa Ntongana, Emalahleni Municipality

Mr. Huthando Namgana, Emalahleni Municipality

Mr. Phetiso Machafa, DEDEAT of Eastern Cape Province

Ms. Lusanda Mtyotywa, DEDEAT of Eastern Cape Province

Ms. Nabahle Mjamba, DRDAR of Eastern Cape Province

Mr. Nick Mujhia, DRDAR of Eastern Cape Province

Ms. Bonnie Schumann, Nawa Karoo Coordinator/GEF Project Responsible, EWT

Mr. Cobus Theron, Dryland Conservation Programme Manager, EWT

Ms. Esther Matthews, Conservation Specialist, EWT

Ms. Desmé Nooqo, Agricultural Advisor, Northern Cape Department of Agriculture

Mr. Amogelang Mentor, Agricultural Advisor, Northern Cape Department of Agriculture,

Ms. Ingrid Brigitte Schöfmann, Chairperson, UFSED

Mr. Justin Gird, GEF 5 Project Coordinator, Living Lands

Mr. Otto Beukes, GEF 5 Project Land Rehabilitation Manager, Living Lands

Dr. Jean Marc Mwenge Kahinda, Principal Researcher / GEF 5 Coordinator, CSIR

Ms. Happy Mashifane, Agricultural Resource Technician, Makhuduthamaga Municipality

Mr. Kgobise Manasoe, Agricultural Resource Technician, Makhuduthamaga Municipality

Dr. Constansia Musvoto, Senior Researcher / GEF 5 Deputy Coordinator, CSIR

Ms. Judith Seopa, Researcher, ARC

Dr. Macdex Mutema, Senior Researcher, ARC

Mr. Tisane Tsere, Agricultural Resource Technician, Greater Tubatse - Fetakgomo

Mr. Kece Cooper Sebesebe Kece, Agricultural Resource Technician, Greater Tubatse - Fetakgomo

Ms. Thizwi Rambau, UNCCD Focal Point, DEA

Ms. Machuene Tshepap, Officer, DEA

Mr. Ashivhanzhi Makhale; Officer, DEA

Mr. James Reeler, Project Consultant, WWF

Annex 6 - List of documents reviewed

- Appendix A - GEF5 SLM Extraordinary intra-quarter update – Living Lands
- Draft Audit Report (April 2019)
- EWT fact sheets
- Financial Audit (April 2019)
- GEF Tracking tool (Baseline and MTR)
- Indicators for Rangelands and Livestock Monitoring in Macubeni
- Masibambisane Multistakeholder Forum (MMF) Core functions
- Minutes of PSC meetings
- National Action Plan 2030
- Presentation - SLM Project Overview (June 2019)
- Project Document
- Project Implementation Report (2018 and 2019)
- Project progress update (specifically prepared by the Project Manager for the MTR exercise)
- Project Quarterly Reports
- Project Social and Environmental Screening Template
- Proposal for the Implementation of the GEF5 SLM Project Small Grant (September 2019)
- Report on proposed plan to improve rangeland management and condition at Macubeni communal lands
- Report on the establishment, structure and purpose of the Masibambisane Multistakeholder Forum (MSF)
- Project Work Plans

Annex 8 - Signed UNEG Code of Conduct form

UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluators/Midterm Review 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 limitations, findings and recommendations.
7. Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation.

MTR Consultant Agreement Form

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

Name of Consultant: _____Giacomo Morelli_____

Name of Consultancy Organization (where relevant): _____

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

Signed at _____*Bern, Switzerland*_____ on _____*18/Nov/2019*_____

Signature: _____