



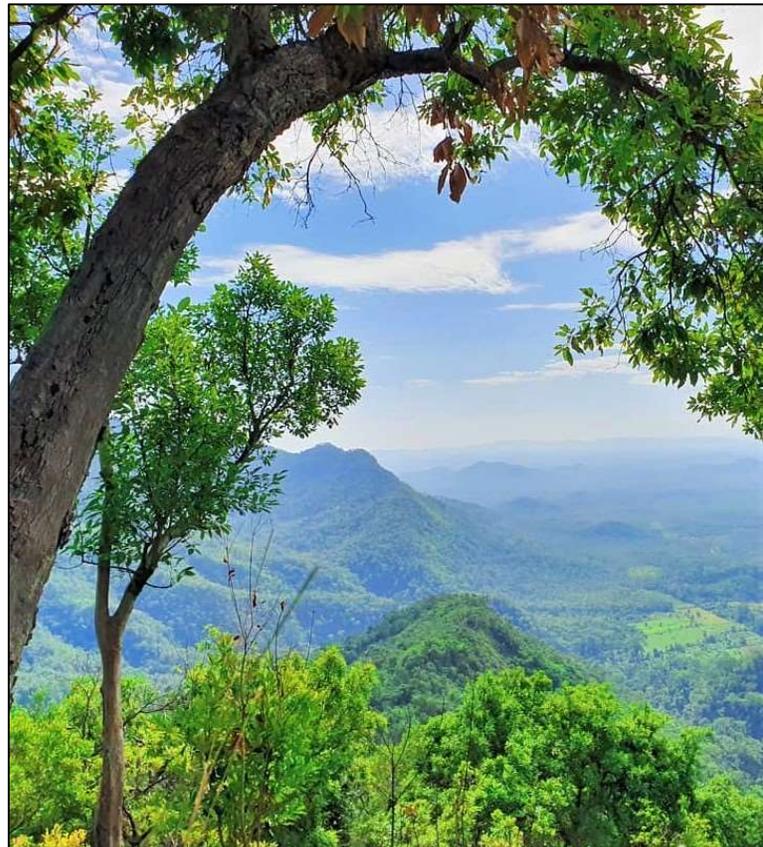
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**UNDP/GEF Project on Collaborative Management for Watershed
and Ecosystem Service Protection and Rehabilitation in the
Cardamom Mountains, Upper Prek Thnot River Basin**

Terminal Evaluation

Final Report, 20th December 2020



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Basic Report Information

Title of the Project	Collaborative Management for Watershed and Ecosystem Service Protection and Rehabilitation in the Cardamom Mountains, Upper Prek Thnot River Basin
Atlas Project ID/ Award ID Number	00090509
UNDP-GEF PIMS ID Number	5944
GEF ID Number	4945
Evaluation Timeframe	15 th July – 15 th August, 2020 (Inception and Preliminary Meetings) 21 st September – 20 th December, 2020 (Stakeholder Consultations, Debriefing of Preliminary Findings, Drafting and Finalization of the TE Report)
Date of Evaluation Report	20 th November, 2020 (draft) 20 th December, 2020 (final)
Region and countries included in the project	Asia and the Pacific region Cambodia
GEF Focal Area/ Strategic Program	Land Degradation
Implementing Partner	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
Other Direct Project Partners	Department of Agricultural Land Resources Management, Provincial Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (Kampong Speu), Mlup Baitong (NGO)
Evaluation Team Members	Ugen P. Norbu (international consultant) Chantha Oeurng (national consultant for stakeholder consultations in the field)

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Ugen Penjor Norbu
20th December, 2020
Thimhu, Bhutan

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
APFNet	Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation
APR	Annual Progress Report
CDP	Commune Development Plan
CF	Community Forest
CIP	Commune Investment Program
CLIP	Community Livelihood Improvement Plan
CoWES	Collaborative Management for Watershed and Ecosystem Service Protection and Rehabilitation in the Cardamom Mountains, Upper Prek Thnot River Basin
CPA	Community Protected Area
CPD	Country Program Document (UNDP)
DALRM	Department of Agricultural Land Resources Management
ELC	Economic Land Concession
FFS	Farmer Field School
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIS	Geographic Information System
HACT	Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers
IA	Implementing Agency
IP	Implementing Partner
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MB	Mlup Baitong
MoA	Memorandum of Agreement
MoE	Ministry of Environment
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NAP	National Action Program to Combat Land Degradation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIM	National Implementation Modality
PDAFF	Provincial Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
PES	Payments for Ecosystem Services

PIR	Project Implementation Review
PMU	Project Management Unit
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
QPR	Quarterly Progress Report
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (plus the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks)
RGC	Royal Government of Cambodia
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound (in relation to formulation of project results, indicators and targets)
TE	Terminal Evaluation
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Program

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Executive Summary

Project Details		Project Milestones	
Project Title	Collaborative Management for Watershed and Ecosystem Service Protection and Rehabilitation in the Cardamom Mountains, Upper Prek Thnot River Basin		
UNDP Project ID (PIMS#):	5944	PIF Approval Date:	Transferred from ADB to UNDP on 21 st July, 2016.
GEF Project ID:	4945	CEO Endorsement Date:	1 st July, 2014
UNDP Atlas Business Unit: Award ID: Project ID:	KHM 10 00090509 00096237	ProDoc Signature Date:	30 th June, 2017
Country/ Countries:	Cambodia	Date Project Manager hired ¹ :	N/A
Region:	Asia and the Pacific	Inception Workshop Date:	14 th December, 2017
Focal Area	Land Degradation	Mid-Term Review Completion Date:	2 nd March, 2019 (final report)
GEF Operational Program or Strategic Priorities/ Objectives	GEF-6 Focal Area Objective: LD3 – Integrated Landscapes, Program 4 – Scaling up Sustainable Land Management through Landscape Approach	Terminal Evaluation Completion Date	20 th December, 2020 (final report)
Trust Fund:	GEF Trust Fund	Operational Closure Date	30 th June, 2020 (planned) 31 st December, 2020 (revised)
Implementing Partner	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries		
NGOs/ CBOs involved:	Mlup Baitong, a national NGO, as a key project executing partner.		
Private sector involvement	Agribusiness companies holding economic land concessions in the project sites were involved in consultations, workshops and short-term collaborative agreements.		
Geospatial coordinate of project sites ²	11°43'39"N, 103°49'46"E (Tasal, Aoral District, Kampong Speu Province) 11°51'44"N, 104°09'38"E (Trapeang Chour, Aoral District, Kampong Speu Pr.) 11°28'40"N, 104°15'10"E (Krang Deivay, Phnom Sruoch Dist., Kampong Speu Pr.)		
Project Financial Information			
PDF/ PPG ³	At approval (USD million)	At PDF/ PPG completion (USD mill)	
GEF PDF/ PPG grants for project preparation	N/A	N/A	
Co-financing for project preparation	N/A	N/A	
Project	At CEO Endorsement (USD million)	At TE (USD million)	
UNDP Contribution:	150,000	148,711	
Government (in-kind):	240,000	240,000	
Others:	-	-	
Total co-financing:	390,000	388,711	
Total GEF funding	1,100,917	1,100,917	
Total Project Funding	1,490,917	1,489,628	

¹ The project did not hire a project manager. The Under Secretary of State, MAFF, served as the project manager.

² The geospatial coordinates were not available in the PIRs. The coordinates provided here are indicative and were located using Google Earth.

³ PPG financing figures are not available with UNDP as PPG phase of the project was carried out by the Asian Development Bank.

Brief Project Description

Initially designed in 2013-2014 with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) as the Implementing Agency, the project proposal for GEF funding was approved by the GEF Secretariat in July 2014. The project, however, was put on hold at ADB due to some technical issues and subsequently transferred to UNDP in 2016 upon ADB's request and approval of the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC). The project was signed on 30th June, 2017, as a three-year project commencing in July 2017 and concluding in July 2020. However, the implementation of project activities effectively got underway in April/May 2018. The delay was primarily due to a long inception phase. Further delays occurred due to the National Assembly Elections in July 2018 and heavy rains and recurrent floods in the project area in the initial year of the project, leading to the extension of the project until December 2020.

The project was implemented in accordance with the National Implementation Modality (NIM). The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries functioned as the Project Implementing Partner and executed the project activities in direct partnership with the Department of Agricultural Land Resources Management, Provincial Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (Kampong Speu) and Mlup Baitong, a national NGO.

The project aimed to reduce pressures on upland watershed areas from competing land uses by demonstrating collaborative management and rehabilitation of agricultural lands and forest areas by promoting sustainable land management and stabilizing watershed catchment functions in Upper Prek Thnot watershed. This area is recognized as a priority area in then the draft National Action Program to Combat Land Degradation. It was designed with the objective "to restore and maintain forest cover and watershed stability functions while providing for sustainable livelihoods and ecosystem services in the Upper Prek Thnot watershed." The project field activities were located in Aoral and Phnom Srouch districts of Kampong Speu province. In Aoral district, the target communes were Tasal and Trapeang Chour and, in Phnom Sruoch district, the project covered Krang Deivay commune.

Terminal Evaluation Ratings

The overall performance of the project is rated as "**satisfactory**" taking into account the challenges posed by the long gestation of the project design, the changeover of Implementation Agency, and short duration available for actual implementation. A "satisfactory" rating implies that the project had only minor shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives. The table below shows the ratings against each criterion set for assessing project performance (in accordance with the UNDP/GEF Project Terminal Evaluation Guidance, 2020):

Criteria	Scale	Rating (point)
Monitoring and Evaluation:		
M&E design at entry	6-point scale	Moderately Satisfactory (4)
M&E Plan Implementation	6-point scale	Satisfactory (5)
Overall quality of M&E	6-point scale	Satisfactory (5)
IA & EA Execution:		
UNDP Implementation/ Oversight	6-point scale	Satisfactory (5)
Implementing Partner Execution	6-point scale	Satisfactory (5)
Overall Quality of Implementation/Execution	6-point scale	Satisfactory (5)
Outcomes:		
Relevance	2-point scale	Relevant (2)

Criteria	Scale	Rating (point)
Effectiveness	6-point scale	Moderately Satisfactory (4)
Efficiency	6-point scale	Moderately Satisfactory (4)
Overall Quality of Project Outcomes	6-point scale	Satisfactory (5)
Sustainability:		
Financial resources	4-point scale	Moderately unlikely (2)
Socio-economic	4-point scale	Moderately likely (3)
Institutional framework and governance	4-point scale	Moderately likely (3)
Environmental	4-point scale	Likely (4)
Overall likelihood of sustainability	4-point scale	Moderately likely (3)
Impact:		
Environmental Status Improvement	3-point scale	Minimal (2)
Environmental Stress Reduction	3-point scale	Minimal (2)
Progress towards stress/status change	3-point scale	Significant (3)
Overall Project Performance		Satisfactory

Note: detailed assessments based on which the ratings were decided are given in the main part of the report

Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations

The CoWES project was very relevant and opportune in that it sought to address the growing challenges of degradation of forest and agricultural lands and ecosystem services in Prek Thnot watershed, considered as one of the most important watersheds in the country but one which is experiencing rapid deforestation and land use changes due to market-driven forces.

Despite a late start, the project has been able to achieve most of the planned project activities and deliver some very good results, which are detailed in Section 3.3.1. However, the scope and scale of the project interventions in the field were too limited to make any significant impact in terms of reducing prevailing stress on Prek Thnot watershed and its ecosystem services and bringing landscape-level improvements in the environmental conditions. The capacity scorecards show that the project has been able to bring marked improvements in the capacity of MAFF as well as subnational/ local authorities although the inability of government staff to find time from their administrative duties and tasks and staff turnover are likely to remain key challenges. It was also timely that the government approval of the NAP took place in the early part of the project, therefore presenting the opportunity for the project to strengthen the institutional arrangements for NAP implementation, which are critical to take forward and internalize SLM and watershed management within the government agenda and governance system.

The project's main weaknesses were a weak PRF, minimal synergy and linkages with other relevant projects and initiatives, and the inability to leverage adequate co-financing required to bring about more comprehensive changes in sustainable management of Prek Thnot watershed.

Following is a summary of recommendations (elaborated in Section 4.2):

A. Related to project design:

- (1) Project results at all levels need to be harmonized in keeping with the time and funds available for the project, and project results framework need to be carefully formulated for coherence between, indicators, baselines and targets, and need to be carefully reviewed to see if the various result components met the 'SMART' criteria before they are finalized and adopted. The Theory

of Change should illustrate the pathways to change with clear linkages between key barriers and challenges and the project results and impacts.

- (2) More co-financing should have been mobilized through dialogue with potential co-financiers and using RGC and UNDP leverage during the project design to consolidate and spread project results for larger impact in keeping with the project objective.
- (3) Where there is a long gestation of project design and transfer of Implementation Agency (IA) role and taking into account the complexity of challenges and issues the project sought to address, another round of project design before the project implementation is recommended. Alternatively, a longer project period is recommended in such cases to accommodate a longer inception for a comprehensive review and revision of the project design.

B. Related to project implementation:

- (1) Mechanism for on-the-job transfer of knowledge and skills of a partner with better capacity to a partner with less capacity should have been devised and employed during the project implementation.
- (2) Planning and design of training events need to carefully consider the number and mix of participants that a training can effectively manage to achieve the training objectives.
- (3) Projects should employ a transition plan where a project partner is taking over and continuing project activities previously managed and implemented by another partner.
- (4) Synergy and linkages with other projects and initiatives should be proactively sought and developed especially when the scope of the project interventions is limited by small resources while the project concept is intended to bring about higher-level changes.

C. Related to project M&E:

- (1) Project progress should clearly report activities in accordance with the outcome/ output they belong to and not provide overlapping information.
- (2) Project results framework need to be carefully formulated with well-defined, SMART and coherent indicators, baselines and targets to aid project reporting and M&E process.

D. Recommendations to reinforce initial project benefits:

- (1) An exit strategy and sustainability plan need to be developed in close consultation with the project stakeholders before the project closure.
- (2) Explore the possibility of initiating community-led projects, such as through UNDP/ GEF Small Grants Program, to continue and strengthen some of the promising sustainable livelihood and community-based SLM interventions initiated through the project but requires more support for consolidation and larger impact.
- (3) On-farm SLM demonstrations should consider integrating participatory and group-based on-farm learning process such as Farmer Field School (FFS), which are known to be successful in farmer-to-farmer exchange of knowledge, skills and experience, and in enhancing community uptake of introduced technology.
- (4) Continue dialogue and advocacy with ELC-holding agribusinesses for collaboration on a longer term based on PPP model, building on the short-term cooperative agreement and collaborative experience initiated through this project.
- (5) Pursue and initiate PES schemes as a sustainable financing and environmental governance mechanism for ecosystem services, building on the ecosystem valuation done by the project.
- (6) Consolidate the CF/ CPA activities and explore opportunities to link with REDD+ initiatives, learning from other CFs and CPAs that have successfully linked with REDD+.

- (7) Where possible, link the management of CF/ CPAs to improved conditions of catchment area/ source of local water supply systems to demonstrate the importance of landscape conservation approach and the inter-linkage between community development and conservation objectives.
- (8) All the knowledge and information generated by various consulting work done under the project need to be consolidated and documented systematically as ready references and basis for decision-making and planning future SLM and watershed management interventions.

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Evaluation

A terminal evaluation (TE) is an integral part of the UNDP/GEF project cycle. It is an independent evaluation carried out at the time of project completion with the purpose to provide a comprehensive and systematic account of the project performance. In accordance with the UNDP/GEF TE Guidance 2020, the TEs for GEF-financed projects have the following complementary purposes:

- Promote accountability and transparency;
- Synthesize lessons that can help to improve the selection, design and implementation of future UNDP-supported GEF-financed initiatives and to improve the sustainability of benefits and aid in overall enhancement of UNDP programming;
- Assess and document project results, and the contribution of these results towards achieving GEF strategic objectives aimed at global environmental benefits;
- Gauge the extent of project convergence with other priorities within the UNDP country program, including poverty alleviation; strengthening resilience to the impacts of climate change, reducing disaster risk and vulnerability, as well as cross-cutting issues such gender equality, empowering women and supporting human rights.

It is expected to enhance organizational and development learning, enable informed decision-making, and create the basis for replication of successful project results. All TEs are intended to provide evidence-based, credible, useful, and reliable information in producing a set of recommendations and lessons learned to help guide future design and implementation of UNDP/GEF projects.

The terms of reference (ToR) for the TE of this project is given as per UNDP/GEF standard evaluation requirements and is appended (**Annex I**).

1.2 Scope and Methodology

The TE has been undertaken as an independent process to provide an objective assessment of the project's performance. While extensive stakeholder consultations have been conducted to secure information and insights on various aspects of the project, the opinions and recommendations presented in this TE are purely based on the evaluator's observations and analysis and do not necessarily reflect the position of any of the project stakeholders including GEF, UNDP, IP and Responsible Parties.

In keeping with the Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed Projects (UNDP, 2020), the TE: (a) examined to what extent the project has achieved its objective and intended results; (b) assessed in detail the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact of the project in accordance with the descriptions outlined in **Box I**; and (c) rated project performance against multiple criteria using rating scales (shown in **Table 1**).

Box 1: Definitions of Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability and Impact

Relevance: The extent to which the objectives of a development intervention are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, global priorities and partners' and donors' policies.

Effectiveness: The extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance.

Efficiency: A measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results.

Sustainability: The likely ability of an intervention to continue to deliver benefits, within or outside the project domain, after GEF/external assistance has come to an end.

Impact: The positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a project or program, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.

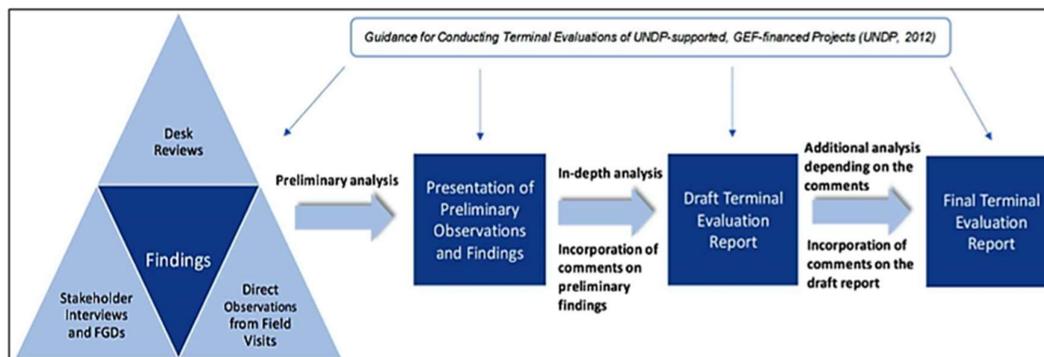
Source: UNDP/GEF Terminal Evaluation Guidance, 2020

The evaluation derived its findings and conclusions from the analysis and triangulation of the information acquired from the various sources/ methods outlined below and based on the process framework illustrated in **Figure 1**:

- **Desk review** of a wide range of documents pertaining to project design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation including annual and quarterly progress reports, project implementation reviews, mid-term review, technical reports and knowledge products emerging from the project. In addition, relevant national strategies and plans as well as UN and UNDP's strategy documents were referred to examine linkages and project relevance. In absence of an in-country mission due to COVID-19 restrictions on international travel, the reliance on information from documented sources was more significant in the case of this evaluation. A full list of all the documents that were reviewed for the TE is provided in **Annex II**.
- **Stakeholder interviews** of: (a) key informants in project implementing agencies and partners; (b) members of the Project Board; (c) project management team at MAFF; (d) UNDP staff related to the project in the Country Office and at the Regional Hub for Asia and the Pacific; and (e) other key stakeholders such as provincial/ district/ commune officials, NGO partner, and agribusiness companies holding economic land concession in the project area. Due to the inability of the international consultant to undertake an in-country mission because of international travel restrictions posed by COVID-19 pandemic, the interviews of the stakeholders based in Phnom Penh and at the UNDP Regional Hub were conducted virtually on zoom/ skype/ whatsapp platforms while the national consultant conducted the interviews of subnational/ local stakeholders in person. Each meeting for stakeholder interviews were conducted for one to two hours depending on the nature and amount of information to be elicited from them. A complete list of people who were interviewed, individually or in group, during the course of evaluation is provided in **Annex III**. Altogether 36 people were interviewed during the course of the TE.
- **Focus-group discussion** was carried out with beneficiaries in each of the target communes to elicit information and insights on project results and their impacts on such target groups. The FGDs involved a total of 57 local community members – 21 in Krang Deivay commune, 12 in Tasal commune, and 24 in Trapeang Chour commune. These included 22 women (38.6% of the total participants). The participants of the focus-group discussions are also listed in **Annex III**.

- **Field visits to project sites** from 23rd to 25th September, 2020, in Aoral and Phnom Sruoch districts to observe project activities first-hand through interaction with the local stakeholders. UNDP CO engaged a national consultant to travel to the project sites to elicit first-hand information and insights from the local stakeholders. However, the limited time in the field was wholly used for stakeholder consultations. Information gathering from direct observations of project activities was negligible.

Figure 1: Basic Process Framework of the Terminal Evaluation



In terms of schedule, the TE was conducted in two parts: the initial part took place from 15th July to 15th August, 2020, and the second part from 15th September to 20th December, 2020⁴. In the first part, an inception report detailing the methodology and workplan was drafted, reviewed and finalized, and initial virtual meetings were conducted with the UNDP project team and the CoWES project management unit. In the second part, field visit and local stakeholder consultations were conducted by the national consultant and virtual consultations with stakeholders based in Phnom Penh were conducted by the international consultant. Upon completion of the stakeholder consultations, a virtual meeting, chaired by the UNDP Deputy Resident Representative, was convened to debrief the UNDP team and project partners on preliminary evaluation observations and findings, and to appraise their validity and seek clarifications and further information.

The fundamental approach was to carry out the evaluation in a participatory manner engaging a wide range of stakeholders including sub-national authorities and local project beneficiaries. An iterative process of stakeholder consultations and triangulation of information from various sources was employed to enhance the veracity and comprehensiveness of the evaluation based on an evaluation questions matrix (**Annex V**) and sets of guidance questions/ notes (**Annex VI**), which were formulated as a part of the Inception Report. The draft evaluation report, based on in-depth analysis and triangulation of information acquired from various sources and taking into account the comments received at the debriefing, was produced and submitted for review by UNDP, project management team and other key stakeholders. Revisions were made based on the comments on the draft, and the final TE report including an appended audit trail (**Annex XI**) of the comments on the draft, was produced and submitted to the UNDP Cambodia CO.

⁴ This happened as, in between the TE process, UNDP CO had to recruit a new national consultant for the local stakeholder consultations as the terms of contract could not be agreed with the previously identified national consultant. Also, a number of public holidays occurred in between.

The rating of various criteria of project performance was done in accordance with the rating scales provided in Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed Projects (UNDP, 2020) as outlined in the table below:

Table 1: Rating Scale for Various Project Performance Criteria

Criteria	Rating Scale
Monitoring and Evaluation IA/EA Execution Quality of Project Outcomes, Effectiveness and Efficiency	6. Highly Satisfactory (HS): exceeds expectations and/or no shortcomings. 5. Satisfactory (S): meets expectations and/or no or minor shortcomings. 4. Moderately Satisfactory (MS): more or less meets expectations and/or shortcomings. 3. Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): somewhat below expectations and/or significant shortcomings. 2. Unsatisfactory (U): substantially below expectations and/or major shortcomings. 1. Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): severe shortcomings. Unable to Assess (U/A): available information does not allow an assessment.
Relevance	2. Relevant (R) 1. Not relevant (NR)
Sustainability	4. Likely (L): negligible risks to sustainability. 3. Moderately likely (ML): moderate risks. 2. Moderately unlikely (MU): significant risks. 1. Unlikely (UL): severe risks. Unable to Assess (U/A): available information does not allow an assessment.
Impact	3. Significant (S) 2. Minimal (M) 1. Negligible (N)

1.3 Evaluation Ethics and Adherence

The TE has been conducted in an independent and transparent manner in conformity with the ethical evaluation standards required by UNDP and GEF. Information derived from documented sources and interviews with project stakeholders have been used to solely understand the project since its design and its status towards completion and to form objective opinions based on analysis and triangulation of the information. No person or agency has been quoted and confidentiality has been maintained throughout the consultations and in the writing of the evaluation report. All the knowledge information and data acquired during the evaluation process are solely used for the evaluation and no other purpose. A signed form of the UNEG Code of Conduct/ Evaluation Consultant Agreement is appended (**Annex IX**).

1.4 Limitations to the Evaluation

The inability to travel to Cambodia for the in-country mission due to international travel restrictions posed by COVID-19 pandemic was a major constraint to the evaluation as such a mission is fundamentally critical to elicit first-hand information and insights on project activities and their performance through visits to project sites, and provides opportunities for in-depth interactions with stakeholders and direct observation of project activities in the field. In lieu of

the in-country mission, virtual consultations were conducted with a number of key informants and a national consultant was fielded by the UNDP CO to visit the project sites and conduct local stakeholder consultations. Not being able to observe the ground realities of the project and field activities up close and interact with project stakeholders, particularly the beneficiaries at the grassroots level, in the real project setting deprived the international consultant of eliciting first-hand information and insights, which are crucial for triangulation and to stimulate thinking and analysis. In general, the virtual consultations via internet platforms went well but remain an inadequate proxy to actual face-to-face interactions with the stakeholders especially those that take place in the project sites. Some of the virtual consultations were affected by poor internet connectivity and technical glitches, and had to be reconducted.

1.5 Structure of the Report

This TE report follows the structure recommended in Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed Projects (UNDP, 2020) and follows Annex 7 of the Guidance, which provides the TE report content checklist.

At the outset of the report, an executive summary containing basic project information and description, evaluation ratings table and an outline of conclusions and recommendations is provided. The introductory chapter describes the purpose of evaluation and the methodology used. Chapter 2 provides the project background, describes the issues that the project sought to address, outlines the project objectives and expected results, lists the project stakeholders, and outlines the project's Theory of Change. Findings from the evaluation are presented in Chapter 3, providing detailed assessments of the various elements of project design and implementation, the attainment of project results and key aspects such as relevance, sustainability and impact of the project results. Based on the detailed assessments, various criteria of the project performance have been rated in accordance with the rating scale given in **Table 1**. Conclusions are drawn in the final chapter, Chapter 4, highlighting the strengths, weaknesses and outcomes of the project. This chapter also recommends actions with respect to future project design, implementation and M&E as well as offers recommendations to reinforce the initial benefits of the project, and highlights lessons learnt from the project.

2. Project Description

2.1 Project Start and Duration

Initially designed in 2013-2014 under the umbrella of the GEF's 'Greater Mekong Sub-Region Forests and Biodiversity Program' (GMS-FBP) regional program, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) had then proposed it as a national project on collaborative watershed management in the Upper Prek Thnot watershed and requested the ADB to assist with processing the project in its capacity as a GEF IA. The proposal for GEF funding was approved by the GEF Secretariat in July 2014. The project, however, was put on hold at ADB due to some technical issues until the end of 2015 and subsequently transferred to UNDP in 2016 upon ADB's request and approval from the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC)⁵.

Earlier planned as a much bigger project, the project was downsized upon transfer to UNDP and approved as a three-year project commencing in July 2017 and concluding in July 2020. The project document was signed between UNDP and MAFF as the IP on 30th June, 2017. However, the project had a slow and protracted inception as it had to engage in a major review and update of the project design based on a series of stakeholder consultations and field studies in order to set the project on a good footing before actual implementation. The project implementation was further impeded by interruptions due to the National Assembly elections in 2018 and incessant rains and seasonal floods that cut off access to remote project areas in the first year of the project. Consequently, the project became effectively operational only in April/ May, 2018⁶. Taking the aforesaid factors that delayed project implementation into account, the project was extended until 31st December 2020 upon official communication from His Excellency the Secretary of State, MAFF, who functions as the National Project Director. **Table 2** lists the project milestones and their dates.

Table 2: Project Milestones and their Dates

Project Milestone	Date
CEO endorsement of the project	1 st July, 2014
Transfer of the project from ADB to UNDP as the GEF Implementing Agency	21 st July, 2016
Local Project Appraisal Committee Meeting	24 th March, 2017
Signing of the Project Document	30 th June, 2017
Project Inception Workshop	15 th December, 2017
Completion of Project Inception Report	28 th February, 2018
First Project Board Meeting	25 th January, 2018
Memorandum of Agreement signed with Mlup Baitong (NGO partner)	1 st April, 2018
Memorandum of Agreement signed with DALRM	9 th May, 2018
Memorandum of Agreement signed with Kampong Speu PDAFF	4 th September, 2018
Second Project Board Meeting	1 st March, 2019
Completion of the Mid-term Review of the Project	2 nd March, 2019
Official MAFF communication of project extension	23 rd September, 2019

⁵ Project document, CoWES, p 6.

⁶ Mid-term Review of UNDP/ GEF Project on Collaborative Management for Watershed and Ecosystem Service Protection and Rehabilitation in the Cardamom Mountains, Upper Prek Thnot River Basin, Final Report, March 2019, p4.

Project Milestone	Date
Third Project Board Meeting	5 th February, 2020
Completion of the HACT Financial Audit Report (covering the period from 1 January to 31 December, 2019)	31 st March, 2020
Completion of Terminal Evaluation of the Project	20 th December, 2020
Extended project end date	31 st December, 2020

2.2 Development Context

Located in mainland Southeast Asia, the Kingdom of Cambodia has a geographic area of 181,035 km² and a population of 15.85 million⁷. The country is made up of 24 provinces, 162 districts, 1,405 communes and 14,383 villages⁸. It is bordered by Thailand to the west and north-west, Laos in the north-east, Vietnam in the east and south-east, and the Gulf of Thailand in the south-west. The main geographical features are the low-lying Central Plain that includes the Tonle Sap basin, the lower Mekong river flood-plains and the Bassac river plain surrounded by mountain ranges to the north, east, in the south-west and south. The country is made up of 39 watersheds.

Over the years, Cambodia has made excellent progress in poverty reduction and human development, on the back of strong growth in agriculture, garment manufacturing, and tourism. The country has recorded impressive economic performances, sharp reductions in poverty, and significant gains in human development and governance reform. Economic growth has been maintained at above 7% for over two decades, and the country graduated from low-income to lower-middle-income country status in 2016. The per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has increased rapidly, from USD 254 in 1993 to USD 1,643 in 2019⁹, but still remains low compared to most of its neighbouring countries. Income poverty has fallen substantially over the last decade while income inequality has remained relatively low. The proportion of Cambodians living in poverty fell sharply from 47.8% in 2007 to 13.5% in 2014¹⁰, but 4.5 million people still live in near-poverty¹¹. The country is transiting from an agriculture-based economy to a service- and industry-based economy. The national economy is driven primarily by textile production and tourism while agriculture remains the main source of employment and income for the rural communities, which make up about three-fourth of the country's population. Rural economic life is dominated by crop cultivation, livestock rearing and poultry, fishing and aquaculture, and collection of forest products. Rural-urban migration is a major phenomenon, giving rise to rapid urbanization. Projections suggest that by 2030 over one third of the country's population will reside in urban areas.

The following table provides some basic indicators of socio-economic changes that has taken place in recent years¹².

⁷ 2017 figure given in Cambodia Socio-economic Survey Report 2017.

⁸ National Strategic Development Plan 2019-2023, Royal Government of Cambodia, p vi.

⁹ World Bank (<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?locations=KH>)

¹⁰ Asian Development Bank Member Factsheet for Cambodia, May 2020.

¹¹ ADB as cited in UNDAF 2019-2023.

¹² The latest government socio-economic survey reports were available in English only until 2017.

Table 3: Some Basic Socio-Economic Indicators, 2014-2017

Socio-economic Indicator	2014	2015	2016	2017
Population	15,184,000	15,406,000	15,626,000	15,848,000
Rural Population	11,772,000	11,865,000	11,956,000	12,047,000
Urban Population	3,412,000	3,541,000	3,670,000	3,801,000
Employment Rate (%)	-	-	83.9	84.2
Employment in Agriculture Sector (%)	45.3	41.5	36.4	37.0
Employment in Industry Sector (%)	24.3	25.5	26.7	26.2
Employment in Services Sector (%)	30.4	33.0	27.0	36.8
Monthly Household Income (Thousand Riels)	1,434	1,619	1,777	1,960

Source: Cambodia Socio-economic Survey Reports (2014, 2015, 2016, 2017), National Institute of Statistics, Ministry of Planning.

Cambodia remains highly vulnerable to natural disasters and climate change. The country consistently ranks among the top 10 countries with the highest risk of impact from climate change. The country as a whole is projected to get warmer with a longer and drier dry season, and a delayed - but shorter and wetter - rainy season. Forecasts predict more extreme weather events with human and economic consequences. The RGC has responded with both mitigation and adaptation measures but requires technical and financial support to reinforce and scale up the initiatives both at central and sub-national levels. The rapid pace of development has placed natural resources and the environment under pressure. In 2017, the RGC consolidated 40% of the land for protection, to ensure conservation of natural resources and biodiversity. The country's forests host more than 2,000 known plant species, 500 birds, 100 mammals and 800 fish, providing sanctuaries to almost two percent of globally threatened species (IUCN's Red List). While forest cover still remains relatively high, deforestation and degradation of forest resources persist and pose threats to biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation efforts. Forest cover declined from 73.3% in 1990 to 49.5% in 2014¹³. The degradation of forest resources has adversely impacted rural livelihoods and reduced capacity for climate change adaptation and mitigation. The proliferation of economic land concessions (ELCs) over the years has also added to the country's environmental challenges as ELCs primarily operate for immediate commercial benefits with generally little consideration of the environmental impacts and investment in sustainable land management practices. Government capacity to monitor the ELCs and enforce environmental regulations is limited and unable to keep pace with the growth of the ELC-holding companies.

2.3 Problems that the Project sought to Address

Like in many developing countries around the world, land degradation is a major issue in Cambodia and is generally characterized by loss of vegetation, soil fertility and natural watershed functions. It has been often attributed to: poor land use practices following the unplanned expansion of agricultural area and settlements; deforestation and forest degradation due to logging and extraction of biomass for fuelwood and charcoal; and allotment of state lands as ELCs for commercial agricultural and forestry operations. The objectives of ELCs are to increase employment in rural areas, generate state revenue and develop Cambodia's agricultural sector. Land and forestry laws and regulations provide a general framework for the

¹³ UNDP Human Development Report 2016.

establishment and operation of ELCs and administrative rules, nevertheless ELCs are known to impact both protected areas and local communities by reducing access to both forest resource and forestland.

Land degradation poses a direct threat to food and water security since it affects agriculture productivity and water retention capacity of watersheds. Furthermore, land degradation increases the cost of agriculture production, which has a disproportionately higher effect on poor rural farmers. In the mid to upper watersheds, land degradation is linked with deforestation and forest degradation. Deforestation rate in Cambodia is reportedly among the highest in the world. Existing satellite images have confirmed that Cambodia's forest cover reduced from 73.3% in 1990 to 49.5% in 2014. Population pressure and economic development forces are among the main drivers of land use conversion, loss of forest and vegetative cover, and when combined with impacts of climate change and variability, have contributed to soil erosion, nutrient loss and reduced water retention capacity across wider landscapes. Land degradation is exacerbated by climate change and this in turn perpetuates increased vulnerability to climate related risks.

The problems of land degradation are most conspicuous in the watersheds. There are altogether 39 watersheds in Cambodia. Based on a set of criteria, The Mekong River Committee, in 2004-2005, had assessed a number of watersheds for the level of risk of quality reduction. This led to the identification of ten watersheds as seriously affected and urgently requiring management interventions. They are namely: (1) Sre Pork River; (2) Sesan River; (3) Siem Reap River; (4) Stoeung Sen River; (5) Chinit River; (6) Sreng River; (7) Pursat River; (8) Sangke River; (9) Battambang River; and (10) Prek Thnot River¹⁴.

The CoWES project is set in Prek Thnot watershed, one of the priority watersheds identified in the NAP as requiring urgent sustainable land management interventions in view of rapid deforestation and land use change due to multiple market-driven forces. The Upper Prek Thnot watershed is located in central-west Cambodia with its headwaters in the Cardamom Mountains, which is recognized as a global ecoregion¹⁵. It includes the tributaries of Stung Tasal, Stung Kantout, Stung Kirirum and Stun Srea Thlong. Within the upper Prek Thnot watershed, the project activities are located in Aoral and Phnom Sruoch districts of Kampong Speu province (see **Figure 2** for location map). The two districts cover 56% of the watershed.

The 'situational analysis' undertaken at the beginning of the project concluded that the current reduction of ecological functions of Prek Thnot watershed is caused by an expanded land for agriculture and residences, extensive deforestation, increased soil erosion, reduced soil fertility and water resources (including under-ground water)¹⁶. Once widely covered by forests, the area has undergone dramatic changes with gradually more land commissioned to ELCs and expansion of agriculture and land conversion, and increased rates of rainfall runoff and extreme flooding events. As a result of years of deforestation, forest cover is now restricted largely to the mountainous areas while most of the lowlands are agricultural land or highly degraded forest. Agricultural livelihoods are constrained, among other things, by water scarcity and poor soil conditions, and the inability to compete with logging and charcoal production which provide

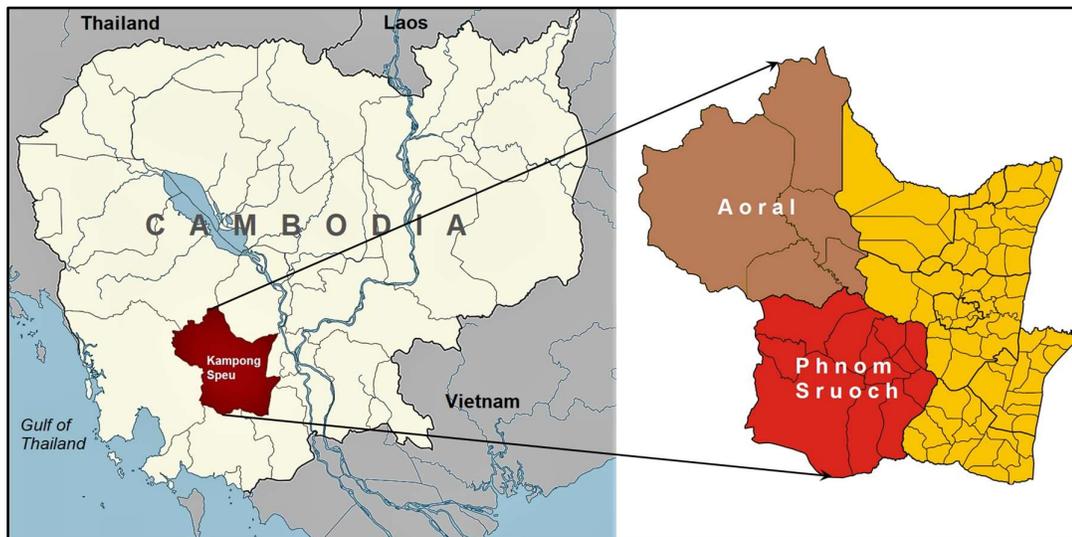
¹⁴ National Action Program to combat Land Degradation (2018-2027), Royal Government of Cambodia, p 14-15.

¹⁵ WWF has identified 238 global ecoregions around the world as most crucial to the conservation of global biodiversity.

¹⁶ UNDP Cambodia, Collaborative Management for Watershed and Ecosystem Service Protection and Rehabilitation in the Cardamom Mountains, Upper Prek Thnot River Basin (CoWES), Annual Project Report 2018, p. 13

more lucrative incomes. As a result of the considerable amount of land being declared as protected areas and granted for ELCs, arable land for smallholders is limited. Also, land tenure issues arise between ELCs and local communities. Approximately 43% of Aoral and Phnom Sruoch districts is located within three protected areas, namely the Central Cardamom Mountains Protected Forest, Phnom Aoral Wildlife Sanctuary and Kirirom National Park. The protected areas are under the management of the Ministry of Environment (MoE). The two districts together have 22 ELC-holding companies. Approximately 28% of Aoral District and 21% of Phnom Sruoch are allocated for ELC operations¹⁷, presenting a major challenge for the sub-national and local authorities to monitor and ensure that the ELCs are operated on socially responsible and environmentally sound principles and practices. The challenges to land degradation are further exacerbated by the lack of capacity at various levels – systemic, institutional and individual – within MAFF as well as at the subnational/ local level for watershed management and monitoring.

Figure 2: Location of Aoral and Phnom Sruoch Districts, Kampong Speu Province



The project was designed to reduce pressures from competing land uses by demonstrating collaborative management and rehabilitation of agriculture lands and forest areas by promoting SLM and stabilizing watershed catchment functions. It addressed important national and global environment goals - to develop multiple benefits from integrated management of landscape mosaics of mixed agricultural and forest ecosystems.

The linkage and conformity of the project with relevant international and national strategies and priorities are described below.

GEF Strategy: The project related to GEF-6 land degradation focal area strategy, which supported the achievement of the UNCCD 10-year Strategy involving long-term integrated strategies that focus simultaneously in affected areas, on improved productivity of land and on the rehabilitation, conservation, and sustainable management of land and water resources, leading to improved living conditions, in particular at the community level. Within the GEF-6

¹⁷ Sopheak Chann and Tim Frewer, *Commodity Frontiers, An ethnographic study of social-environmental interaction of Upper Stung Prek Thnot River Catchment, Eastern Cardamom Mountains*, July 2017, p.3-4

land degradation focal area strategy, the project specifically corresponded to the focal area objective LD-2: Generate sustainable flows of ecosystem services from forests, including in drylands and to the focal area objective LD-3: Reduce pressures on natural resources by managing competing land uses in broader landscapes¹⁸.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): The project related directly to SDG 15 – Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss. Within SDG 15, the project corresponded to: SDG target 15.1 – By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands in line with obligations under international agreements; and SDG target 15.3 – By 2030, combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world. It also contributed to SDG 13 – Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

UN and UNDP Strategies and Priorities: The project strategy was developed in conformity with the UN and UNDP’s country strategy in Cambodia as articulated in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF, 2016-2018) in relation to its Outcome 1 – inclusive growth and sustainable development and UNDP Cambodia’s Country Program Document, 2016-2018, in line with the CPD Output - “Establishment and strengthening of institutions, coordination mechanisms and policies for sustainable management of natural resources, ecosystem services.” It also aligned with the UNDP Strategic Plan, 2014-2017 with reference to its Outcome 1: "Growth and development are inclusive and sustainable, incorporating productive capacities that create employment and livelihoods for the poor and excluded" as well as Output 1.3: "Solutions developed at national and sub-national levels for sustainable management of natural resources, ecosystem services, chemicals and waste."

National Strategies and Priorities: At the national level, the project conformed with Cambodia’s sustainable development and environmental agenda as articulated in the RGC’s Rectangular Strategy Phase III (2013), which identifies “environment and natural resources management and managing impacts of climate change on Cambodia’s ecological systems and socioeconomic development” as key challenges to be addressed in a collaborative manner. It also aligned with the National Strategic Development Plan (2014-2018) with particular reference to the key policy priority of inclusive and sustainable development and its constituent actions to promote agriculture sector and rural development, sustainably manage natural resources and culture, and ensure environmental sustainability and pre-emptive response to climate change. The project objective also strongly related to the National Environment Strategy and Action Plan (2016-2023) specifically in relation to: objective 1.1 to strengthen cross-sectoral coordination for mainstreaming environment and natural resources sustainability; objective 1.4 to promote good environmental governance for halting the loss of biodiversity and sustaining ecosystem services and functions; objective 1.5 to build institutional and human resources capacity for applying appropriate environmental policy tools and instruments and support implementation of environmental and natural resources code; and objective 4.2 to strengthen public awareness and application of informed environmental decision making.

The project responded to Cambodia Climate Change Strategic Plan (2014-2023) specially to promote climate resilience through improving food and water, enhancing climate resilience of

¹⁸ GEF-6 Programming Directions, 2014.

critical ecosystem and biodiversity, and improving capacities, knowledge and awareness for climate change. In addition, the project was in line with the Agricultural Sector Strategic Development Plan (2014-2018) by directly contributing to three of the four pillars laid out in the strategic development plan.

The project was directly linked to the implementation of the National Action Program to combat Land Degradation (2018-2027) especially in relation to: Strategic Objective 1 – expansion of the use of techniques for effective and sustainable agricultural land management; and Strategic Objective 2 – restoration of watershed and forest ecosystem services. Component 3 of the CoWES project primarily focused on developing and strengthening institutional mechanisms to address land degradation based on watershed management concept and approach espoused in the NAP.

2.4 Project Objectives

According to the project results framework, the project has been designed with the objective “to restore and maintain forest cover and watershed stability functions while providing for sustainable livelihoods and ecosystem services in the Upper Prek Thnot watershed.”

To achieve the aforesaid objective, the following three inter-related project components/outcomes were conceived:

Component / Outcome 1: On-farm soil conservation and agroforestry practices improved.

Component / Outcome 2: Community forest areas restored and sustainably managed.

Component /Outcome 3: Watershed management and monitoring capacity of stakeholders improved.

2.5 Expected Results

The CoWES project was designed to deliver the following outputs under each project component/ outcome¹⁹:

Component / Outcome 1: On-farm soil conservation and agroforestry practices improved.

Output 1.1: SLM priorities mainstreamed into local authority area plans in collaboration with MAFF and partners.

Output 1.2: Suitable SLM practices for small landholders demonstrated.

Output 1.3: Suitable land use practices demonstrated among medium- to large-scale agribusiness entities.

Component / Outcome 2: Community forest areas restored and sustainably managed

Output 2.1: Prioritized actions to accelerate CF implementation, reflected in local authority and MAFF programs of action.

Output 2.2: Suitable restoration strategies and livelihood enterprises demonstrated.

¹⁹ The project document did not define the outputs. They were formulated and incorporated in the project design during the inception phase.

Component /Outcome 3: Watershed management and monitoring capacity of stakeholder improved.

Output 3.1: Capacity of key stakeholders to develop and start a program of action for watershed management in place.

Output 3.2: Participatory monitoring and assessment to support agreed upon program of action in place.

2.6 Project Stakeholders: Summary List

A wide range of project stakeholders was identified in the project document and the project inception report. They included central government ministries and their line agencies, sub-national and local governments, NGO, academia, ELC-holding companies, UNDP and most importantly, local communities, as shown in the list below:

- (a) Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries – as the Implementing Partner
- (b) Department of Agricultural Land Resources Management (DALRM), MAFF
- (c) Provincial Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (PDAFF), Kampong Speu Province
- (d) Kampong Speu Provincial Government
- (e) District-level governments (Aoral and Phnom Srouch)
- (f) Commune authorities: Tasal and Trapeang Chour communes (Aoral district); and Krang Deivay (Phnom Sruoch district)
- (g) Ministry of Environment
- (h) Other relevant government ministries such as Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology (MoWRAM)
- (i) Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MOWA)
- (j) Mlup Baitong (NGO)
- (k) Selected agribusinesses, notably including private companies with ELC contracts
- (l) Royal University of Agriculture
- (m) Local communities of Tasal and Trapeang Chour communes in Aoral district, and Krang Deivay commune in Phnom Sruoch district.

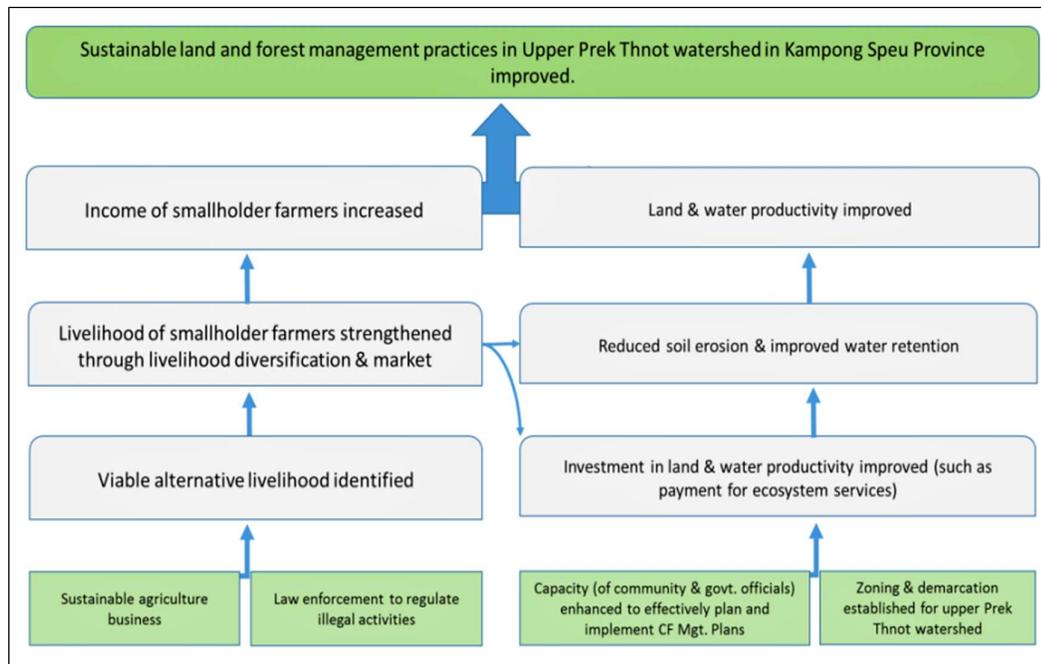
In what role and capacity were the above-listed project stakeholders envisaged to participate in project implementation are described in sub-section 3.1.4 (Planned stakeholder participation).

2.7 Theory of Change

The project’s Theory of Change (ToC, see **Figure 3**) illustrated the pathways to achieve the project objective. Project interventions were envisaged to generate two key drivers which will enhance the flow of socio-economic benefits at the community level. The first driver was to increase infrastructure and capacities to implement good practices in sustainable land and water management, sustainable livelihoods and forest protection and maintenance. The second

was improved access to important and actionable information and knowledge related to these fields, which will enhance participation, inclusion and decision-making related to productive activities.

Figure 3: Project's Theory of Change



In the description of the ToC, anticipated socio-economic benefits to be delivered by this project were described as below:

National level:

- Strengthened project management capacity within MAFF and other project partners, leading to the ability to manage larger, more complex technical assistance projects targeting wider cross section of the Cambodian population; and
- Better technical understanding within MAFF and other project partners of the constraints to promoting sustainable land/water management, sustainable forest management etc., which will lead to improved design and implementation of policies, programs and projects relevant to the NAP, in support of obligations under UNCCD.

Sub-national/ local level:

- Increased Net Primary Productivity (NPP)²⁰ per hectare of land in project target areas in Aural and Phnum Sruoch districts as well as Dam Ray Chak Pluk commune forest;

²⁰ Net carbon dioxide retained in vegetation from the atmosphere, quantified by production of new plant material, new biomass etc, measurable through remote sensing and other techniques.

- Increased Total Factor Productivity (TFP)²¹ per agricultural commodity across households in project target areas in Aoral and Phnom Sruoch districts as well as Dam Ray Chak Pluk commune forest;
- Increased incomes and income opportunities for a cross-section of farming households in Aoral and Phnom Sruoch districts as well as Dam Ray Chak Pluk commune forest, which will be complemented by business training, better skills and efficient resource use, access to microfinance products (e.g. microsavings, microinsurance, microcredit);
- Increased vegetation and forest cover which promotes resilience of ecosystems services in the microwatersheds of targeted project areas, by way of sustained hydrological, nitrogen and carbon cycles; and
- Enhanced base of physical and social assets, health, nutrition, and food security for target households.

²¹ TFP measures the ratio of total commodity output (the sum of all crop and livestock products) to total inputs used in production, including all land, labor, capital, and materials.

3. Findings

3.1 Project Design/ Formulation

3.1.1 Analysis of project's results framework and logic

The project results framework states the project objective as: “to restore and maintain forest cover and watershed stability functions while providing for sustainable livelihoods and ecosystem services in the Upper Prek Thnot watershed.” As explained in detail in section 2.3 (Problems that the Project sought to Address), the project objective and strategy relate strongly to Cambodia’s priorities for sustainable development and environmental conservation. While the project objective is clearly stated and highly relevant, it is a higher-level objective that exceeds the scope of the project interventions, which were primarily small-scale local livelihood and community-based natural resource management activities targeting three communes, and development of watershed management capacity of subnational and local stakeholders. It is understood that the project objective was originally conceived for a large-scale project to be realized through a much bigger project financing including ADB funding. The TE observes that while the project interventions were downscaled in keeping with the limited resources upon transfer to UNDP, the project objective somehow remained unchanged from what was conceived for a large-scale project. Hence, the anomaly between the project objective and planned project interventions.

It is common for GEF projects to have two objectives – a development objective and an immediate objective. An immediate project objective was necessary for this project to realistically link the project components/ outcomes and associated outputs with the higher-level project objective (development objective). For example, there could have been an immediate project objective for CoWES project stated as: to strengthen the national and local capacity for collaborative and sustainable management of agricultural and forest lands and their ecosystem services in Prek Thnot watershed.

The project outcomes and constituent outputs are well-defined and clearly indicate what the project realistically sought to achieve for each of the outcomes within its limited timeframe and funds. A major review and revision of the project design, including the results framework, was undertaken during the inception phase. The revision included formulation and incorporation of a set of 2-3 outputs (which were lacking in the project document) for each of the project components/ outcomes and revision of some of the outcome indicators in the results framework. The outputs were formulated taking into consideration what was possible to achieve with available project resources and existing capacity of subnational administrations and local communities discerned from multiple stakeholder consultations during the inception phase. The revisions in the outcome indicators made are found justified. Complex, data-intensive indicators beyond existing local capacity were removed or moved, such as the “number of households with increase of Total Factor Productivity” was removed and “percentage improvement of Net Primary Production” was moved from outcome level to objective level. A more realistic indicator “net household income in forest area of target projected areas” was added to compensate for the removal of the TFP indicator. Under Outcome 3, the indicator of “regulatory, legal and administrative mechanisms for a multi-stakeholder provincial body to manage Prek Thnot watershed in Kampong Speu in place and functional” was replaced with another indicator “a collaborative program of action to enforce

regulations and establish provincial level administrative mechanisms for Prek Thnot watershed management is in place and functional” with the reasoning that it was currently more important for stakeholders from key sectors to gain awareness and understanding of issues, forge collaborative agreements to implement short- and long-term measures that improve watershed management beginning in the upstream, and micro watersheds.

The baselines and targets for some of the indicators were found to be incongruent and, in a few cases, incomplete. For example, outcome 1 has an indicator stated as: percentage increase in average gross and net income per household in forest areas in project target areas. The mid-term target is 10% and end-of-the-project target is 20% for this indicator. But the baseline is stated as 0 in the results framework. There has to be a baseline income figure against which the percentage increase targets of incomes can be measured. Similarly, outcome 2 has indicators stated as: (a) percentage increase in forest and vegetation cover of commune forest in locally prioritized micro community watersheds based on land use management plan, strengthened law enforcement, conservation and sustainable use; and (b) percentage increase in average gross and net income per participating household. Again, both these indicators have ‘0’ baselines rendering their respective targets unmeasurable in absence of baseline figures for forest and vegetation cover and income per participating household. Furthermore, any noticeable increase in forest and vegetation cover is unlikely in the short period of the project considering the long gestation in forest crops and also given that much of the project period was to be expended in raising awareness, mobilizing and reviving CF/ CPA groups, building local capacities, and establishing the CF/CPAs with management plans and government approvals. Given these factors, a measurable and realistic indicator should have been chosen instead. It was also noted that the project was not able to finalize targets for two indicators, land productivity for key commodity and labor productivity for key commodity, both relating to project outcome 1. In both cases, the targets were left “TBD” (to be decided) throughout the project. The incongruity and gaps in baselines and targets of the indicators present difficulties in monitoring and reporting progress coherently. Difficulty in interpreting project progress against the indicators and targets can be discerned in the Project Implementation Reviews (PIRs) and Annual Progress Reports (APRs).

With regards to gender mainstreaming in the project results, the project results framework specified, at the objective level, the need for gender-disaggregated data for the indicator “% of targeted households in the project target areas benefitting from diversified livelihoods.” However, this was not reinforced with gender-disaggregated targets. For example, the targets of 200 households (mid-term) and 500 households (end of the project) could have also specified targeted percentage of women-headed/ represented households for gender emphasis in keeping with the indicator. Having said that, it needs to be pointed out that the progress reporting against the targets does mention the percentage of women that represented the beneficiary households. At the outcome level, none of the indicators lent themselves well to gender-disaggregated monitoring.

The ToC provides a generic and abstract illustration of pathways to change but these pathways do not tangibly link project strategy and outcomes to address the various barriers and challenges to SLM at the watershed level. While the project interventions lend themselves well to bring about localized improvements in community livelihoods and the management of agricultural lands and forest resources in the three target communes, it is difficult to expect the localized interventions in a few communes over a short period of time to accumulate to bring forth landscape-level improvements in SLM and natural resources in Prek Thnot watershed as

envisaged in the project’s ToC. This observation is in line with the Mid-term Review (MTR, March 2019), which noted that “the projected results of a small pilot work (covering 2-4 communes in 3 years) will not automatically lead to impact on a catchment-wide basis. There is a need, to include in the ToC, some fundamental processes that must also be present for some “impact” to happen even from a small-scale pilot during the short period covered.” In addition, the MTR observed that “the transition from pilot activities and increased income and land/water productivity to long term impacts on sustainable land and forest practices may under-estimate the challenges in the Prek Thnot watershed.”

3.1.2 Assumptions and risks

The project results framework identified a number of assumptions and risks pertaining to the achievement of the project objective and each of the project outcomes. These are outlined in the table below:

Table 4: Objective and Outcome-level Assumptions and Risks

Objective/ Outcome	Assumption(s)	Risk(s)
Project Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National government is supportive of sustainable land and water management, and recognizes role of MAFF and the need to engage at local levels; ▪ Provincial government of Kampong Speu is committed to support watershed management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Economic development and other priorities overshadow natural resource management needs; ▪ Government departments unwilling to work together on cross-sectoral initiatives.
Project Component/ Outcome 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Local communities are willing to participate in government-led initiatives; ▪ Agribusinesses and relevant government agencies are willing to engage in dialogue on policy issues related to land use and management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Shifts in priorities of national and provincial government, with increased emphasis on economic growth at cost to sustainable development; ▪ Agribusinesses, particularly ELC companies, reluctant to enter into discussions with government on contentious issues.
Project Component/ Outcome 2	Farming households are willing to assume risk related to adoption of new technologies and practices.	Farming and village households in project target areas (including CF) reluctant to give up charcoal making as supplementary source of income.
Project Component/ Outcome 3	There are sufficiently skilled and capable human resources to carry out activities.	Institutional arrangements unwieldy and render implementation slow and uneven.

When assessed against the various parameters of social and environmental standards at the time of project design, the project was categorized as having “moderate risk”. Three specific risks were identified: (a) adverse impacts on human rights of local marginalized groups, rated as low risk; (b) restricted access to natural resources due to enhanced enforcement for local communities, including marginalized groups, rated as moderate risk; and (c) the duty-bearers do not have the capacity to meet their obligations in the project, rated as moderate risk.

In addition, the project risk log identified the following:

- (a) Ad hoc development investment decisions override long-term Prek Thnot landscape and ecosystem management plans;
- (b) Limited technical implementation capacities, limited abilities in project contract management, finance;
- (c) Local farmers are risk adverse, resist change to known subsistence farming methods;
- (d) Agro-forest production systems promoted fail to develop gains in forest area or improved forest ecosystem services;
- (e) Efforts to engage ELCs, agribusiness, other private sector, non-government and government counterparts to collaboratively address land use concerns meet with resistance;
- (f) Extreme weather fluctuations, e.g. floods, droughts, landslides.

Among the aforesaid identified risks, (e) and (f) were rated as high in terms of impact and probability. This assessment turned out to be correct during project implementation. The project faced difficulty in engaging with agribusiness companies that hold ELCs in the project areas. Until the mid-term of the project, there was almost no progress made in this regard as a result of reluctance from ELC companies to enter into collaboration, committing themselves to SLM practices in their area of operation. Subsequently, after the MTR, there was some progress in engaging with the ELC-holding companies resulting in short-term agreements for collaborative SLM activities in the areas where they were operating. Extreme weather events were also experienced particularly in the first year of the project. Recurrent floods induced by incessant rains in July-October 2018 cut off access to remote communities in the project area, slowing down and delaying project interventions in the field.

There were a few other unforeseen factors, including the global COVID-19 pandemic, that affected project implementation and progress. These factors and how the project managed them and other risks envisaged during the project design are described in subsection 3.2.6 (Risk management).

3.1.3 Lessons from other relevant projects incorporated into the project design

The project was designed to demonstrate sustainable land management at the landscape level as espoused in the NAP, the draft of which was a major product emanating from the previous UNDP/GEF medium-size project titled “Building Capacity and Mainstreaming Sustainable Land Management Project”, implemented by MAFF from 2008 to 2011. It also recognized the need to promote the use of agroecosystem analysis and guidelines advanced by the aforesaid UNDP/GEF SLM project for biophysical resource assessments to be undertaken under the CoWES project to establish baselines and aid the selection of project sites for on-farm soil conservation and agroforestry practices (project component/ outcome 1). In addition, project component/ outcome 3 was formulated to strengthen watershed management and monitoring capacity, building on the capacity development work undertaken during the UNDP/GEF SLM project.

Furthermore, learning from the implementation difficulties experienced during the UNDP-GEF project on Building Capacity and Mainstreaming SLM, the project document recognized that particular attention was to be given to: (a) commitment and leadership from senior government officials; (b) a well-defined and accepted project inception strategy to guide implementation; (c) recruitment of qualified and experienced project management staff with probation conditions for the inception period; and (d) putting in place adequate support for the implementing and executing partners.

The project document recognized the potential to employ a number of ecosystem valuation tools and methods developed by various development institutes and agencies. These included cost-benefit analysis, value transfer, the Wildlife Habitat Benefits Estimation, and the Integrated Valuation of Ecosystem Services and Tradeoffs (InVEST), the Economic of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) framework for analysis. In light of very limited capacity for ecosystem services valuation in Cambodia, learning from earlier valuation studies was considered important for insights. In particular, two studies were mentioned: "Economics of Watershed Protection and Trade Off with Timber Production: A Case Study in Malaysia" by Mohd Shahwahid, International Development Research Centre (IDRC), 1997; and "A Cost Benefit Analysis of the Community Forest Project in Chumkiri District, Kampot Province" by Kalyan Hou and Sothunvathanak Meas, IDRC, 2008. It also recognized that the Economy and Environment Program for South East Asia (EEPSEA) had trained and supported researchers at the Community Based Natural Resource Management Learning Institute in Cambodia, and that this resource needed to be tapped for support. In highlighting the importance of valuation of ecosystem services, the project document made reference to information from the publication "The Cardamom Conundrum: Reconciling Development and Conservation in the Kingdom of Cambodia" by Timothy J Killeen, published by the National University of Singapore, 2012, and to the report "The Value of Land Resource in the Cardamom Mountains of Cambodia" by Sousan, J and C. Sam (undated), Stockholm Environment Institute.

The NGO project partner, Mlup Baitong, have been working intermittently in Kampong Speu since 1998 and have considerable experience of working on community livelihoods, rural water supply systems, and CF/CPA. They have reportedly used lessons from their previous experience in developing and implementing a number of the project interventions. An example that can be cited relates to the development of the small-scale water supply systems. In their previous work on developing small-scale water supply systems, they experienced sustainability issues as they had not built in the institutional and financial mechanisms to sustain the systems. Learning from this experience, this time round in this project, Mlup Baitong integrated sustainability measures such as formation of water users' groups/ committees and bylaw for maintenance and management of the systems and establishment of water tariff to generate funds to plough back into the upkeep of the systems.

3.1.4 Planned stakeholder participation

As outlined in the project document and project inception report, the project stakeholders and their role envisaged during project implementation are outlined in the following table:

Table 5: Project Stakeholders and their Role in the Project

Project Stakeholder(s)	Roles and Responsibilities
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF)	As the lead Project Implementing Partner, MAFF provided strategic decisions, oversaw and monitored project implementation and accomplishment of project objectives and tasks, ensured government co-financing in kind, and facilitated institutional coordination and collaboration, and participation of project stakeholders. The PMU was based in the MAFF.
Project Management Unit, MAFF	Day-to-day project management and coordination with various project partners for the delivery of project outputs in a timely and effective manner. Facilitation of project-related planning activities and overall project monitoring and reporting as per UNDP/GEF norms and standards.

Project Stakeholder(s)	Roles and Responsibilities
Department of Agricultural Land Resources Management (DALRM), MAFF	A major project partner as the focal point for component 3 and for component 1 (until mid-term). Facilitated the implementation of project activities related to the aforesaid components, including necessary technical guidance and backstopping.
Provincial Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (PDAFF), Kampong Speu Province	A major project partner as the focal point for component 2 and for component 1 (after mid-term). Facilitated the implementation of project activities related to the aforesaid components, including necessary technical guidance and backstopping. PDAFF was included as a member of the Project Board.
Forestry Administration (FA)/ Forest Research Institute, MAFF	Technical assistance, such as GIS and spatial planning services, and policy insights related to forestry activities. A representative from the FA was a member of the Project Board.
Kampong Speu Provincial Government	Regulatory, policy and institutional support to districts, communes and other target communities within their jurisdiction.
District-level governments (Aoral and Phnom Sruoch)	Coordination and provision of technical assistance and capacity building activities within their respective districts.
Commune authorities: Tasal and Trapeang Chour communes (Aoral district); and Krang Deivay (Phnom Sruoch district)	Implementation of project activities in the field in collaboration with local communities and with capacity building and technical assistance from district-level governments; mobilization of community participation, and integration of community livelihood improvement plans developed through the project into the respective commune development plans and commune investment programs.
Ministry of Environment	Guidance and policy support in matters related to the development and revitalization of target community protected areas. A representative from the MoE was a member of the Project Board.
Other national ministries such as Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology (MoWRAM)	Technical support, advice and inputs where relevant through higher level steering groups or technical committees, including ideas and insights for dissemination and scaling up of good practices.
Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA)	MOWA's inputs and guidance were critical to ensure that the project was responsive to the specific roles and needs of women in the area of sustainable land management. A representative from MoWA was a member of the Project Board.
Mlup Baitong (NGO)	MB played a crucial role as a key project partner, particularly in community training and advocacy on sustainable agriculture and natural resource management practices, and in the mobilization of community participation in sustainable livelihoods and SLM interventions including agroforestry, water supply systems, community forestry, CPA, and ecotourism.
Royal University of Agriculture	Technical advice and training on agricultural SLM methods and potential participation in SLM research and studies in project areas to provide university students with field knowledge and experience. A representative from the RUC is a member of the Project Board.

Project Stakeholder(s)	Roles and Responsibilities
Selected agribusinesses, notably including private companies with ELC contracts	Dialogue was pursued with several ELC-holding agribusiness companies operating in the project areas, leading to short-term cooperative agreements for joint SLM activities with three ELC-holding companies viz. Grandis Timber Ltd, HLH Agriculture Cambodia, and CPL-Teak Farm Co.
Local communities of Tasal and Trapeang Chour communes in Aoral district, and Krang Deivay commune in Phnom Sruoch district.	Primary resource users and managers, participation in community-based project activities such as revitalization of community forest and community protected areas and development of small-scale water supply systems, and direct beneficiaries of on-farm sustainable land management and agroforestry interventions, and related capacity building activities.
UNDP (Country Office and A/P Regional Hub)	As GEF Implementing Agency, provided quality assurance, coordinated the delivery of project funds, monitored project progress, and rendered programmatic and strategic support for project implementation through the CO and with overall strategic guidance from UNDP A/P Regional Hub. UNDP was a member of the Project Board.

The above-listed project stakeholders were engaged during the inception and implementation of the project in varying roles and capacities as envisaged in the project document. To what extent the identified project stakeholders were actually engaged during project implementation as anticipated during the project design is described in sub-section 3.2.2 (Actual stakeholder participation and partnership arrangements).

3.1.5 Linkages/ synergy between project and other interventions within the sector

The project design identified a number of projects/ initiatives with which CoWES project could develop synergy and linkages. These included:

- APFNet Project entitled “Landscape Approach to Sustainable Management of Forests in Prek Thnot Watershed”. This is a research and development (R&D) project supported by the Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management to develop capacity for watershed management planning. The project concluded in 2018 and, therefore, had a short interface period with the CoWES project.
- GEF UNDP NCCDS – Reducing the Vulnerability of Cambodian Rural Livelihoods through Enhanced Sub National Climate Change Planning (SRL). This project aimed to strengthen sub-national investment planning systems to address climate change.
- The FAO GEF Life and Nature Project aims to increase adaptive capacity and resilience of communities including promotion of participatory micro-watershed management to reduce climate impacts on natural resources and agriculture.
- MAFF-UNCCD Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) Target Setting Program, which is a commitment of the MAFF to the UNCCD’s LDN Target Setting Program. The initiative aims to establish land degradation neutrality targets for the country to support the targets of SDG 15 (Life on Land) by 2030, and calls for monitoring land degradation (and its mitigation) using 3 globally-agreed indicators.
- The FA-FAO Forest and Landscape Restoration Mechanism Project to promote widespread awareness and demonstration of various technologies that are helpful for forest and landscape restoration.

In addition, at its third meeting, the Project Board had recommended that the project explore the possibility of developing linkages with other projects, such as the World Bank-supported “Land Allocation for Social and Economic Development (LASED)” project and the sustainable agriculture project supported by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research, to gain more knowledge and experience and expand the impact of the project.

However, it is noted there was no systematic linkage with any of the aforesaid projects to pursue collaboration and synergy. Relationship with other projects was minimal and basically limited to participation of the project staff and stakeholders in the APFNet project closing workshop to exchange project experience and lessons, and an exposure visit to REDD+ project sites at Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary, Monduliri Province, to observe and gain insights on forest-based livelihoods and best practices of community patrolling. Besides these, the project incorporated “percentage improvement of net primary production” – an indicator under MAFF commitment to UNCCD LDN Program for long term monitoring – in the project results framework. However, PIRs reveal that project progress and achievement against the indicator could not be monitored and assessed as the three-year project duration was too short to show any tangible progress or achievement against the LDN indicator.

3.1.6 Gender responsiveness of the project design

The project document describes the status of women and men in the Cambodian society with particular reference to their rights to assets and ownership of property and their roles in the management of funds and household decisions. It explains the engagement of women in the agriculture, industry and services economic sectors, and their role in rural economy. The project design recognizes that diminishing agricultural returns, reduced access to land resources and water insecurity place a disproportionate burden on women as they are most often the caretakers of their families, responsible for collecting water for household use and feeding their families, in addition to working as laborers in the fields. It underlines that gender inequality has reduced over the years following the country’s accession to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women²².

The Project’s Gender Action Plan (GAP), which was formulated during the inception phase, adopts a three-pronged approach that aims to ensure the meaningful participation of women and girls, rather than mere token representation. This approach included: (a) raising the awareness of the overall community of the differential gendered aspects of sustainable land management and community forestry; (b) ensuring inclusivity and facilitating participation of all types of participants in the different aspects of project implementation; and, (c) specific livelihoods support inclusive to all beneficiaries particularly the affected women.

The GAP was drawn to ensure: (a) equal opportunities to access project benefits; (b) active consultation and participation of women and minority ethnic groups; (c) collection of gender disaggregated data including benefit monitoring and evaluation; and, (d) increased representation of women in decision-making bodies at all levels. The gender inclusive design elements included a set of gender-related targets for each project component/ outcome and description of the implementation mechanisms of GAP through the management of project results framework and work plans, and the governance of project (representation of the Ministry of Women Affairs in the PB and designation of gender focal points within the project).

²² Cambodia signed the CEDAW on 17th October, 1980, and acceded to it on 15th October, 1992.

As described in sub-section 3.1.1 (Analysis of project results framework and logic), gender-disaggregated data was recognized for one of the objective-level indicators “number of households in the project target areas benefitting from diversified livelihoods.” However, the targets for this indicator were not gender-disaggregated. The chosen indicators for the outcomes provided little opportunity to mainstream gender aspect.

3.2 Project Implementation

3.2.1 Adaptive management

At the outset, the project undertook a major review and revision of the project design in view of the long gestation period between project design and inception due to the transfer of the project from ADB to UNDP. To facilitate the review and revision of the project design and lay the project on a sound footing for implementation, an international project start-up advisor was employed during the inception phase. Although the inception phase was long and slow, it was useful to have had a major review and updating of the project design including the formulation of outputs, GAP and knowledge management/communication strategy. If this had not been done the project would have operated in a series of programmatic vacuum aggravating project implementation problems. The long inception phase provided the project the opportunity to engage with and consult multiple stakeholders at the central level as well as at the subnational and local levels, finetune project design and plan the project interventions in detail, and determine specific partnership arrangements in accordance with the planned project interventions.

As explained earlier in section 2.1, project closure was extended by six months in view of a long inception phase and delays experienced as a result of the National Assembly elections and the incessant rains and recurrent floods in the first year of the project. The project rescheduled some of the consultancies during the election time so that key project activities continued even while government partners were busy with election process and logistics. Furthermore, the project made effort to gain lost ground through intensive planning of project activities. This, however, often resulted in under-achievement of the workplan as existing capacity within government partners was not adequate to implement intensive workplans.

Spot check on fund utilization was carried out in November 2018 and HACT Financial Audit was conducted for the period from 1st Jan to 31st Dec 2019. The IP and IA noted the observations made by the spot check and financial audit, and took steps to address them (also mentioned in sub-sections 3.2.3 and 3.2.4).

The project was also responsive to the MTR recommendations.²³ The Project Board endorsed all the recommendations, and UNDP and respective project partners undertook actions to address them. The reorganization of implementation arrangement, following MTR recommendation, which saw PDAFF take over as the focal point/ responsible party for component 1 from DALRM benefitted project implementation. As a result of this reorganization, the PDAFF because of its presence in the province could coordinate closely with the ELC-holding companies and secure partnerships with three ELC-holding companies when at the time of the MTR it looked like at best the project would be able to secure partnership with only one ELC-

²³ The MTR made nine specific recommendations.

holding company. It is another matter that subsequently two of the three ELC-holding companies closed their operations due to constraints posed by COVID-19 pandemic.

Also following MTR recommendation, the project re-appropriated project budget to allocate additional funds to sufficiently develop the small-scale water storage and supply systems in the three target communes. The project stakeholders cited these as a key project achievement considering their direct multiple benefits to the local communities and their importance in enhancing on-farm livelihoods that can wean local people away from unsustainable livelihoods such as illegal logging and charcoal production, which are major concerns in Prek Thnot watershed. All major changes or revisions in project workplans and budgets were presented before the PB and undertaken with its approval.

Furthermore, learning from the implementation difficulties experienced during the UNDP-GEF project on Building Capacity and Mainstreaming SLM, the project: (a) constituted a robust PB with senior representation from various government agencies and held timely PB meetings, chaired by the Secretary of State, MAFF; (b) undertook a major review and update of the project design including implementation arrangements with the assistance of a part-time international project start-up advisor to set the project on a firm footing; and (c) instituted a strong PMU made up of a team of five experienced staff to ensure that the MAFF is well supported in project implementation²⁴.

3.2.2 Actual stakeholder participation and partnership arrangements

The project was executed by the MAFF as the IP in accordance with National Implementation Modality (NIM) based on the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement between UNDP and the RGC, and the Country Program. NIM is an arrangement whereby the government, in principle, assumes full ownership and responsibility for the formulation and effective management, or execution, of all aspects of UNDP-assisted projects and programs. It implies that all management aspects of the project are the responsibility of the national authority. However, the national authority remains accountable to UNDP for production of the outputs, achievement of objectives, use of resources provided by UNDP, and financial reporting. UNDP Cambodia in turn remained accountable for the use of resources to the UNDP Executive Board and the project donors, GEF Secretariat in this case.

As the IP, MAFF was responsible and accountable for managing the project, including the monitoring and evaluation of project interventions, achieving project outcomes, and for the effective use of GEF/UNDP resources. A PMU was established within MAFF for the day-to-day management of project operations and funds, programmatic oversight and backstopping, work planning and budgeting, monitoring and reporting of project progress, and coordination and liaison with project partners and other key stakeholders.

The MAFF entered into partnership agreement with DALRM, PDAFF of Kampong Speu, and Mlup Baitong to execute project activities and assist in the delivery of project outputs. The DALRM functioned as the focal point, or responsible party, for project component 3 and for project component 1 (until the mid-term of the project) while PDAFF functioned as the focal point, or responsible party, for project component 2 and for project component 1 (after the mid-term of the project). Each of these agencies operated based on a memorandum of agreement with the

²⁴ The project document had envisaged a PMU with just two project support staff viz. a project advisor and a project assistant.

MAFF. Mlup Baitong as the NGO partner provided natural resources management advocacy and mobilized community actions for sustainable livelihoods and CF/CPAs. The NGO appointed three field coordinators, one for each target commune. The MoAs consisted of the terms of reference, log-frame of activities to be executed by the respective agencies, and work plan and budget to support these activities. These direct project partners engaged other stakeholders including relevant government agencies in field activities and capacity building events as per their relevance. In line with the MTR recommendation, the project engaged the services of the Provincial Department of Water Resources and Meteorology for technical guidance on the development of small-scale water supply systems. It also received assistance from officials from the Ministry of Industry, Mine, and Energy to test the quality of the water of these systems. Training and guidance on ecotourism for local communities were obtained from the Provincial Department of Tourism. ELC-holding agribusiness companies in the project areas were engaged through dialogue and participation in relevant workshops, leading to securing of short-term agreements for collaborative implementation of SLM measures with three of them, namely Timber Grandis Ltd, HLH Agriculture Cambodia, and CPL-Teak Farm Co.²⁵

At the upstream management level, the PB had senior-level representation from relevant departments under the MAFF as well as from the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Women's Affairs, and the Royal University of Agriculture. The PB meetings were held in the Kampong Speu province, thus giving the PB members the opportunity to have a close look at the project activities in the field.

At the local level, active participation of local communities was mobilized through formation of CF (Damrey Chark Thlork) and CPA groups (Reaksmey Samaki and Tang Bampong), and water users' groups/committees established in all the villages where small-scale water supply systems were developed by the project. The project worked closely with the commune councils and district administrations whilst developing and integrating the community livelihood improvement plans in the commune development plans and commune investment plans.

A key aspect of the project was the successful partnership between government agencies and the NGO partner, Mlup Baitong, which led to the attainment of several project activities despite a slow inception and short project period. To a good extent, the government-NGO partnership complemented each other in terms of implementation approach, skills and experience and especially considering that the government staff were not always in a position to give sufficient time for the implementation of project activities as per workplans because of their regular administrative duties and responsibilities.

The technical aspect of the project was largely managed through the recruitment of consultants. In all, thirteen consultants were recruited – three international experts and ten Cambodian national experts. The consultancies pertained to the following work: (a) project inception and start-up (b) ethnographic study of Prek Thnot watershed; (c) valuation of ecosystem services in Prek Thnot watershed and roadmap for PES; (d) development of reforestation/ afforestation strategy; (e) GIS technology; (f) agri-environment technology; (g) micro-watershed and water resources management; (h) local forest governance; (i) watershed governance; (j) development of SLM technical guidelines for Prek Thnot watershed; (k) agro-forestry; (l) forest livelihoods development; and (m) monitoring and evaluation. In addition, the project MTR and TE were conducted by international consultants recruited directly by UNDP.

²⁵ HLH Agriculture Cambodia and CPL-Teak Farm Co. have closed their operations in the country due to COVID-19 pandemic.

The annual reflection workshops provided a major forum for stakeholder engagement. A large number of project stakeholder representatives – 64 in 2018 and 61 in 2019 – participated in these workshops. Over the course of two days of these workshops, the project updated the stakeholders about project activities and their progress, and exchanged experiences and views on issues, ideas and future course of project activities.

3.2.3 Project finance and co-finance management

The project document reflects a total budget of USD 1,490,917, made up of USD 1,100,917 from the GEF Trust Fund and co-financing of USD 150,000 (in cash) from UNDP TRAC resources, and USD 240,000 (in kind) from the RGC. There has been no change in the status of the overall project financing from what was conceived in the project document. The project budget, as reflected in the project document, is summarized by year and component in the table below:

Table 6: Project Budget (as given in the project document)

Project Component	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total by Component	Comp% of the Total
Outcome 1	97,000	169,100	79,600	345,700	27.6
Outcome 2	104,000	152,500	101,083	357,583	28.6
Outcome 3	107,600	181,334	153,700	442,634	35.4
Project Management	46,000	28,000	31,000	105,000	8.4
Total	354,600	530,934	365,383	1,250,917	

As shown in the Table 6, the largest proportion (amounting to 35.4%) of the project budget was allotted for the achievement of component/ outcome 3 pertaining to improvement of watershed management and monitoring capacity. Components/ outcomes 1 and 2 accounted for 27.6% and 28.6% of the project budget respectively. Project financial data made maintained by the UNDP CO show a total cumulative project expenditure (from project start until September 2020) of USD 1,093,526, which translates to 87.4% of the total project budget. As given in Table 7, the breakdown of the cumulative expenditure by outcome is: USD 319,560 for Outcome 1; USD 316,684 for Outcome 2; USD 327,356 for Outcome 3; and USD 129,926 for project management. Financial delivery was best for outcome 1 at 92.4% of the budget, followed by outcome 2 at 88.6%. Outcome 3 had only 74% delivery while project management expenditure had exceeded planned budget by 23.7%.

Table 7: Status of Project Expenditure until September 2020

Project Component	Budget as per Prodoc (USD)	Expenditure (USD)					Exp% of Planned Budget
		2017	2018	2019	2020*	Cumulative	
Outcome 1	345,700	4,209	133,298	150,349	31,704	319,560	92.4
Outcome 2	357,583	11,529	95,168	140,613	69,374	316,684	88.6
Outcome 3	442,634	29,401	127,051	134,616	36,288	327,356	74.0
Project Management	105,000	20,141	41,681	28,121	39,983	129,926	123.7
Total	1,250,917	65,280	397,198	453,699	177,349	1,093,526	87.4

Note: Figures for 2020 were available until September

Financial delivery of the project in terms of expenditure was very low in the first year but saw significant improvement from 2018 onward (see **Figure 4**).

Co-financing for the project was small: USD 150,000 (cash from UNDP TRAC resources) and USD 240,000 (in-kind from the RGC). Until September 2020, USD 148,711 (99.1%) of the committed cash co-financing had been realized (see **Table 8**). The realization of in-kind contribution from RGC is difficult to ascertain in monetary terms in the absence of any cost tabulation. The in-kind co-financing is reported to have been primarily incurred in terms of office overheads and utility costs of the PMU based within MAFF, government staff time dedicated to project activities, government staff field travels to monitor and backstop project activities, and logistics involved in organizing project-related meetings and other events.

Figure 4: Year-wise Project Expenditure (USD) by Outcome

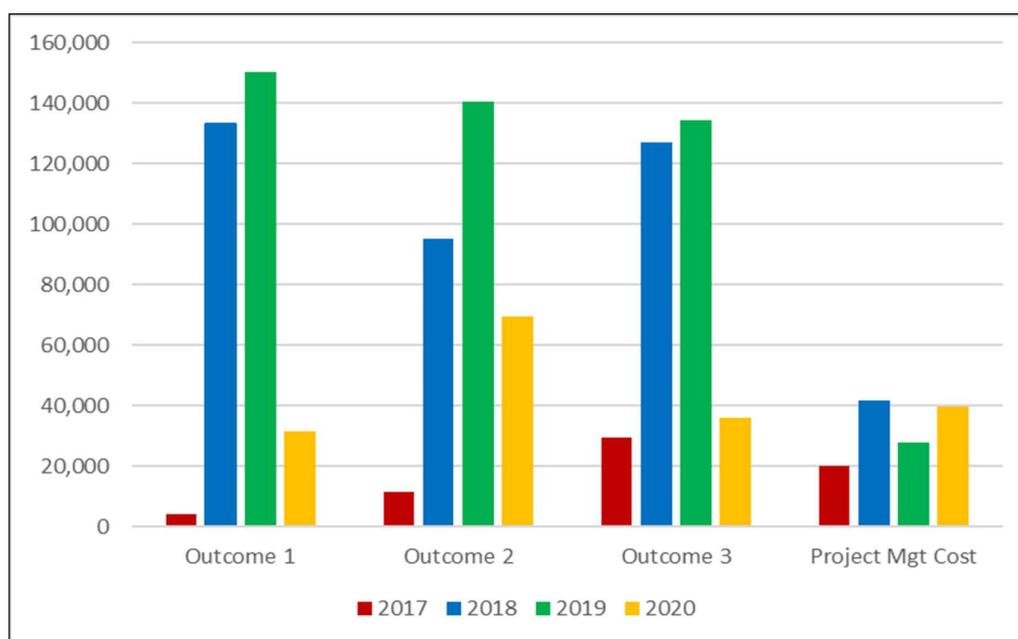


Table 8: Realization of Committed Project Funds and Co-financing by Year

Funding Source	Committed at CEO Endorsement	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
GEF	1,100,917	49,832	344,474	410,188	296,423	1,100,917
UNDP (co-financing)	150,000	15,448	52,724	43,511	37,028	148,711
Government (in-kind co-financing) ²⁶	240,000	30,000	70,000	70,000	70,000	240,000
Total	1,490,917	65,280	397,198	453,699	333,451	1,249,628

²⁶ Given that there was no year-wise cost tabulation of in-kind government contribution, the total in-kind contribution has been apportioned year-wise as per the duration of years with the amount for 2017 being less than half of the other project years as the project commenced in July 2017 and the activities that year were largely directed to project inception.

Spot check on fund utilization was carried out in November 2018 – two medium and two low risks were brought to the notice of IA and PMU/ IP. Actions to address these risks were taken up within two months of the findings. HACT Financial Audit was conducted for the period from 1st Jan to 31st Dec 2019. The audit made two observations with high risk; five with medium risk; and one with low risk. The PMU/IP provided clarifications on the observations and undertook necessary corrective actions.

3.2.4 Monitoring and evaluation: design at entry and implementation

M&E design at entry:

The M&E framework was defined in the project document (section VII) and Annex 2 of the project document presented a monitoring and evaluation work plan and budget featuring M&E activities required by UNDP and GEF, responsible agencies for these activities, estimated budget and related timeframe and/or frequency of the M&E activity. The range of M&E activities reflected the standard UNDP-GEF instruments, such as quarterly and annual progress reports, project implementation reviews, a mid-term review and terminal evaluation. Also included in the M&E plan and budget were the inception workshop and inception report at the beginning of the project, PB meetings, internal monitoring and backstopping, regular audits and field visits. The total indicative budget was USD 131,000 (i.e. 11.9% of the total GEF budget). The M&E plan was reviewed during the inception phase and minor changes in terms of responsible agency and frequency of the M&E activity were made in it.

The PRF, along with UNDP’s capacity development scorecard, provided the key basis for planning project implementation and tracking progress towards project results. The PRF had a number of drawbacks, which were described in detail in sub-section 3.1.1 (Analysis of project results framework). The capacity development scorecard was done for MAFF and subnational/ local authority determining their capacity score at the start of the project and the target to be achieved by the project in the mid-term and at the end of the project.

Data for relevant indicators under GEF-7 Core Indicators were provided. This included two core indicators: Core Indicator 4.3 – area of landscapes under SLM in production systems under the broader Core Indicator 4 – area of landscapes under improved practices; and Core Indicator 11 – number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment.

The M&E design at entry is rated **moderately satisfactory**, primarily on account of a deficient PRF which is the main basis for monitoring and evaluating progress towards project results. All other aspects of the M&E design were done well as per UNDP/ GEF standards.

M&E implementation:

Monitoring and reporting have been carried out with due diligence. Based on desk review of project documentation and consultations with the stakeholders during the TE process, the following were observed:

- The project inception workshop was held on 15th December, 2017, and the project inception report was completed on 28th February, 2018. The inception report reflected the full range of review and revision of the project design that were undertaken, involving a series of multi-stakeholder consultations, bilateral meetings with project partners and field visits, with the support of an international project start-up advisor;
- Project Board meetings were held annually without fail in the first quarter of each project year – 25th January in 2018, 1st March in 2019, and 5th February in 2020 – with senior-level

representation of all key members. The minutes of the PB meetings were produced in a timely manner; the first PB meeting minutes on 7th February, 2018, and the second PB meeting minutes on 7th March, 2019²⁷. All the PB meetings were held at various locations in Kampong Speu, providing opportunities to the members to see field activities before or after the PB meeting.

- APRs were produced for 2018 and 2019 and QPRs were available for first, second and third quarters of 2018 and 2019, and for first and second quarters of 2020. These reports reflected the progress made during the reporting period, financial status and fund utilization, the mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues (particularly gender and social and environmental safeguards) and highlighted key issues and challenges.
- PIRs were duly completed annually taking stock of and keeping track on project progress towards intended results, financial flow and delivery, and management of risks and cross-cutting issues through a joint assessment by the Project Manager, UNDP CO Program Officer, and UNDP-GEF Regional Technical Advisor. Despite the constraint posed by a deficient PRF, the PMU has been comprehensive in its monitoring and reporting of the project results, which was evident from the documentation done in the APRs, QPRs and PIRs.
- The capacity scorecards were periodically updated, providing capacity scores for the mid-term and end of the project – reflecting an increasing trend. Data for the relevant GEF-7 Core Indicators (Core Indicator 4.3 – area of landscapes under SLM in production systems under the broader Core Indicator 4 – area of landscapes under improved practices; and Core Indicator 11 – number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment) were updated at the time of MTR and TE.
- Spot check on fund utilization was carried out in November 2018 and HACT Financial Audit was conducted for the period from 1st Jan to 31st Dec 2019. Observations and findings from the spot check and audit were duly noted by the project management team and, where necessary, actions were taken to rectify the observed risks (as highlighted earlier in sub-section 3.2.3 – Project finance and co-finance management).
- The mid-term review (MTR) of the project was carried out in the first quarter of 2019 with the MTR report finalized on 2nd March, 2019. The MTR assessed the project progress and rated the various aspects of project performance until the halfway of project period, and recommended key actions to improve project implementation and achieve project results. The MTR recommendations were endorsed by the PB and taken up by the project management, resulting in improved progress in several project activities in the remaining period of the project.
- A M&E officer was recruited as a part of the project management team and project staff regularly made field visits (until the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic) and concerned UNDP program staff undertook field missions to monitor and backstop project activities as necessary.

Based on the foregoing assessments, the implementation of the project M&E plan is rated **satisfactory**. The overall quality of the M&E is also rated **satisfactory**.

²⁷ The completion date of the minutes of the third PB meeting could not be ascertained at the minutes was undated.

Table 9: Monitoring and Evaluation Rating

M&E Plan	Rating
M&E design at entry	Moderately Satisfactory
M&E plan implementation	Satisfactory
Overall quality of M&E	Satisfactory

3.2.5 Project implementation and oversight

UNDP Implementation and Oversight

UNDP, through its country office in Cambodia and the regional hub in Bangkok, was involved in quality assurance including audits, spot checks, and monitoring visits to project sites, coordination and delivery of project funds as per agreed plans and budgets, liaison with the IP and other project partners, reviewing project implementation and reporting to the GEF Secretariat on project implementation and progress. UNDP participated in the PB meetings providing critical observations and suggestions on management as well as strategic and technical issues related to the project activities and their progress.

UNDP applied its administrative procedures and standards to recruit the project advisor, M&E officer and project assistant to ensure that they sufficiently met the qualifications, skills and experience required for effective implementation of the project. They consistently liaised with the IP to ensure that the project reports and key deliverables were produced as per UNDP/GEF requirements/standards and submitted in a timely manner. They supported and backstopped the PMU in the administration of project management tasks, including discussion and agreement on operations manual and financial system with MAFF and the preparation of annual workplans and budgets. The UNDP Regional Hub organized UNDP/GEF project management training for UNDP CO staff and project management staff and backstopped the UNDP CO and PMU in employing UNDP/GEF project monitoring and reporting standards, including the PIRs and management of risks. The UNDP CO managed the MTR and TE processes in close coordination with the IP and with guidance from the UNDP Regional Hub and ensured that these processes were carried out as per the standards and requirements of prevailing UNDP/GEF MTR and TE Guidance.

The financial spot checks and audit were facilitated by UNDP, ensuring that they were conducted on time and as per standards required for a UNDP/GEF project, and followed up with the IP and PMU to ensure the observations and recommendations were acted upon.

Implementing Partner Project Execution

The MAFF as the project IP took responsibility for day-to-day supervision and functioning of the project. The Secretary of State, MAFF, assumed the responsibility of the Project Director and the Under Secretary of State, MAFF, functioned as the Project Manager with the support of the PMU based within the MAFF. While the national project advisor, M&E officer and project assistant were recruited through the UNDP system, the project coordinator and administration & finance officer were recruited directly by the MAFF. The MAFF appointed its line agencies, PDAFF and DALRM, as project component/ outcome focal points or responsible parties and drew up MoAs with them and Mlup Baitong for execution of project activities in the field as explained earlier in sub-section 3.2.2. The PB meetings were chaired by the Secretary of State, MAFF, and preparations for the PB meetings were conducted under the supervision of the Under Secretary of State, MAFF, as the Project Manager. Minutes of the PB meetings were prepared and circulated by the MAFF in a timely manner, within one to two weeks of the

completion of the PB meeting. The MAFF prepared and submitted the APRs and QPRs as desired on time, and participated in the completion of the PIRs in close coordination with UNDP. As the focal agency for UNCCD and responsible agency for NAP, the MAFF took the opportunity to anchor the project activities into UNCCD- and NAP-related mandate and commitments. Upon the expiry of the MoA with Mlup Baitong in May 2020, MAFF took over the responsibility to continue and complete the pending activities such as the extension of the small-scale water supply systems to two additional villages and the establishment of CPAs. The Ministry also responded adequately and quickly to the observations of project financial spot-check and audit report, and to the recommendations of the MTR.

Based on the above assessments, the ratings on project implementation and execution by IA and IP are provided in the following table:

Table 10: Rating of UNDP Implementation/ IP Execution

UNDP Implementation/ IP Execution	Rating
UNDP implementation/ oversight	Satisfactory
Execution by implementing partner	Satisfactory
Overall project implementation/ execution	Satisfactory

3.2.6 Risk management

Management of risks associated with insufficient capacity of partners for project management, implementation and institutional coordination

The project conducted several trainings and workshops to build the capacity of subnational/ local government officials. It also forged partnership with Mlup Baitong, an NGO with vast experience in environmental advocacy and training at the grassroots level and collaboration with local communities for sustainable livelihoods and community-based natural resource management. This helped alleviate the risk associated with implementation capacity of government partners. In areas where technical capacity was lacking within the government for specialized studies and assessments, consultancies were identified during the inception phase and accordingly engaged during project implementation.

At the outset of project implementation, UNDP and MAFF discussed and agreed on the operation manual and financial system for the project. A full complement of project management staff, comprising a national project advisor, a project coordinator, a M&E officer, a project assistant, and an administration & finance officer, was recruited to ensure that the MAFF was sufficiently supported for day-to-day management and coordination of project activities in keeping with agreed project commitments and UNDP/GEF standards. The project staff participated in the UNDP/GEF project management training organized by the UNDP Regional Hub. The project also recognized that the approval of NAP and formation of various NAP institutional bodies provide an excellent opportunity to embed SLM and watershed management within relevant government institutions and strengthen inter-sector coordination and institutional collaboration at central as well as subnational levels.

Management of risks associated with lack of participation and support from local stakeholders

Livelihood interventions to generate some quick socio-economic benefits, including additional incomes, were integrated in the project to motivate the local communities to involve in SLM interventions. Advocacy/ sensitization activities were undertaken to create community

awareness and interest in the project activities at the grassroots level. Dialogue was pursued with ELC agribusiness companies but the process of securing collaborative agreements was slow as noted from the APRs/PIRs and MTR.

Management of social and environment risks

As mentioned in sub-section 3.1.2 (Assumptions and risks), when assessed against the various parameters of social and environmental standards at the time of project design, the project was categorized as having “moderate risk”. It was, however, noted that the project’s potential adverse risks to human rights and restricted access to natural resources were actually limited in scale and were largely addressed by: locating the project interventions in areas where local communities were impoverished and in most need of support for sustainable livelihoods and environmental improvements; conducting broad-based stakeholder consultations at the local level; employment of participatory approaches, e.g. participatory rural appraisal methods, in deciding grassroots level project interventions; and engagement of local communities in project awareness-building and sensitization workshops. Furthermore, government procedures for establishment of CF/CPA require that all neighboring communities are fully consulted during boundary demarcation and mapping.

Management of risks unforeseen in project design

There were a few other factors that affected project implementation and progress but were not foreseen in the project design. These factors, which appear in the PIRs and other project documentation, were managed as described below:

- (a) The National Assembly elections, held in 2018, when government officials became busy with election process and logistics, and had little time for project activities during the run-up to, and the period immediately after, the elections. The engagement of Mlup Baitong as a project partner and rescheduling of some of the consultancies ensured that key project activities continued with minimal hinderance during the elections;
- (b) The transfer of the authority for CPAs from MAFF to the MoE, which presented some bureaucratic complexities in registering CPAs on time. A senior representative from MoE was included in the Project Board which provided the opportunity to deliberate on and address any outstanding implementation issues related to the CPAs;
- (c) Staff turnover at the subnational/ local government agencies and the inability of government staff to give sufficient time to project activities because of their regular administrative duties and tasks. This is a systemic issue that can be addressed only through long-term human resources administration reforms. For the project period, the partnership with Mlup Baitong and engagement of consultants helped alleviate this problem but it remains a major concern in terms of sustaining project results (this is also reflected in sub-section 3.3.4 – Sustainability).

COVID-19 pandemic scenario in Cambodia and its effects on the project

In Cambodia, the first COVID-19 case was detected and confirmed on 27th January, 2020. This triggered a rapid response from the RGC, which involved the use of its health surveillance system, laboratory tests and diagnostics, contact tracing, and cluster management and hotspot hunting. The effective and coordinated response of the Government has been hugely responsible in the successful containment of COVID-19 cases in Cambodia so far. As of 9th November, 2020, Cambodia recorded 297 COVID-19 cases; of these 288 (97%) had recovered and no death had occurred. The cases spiked in 3rd/4th week of March and in 3rd week of July

but were relatively very small compared to the global scenario. Large-scale non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) were introduced in March and April 2020 in the form of closure of schools, ban on mass public gathering, and travel restrictions. Stay-at-home advisory was also publicly announced. Since July 2020, the NPIs have been eased with partial to complete lifting of the restrictions. Of the country's 25 provinces, 14 have recorded COVID-19 cases. Phnom Penh, the country's capital, was the most affected with 181 cases while Kampong Speu province, where the project sites are located, was among the provinces with low cases; it had recorded three cases²⁸. Implementation of project activities was slowed down as travel and meetings had to be curtailed for safety and in order to contain the spread of the virus. Training and field monitoring were particularly affected. In fact, no training was conducted since the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic. Several organizations, including UN agencies, in the initial period of the pandemic employed 'work-from-home' and 'no travel' measures to keep their employees safe. Community-based ecotourism activities that were introduced in the project area have been brought to a standstill as tourism in general has been hit hard by the pandemic. ELC-holding companies have been affected too with some ELC-holding companies closing their operations in Cambodia. These included two of the ELC agribusiness companies, namely HLH Agriculture Cambodia and CPL-Teak Farm Co., with whom the project had secured short-term agreements for collaborative SLM interventions.

3.3 Project Results and Impacts

3.3.1 Progress towards project results

Component/ Outcome 1: On-farm soil conservation and agroforestry practices improved.

The following were the key achievements for each output under this component/ outcome:

Output 1.1: SLM priorities mainstreamed into local authority area plans in collaboration with MAFF and partners.

Development of CLIPS and their integration in CDPs and CIPs: The project carried out situation analysis using PRA approach and tools in each of the communes – Tasal and Trapeang Chour in Aoral District, and Krang Deivay in Phnom Sruoch District. Changes and trend in the watershed functions and natural resources were assessed and solutions to improve the management of watershed and natural resources were identified in close consultation with the local authorities in the communes and other stakeholders such as Provincial and District Administrations, PDAFF and Provincial Department of Environment, and with technical support from DALRM. Based on this exercise, a Community Livelihood Improvement Plan (CLIP) was prepared for each commune and integrated in their respective Commune Development Plans (CDPs) and Commune Investment Programs (CIPs)²⁹. However, this does not in any way guarantee the implementation of the activities of the CLIP and this will depend on the ability of the local authorities to mobilize necessary funds or to what extent they are given priority for commune funding. It, though, does improve the chances of the local administrations giving priority to the activities in the CLIP for funding particularly because they have been derived through an

²⁸ Communicable Disease Control Department, Ministry of Health, Royal Government of Cambodia.

²⁹ The integration was endorsed with an interim agreement between the project and the respective communes at the annual District Integration Workshop.

extensive participatory approach taking into account local circumstances and needs and with the consensus of the local communities as well as the local authorities.

Output 1.1 Achievement Rating: Satisfactory.

Output 1.2: Suitable SLM practices for small landholders demonstrated.

SLM demonstrations and agroforestry pilots: The project has carried out field demonstrations on sustainable land management technology and practices and agroforestry plantations. Sixty-five households have participated in the SLM demonstrations while 34 households were engaged in agroforestry plantations. Thirty-three of the sixty-five households that participated in the SLM demonstrations have hitherto reported experiencing benefits from SLM activities undertaken by them. Agroforestry plantations are also expected to generate benefits from the production of ginger, galangal, turmeric, lemongrass, and sweet bamboo in a few months to a few years' time.

Small-scale water supply systems: In order to address water constraint to SLM interventions, the project developed small-scale water supply systems in three villages, namely Dock Por, Tang Bampong and Longlim. A total length of 27,000 meters of water pipeline have been laid: 6,500 m in Dock Por; 9,500 m in Tang Bampong; and 12,000 m in Longim village. These water supply systems benefit a total of 243 households. While the primary intent of these systems is to support SLM interventions, local people are experiencing significant spin-off benefits in terms of saving of time spent by women and children in collection of water, saving of money spent on buying water from private suppliers, and increased availability of water for improved hygiene practices and growing vegetables in home gardens. To sustain these systems, each village has formed a water users' group/ committee and local rules and regulations to ensure that the systems are maintained properly and established water tariff to generate funds required to operate and maintain the systems. At the time of the evaluation, it was reported that activities to develop similar water supply systems in another two villages through the project were underway and nearing completion. Interviews with a number of stakeholders and documented sources suggest this intervention as one with the most tangible benefits from the project and with particular relevance to the wellbeing of women.

Output 1.2 Achievement Rating: Highly Satisfactory.

Output 1.3: Suitable land use practices demonstrated among medium- to large-scale agribusiness entities.

Collaboration with ELC-holding companies: The project has conducted a preliminary review of the ELC operations and pursued dialogue with agribusiness companies operating ELCs in the project area including through a workshop on SLM and soil and water conservation. Cooperative agreements for joint implementation of SLM and forest rehabilitation activities have been secured with three ELC-holding companies, namely Grandis Timber Limited, HLH Agriculture Cambodia and CPL-Teak Farm Co (as pointed out earlier, the latter two have closed their operations due to COVID-19 pandemic). However, these agreements cover small-scale activities on a short-term basis and as such do not actually represent a PPP model as envisaged in the project design³⁰. It is surmised that a delayed start in project implementation, lack of detailed information, and the need for extensive dialogue to build understanding and consensus for

³⁰ PPPs vary in definition but they are generally long-term contractual arrangements between the government and a private partner with a clearly defined set of activities and costs, and delineation of roles and responsibilities of the parties involved.

partnership would not have allowed the project to realize the PPP models within its short duration.

Output 1.3 Achievement Rating: Moderately Satisfactory.

Overall Rating of Component/ Outcome 1: Satisfactory

Component / Outcome 2: Community forest areas restored and sustainably managed

Major achievements for each output under this component/ outcome are described below:

Output 2.1: Prioritized actions to accelerate CF implementation, reflected in local authority and MAFF programs of action.

Revitalization of CF and CPAs for sustainable management: The project supported the revitalization of one community forest, namely Damrey Chark Thlorck CF (1,452 ha), and two community protected areas, namely Tang Bampong CPA (2,462 ha) and Reaksmey Samaki CPA (626 ha). The CF/ CPAs supported by the project cover a total area of 4,540 hectares (ha) and are expected to benefit 686 local households in the medium- and long-term through improved access to forest resources including non-timber forest products (NTFPs), improved ecosystem services, and nature-based economic opportunities such as ecotourism. Damrey Chark Thlorck CF is functionally established with official registration, formation of a CF group and an updated 15-year management plan, approved by the Forestry Administration in August 2018. However, the establishment of Tang Bampong and Reaksmey Samaki CPAs is yet to be fully achieved. At the time of the evaluation, the two CPAs were in the final stage of official registration and drafting of their respective management plans in close communication and coordination with the Ministry of Environment (MoE)³¹. To support the revitalization of the CF/ CPAs, the project conducted rapid assessments of the resource conditions and land tenure, review of legal status of the CF and CPAs, field appraisal of boundaries, GIS mapping, and training of the CF/ CPA groups to develop their understanding and skills on various aspects of community organization and management. Community patrolling activities have been initiated to protect the CF and CPAs from encroachment and illegal collection of forest resources.

Output 2.1 Achievement Rating: Moderately Satisfactory

Output 2.2: Suitable restoration strategies and livelihood enterprises demonstrated.

Development of forest restoration and rehabilitation strategy: With the assistance of a local forest governance consultant, forest restoration and rehabilitation strategy was developed and a workshop was conducted for leaders from the CF/ CPA groups and local authorities to sensitize them about the contents of the strategy.

Implementation of forest restoration and livelihood activities in the CF and CPAs: Tree plantations have been carried out to reforest the degraded areas and improve forest vegetation³². Training on ecotourism has been imparted to local authorities and local communities with support from the Provincial Department of Tourism. Consequently, small-scale ecotourism activities have been undertaken in the CF and CPAs. The ecotourism activities have generated additional incomes for the local households mainly through local tour-guiding, provisioning of food, and transportation. In addition, collection of NTFPs from the CF and CPAs

³¹ The authority for approval of official registration and management plan of CPAs has been transferred from MAFF to MoE since 2016, and that of CF has remained with MAFF as before. This bureaucratic change in CPA authority has led to a lengthier process of official registration and approval.

³² During the project period, more than 13,000 tree saplings/ seedlings were planted.

has also generated additional income for the local households³³. Training in rearing poultry has also been provided to the local communities.

Output 2.2 Achievement Rating: Moderately Satisfactory

Overall Component/ Outcome 2 Achievement Rating: Moderately Satisfactory

Component /Outcome 3: Watershed management and monitoring capacity of stakeholders improved.

Following were the main achievements of each output under this component/ outcome:

Output 3.1: Capacity of key stakeholders to develop and start a program of action for watershed management in place

Strengthening of institutional capacity for watershed management based on NAP: The long-awaited National Action Program to combat Land Degradation was approved by the RGC in 2018, covering the period from 2018 to 2027. The NAP was originally drafted through support from an earlier UNDP/GEF project “Building Capacity and Mainstreaming Sustainable Land Management in Cambodia”, 2008-2011. With support from the CoWES project, the MAFF published and circulated 1,000 copies of the NAP document to sub-national and local authorities in Prek Thnot watershed and to other relevant government agencies, and was able to set up NAP Secretariat within MAFF, NAP steering committee, NAP working group, NAP technical working group, and sub-national committees for all 39 watersheds across the country including Prek Thnot watershed. The setting up and approval of the sub-national committees took considerable time and was achieved only towards the end of the project. This was largely because several watersheds transcended more than one province and this consequently entailed extensive consultation and consensus on the composition and set-up of the committees. Although it is noted that the NAP was not an explicit part of the project design, the evaluation recognizes the significance of the NAP document and setting up of NAP-related institutional bodies. By supporting NAP and the establishment of the various NAP bodies, the project has enabled the MAFF to operationalize the strategic and institutional mechanisms to take forward the concept and agenda of SLM in the watersheds based on the vision, mission, goal and strategic objectives of the NAP. In particular, the sub-national committee of Prek Thnot watershed will have a vital role in taking forward SLM interventions building on the experience and lessons from the CoWES project and disseminating them to sub-national committees of other watersheds. It is also a positive sign that the RGC had initially allotted 200 million Cambodian Riel to support the implementation of NAP³⁴.

Economic valuation of Prek Thnot watershed and development of roadmap for management of the ecosystem services: An economic valuation of the Prek Thnot watershed was conducted by a team of a national consultant and an international consultant, providing a cost-benefit analysis of the various ecosystem services in Prek Thnot watershed and a roadmap to manage the ecosystem services through Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) schemes. The economic valuation and PES roadmap are expected to serve as useful decision-making tools for the sub-

³³ PIR 2020 mentions additional annual household incomes of USD 2,400 in Tang Bampong CPA and of USD 900 in Reaksmei Samaki CPA from ecotourism, and an additional household income of USD 750 during the rainy season (five months) from collection of NTFPs.

³⁴ This has been reportedly cut down to half as a result of resource constraint due to the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic.

national committee of Prek Thnot watershed, including the institution of PES as a sustainable financing mechanism for watershed management.

Training and Capacity Development: The PIR of 2020 reports that a total of 126 events of training, workshops and consultative meetings involving 3,285 participants from 25 sectoral departments, sub-national administrations, communities, large landholders, ELCs and ministries, were conducted³⁵. Capacity scorecards done by the project show that the capacity of MAFF improved from a score of 14 (baseline) to 17.4 by mid 2019 and to 32.3 by mid 2020 whereas the capacity of local authorities improved from 13 to 18.9 by mid 2019 and to 29.8 by mid 2020. Going by these scores, capacities at both the central and local levels have improved substantially – by 130% for MAFF and 129% for the local authorities. The capacity score of the local authorities exceeded the end-of-the-project target capacity score of 28. However, the MAFF capacity score remained much below the end-of-the-project target score of 41 envisaged in the project design. It is surmised that MAFF target capacity score of 41 in the project results framework has been set too high for a small project to achieve in a short timeframe and also in view that maximum achievable score is given as 48.

Output 3.1 Achievement Rating: Satisfactory

Output 3.2: Participatory monitoring and assessment to support agreed upon program of action in place.

Development of technical guidelines on sustainable agricultural land management: The guidelines include some seven broad parameters with several sub-parameters within each to monitor various aspects of agricultural land management. At the time of the evaluation, the technical guidelines had been finalized and was being readied for launch. Following the launch, the project plans to organize training on the application of the guidelines for relevant government staff at the subnational and local level as well as community leaders possibly with support of resource persons from the Cambodian Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI).

Digital micro-watershed assessment: The DALRM with assistance from a national consultant has carried out micro-watershed study of the project area using GIS analysis. This assessment is to be useful for the NAP sub-national committee of Prek Thnot watershed to monitor the conditions of the watershed, and plan and design future SLM interventions.

Output 3.2 Achievement Rating: Moderately Satisfactory

Overall Component/ Outcome 3 Achievement Rating: Satisfactory

Based on the above assessment of project outcomes and outputs, the overall achievement of the project results can be rated as **satisfactory**. The breakdown of individual outcome and output ratings are shown in the table below:

³⁵ The given figures are misleading. On scrutiny of the lists of training, workshops and meetings (which are appended in the APRs of 2018 and 2019 and the QPR of the 1st quarter of 2020 reveal that a considerable number of these were actually consultations, work-related meetings (including Project Board meetings and annual review/ reflection workshops), field studies/ assessments and field trips. Actual number of training and workshops were much lower (less than 50% of what has been listed).

Table 11: Ratings of Achievements of Outcomes and Outputs

Outcome/Output	Ratings					
	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
<u>Outcome 1:</u> On-farm soil conservation and agroforestry practices improved.		✓				
<u>Output 1.1:</u> SLM priorities mainstreamed into local authority area plans in collaboration with MAFF and partners.		✓				
<u>Output 1.2:</u> Suitable SLM practices for small landholders demonstrated.	✓					
<u>Output 1.3:</u> Suitable land use practices demonstrated among medium- to large-scale agribusiness entities.			✓			
<u>Outcome 2:</u> Community forest areas restored and sustainably managed.			✓			
<u>Output 2.1:</u> Prioritized actions to accelerate CF implementation, reflected in local authority and MAFF programs of action.			✓			
<u>Output 2.2:</u> Suitable restoration strategies and livelihood enterprises demonstrated.			✓			
<u>Outcome 3:</u> Watershed management and monitoring capacity of stakeholders improved.		✓				
<u>Output 3.1:</u> Capacity of key stakeholders to develop and start a program of action for watershed management in place.		✓				
<u>Output 3.2:</u> Participatory monitoring and assessment to support agreed upon program of action in place.			✓			
Overall rating of achievements of project results		✓				

Note on ratings: HS – Highly Satisfactory; S – Satisfactory; MS – Moderately Satisfactory; MU – Moderately Unsatisfactory; U – Unsatisfactory; and HU – Highly Unsatisfactory.

3.3.2 Relevance

As explained in detail in section 2.3, the overall project concept was very relevant to the national circumstances and issues of land degradation. The project strategy was consistent with UN/ UNDP country strategies at the time of project design and remains relevant as well to the current UN/ UNDP country strategies as encapsulated in the UNDAFs (2016-2018 and 2019-2023), UNDP CPDs (2016-2018 and 2019-2023), and UNDP Strategic Plans (2014-2017 and 2018-2021).

At the national level, the project conformed with, and contributes to, Cambodia’s sustainable development and environmental agenda at the time of project design as well as in the current context as defined by key national strategies and plans including RGC’s Rectangular Strategy Phase III (2013) and Phase IV (2018), NSDPs (2014-2018 and 2019-2023), NESAP (2016-2023), CCCSP (2014-2023), and NAP (2018-2027).

The choice of most of the project interventions, specifically SLM demonstrations and agroforestry pilots, small-scale water supply systems, collaboration with ELC-holding companies, CF and CPAs, ecotourism, and institutional strengthening of NAP bodies as a mechanism to foster watershed management concept, approach and practices were

appropriate and relevant to the needs and circumstances of the project stakeholders both within the government and at the local community level.

The selection of Prek Thnot watershed as the project area was highly appropriate to addressing the challenges of land degradation as the watershed was recognized in NAP as a priority area for SLM interventions given the high level of degradation of agricultural and forest lands and large proportion of area allocated for ELC operations. Within Prek Thnot watershed, the selection of the three communes of Tasal, Trapeang Chour and Krang Deivay as project sites was also very relevant given the combination of high level of poverty and high level of land degradation in these communes.

The project partnership arrangement with Mlup Baitong was suitable for the kind of interventions developed for project support, which was largely rooted in the concept and logic of integrating sustainable community livelihoods and environmental conservation to produce mutually-reinforcing benefits. MB's long experience in Kampong Speu province and in the field of integrated conservation and development was a major advantage in project implementation.

In light of the aforesaid observations on relevance of project design including conformity and linkage to GEF strategic areas and SDGs (elaborated in section 2.3), choice of project interventions, selection of project sites, and partnership arrangements, the project is rated as **Relevant**.

3.3.3 Effectiveness and efficiency

Effectiveness

The following observations were made related to project effectiveness:

- The project was affected by a long gestation of project design and a slow inception. Until the MTR, there was limited progress. Project implementation was accelerated after the MTR leading to significant progress in several project activities. As described in detail in sub-section 3.3.1 (Progress towards project results), most of the planned outcomes and outputs had been achieved with a few remaining activities scheduled to be completed by the end of the project. However, delays until the mid-term of the project meant that many project activities got cramped up in the latter half of the project allowing little time to consolidate them, assimilate lessons and mainstream the results.
- Project partnerships were well established based on MoAs with clearly defined ToRs, workplans and budget, which aided effectiveness in project implementation. The NGO-government partnership worked with complementarity in knowledge, experience and approach.
- Annual work planning and budgeting were undertaken as required and project partners had no major issues in addressing UNDP/GEF reporting requirements. Backstopping from UNDP was useful in facilitating project monitoring and reporting in accordance with UNDP/GEF requirements. PIRs were effectively used to track and assess project progress, financial delivery and associated challenges, and review risks and recommend mitigation actions.
- The PB meetings were held on time and well-participated by the members, and were effectively conducted to provide necessary oversight, guidance and decisions for the project to operate without any major impediments.

- Financial spot check and project audit were carried out to a high standard by independent auditors and the project management responses to clarify and/or address the observations made by the auditors were prompt and appropriate.
- M&E activities were conducted in a timely manner as planned and M&E deliverables were produced as desired of a UNDP/GEF project.

Efficiency

Following observations were made with respect to the efficiency of the project:

- The engagement of project partners based on MoAs consisting of a set of ToR, logframe, workplan and budget provided the fundamental framework for the efficiency (and effectiveness) of the partnerships, which was instrumental in the attainment of most of the planned activities.
- The project exercised flexibility in resource use influenced by the value and significance of the project interventions to the target beneficiaries and the objectives of the project. For example, the allocation of additional budget to sufficiently develop the small-scale community water supply systems and extend them to two additional villages in view of the value and significance of these systems to the local communities not only in terms of promoting SLM but also the multiple spin-off benefits. Another example is the promotion of community-based ecotourism in the CF/CPAs, although not explicit in the project design, as a means to generate income for the CF/CPA groups especially given that immediate benefits from the CF/CPAs were limited and much of these areas were actually degraded.
- Given the limited resources, the project has productively focused on actions at the local level to revitalize CF/CPAs, to develop sustainable livelihoods as alternatives to forest exploitation, and to increase awareness within government and communities about watershed management and SLM.
- Annual work planning and budgeting were undertaken as required. However, recurrent deferment of planned activities, under-achievements of planned activities and under-spending reported in periodic reports and project implementation reviews suggest that the planning has not been good at anticipating realistic deliverables for much of the project period. Project implementation remained under constant pressure due to the high aspiration of the project design as well as the need to make up for the lost ground due to a long inception phase. This is seen as a major reason for over-estimated annual planning and budgeting of project activities.
- Overall financial delivery was good at 87.4% until September 2020. However, on the adverse side, the financial delivery of project component/ outcome 3 was relatively low at 74% while the project management costs exceeded the planned budget by 23.7%. Until September 2020, reported project management costs totaled USD 129,926 against the planned budget of USD 105,000.

Based on the aforesaid assessments, the effectiveness and efficiency of the project are rated in the table below:

Table 12: Ratings of Project Effectiveness and Efficiency

Effectiveness/ Efficiency	Rating
Effectiveness	Moderately Satisfactory
Efficiency	Moderately Satisfactory

3.3.4 Sustainability

Sustainability is generally considered to be the likelihood of continued benefits after the project ends. As per the UNDP/GEF TE Guidance 2020, the assessment of sustainability requires to consider the risks that are likely to affect the continuation of project outcomes. Below is an assessment of sustainability against the four risk categories:

Financial risks: At the project level, there is no financial strategy to sustain the project activities through domestic sources or opportunities such as PES, REDD+ schemes and carbon financing. A valuation of ecosystem services of Prek Thnot watershed has been conducted and a roadmap for implementation of PES, listing potential schemes, has been formulated but the roadmap has to be deliberated and it is not clear how it will be put into action except for the mention that it will be for use by the sub-national committee of Prek Thnot watershed which was only recently established. The livelihood activities supported by the project have the potential to generate enhanced incomes for the local communities. This has occurred to a certain level during the project period and is likely to grow over the next few years. Therefore, such activities can be considered financially self-sustaining unless other unknown factors, such as lack of markets and natural disaster, come into play. The integration of CLIPs in the CDPs and CIPs is an encouraging sign as it implies the SLM-based livelihood priorities are embedded in government development and investment plans at the commune level. However, the implementation of the CLIP activities is dependent on availability of funds and this remains a concern as generally government funds are limited and development investments tend to take priority over environmental investments. Project stakeholders have, therefore, expressed the need for additional funds to support and consolidate the livelihood activities in view of limited government funds. The RGC has earmarked some government budget (initially 200 million Cambodian Riel, later cut down to half due to resource constraint induced by COVID-19) to support the functioning of the NAP Secretariat and various other NAP bodies, which provide crucial institutional mechanisms to take forward and sustain the national agenda of combating land degradation and promoting watershed management. The establishment of water tariff is noted as a practicable mechanism of financially sustaining the water supply systems. Government co-financing of USD 240,000 was in kind and largely incurred in terms of project management overheads and utilities, staff time, and administrative logistics. There was no government co-financing of actual project activities, which points to over dependence on external funds.

Socio-economic risks: As explained in the subsequent sub-section 3.3.5 (Country ownership), there is a high level of government ownership. The RGC recognizes the problems of degradation of land and ecosystem services in the watersheds and have strategies and plans in place to address these problems but lack adequate funds. The evaluation does not foresee any significant political risk to ongoing efforts to combat land degradation through SLM interventions. Nonetheless, economic development priorities do take priority over environmental conservation in the short-term in many developing countries which are constrained by financial resources. Unsustainable activities such as logging and charcoal production as practiced in the project area are lucrative and can entice impoverished communities in absence of sustainable alternatives. The project has demonstrated some alternative livelihoods that can bring economic benefits to the local communities without compromising the sustainability of the natural environment. Ecotourism has shown good potential to generate quick cash benefits which will wean away local people from logging and charcoal production. The efforts of the government to keep local communities interested in such livelihoods will need to continue over a long-term through advocacy, technical support and

facilitation of marketing. The capacity of CF/ CPA groups is still nascent and they will need continued technical support, guidance and encouragement from the government to maximize CF/ CPA operations and benefit from them.

Institutional framework and governance risk: The establishment of a permanent NAP Secretariat within MAFF and various other NAP bodies, including sub-national committees for the watersheds, provide a good institutional platform to take forward strategies and plans to address land degradation issues and advance watershed management efforts within the government system. Besides NAP, the government has in place a number of strategies and plans that include the objectives of environmental sustainability, sustainable livelihoods, and protection of ecosystem services as outlined in section 2.3 (Problems the project sought to address). The livelihoods component has been carried out directly with the local households, who are likely to continue with the project interventions in light of their potential economic benefits. Several reports on various aspects of watershed management have been produced with the support of consultants. These are expected to provide MAFF and its line departments and agencies as well as the NAP bodies necessary technical information and basis for decision-making and planning future SLM and watershed management interventions. The various training and workshops conducted by the project are expected to have built the ability and understanding of MAFF and the sub-national/ local government authorities to undertake SLM and watershed management interventions at their respective levels. Having said this, staff turnover and the inability of government staff to find time from regular administrative duties remain key concerns.

Environmental risk: The project objectives and interventions are directed towards improving environmental sustainability and ecosystem services of Prek Thnot watershed. The small-scale water supply systems did have some potential health risk in terms of tapping and distributing water that was unhealthy for human consumption. Water quality tests were done for all the water supply systems by officials from the Ministry of Industry, Mine, and Energy and concluded that the water was clean and safe for human consumption. The CF/ CPAs have the possibility to restrict access and use of forest/ natural resources by other users. However, it has been noted that the CF/ CPA planning and establishment procedures require that CF/ CPAs are demarcated with the full participation of the neighboring communities. There was no discernible environmental risk associated with other project activities.

Based on the aforesaid assessment, following is the rating of likelihood of sustainability in relation to the four risk categories:

Table 13: Ratings of Project Sustainability

Risk Category	Likelihood of Sustainability			
	Likely	Moderately Likely	Moderately Unlikely	Unlikely
Financial			✓	
Socio-economic		✓		
Institutional Framework and Governance		✓		
Environmental	✓			
Overall Sustainability		✓		

3.3.5 Country ownership

There is a high level of country ownership of the project concept and approach, stemming from the fact that project is anchored in the NAP which has been endorsed by the highest authority in the RGC, that is His Excellency the Prime Minister. A permanent NAP Secretariat has been established within the MAFF and various NAP bodies, including the very important sub-national committees for watersheds, have been set up, which goes on to show that there is national commitment to address land degradation issues and advance watershed management efforts.

Since the beginning of the project design, which was then with ADB, MAFF has remained the principal partner and played a key role in the conception and inception of the project. The project concept and strategy are relevant to national circumstances and conforms with Cambodia's agenda for sustainable development and environmental conservation (see section 2.3 and sub-section 3.3.2). It is also consistent with UNDAFs and UNDP CPDs, which are prepared in close consultation with the RGC.

The PMU was based in the MAFF with the Secretary of State, MAFF, as the Project Director, and the Under Secretary of State, MAFF, as the Project Manager. The PB meetings, under the chair of the Secretary of State, MAFF, and with participation of senior officials from other relevant government ministries and institutes, were held without fail in the first quarter of each year. At the operational level, the project conducted annual review/ reflection workshops involving all groups of project stakeholders. These mechanisms are considered vital to fostering ownership of the project among stakeholders at all levels.

It is also noted that upon the conclusion of the MoA with NGO partner, Mlup Baitong, MAFF decided not to extend the MoA with the NGO but instead took over the continuation and completion of the pending activities. This goes on to show government confidence in their capacity as well as their ownership of project activities³⁶.

At the local level, ownership is enhanced where the project benefits are tangible. From the documented sources (field case stories and progress reports) as well as through the stakeholder consultations, there is evidence that the project has been able to generate some visible benefits including additional incomes notably through agroforestry, collection of NTFPs, ecotourism and small-scale water supply systems. Over the next few years, as the livelihood interventions mature, these benefits are expected to enhance. Also, a good indicator of the local ownership is the willingness of the local people to pay water tariff to financially sustain the operation and maintenance of the small-scale water supply systems.

Furthermore, the CLIPs, prepared by the project based on the situation analysis of the communes using PRA approach and tools and discussed with the local stakeholders, have been integrated in the CDPs and CIPs, which guide government development plans and investments at the commune level.

From the foregoing observations, it can be concluded that there is a high level of country ownership of the project although there are some concerns of sustainability (as discussed in the previous sub-section 3.3.4).

³⁶ However, it is felt that a short extension would have been useful for smooth transition of the project activities. Furthermore, despite improved capacity, government officials have difficulty in finding adequate time for the project activities from their regular government duties and tasks.

3.3.6 Gender equality and women's empowerment

Gender mainstreaming has been pursued through advocacy of equal opportunities for both women and men to participate in the project activities, specifically in the SLM demonstrations, agroforestry pilots and CF/CPAs. All of these have registered high level of participation of local women (65% in SLM demonstrations, 52% in agroforestry, and 51% in CF/CPAs)³⁷. While the small-scale water supply systems benefit all members of the local communities, their benefits for women are more pronounced in view of the inherent role of rural Cambodian women in collection of water and other water-related chores. Similarly, agricultural livelihoods and improved land productivity from sustainable land management have a significant bearing on the lives of women in Cambodia as they have the role of feeding their families and working as laborers in the farms. In Cambodia's agriculture sector, 53% of the wage-workers are reportedly women³⁸.

Project information on training and workshops have kept account of participants by gender; 64% of the total participants were men while 36% were women. A senior official from the Ministry of Women Affairs was included as a member of the PB to elicit guidance and recommendations on women issues and needs as relevant to the project and ensure that they are taken into account in the planning and decision-making of project workplans and activities.

The project can be said to be gender-targeted in that the project results focused on the number of equity of women and men targeted for project interventions, and planning and reporting of project activities took account of women beneficiaries wherever relevant³⁹.

3.3.7 Mainstreaming of other issues

The project was able to mainstream sustainable development and environmental objectives and priorities in the context of Cambodia as expressed in various national strategies and plans as well as in UN and UNDP's country strategies/ programs. The project effectively worked with the local stakeholders to embed the SLM and watershed management concept, approaches and practices in the local livelihood and governance system through SLM demonstrations, agroforestry pilots and CF/CPAs, and participatory planning and integration of CLIPs in the CDPs and CIPs. The work on CF and CPAs was based on established government procedures and steps of planning and establishing CF/ CPAs and carried out in close collaboration with subnational authorities and government departments of MAFF and MoE. Livelihood initiatives have been built into the CF and CPAs to create better local acceptability for them. The management of small-scale water supply systems have been internalized within the communities through the formation of water users' groups/ committees, development of community bylaws and establishment of water tariff.

The project followed an integrated approach to watershed management combining local economic development needs and conservation objectives. While livelihoods and income generation were not the primary objective, the project integrated them in view of the high level

³⁷ PIR 2020

³⁸ Project document, p17.

³⁹ Gender Results Effectiveness Scale, UNDP Independent Evaluation Office, 2015. This scale rates gender mainstreaming effectiveness as: gender-negative (being the lowest), gender-blind, gender-targeted, gender-responsive, and gender-transformative (being the highest).

of poverty in the project area and the importance of addressing the poverty-environment nexus.

The project strengthened the governance structure relating to NAP. It strengthened institutions and coordination frameworks by supporting the establishment of NAP steering committee, working group, technical working group, and watershed management subnational committees. These bodies are expected to be vital in embedding SLM and watershed management within the national and subnational governance systems.

3.3.8 Replication effect

Replicability of project interventions is fundamental to a project so as to generate and promote sustainable models in other areas with similar circumstances and issues. Following the formulation of the NAP, this project presents the pilot set of interventions for a collaborative approach to sustainable management of agricultural and forest lands in watersheds. Although due to limited resources and a short timeframe (further constricted by a protracted inception phase) the project was unable to achieve the higher-level result of landscape-level change as envisaged in the project design, it does provide some useful platforms and lessons to launch further initiatives for collaborative approach to combat land degradation in watersheds. For instance, the collaboration – albeit short-term agreements – secured with ELC-holding companies in the latter part of the project, can be used as a foundation for long-term collaboration along the lines of project-private partnership (PPP) and as a catalyst to pursue similar partnerships with other ELC-holding companies in and beyond the project area. The sub-national committee of Prek Thnot watershed set up in accordance with the NAP has been similarly established for the other 38 watersheds through support from this project. Through the sub-national committee of Prek Thnot watershed, the experience from the CoWES project can be disseminated to the sub-national committees of the other watersheds to foster SLM interventions in their respective areas. The development of small-scale water storage and supply systems and the formation of water user groups/ committees and development of water tariff to sustain these systems can be replicated in other rural communities where access to water is a major impediment to SLM and agricultural livelihoods. As a national NGO that is consistently working with local authorities and communities on sustainable livelihoods and environmental conservation at the grassroots level, Mlup Baitong can take forward their experience and lessons from the project and use them to assist other communities to address land degradation and environmental problems in Cambodia. Finally, the capacity built especially in terms of improved professional awareness and understanding about watershed management concept, approach and practices among government officials at the central and subnational/ local levels should improve the chances of their adoption in subnational/ local government plans and programs.

3.3.9 Progress to impact

Project impacts are defined in as actual or anticipated, positive or negative changes in global environmental benefit, as verified by environmental stress and/or status change, and also taking into account sustainable development impacts, including changed livelihoods. They concern longer-term global environmental benefits, replication and other local effects.

The project impact can be expressed in terms of the following main benefits:

- Sixty-five households, of which 65% were represented by women, have participated in the field SLM demonstrations carried out by the project. Of these, 33% have reported to experience some initial benefits; this is expected to grow over the next few years as the SLM interventions mature.
- Thirty-four households have taken up agroforestry plantations with support from the project. Some benefits have been experienced from the initial harvests and are expected to increase as the medium- and long-term crops become reappable.
- The three CF/ CPAs supported by the project collectively encompass an area of 4,540 ha. With effective implementation of the management plans, these are expected to improve local ecology as well as provide opportunities for forest- and nature-based livelihoods to the local communities. 686 households have access to the CF and CPAs for sustainable resource use. Some households have engaged in collection of NTFPs from the CF/ CPAs and made an additional household income of up to USD 750 in a single rainy season (five months).
- Ecotourism initiatives in the CF/ CPAs have engaged 165 households. These households have earned USD 900 to USD 2,400 in a year from local tour-guiding, provisioning of food to tourists and transportation. Ecotourism has the potential of growing into a lucrative income-generating enterprise with the strength to wean away local people from unsustainable activities such as logging and charcoal production, which are major threats to the integrity of Prek Thnot watershed.
- The small-scale water systems have been frequently cited as the most important benefit by the interviewees during the evaluation. These systems, which benefit 243 households in three villages⁴⁰, have been developed primarily to support SLM interventions in the project areas where water scarcity is a major impediment. People are experiencing spin-off benefits in terms of saving of time of women and children spent on collecting water, saving of money spent on buying water from private suppliers, and increased availability of water for improved hygiene and home-yard farming.
- Increased capacity of government officials within MAFF and in the subnational and local governments is a major project outcome. As per the project capacity scorecards, the capacity of MAFF improved from a score of 14 (baseline) to 17.4 by mid 2019 and to 32.3 by mid-2020 whereas the capacity of local authorities improved from 13 to 18.9 by mid 2019 and to 29.8 by mid 2020. The improvement in capacity is anticipated to enable the government officials to provide better advocacy and technical support for SLM and watershed management. The updated Capacity Scorecards provided by the project management are appended (**Annex VII**).
- Strengthening of the institutional capacity for SLM and watershed management through support to the setting up of NAP Secretariat and various NAP bodies including the sub-national committees for the watersheds which will have a key role in institutionalizing SLM interventions in their respective watersheds across the country.
- Women are major beneficiaries of the grassroots level project interventions (SLM demos – 65%, agroforestry – 52%, CF/CPAs – 51%). The benefits of the water supply systems are more pronounced for women as they are primarily responsible for water-related chores in

⁴⁰ In addition, this intervention is being extended to two more villages.

the household and are, therefore, most affected by water scarcity. In addition, women constituted 36% of the recipients of training and workshops conducted by the project.

- The project contributes to the GEF-7 Core Indicator 4.3 (Area of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems) and Core Indicator 11 (Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment. The updated GEF-7 Core Indicators shows that the project has been able to bring a total of 13,000 hectares of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems (Core Indicator 4.3) and directly benefit a total of 3,973 people including 1,743 women (Core Indicator 11). The updated GEF-7 Core Indicators worksheet provided by the project management are appended (**Annex VIII**).

The project has been conceived with a higher-level objective “to restore and maintain forest cover and watershed stability functions while providing for sustainable livelihoods and ecosystem services in the Upper Prek Thnot Watershed.” While it is noted that the project has brought about several benefits as outlined above, the field activities are small-scale limited to a few sites. As pointed out earlier, these would not directly accrue to landscape-level improvements in the conditions of the watershed and ecosystem services in keeping with the project objective. For the small-scale, localized project interventions to have a larger and long-term impact, the government will have to continue to support the local communities and sustain their interest to consolidate the benefits from SLM interventions and create a wider interest among other local communities to engage in similar activities, thereby having a multiplier effect.

Minimal ecological improvements and reductions on ecological systems are expected to have taken place in the project area but these are not verifiable and are actually beyond the scope of the project. The larger concerns about high rates of deforestation, instability of watercourses, flooding, land slippage and soil erosion, runoff of polluted water into local reservoirs, illegal logging and other matters (as noted in the situational analyses reports prepared by the project) appear to be outside the scope of the project. Nevertheless, the progress towards achievement of stress reduction and/or ecological improvement through the engagement of local communities in sustainable livelihood practices and CF/CPAs and creation of professional and public awareness on SLM and watershed management approach can be considered significant. The ratings of project impact is given below:

Table 14: Ratings of Project Impacts

Project Impact	Rating
Environmental Status Improvement	Minimal
Environmental Stress Reduction	Minimal
Progress towards stress/status change	Significant

Note: The project impact is rated on a scale of three: (1) negligible; (2) minimal; and (3) significant.

4. Conclusions, Recommendations and Lessons

4.1 Conclusions

The CoWES project was very relevant and opportune in that it sought to address the growing challenges of degradation of forest and agricultural lands and ecosystem services in Prek Thnot watershed, considered as one of the most important watersheds in the country but one which is experiencing rapid deforestation and land use changes due to market-driven forces. The project objective conformed with and addressed national and international priorities for sustainable development and environmental conservation. The project was affected by a long gestation of the project design and a slow, protracted inception phase involving a major review and revision of the project design through multiple stakeholder consultations. This long delay posed a major challenge and created pressure on the project partners to make up lost ground. Until the MTR, the project showed limited progress. Project implementation was accelerated after the MTR and significant progress was recorded only in the latter half of the project period.

The project has been able to achieve most of the planned project activities and deliver some very good results, which are detailed in sub-section 3.3.1. The MAFF and other project partners are to be commended for their efforts and the high level of project ownership. The project has been able to demonstrate how government-NGO partnership can effectively complement each other in skills and approach in working with local communities on SLM and watershed management issues.

The project has been effective in generating localized benefits, demonstrating the integration of community livelihoods as a strategy for watershed management, and highlighting the importance of addressing immediate community needs while pursuing long-term conservation objectives. However, the scope and scale of the project interventions in the field were too limited to make any significant impact in terms of reducing prevailing stress on Prek Thnot watershed and its ecosystem services and bringing landscape-level improvements in the environmental conditions. Synergy and linkages with other projects and initiatives and a larger co-financing would have been useful in this regard but these were conspicuously deficient. Going by the capacity scorecards, the project has been able to bring marked improvements in the capacity of MAFF as well as subnational/ local authorities although the inability of government staff to find time from their administrative duties and tasks and staff turnover are likely to remain key challenges.

It was also timely that the government approval of the NAP took place in the early part of the project, therefore presenting the opportunity for the project to strengthen the institutional arrangements for NAP implementation, which is critical to take forward and internalize SLM and watershed management within the government agenda and governance system.

The project's main weaknesses were a weak PRF, minimal synergy and linkages with other relevant projects and initiatives, and the inability to leverage adequate co-financing required to bring about more comprehensive changes in sustainable management of Prek Thnot watershed. While planned project results have been largely achieved, inception delays constricted the time available for project implementation allowing little time to consolidate the project activities, assimilate lessons and mainstream the results.

4.2 Recommendations

4.2.1 Related to project design

- (1) Project results at all levels need to be harmonized in keeping with the time and funds available for the project. In the case of this project, the project objective should have been reviewed and revised in conjunction with the project outcomes, outputs and constituent interventions. Alternatively, an immediate project objective could have been formulated to link the project outcomes to the higher-level project objective.
- (2) Project results framework need to be carefully formulated for coherence between, indicators, baselines and targets and need to be carefully reviewed to see if the various result components met the 'SMART' criteria before they are finalized and adopted.⁴¹ As pointed out in detail in section 3.1.1, a number of indicators, baselines and targets were incongruent, unmeasurable or unachievable. Baselines were also missing and targets were not determined in a few cases.
- (3) Theory of Change need to be comprehensively formulated and illustrate pathways to change with clear linkages between barriers and challenges that the project seeks to address and the project results and anticipated impacts.
- (4) More co-financing should have been mobilized through dialogue with potential co-financiers and using RGC and UNDP leverage during the project design. The CoWES project co-financing was too small to complement project resources to consolidate and spread out project results for larger impact in keeping with the project objective.
- (5) Where there is a long gestation of project design and transfer of IA role as in the case of this project and given the complexity of challenges and issues the project sought to address, another round of project design before the project implementation, even if a short one for three-four months, is recommended to allow the IA and IP to review and update the project design in close consultation with project stakeholders. This would allow a quicker inception and allow more time for the project to not only achieve the intended results but also consolidate the project activities before project closure. Alternatively, a longer project period is recommended in such cases to accommodate a longer inception for review and revision of the project design including multi-stakeholder consultations and additional field surveys without impinging on the time required for actual project implementation.

4.2.2 Related to project implementation

- (1) Mechanism for on-the-job transfer of knowledge and skills of a partner with better capacity to a partner with less capacity should have been devised and employed during the project implementation. The partnership between Mlup Baitong and the subnational/ local government authorities presented the opportunity for transfer of Mlup Baitong's knowledge and skills in participatory approaches of working with local communities to promote sustainable livelihoods and natural resources management to their government

⁴¹ **Specific:** Outcomes must use change language, describing a specific future condition; **Measurable:** Results, whether quantitative or qualitative, must have measurable indicators, making it possible to assess whether they were achieved or not; **Achievable:** Results must be within the capacity of the partners to achieve **Relevant:** Results must make a contribution to selected priorities of the national development framework **Time-bound:** Results are never open-ended. There should be an expected date of accomplishment. (Reference: Guidance for Terminal Evaluation of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed Project)

counterparts but there is no evidence of such a mechanism. It is important to recognize that training and workshops are just one element of capacity building and that on-the-job transfer of knowledge and skills from one partner to another, or for that matter from consultants to government counterparts, can be equally, if not more, important in capacity building.

- (2) Planning and design of training events need to carefully consider the number and mix of participants that a training can effectively manage to achieve the training objectives. Training events with a large number of participants are likely to be less effective and so are those that mix participants of different educational and occupational backgrounds.
- (3) Projects should employ a transition plan where a project partner is taking over and continuing project activities previously managed by another partner so that the transition is smooth and there is continuity and consistency in project implementation. In the context of this project, a transition plan – perhaps of 1 to 2 months – should have been developed and implemented between Mlup Baitong and subnational/ local government authorities after the conclusion of the Mlup Baitong’s agreement in March 2020.
- (4) Synergy and linkages with other projects and initiatives should be proactively sought and developed especially when the scope of the project interventions is limited by small resources while the project concept and objective are intended to bring about landscape-level improvements as was in the case of this project. The Project Inception Report described a number of projects/ initiatives with which CoWES project could develop synergy and linkages (refer sub-section 3.1.5 for details). However, no systematic linkage was developed with any of those projects for collaboration and synergy.

4.2.3 Related to project monitoring & evaluation

- (1) Project progress should clearly report activities in accordance with the outcome/ output they belong to and not provide overlapping information. Where there is a need to mention activities from another outcome/ output due to inter-linkage, there has to be a clear reference about it.
- (2) Project results framework need to be carefully formulated with well-defined, SMART and coherent indicators, baselines and targets to aid project reporting and M&E process (also mentioned in 4.1.1 with elaboration).

4.2.4 Actions to follow-up or reinforce initial benefits of the project

- (1) Foremost of all, an exit strategy and sustainability plan need to be developed in close consultation with the project stakeholders and presented to the Project Board for approval before official project closure. The strategy and plan will need to take into account the importance of consolidation and sustainability of the project activities and their results in the keeping with the current context of Cambodia’s sustainable development and environmental policies, strategies and plans. It will need to consider the sustainability assessment (sub-section 3.3.4) and also review and incorporate the ensuing recommended actions to the extent possible.
- (2) Explore the possibility of initiating community-led projects, such as through UNDP/ GEF Small Grants Program, to continue and strengthen some of the promising sustainable

livelihood and community-based SLM interventions initiated through the project but requires more support for consolidation and larger impact.

- (3) Participatory field trials and group-based on-farm learning process such as FFS have known to be successful in farmer-to-farmer exchange of knowledge, skills and experience, and in enhancing community uptake of introduced technology. On-farm SLM interventions should consider integrating FFS and similar processes and in this regard partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) would be useful as the agency has a long experience of developing and applying FFS in many countries including Cambodia and its neighboring countries.
- (4) Continue dialogue and advocacy with the ELC-holding companies for collaboration on a longer term based on PPP model, building on the short-term cooperative agreement and collaboration secured with them through this project. Seek to build in corporate social and environmental responsibility concept and principles in such partnerships.
- (5) Pursue and develop PES schemes as a sustainable financing and environmental governance mechanism for ecosystem services, building on the work done by the project on valuation of ecosystem services and roadmap for PES in Prek Thnot watershed, and build up the valuation and cost-benefit analysis into a robust tool for informed decision-making and leveraging political and public support for the conservation of Prek Thnot watershed.
- (6) Strengthen the CF and CPAs through continued government support especially in terms of capacity development and technical guidance, and explore opportunities to link with REDD+ initiatives, learning from other CFs and CPAs (within and outside Cambodia) that have successfully linked with REDD+. The REDD+ strategy is now coming on-stream and there is growing interest about the potential opportunities of linking it with CF management. Such linkage is expected invigorate the CFs and CPAs into more viable community conservation enterprises whilst also contributing to global and national climate change mitigation efforts.
- (7) Where possible, link the management of CF/ CPAs to improved conditions of catchment area/ source of local water supply systems to demonstrate the importance of landscape conservation approach and the inter-linkage between community development and conservation objectives. The visibility of such linkages will motivate local communities to sustain the CF/ CPAs and continue with watershed management approach and practices.
- (8) All the knowledge and information, including maps, generated by various consulting work done under the project need to be consolidated and documented systematically as ready references and basis for decision-making and planning future SLM and watershed management interventions.

4.3 Lessons Learnt

The project encapsulates the following lessons, which can be useful in the development of future projects/ programs/ strategies that seek to address similar issues:

- (1) Solutions to address degradation of land and ecosystem services normally involve a wide range of people and groups with varying interest. This project has successfully engaged multiple stakeholders – farmers, subnational and local authorities, NGO, ELC-holding companies, CF/ CPA groups, consultants, women, relevant ministries (including Ministry of Women Affairs) and their line agencies – in varying role and capacity as a part of project implementation.

- (2) The complement of knowledge and skills resulting from the Government-NGO partnership between Mlup Baitong and government agencies was crucial in view of the need for integration of social and technical approach to implement the project activities.
- (3) Conservation projects cannot meet much success using conventional approach that often undermine local community development needs in favor of environmental objectives. The CoWES project has done a good job of working with local authorities and communities to link sustainable livelihoods and conservation interventions in mutually-reinforcing ways. It is especially encouraging to note that some livelihood interventions were already generating visible initial benefits including cash incomes, which is vital to keep the local stakeholders interested and motivated as pure conservation interventions generally tend to take time to generate tangible benefits and, in the process, often lose community interest and ownership.
- (4) Grounding SLM interventions in local governance system – in the case of this project through development of CLIPs in close consultation and consent with local stakeholders and their integration in the respective CDPs and CIPs – maximize their institutionalization and ownership at grassroots level, and provides opportunities for securing future resources through commune budgets.
- (5) Project circumstances and scope change in the event of a long gestation in the project design. A comprehensive review and revision of all aspects of the project design with necessary resources to do so becomes important in such situations.

A few adverse lessons associated with the project are described below:

- (1) The project's ToC and results framework had a number of shortcomings. These shortcomings have been highlighted earlier in some detail in sub-section 3.1.1 and recommended for corrective action in sub-section 4.1.1. The PRF serves as the main basis for M&E and, thus, when it is not well done it can pose a major challenge in interpreting and reporting progress against the project results.
- (2) The project is also not a good example when it comes to synergy and linkages with other relevant projects and initiatives and leveraging co-financing. This issue has been highlighted earlier in sub-section 3.1.5 and recommended for corrective action in sub-section 4.2.2.

Annex I: Terms of Reference

BASIC INFORMATION

Assignment Title	Terminal Evaluation of UNDP/GEF Project “Collaborative Management for Watershed and Ecosystem Service Protection and Rehabilitation in the Cardamom Mountains, Upper Prek Thnot River Basin”
Location:	Home based with possible mission to Cambodia
Application Deadline:	1 July 2020
Type of Contract:	Individual Contract
Post Level:	International Consultant
Languages Required:	English; proficiency in Khmer would be an advantage
Expected Starting Date:	15 July 2020
Expected Duration of Assignment:	30 working days total from 15 July to 15 September 2020, including 10 days mission in Phnom Penh and Kampong Speu provinces in Cambodia if the situation improves.

BACKGROUND AND PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Land degradation is a serious issue in Cambodia posing a direct threat to food and water security since it affects agriculture productivity and water retention capacity of watersheds. It is linked with deforestation and forest degradation and exacerbated by climate change perpetuating increased vulnerability to climate related risks in turn. The project title “Collaborative Management for Watershed and Ecosystem Service Protection and Rehabilitation in the Cardamom Mountains, Upper Prek Thnot River Basin (CoWES)” is designed to reduce pressures on upland watershed areas from competing land uses by demonstrating collaborative management and rehabilitation of agriculture lands and forest areas by promoting sustainable land management and stabilizing watershed catchment functions in a priority degraded area, Upper Prek Thnot watershed in Kampong Speu Province as identified by the National Action Plan to Combat Land Degradation 2018 - 2027. The project aims to achieve three main outputs: i) On-farm soil conservation and agroforestry practices improved; ii) Community forest areas restored and sustainably managed; and iii) Watershed management and monitoring capacity improved. They are consistent with UNDP Cambodia’s Country Program Document (CPD) 2016-2018 as it specifically requires “building resilience” by contributing to strengthening environmental services and the system of forest management and protected areas, including sustainable land and watershed management.

The MAFF is the IP with support from a number of key relevant Ministries and their line agencies. To ensure effective engagement of stakeholders in order to establish institutional arrangements at provincial and district levels to lead watershed management programs and host M&E system in partnership with relevant stakeholders at various levels, various capacity development and trainings for communities as well as for national, provincial and district government officials will be provided by the project through consultation meetings and workshops to promote sustainable land and forest management practices in the targeted area.

CoWES aims to restore and maintain forest cover and watershed stability functions while providing for sustainable livelihoods and ecosystem services in the Upper Prek Thnot Watershed. In order to achieve this objective, the project demonstrate, or pilot introduce sustainable land management

(SLM) technologies with local households (small landholders), SLM and technical advices to agribusiness (large landholders and ELCs and experiment on wider landscape management for protection of ecosystem functional services. The project has 3 components and 7 outputs:

Component / Outcome 1: On-farm soil conservation and agroforestry practices improved

Output 1.1: SLM priorities mainstreamed into local authority area plans in collaboration with MAFF and partners

Output 1.2: Suitable SLM practices for small landholders demonstrated

Output 1.3: Suitable land use practices demonstrated among medium to large scale agribusiness entities

Component / Outcome 2: Community forest areas restored and sustainably managed

Output 2.1: Prioritized actions to accelerate CF implementation, reflected in local authority and MAFF programs of action

Output 2.2: Suitable restoration strategies and livelihood enterprises demonstrated

Component / Outcome 3: Watershed management and monitoring capacity improved

Output 3.1: Capacity of key stakeholders to develop and start a program of action for watershed management in place

Output 3.2: Participatory monitoring and assessment to support agreed upon program of action is in place.

To execute project effectively, MAFF has engaged both non-governmental organization (NGO) and governmental organizations (GO—technical departments) to work and support activities at 3 communes such as Krang Devay, Trapeang Chour and Tasal located upper part of Preak Tnoat Watershed and made significant results at these target areas.

To look for project's impacts, effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, sustainability and ownership of project implementation, on behalf of the Government of Cambodia and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), UNDP is now recruiting an international consultant to conduct terminal evaluation for CoWES Project.

Objective and Scope

This terminal evaluation will be conducted according to the guidance, rules and procedures established by UNDP and GEF as reflected in the UNDP evaluation guidance for GEF financed projects. The terminal evaluation should start in Mid-July 2020 and be carried out until Mid-September 2020.

The objectives of the terminal evaluation are to assess the achievement of project results, and to draw lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project, and aid in the overall enhancement of UNDP programming. The terminal evaluation will be carried out by an international consultant supported by UNDP Country Office in Cambodia.

In accordance with UNDP and GEF policies and procedures, all full and medium-sized UNDP- GEF projects are required to undergo a terminal evaluation upon completion of implementation. This term of reference set out the expectations for a terminal evaluation of the project “Collaborative Management for Watershed and Ecosystem Service Protection and Rehabilitation in the Cardamom Mountains, Upper Prek Thnot River Basin”.

Evaluation Approach and Method

An overall approach and method⁴² for conducting project terminal evaluations of UNDP supported GEF financed projects has developed over time. The evaluation will be carried out by a lead international consultant and supported by the project team at UNDP Cambodia. The final evaluation should include a mixed methodology of document review, interviews, and observations from project site visits, at minimum, and the evaluator should make an effort to triangulate information. The evaluator is expected to frame the evaluation effort using the criteria of **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact**, as defined and explained in the UNDP Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed Projects. A set of questions covering each of these criteria have been drafted and are included with this TOR. The evaluator is expected to amend, complete and submit this matrix as part of the evaluation inception report, and shall include it as an annex to the final report.

The evaluation must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful. The evaluator is expected to follow a participatory and consultative approach ensuring close engagement with government counterparts, the GEF operational focal point, Project Team, UNDP Programme Result Team, Programme Supported Unit, UNDP GEF Technical Adviser based in Bangkok, Thailand and other key stakeholders.

Field Mission

The international evaluator is expected to conduct a field mission of 8 days (not including travel days) to the project sites (Kampong Speu Province) and Phnom Penh. The 8 working days mission should include at a minimum 3-4 working days based in Phnom Penh, and 4 working days in the province (Project target areas). The international evaluator will be accompanied by the Project Team who arranges all meetings and field mission.

A list of persons and organizations for interviews will be proposed by the project team and should be agreed prior to the mission to Cambodia. The international evaluator can request additional meetings/interviews as required. UNDP should be informed of additional interviews/meetings required by the evaluator, and the dialogue with the evaluated party should be handled in an inclusive and transparent manner.

The international evaluator will review all relevant sources of information, such as project document, project reports – including Annual APR/PIR, project budget revisions, midterm review, progress reports, project files, national documents and any other materials that the evaluator considers useful for this evidence-based assessment. A list of documents will be provided by the project team after signing the contract.

Based on current outbreak of Covid-19, the countries and cities were lockdown, borders are closed and access restricted, therefore, virtual engagement with stakeholders (zoom, skypes etc.) and desk reviews will be discussed for successful evaluation/assignment. However, the endorsement from UNDP CO and RTA/GEF is required. In the event if the situation doesn't improve and the evaluator can't conduct in-country mission, options will have to be explored to conduct virtual consultation with project stakeholders or use the national counterpart to do local consultations and then triangulate evaluation findings.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Evaluation Criteria and Ratings: An assessment of project performance will be carried out against expectations set out in the Project Logical Framework/Results Framework, which provides

⁴² ⁴² For additional information on methods, see the [Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results](#), Chapter 7, pg. 163

performance and impact indicators for project implementation along with their corresponding means of verification. The evaluation will at a minimum cover the criteria of: **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact**. Ratings must be provided on the following performance criteria:

- Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E design at entry, M&E Plan Implementation, Overall quality of M&E);
- IA& EA Execution (Quality of UNDP Implementation, Quality of Execution - Executing Agency, Overall quality of Implementation / Execution);
- Assessment of Outcomes (Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Overall Project Outcome Rating);
- Sustainability (Financial resources, Socio-political, Institutional framework and governance, Environmental, Overall likelihood of sustainability).

The completed table must be included in the evaluation executive summary. The obligatory rating scales are included in [Annex D](#).

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

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

Impact: The evaluator will assess the extent to which the project is achieving impacts or progressing towards the achievement of impacts. Key findings that should be brought out in the evaluations include whether the project has demonstrated: a) verifiable improvements in ecological status, b) verifiable reductions in stress on ecological systems, and/or c) demonstrated progress towards these impact achievements⁴³.

Conclusions, Recommendations and Lessons: The evaluation report must include a chapter providing a set of conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned. Conclusions should build on findings and be based on evidence. Recommendations should be prioritized, specific, relevant, and targeted, with suggested implementers of the recommendations. Lessons should have wider applicability to other initiatives across the region, the area of intervention, and for the future.

Implementation Arrangements

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

Evaluation Timeframe

⁴³ A useful tool for gauging progress to impact is the Review of Outcomes to Impacts (ROTI) method developed by the GEF Evaluation Office: [ROTI Handbook 2009](#)

The total duration of the evaluation will be 30 working days during the calendar period of 15 July – 15 September 2020. The following tentative timetable is recommended for the evaluation; however, the final schedule will be agreed in the beginning of the assignment:

Preparation - 3 days in July 2020;

Evaluation Mission - 8 days in first week of August 2020;

Travel Days – 2 working days for travel to and from Cambodia (August 2020)

Draft Evaluation Report - 10 days, completed by end of August 2020;

Final Report - 7 days, completed by September 15, 2020.

Deliverables

The International Consultant / evaluator is expected to deliver the following:

Inception Report: Evaluator provides clarifications on timing and method, Evaluator submits to UNDP CO no later than 1 week before the evaluation mission

Presentation of Initial Findings: Evaluator submits to project management and UNDP CO at the end of evaluation mission

Draft Final Report: Full report (per template provided in TE Guidance) with annexes, Evaluator submits to UNDP CO within 3 weeks of the evaluation mission, reviewed by RTA, PCU, GEF OFPs

Final Report: Revised report, Evaluator submits to UNDP CO within 1 week of receiving UNDP comments on draft

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

Payment Modalities and Specifications

The consultant will be paid on a lump sum basis (all-inclusive of expense relate to the above assignment including travels outside and inside the duty station and any tax obligation) under the following instalments.

10%- at submission and approval of inception report: 30th July 2020

40%- Following submission and approval of the 1ST draft terminal evaluation report: 31st August 2020

50%- Following submission and approval (UNDP-CO and UNDP RTA) of the final terminal evaluation report 15th September 2020

COMPETENCIES

Corporate competencies

- Demonstrates integrity by modelling the UN's values and ethical standards;
- Promotes the vision, mission and strategic goals of UN/UNDP;
- Displays cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality and age sensitivity and adaptability.

Functional competencies

- Ability to lead strategic planning, results-based management and reporting;
- Builds strong relationships with clients, focuses on impact and result for the client and responds positively to feedback;

- Consistently approaches work with energy and a positive, constructive attitude;
- Demonstrates good oral and written communication skills;
- Demonstrates ability to manage complexities and work under pressure, as well as conflict resolution skills;
- Capability to work effectively under deadline pressure and to take on a range of responsibilities;
- Ability to work in a team, good decision-making skills, communication and writing skills.

Evaluation consultant will be held to the highest ethical standards and are required to sign a Code of Conduct upon acceptance of the assignment. UNDP evaluations are conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG 'Ethical Guideline for Evaluations.'

REQUIRED SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

Education:	A Master’s degree in natural resource management, agricultural development, climatology/meteorology, water resources management, environmental sciences, disaster management or related field.
Experience:	Minimum 7 years of experience in conducting evaluation for development projects and GEF funded project. Experience with working in the UN system is a strong asset Minimum of 7 years of relevant professional experience in relevant technical areas of climate change, agriculture, watershed, natural resource management and/or rural development. Experience working for development projects, with multi stakeholders including government agencies, development agencies, and UN agencies Knowledge and experiences of UNDP and GEF monitoring and evaluation policies and Cambodian development context. Previous experience with results-based monitoring and evaluation methodologies, application of SMART indicators and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios
Language requirement	High proficiency in English, knowledge of Khmer would be an advantage.

Conflict of interest:

To ensure impartiality and objectivity of the evaluation, as well as to avoid the conflict of interest, UNDP will not consider the applications from the candidates that have had prior involvement in the design, formulation, implementation or evaluation of the above-indicated project.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Qualified candidates are requested to apply online via this website. The application should contain:

- Completed letter of confirmation of interest and availability. Please paste the letter into the "Resume and Motivation" section of the electronic application;
- CV or a UNDP Personal History form (P11) available at http://procurement-notices.undp.org/view_file.cfm?doc_id=198244, indicating all past experience, as well as the contact details (email and telephone number) of the candidate and three professional references;
- Financial proposal that indicates the all-inclusive fixed total contract price, supported by the breakdown of costs. The breakdown should contain: professional fee for home-based work (number of working days), professional fee for work on mission (number of working days), travel costs (international/local travel and per diems). Per diems cannot exceed maximum UN daily allowance rates (<http://icsc.un.org>) and consultants are encouraged to bid lower amount to make their offers more competitive.

Please note that the professional fee is all-inclusive and shall take into account various expenses incurred by the consultant/contractor during the contract period (e.g. fee, health insurance, vaccination and any other relevant expenses related to the performance of service, etc.). All envisaged international travel costs must be included in the financial proposal.

If an applicant is employed by an organization/company/institution, and he/she expects his/her employer to charge a management fee in the process of releasing him/her to UNDP under reimbursable loan agreement (RLA), the applicant must indicate at this point, and ensure that all such costs are duly incorporated in the financial proposal submitted to UNDP.

Incomplete applications will not be considered. Please make sure you have provided all requested materials.

Payments will be made only upon confirmation of UNDP on delivering on the contract obligations in a satisfactory manner.

Individual consultants are responsible for ensuring they have vaccinations/inoculations when travelling to certain countries, as designated by the UN Medical Director. Consultants are also required to comply with the UN security directives set forth under dss.un.org

General terms and conditions as well as other related documents can be found under: <http://on.undp.org/t7fjs>.

Qualified women and members of minorities are encouraged to apply.

Due to large number of applications we receive, we are able to inform only the successful candidates about the outcome or status of the selection process.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

Only applications which are responsive and compliant will be evaluated. Offers will be evaluated according to the Combined Scoring method – where the educational background and experience on similar assignments will be weighted at 70% and the price proposal will weigh as 30% of the total scoring. The applicant receiving the Highest Combined Score that has also accepted UNDP’s General Terms and Conditions will be awarded the contract. Detail component of technical evaluation criteria is presented below:

Technical Evaluation Criteria	Obtainable Score
Minimum 7 years of experience in conducting evaluation for development projects and GEF funded project. Experience working in the UN system is a strong asset;	30
Minimum of 7 years of relevant professional experience in relevant technical areas of climate change, agriculture, watershed, natural resource management and/or rural development.	20
Experience working for development projects, with multi stakeholders including government agencies, development agencies, and UN agencies	15
Knowledge of UNDP and GEF monitoring and evaluation policies and Cambodian development context	20
Previous experience with results-based monitoring and evaluation methodologies, application of SMART indicators and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios	15
Total Obtainable Score:	100

EVALUATION ETHICS

Evaluation consultant will be held to the highest ethical standards and is required to sign a Code of Conduct (**appended as Annex VII – Signed Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form to this report**) upon acceptance of the assignment. UNDP evaluations are conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluations'

Annex II: List of Documents Reviewed

Annual Progress Reports, 2018 and 2019.

Baseline Survey Report of Aoral and Phnom Sruoch Districts, CoWES Project, January 2019.

Capacity Scorecards, CoWES Project.

Cooperative Agreement on Joint Implementation of Technical Measures for Sustainable Land Management and Conservation of Forest Resources in ELC zones between Grandis Timber Ltd and PDAFF (Kampong Speu), 20th September, 2019.

Communication materials: a series of 17 brief stories from the field highlighting community participation and project benefits at the grassroots level.

Ethnographic study of socio-environmental interaction of Prek Thnot watershed, November 2018.

HACT Financial Audit Report of the CoWES Project, UNDP/MAFF, January to December 2019.

Knowledge Management Strategy, CoWES Project, 28th June, 2018.

Logframe, work plan, budgets and terms of reference signed by MAFF with PDAFF, DALRM and Mlup Baiting for partnerships in project implementation.

Management Letter and Report of Factual Findings arising from agreed-upon procedures on UNDP Project implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, 28th November, 2017, to 31st August, 2018, Spot-check by Pricewaterhouse Coopers (Cambodia) Ltd.

Mid-term Review of the CoWES Project, Final Report dated 2nd March, 2019, and Management Response to MTR Recommendations, 30th June, 2019.

Minutes of the First Project Board Meeting (7th February, 2019), Second Project Board Meeting (1st March, 2019), and Third Project Board Meeting (5th February, 2020).

Monitoring & Evaluation Plan, CoWES Project, 14th June, 2018.

National strategies, plans and other documents relevant to the project evaluation:

- Cambodia Climate Change Strategic Plan, 2014-2023;
- Cambodia Socio-economic Survey Reports, 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017;
- National Action Program to Combat Land Degradation, 2018-2027;
- National Environment Strategy and Action Plan, 2016-2023;
- National Strategic Development Plan, 2014-2018 and 2019-2023;
- Royal Government of Cambodia's Rectangular Strategy Phase III and Phase IV.

Project Document (signed 30th June, 2017).

Project Extension Request letter from MAFF, 23rd September, 2019.

Project Implementation Reviews 2018, 2019 and 2020.

Project Inception Report (28th February, 2018).

Quarterly Progress Reports: a total of eight reports covering the quarterly periods from January 2018 to June 2020.

UN/ UNDP strategy documents:

- United Nations Development Assistance Framework, 2016-2018 and 2019-2023;
- UNDP Country Program Documents, 2016-2018 and 2019-2023;

- UNDP Strategic Plans 2014-2017 and 2018-2021.

Various consulting reports produced by CoWES project, viz. watershed governance (June 2018), valuation of ecosystem services in Prek Thnot watershed (November 2018), and local forest governance (March 2019).

Websites:

- kh.undp.org;
- strategicplan.undp.org;
- web.maff.gov.kh;
- por.cnmc.gov.kh;
- www.adb.org.

Annex III: List of People Consulted

Virtual Meetings (listed in chronological order)

Sl. No.	Name	Position and Organization	Date(s) of Meeting
1	Ms. Chinda Heng	Project Coordinator, PMU, CoWES Project	12 th August and 28 th October
2	Ms. Lyda Bou	Project Assistant, PMU, CoWES Project	12 th August and 28 th October
3	Mr. Nissay Sam	National Project Advisor, PMU, CoWES Project	12 th August and 29 th October
4	Ms. Rathana Nhan	Finance & Admin Officer, PMU, CoWES Project	12 th August
5	Ms. Tosoth Kong	Monitoring & Evaluation Officer, PMU, CoWES Project	12 th August
6	His Excellency Dr. Hean Vanhan	Secretary of State, MAFF – Project Director and Chair of Project Board	13 th August
7	His Excellency Mr. Bunthan Ngo	Director, Royal University of Agriculture – member of the Project Board	13 th August
8	Mr. Tashi Dorji	Regional Technical Advisor, UNDP Regional Hub for Asia-Pacific	14 th August
9	His Excellency Dr. Pyseth Meas	Under Secretary of State, MAFF – Project Manager	14 th August
10	Mr. Chhum Sovanny	Program Analyst, UNDP Cambodia CO	14 th August and 2 nd November
11	Dr. Rany Pen	Assistant Country Director and Head of Program, UNDP Cambodia CO	14 th August
12	Ms. Ratana Norng	Head, RBM Unit, UNDP Cambodia CO	14 th August and 2 nd November
13	Ms. Sraspanha Srey	Finance Associate, UNDP Cambodia CO	14 th August
14	Mr. Sophana Om	Executive Director, Mlup Baitong	26 th October
15	Dr. Vang Seng	Director, Department of Agricultural Land Resources Management	28 th October

Stakeholder Consultations in the Field (by the national consultant)

Mlub Baitong (NGO partner), 21st September

Sl. No.	Name in Khmer	Name in English	Gender	Position	Institution
1	អុំ សុផាន់ណា	Om Sophanna	Male	Executive Director	Mlub Baitong
2	ជិន បុនថាន	Chin Bunthan	Male	Project Coordinator	Mlub Baitong

Kampong Speu Provincial Government Administration, 23rd September

Sl. No.	Name in Khmer	Name in English	Gender	Position	Institution
1	លុយ ចាន់ដារ៉ា	Luy Chandara	Male	Head department of Inter-sectors	Kampong Speu Provincial Government Administration

Department of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries, Kampong Speu Province, 23rd September

Sl. No.	Name in Khmer	Name in English	Gender	Position	Institution
1	យឹម ណន	Yim Non	Male	Head department	Department of Agriculture of Kampong Speu
2	នួន ម៉ៅ	Nuon Mao	Male	Officer	Department of Agriculture of province
3	ប៊ិន វណ្ណារេត	Born Vannareth	Male	Head of CF	Kirivan Commune
4	ឡាង អូន	Lang Oun	Male	President	Kirivan Commune
5	វ៉ាន់ ដេត	Van Det	Male	Joint Officer	Department of Agriculture of province
6	អៀន សារ៉េត	Ian Sareth	Male	Head of CF Trapeang Chor	Department of Agriculture of province
7	សៀង សារី	Soeung Savy	Male	Deputy Head department	Agricultural Engineering
8	មាស វិចិត្រ	Meas Vicheth	Male	Officer	Department of Association Development
9	គិន ច័	Kin Chi	Female	Head department	Agriculture department

Phnom Sruoch District Government Administrations, 23rd September

Sl. No.	Name in Khmer	Name in English	Gender	Position/ Institution
1	អ៊ី សំអឿន	Orm SamOeun	Male	Deputy District Chief of Phnom Sruoch
2	នោ អេងហៃ	Nov Enghai	Male	Head department of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment
3	ប៊ុន ហឿន	Bun Hoeun	Male	Deputy head department of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment

Aoral District Government Administrations, 25th September

Sl. No.	Name in Khmer	Name in English	Gender	Position/ Institution
1	ឈិន មុនី	Chhin Mony	Male	Aoral District
2	ស៊ិន ស៊ុន	Sain Saun	Male	Aoral District
3	ដួល សុខុម	Doul Sokhom	Male	Tasal commune chief
4	សម្បត្តិ វឌ្ឍន	Sambat Vathnak	Male	Director of Administration

ELC holding companies: Grandis Timber Ltd, 25th September

Sl. No.	Name in Khmer	Name in English	Gender	Institution
1	ជាតិ វិចិត្រ	Cheate Vichet	Male	Grandis Timber Ltd
2	យង់ វន្តា	Yong Vanthea	Male	Grandis Timber Ltd
3	តូច ខេង	Tauch Kheng	Male	Grandis Timber Ltd

Focus Group Discussion: Tang Bamong Community Protected Area group, Tasal Commune, 24th September

Sl. No.	Name in Khmer	Name in English	Gender	Position/ Institution
1	ម៉ៃ ឡាញ	Mai Lounh	Male	Committee
2	ជ័ម សៀន	Chum Suen	Male	Committee
3	សៅ ស៊ុន	Sauw Saun	Female	Deputy village header and Community Committee
4	ហ៊ុន សៅ	Hun Sauw	Male	Head of committee
5	ញ៉ូ យ៉ាន	Nher Yean	Male	Deputy head of community committee
6	ក្រេង ក្រាំង	Kraeng Krang	Male	Water operation committee
7	យ៉េន យឹត	Yuen Yeut	Male	Committee
8	ធំ គា	Thom Kea	Male	Committee
9	សួន វ៉ន	Suon Vorn	Female	Villager
10	អន ង៉េត	Orn Nget	Female	Villager
11	ម៉ុយ គន្ធា	Mouy Kunthea	Female	Villager
12	ជ័យ ភួន	Chy Phuon	Female	Villager

Focus Group Discussion: Reaksmeay Samaki Community Protected Area group, Trapeang Chour Commune, 24th September

Sl. No.	Name in Khmer	Name in English	Gender	Position/ Institution
1	ម៉ោក មន	Mok Mon	Male	Deputy head of CF
2	កែ គិន	Keo Ken	Male	Committee
3	សឹម វ៉ង	Sem Veng	Male	Committee
4	សុខ មួន	Sok Muon	Male	Committee
5	ហ៊ុន វិចិត្រ	Hun Vichet	Male	Community Committee
7	អៀម អួន	Eam Uon	Male	Head of village
8	មិន តុង	Min Tong	Male	Deputy head of village
9	ថុល ធីម	Thol Thim	Male	
10	អួន ម៉ៅ	Oun Mao	Male	Head of Lngum village
11	ស៊ុយ សាវ៉ាន	Suy Savann	Male	Community Committee
12	គិត តៀ	Kit Tue	Female	Ou Kong
13	អេង តឿន	Eng Toeun	Female	Lngum
14	អាត ពិស	At Pis	Female	Lngum
15	សឹម ស៊ុប	Sim Sip	Female	Lngum
16	ណុប ទក	Nop Tok	Male	Lngum
17	មន ថុល	Mon Thol	Female	Lngum
18	សាំង ពៅ	Saing Pov	Female	Ou Kong
19	ណុប សុខ	Nop Sok	Male	Lngum
20	សាយ សើម	Say Serm	Male	President of Ou Kong
21	រស់ មួន	Rous Mourn	Male	Committee
22	កាយ គិន	Kay Krin	Male	Committee
23	សឹម វ៉ង	Sim Veng	Male	Committee
24	ហយ ហឿន	Hoy Hoeun	Male	Head of Peam Lvea village

Focus Group Discussion: Damrey Chak Thlork Community Forest group, Krang Devaiy commune, 25th September

Sl. No.	Name in Khmer	Name in English	Gender	Position/ Institution
1	គឹម គៀង	Kim Keang	Male	Member
2	សុន សិន	Son San	Male	Committee
3	ប៉ុក សយ	Bok Soy	Male	Committee
4	ច្បប ធី	Chuob Thy	Male	Committee
5	ស្មុត ញ៉ឹង	Suot Nhung	Male	Committee
6	មុត ម៉ន	Mout Morn	Male	Committee
7	ជុន សោ	Choun Sao	Male	Member
8	សាក សាវ	Sak Sav	Male	Member
9	ជិន ពុទ្ធី	Chin Pouthy	Male	Member
10	ម៉ែន ជាន	Men Chean	Female	Villager
11	យូ រិន	You Rin	Female	Villager
12	ថន មុត	Thn Mout	Female	Villager
13	រិត្តនា	Ri Kunthea	Female	Villager
14	ញី រុរ	Nher Rur	Female	Villager

Sl. No.	Name in Khmer	Name in English	Gender	Position/ Institution
15	ម៉ាន ចាន់ថុ	Mean Chanthou	Female	Villager
16	យួន ម៉ៃ	Yvon Meo	Female	Villager
17	ញ៉ុ រលន	Nher Rin	Female	Villager
18	ម៉ុន ម៉ៅ	Mon Maw	Female	Villager
19	ប៊ិន ស៊ីន	Bin Sain	Female	Villager
20	រ៉ន ព្រីស	Rn Pris	Female	Villager
21	ម៉ុត ម៉ីន	Mot Muen	Male	Director committee of water operating group

Debrief Meeting, 4th November

Sl. No.	Name	Position and Organization
1	Ms. Sonali Dayaratne	Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP CO
2	Dr. Rany Pen	Head of Programmes and Results Unit, UNDP CO
3	Ms. Ratana Norng,	Head of Results Based Management Unit, UNDP CO
4	Mr. Sovanny Chhum,	Programme Analyst, UNDP CO
5	Ms. Kelsea Clingleffer	Results Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Consultant, UNDP CO
6	Ms. Chinda Heng	Project Coordinator, PMU, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
7	Ms. Rathana Nhan,	Finance and Admin Officer, PMU, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
8.	Dr. Chantha Oeurng	TE National Consultant

Note: H.E. Dr. Pyseth Meas, National Project Manager, who planned to be at the debriefing, could not turn up as an unforeseen important government meeting came up at the same time.

Annex IV: Field Itinerary

Date	Time	Field data collection/Interview	Remarks
21 Sept 2020 ថ្ងៃទី២១ ខែ កញ្ញា២០២០	9:00 – 11:00 am	Meeting with Mlub Baitong NGO	Met and interviewed Executive Director and Field Coordinator of MB
23 Sept 2020 ថ្ងៃទី២៣ ខែ កញ្ញា២០២០	7:30 -10:30 am	Travel from PP to Kg. Speu province ធ្វើគំណើរពីភ្នំពេញទៅកំពង់ស្ពឺ	
	10:30 -12:00 am	- Meeting with Kampong Speu Provincial Government Administration - ជួបជាមួយរដ្ឋបាលខេត្តកំពង់ស្ពឺ	Met and interviewed the Head of Inter-sector Department
	2:00-3:00 pm	- Phnom Sruoch District Government Administrations - ជួបជាមួយរដ្ឋបាលស្រុកភ្នំស្រួច	Met and interviewed three district officials as a group.
	3:00-5:00 pm	- Provincial Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries – Components 1 and 2 - ជួបជាមួយមន្ទីរកសិកម្មខេត្តកំពង់ស្ពឺ	Met and interviewed nine PDAFF officials including the head of the department.
24 Sept 2020 ថ្ងៃទី២៤ ខែ កញ្ញា២០២០	9:00-11:30 am	(1) Reaksmev Samaki Community Protected Area group, Trapeang Chour Commune Together with commune and community people ជួបជាមួយសហគមន៍ស្តីសាមគ្គី	Focus group discussion with 24 members of the CPA group
	2:00-4:30 pm	(2) Tang Bampong Community Protected Area group, Tasal Commune Together with commune and community people ជួបជាមួយសហគមន៍តាំងបំពង់	Focus group discussion with 12 members of the CPA group.
25 Sept 2020 ថ្ងៃទី២៥ ខែ កញ្ញា២០២០	8:00-9:00 am	Aoral District Government Administrations-include commune ជួបជាមួយរដ្ឋបាលស្រុកឌីរាល់	Met and interviewed four district officials as a group.
	10:00-12:00 am	- ELC holding company: Grandis Timber Ltd - ជួបជាមួយក្រុមហ៊ុន ហ្វ្រែនឌីស	Met and interviewed the manager of the forestry operations and two other company staff
	2:00-4:30 am	(3) Damrey Chak Thlork Community Forest group, Krang Devay commune Together with commune and community people ជួបជាមួយសហគមន៍ដំបែកក្រវាត់	Focus group discussion with 21 members of the CF group.

Annex V: Evaluation Questions Matrix

Evalutive Criteria	Questions	Indicators	Methodology
Project Strategy and Relevance: Extent to which the project strategy relates and contributes to the environment and sustainable development objectives and priorities at the global, national and sub-national/ local levels, particularly in relation to addressing degradation of agricultural and forest lands in watersheds.			
Relevance to global sustainable development agenda and UNCCD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Which of the Sustainable Development Goals and associated targets does the project relate to? ▪ How does the project support the objectives of UNCCD, particularly with reference to the 10-Year Strategy (2008-2018) and subsequent UNCCD 2018-2030 Strategic Framework? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Existence of linkage with SDGs and constituent targets; ▪ Incorporation of UNCCD priorities and areas of work in the project design. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Desk review of project documents; national policies, plans, strategies, etc. addressing SDGs, UNCCD objectives and strategic priorities; ▪ On-line review of UNCCD and GEF websites; ▪ Interviews of key informants at the policy and planning level in government ministries; ▪ Interviews of project management team.
Relevance to GEF Land Degradation Focal Area	How does the project support the GEF Land Degradation Focal Area and strategic priorities?	Existence of clear relationship between the project objectives and GEF Land Degradation Focal Area and strategic priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Desk review of project document and GEF Land Degradation Focal Area document; ▪ Interviews of project management team.
Alignment with national policies, plans, strategies, and priorities pertaining to environment and sustainable development.	How does the project relate and contribute to national policies, plans, strategies, priorities, e.g. National Strategic Development Plan, National Environment Strategy and Action Plan, agriculture sector development plan, forestry sector development plan?	Existence of linkages between project objectives and NSDP, NESAP, NAP and other relevant national policies, plans, strategies, priorities related to agriculture, forestry, and water resource management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Desk review of project document, NSDP, NESAP and other key national documents that relate to sustainable development, environment, agriculture, forestry and water resource management; ▪ Interviews of key informants at the policy and planning level in government ministries and line agencies; ▪ Interviews of project management team.
Alignment with sub-national/ local policies, plans, strategies, and priorities related to environment and sustainable development.	How does the project relate and contribute to policies, plans, strategies, and priorities related to sustainable development, environment, agriculture, forestry and water resources management at the provincial, district and commune level?	Existence of linkages between project objectives and policies, plans, strategies, and priorities related to sustainable development, environment, agriculture, forestry and water resources management at the provincial, district and commune level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Desk review of project document and key sub-national/ local documents related to sustainable development, environment, agriculture, forestry and water resource management; ▪ Interviews of key informants at the provincial, district and commune levels and project partners in the field.

Evaluative Criteria	Questions	Indicators	Methodology
Relevance of Theory of Change and Results Framework	Were the ToC and RF appropriately formulated to address the key barriers and challenges to environment and sustainable livelihoods in the Preak Thnot watershed?	Level of conformity between project design and project implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Desk review of project document, implementation reports, and progress reports; ▪ Key informant interviews of project management team and project partners.
Suitability of the target project areas and relevance of the project to the needs and priorities of the beneficiaries	<p>Are the target project areas suitable to address the project objectives and outcomes?</p> <p>Does the project address the priorities and needs of the target project areas and beneficiaries in relation to environmental conservation and sustainable livelihoods?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rationale of project site selection; ▪ Linkages between project results and the needs and priorities of the target project beneficiaries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Desk review of project document, implementation reports, and progress reports; ▪ Key informant interviews of project management team and project partners; ▪ Field visits and focus group discussions with project beneficiaries.
Coherence of the project design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Were the project timeframe and resources commensurate with expected project results? ▪ Were the project institutional set-up and delivery mechanism, including choice of partners, appropriate for the achievement of project results? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conformity between project implementation and work plan and budget; ▪ Delivery of project results as per planned targets and milestones; ▪ Level of involvement of project partners in the planned project activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Desk review of project document, implementation reports and progress reports; ▪ Key informant interviews of project management team and project partners.
Effectiveness of the project: Extent to which the project has achieved the project objective(s) and expected outcomes, generated tangible benefits and brought about positive changes in the ways project stakeholders operated.			
Attainment of project objective(s), outcomes and constituent outputs and targets.	<p>To what extent has the project achieved the intended outcomes and their constituent outputs and targets:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. On-farm soil conservation and agroforestry practices improved; 2. Community forest areas restored and sustainably managed; 3. Watershed management and monitoring capacity improved. 	Refer indicators outlined in the project results framework.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Desk reviews comparing annual work plans, project implementation reviews, progress reports vis a vis work plans and project results framework; ▪ Key informant interviews of project management team and project partners; ▪ Key informants of project stakeholders in the field; ▪ Focus group discussions with project beneficiaries; ▪ Direct observation of project activities in the field.
Risk management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Were all the key risks and assumptions foreseen in the project design? ▪ Has the risk mitigation plan been effective in managing the risks and assumptions? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Completeness of identification of risks and assumptions in the project design; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Desk review of project document, implementation reports and progress reports; ▪ Key informant interviews of project management team and project partners.

Evaluative Criteria	Questions	Indicators	Methodology
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How were the unforeseen risks and assumptions managed during project implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adequacy of the risk mitigation plan; ▪ Adaptations made to address unforeseen risks and assumptions. 	
Generation of project benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What tangible benefits did the project generate and who were the direct beneficiaries? ▪ Was the project able to generate all the benefits anticipated during project design? If less than what were anticipated, why? ▪ Did the project generate any additional benefits beyond what was anticipated in project design, and in which ways? 	Statistical and narrative evidences in project implementation reports, progress reports, and other tangible knowledge products (case studies, survey reports, publications, etc) emerging from the project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Desk review of project document, project implementation reviews, progress reports, and other tangible knowledge products (case studies, survey reports, publications, etc) emerging from the project; ▪ Key informant interviews of project management team and project partners; ▪ Key informants of project stakeholders in the field; ▪ Focus group discussions with project beneficiaries; ▪ Direct observation of project activities in the field.
Changes brought about by the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What changes has the project brought about in terms of: (a) capacity of project stakeholders; (b) adoption of sustainable land management practices by farmers and other natural resource users; (c) livelihood diversification and income of local communities; (d) management of community forest and community protected areas; (e) knowledge and data for planning and monitoring; ▪ Any other changes. 	Data and trends comparing baseline situation with end-of-the project situation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Comparative review of baseline data and end-of-the-project data; ▪ Desk review of project implementation reviews, progress reports and various other project reports/ studies/ surveys; ▪ Key informant interviews of project management team, project partners and other stakeholders.
Generation of knowledge and lessons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Has the project generated relevant knowledge and lessons for the design of future projects/ initiatives? ▪ Has the project generated information to influence policy decisions? ▪ How effectively has the knowledge management strategy been used in project implementation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Incorporation of knowledge and lessons derived from the project in the design of other projects and/or policy decisions; ▪ Number of knowledge products and the level of their dissemination; ▪ Quality of the knowledge management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Desk review of project implementation reviews, progress reports, KM strategy and tangible knowledge products (case studies, survey reports, publications, etc) emerging from the project; ▪ Key informant interviews of project management team and project partners.

Evaluative Criteria	Questions	Indicators	Methodology
		strategy and the level of its use.	
Mainstreaming of sustainable agriculture, community forestry and watershed management.	Has the project been effective in influencing government agencies to mainstream sustainable agriculture, community forestry and watershed management into relevant policy, regulatory frameworks, programs, land-use plans, etc. at national and sub-national/ local levels?	Existence of sustainable agriculture, community forestry and watershed management principles and practices in relevant policy, regulatory frameworks, programs, land-use plans, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Key informant interviews of project management team and project partners at the policy and planning level; ▪ Desk reviews of relevant project policy/ program/ plan documents.
Gender mainstreaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How effectively has the project mainstreamed gender issues in project design and during implementation, including through the use of project's Gender Action Plan? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gender-wise data on local community participation and project beneficiaries; ▪ Quality of the GAP and the level of its use during project implementation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Desk review of Desk review of project document, implementation reviews, progress reports, and GAP; ▪ Key informant interviews of project management team and project partners; ▪ Interview of the representative of Ministry of Women Affairs on PB; ▪ Focus group discussion with project beneficiaries.
Linkages and synergy with other projects and initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How effectively has the project built up on earlier projects/ initiatives? ▪ How effectively has the project linked and synergized with other relevant projects/ initiatives supported by UNDP as well as other development partners? 	Linkages with other projects/ initiatives reflected in project design and project implementation reports.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Desk review of project document, implementation reports and progress reports; ▪ Key informant interviews of project management team and project partners.
Efficiency of the project: Extent to which the project has been managed and implemented in a timely, adaptive, and coordinated manner.			
Delivery of project oversight and management services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Was the project board adequately composed for project oversight and guidance? ▪ Were the project board meetings convened as per required frequency and timing? ▪ Was the project management team adequate in providing timely management services and backstopping? ▪ Were the accounting and financial systems in place adequate for project management and producing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Composition of the project board; ▪ Number and timing of PB meetings; ▪ Issues reported and resolved at the PB meetings; ▪ Issues reported in M&E reports and project audits: ▪ Number and frequency of project management issues reported in the project implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Desk review of project document, implementation reports, progress reports, minutes of PB meetings, M&E reports, audits, etc; ▪ Key informant interviews of PB members; ▪ Key informant interviews of project management team and project partners.

Evaluative Criteria	Questions	Indicators	Methodology
	accurate and timely financial information?	reports and progress reports, and during interviews of project board members, management team and project partners.	
Planning and reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Were progress reports produced accurately and on time? ▪ Did the reports adequately respond to reporting requirements including adaptive management changes? ▪ Did the project results framework and workplans undergo changes and, if so, how were the changes managed? How did the changes affect project implementation? ▪ How was the results framework used in annual work planning and monitoring of project activities? ▪ Were there deviations from annual work plans and budgets during project implementation and how were these deviations managed? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Timeliness and comprehensiveness of the annual work plans, project implementation reviews and progress reports; ▪ Conformity between annual work plans and project results framework; ▪ Conformity of project implementation reports and progress reports with annual work plans and budgets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Desk reviews comparing project results framework, work plans and budgets, project implementation reviews, progress reports; ▪ Key informant interviews of project management team and project partners.
Partnerships and coordination during project implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Did the project partners have adequate knowledge and skills to implement planned project activities and how did the project partners address capacity gaps where they emerged? ▪ How did the project facilitate coordination between project stakeholders at national and sub-national/ local levels? ▪ Did the project partner with international/ regional institutes and, if so, in what areas of work? ▪ Which partnerships were useful and which were not? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Existence and type of partnerships and coordination; ▪ Frequency of coordination events; ▪ Outcomes of the partnerships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Desk review of project document, project implementation reviews and progress reports; ▪ Key informant interviews of project management team and project partners.

Evaluative Criteria	Questions	Indicators	Methodology
Delivery and utilization of technical assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Was the project able to recruit consulting services and other TA on time and as per requisite qualifications? ▪ Did the procured TA deliver the desired outputs for project progress? ▪ Did the project use local capacity and strike a balance between local and international expertise? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Number and type of TA/ consultancy engaged; ▪ Number and quality of TA/ consultancy products/ deliverables; ▪ Utilization of the TA products/ deliverables. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Desk review of project implementation reviews, progress reports and TA/ consultancy products; ▪ Key informant interviews of project management team and project partners.
Mobilization of co-financing	Was project co-financing mobilized as planned in the project document?	Realization of co-financing.	Desk review of project document and co-financing data reported in various project reports.
Monitoring and evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Was M&E carried out as planned in the project design? ▪ How were the lessons derived from M&E used to rectify shortcomings and enhance project implementation? ▪ Were the recommendations from the MTR followed and, if not, why? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Existence of reports documenting all M&E activities envisaged in the project design; ▪ Incorporation of M&E lessons and dissemination in project implementation reports and progress reports. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Desk review of project document, project implementation reviews, progress reports, M&E plan, and M&E reports particularly MTR report; ▪ Key informant interviews of project management team and project partners.
Sustainability of the project: Extent to which project results have been/ will be mainstreamed and sustained over the long term.			
Mainstreaming of project results	Have the project results been integrated in the mainstream planning and policy-making system?	Evidences of integration in the system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Desk review of project implementation reviews, progress reports, and planning/ policy instruments that are reported to have integrated project results; ▪ Key informant interviews of project management team and project partners in particular those dealing with planning and policy-making.
Ownership at the national, sub-national and local levels	Is there enough ownership and willingness among project stakeholders to sustain the project results over the long term?	Level of ownership of project ownership among the stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Desk review of project implementation reviews, and progress reports, and other relevant documents; ▪ Key informant interviews of project management team and project partners.
Capacity of project partners	▪ Has sufficient capacity been built among project partners, through the project or other initiatives, to sustain the project results without external assistance?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Changes in capacity scorecard; ▪ Partnership information/ profiles; ▪ Level of awareness and understanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Comparative review of capacity scorecards at project inception, mid-term and end-of-the-project; ▪ Desk review of project implementation reviews and progress reports;

Evaluative Criteria	Questions	Indicators	Methodology
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have the right project partners been engaged to sustain the project results? ▪ Is there awareness and understanding among project partners, especially those at the senior level of government, of the significance of sustaining project results? 	<p>of the issues among project partners and other stakeholders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Key informant interviews of project management team, project partners and other stakeholders.
Appraisal of sustainability factors	What factors (economic, environmental, technological, political, etc.) are likely to drive or affect the sustainability of project results?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Current trends and scenarios anticipated in the future related to project results; ▪ Documented references of sustainability drivers and impediments related to project results. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Desk review of project implementation reviews, progress reports and other relevant documents; ▪ Key informant interviews of project management team, project partners and other stakeholders.

Annex VI: Guidance Questions for Local Stakeholder Consultations

Note: The lists of questions provided here are for guidance of the national consultant to conduct interviews and focus group discussions with local project stakeholders. They are to be used with some flexibility and not be taken as fixed questionnaire. Questions may be adjusted or additional questions may be asked for more details or clarifications depending on the response of the stakeholders and as necessitated by circumstances at the time of the interview/ focus group discussion.

Interviews of Key Informants:

Sub-national Governments:

(1) Kampong Speu Provincial Government Administration

(2) Aoral District Government Administrations

(3) Phnom Sruoch District Government Administrations

- In what ways has the Provincial Government Administration/ District Government Administration been involved in the project?
- How has the project been useful to the Provincial Government Administration/ District Government Administration in dealing with issues related to sustainable management of agricultural and forest lands in Prek Thnot watershed?
- What major changes has the project brought at the provincial/ district level in terms of knowledge and skills of staff, technology, institutional coordination, data and information for planning and M&E, etc.?
- How does the Provincial Government Administration/ District Government Administration intend to take forward and sustain the project results/ achievements? What opportunities and challenges are foreseen in this regard?
- Have the project results been integrated in any of the ongoing and/ or upcoming provincial/ district plans and programs?
- What technical assistance and training did the provincial/ district staff receive from the project? How have they helped?

Project Component Focal Points:

(1) Provincial Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries – Components 1 and 2

(2) Department of Agriculture Land Resource Management – Component 3

- What key roles did you play as the component focal point?
- What challenges did you face in carrying out your responsibilities as the component focal point?
- Were you involved during the project design and in what ways?
- What major changes has the project brought in the way you carry out your job?
- What activities were undertaken under your component and what were the major achievements?
- Who were the main beneficiaries of the activities under your component? Please specify how many benefitted in total and how many of them were women.
- What measures have been taken up to carry forward and sustain the project results/ achievements? What opportunities and challenges do you foresee in this regard?

- Have the project results been integrated in any of the ongoing and/ or upcoming plans and programs of your agency? If so, please specify how and which plans/ programs.
- Who were the key partners in the implementation of your component and what roles did they play? How was the coordination with partners done?
- Was there coordination with other components of this project and how was it done?
- Was there any linkage and coordination with other projects/ initiatives?
- How were gender issues addressed in your component? How was the project's gender action plan (GAP) used for gender mainstreaming in your component?
- What technical assistance and training were carried out under your component and how useful were they?
- Have there been any difficulties in working with UNDP and GEF systems? If so, were these difficulties resolved and how?
- Were you satisfied with the coordination and management of the project?
- Were you satisfied with the delivery of technical assistance and project funds?
- Are there any activities that was planned under your component but remains unachieved? Why has it happened?

Mlup Baitong, NGO partner

- What are your NGO's core areas of expertise and work in general? How long has your NGO been working in the project area?
- What key roles did your NGO play as a project partner? What project activities did your NGO implement as a project partner? What were the main achievements of your collaboration with the project? What gaps still exist?
- What challenges did you face as a project partner?
- Were your NGO involved during the project design and in what ways?
- What major changes has the project brought in the way your NGO works?
- Who were the main beneficiaries of the project activities carried out by your NGO? Please specify how many benefitted in total and how many of them were women.
- What do you think about the sustainability of the project results achieved through the activities carried out by your NGO? What measures do you recommend to sustain the project results? What opportunities and challenges do you foresee in this regard?
- Who all did you coordinate with during project implementation and in what ways did you coordinate with them? Was the coordination effective?
- How was the collaboration with MAFF, DALRM and PDAFF, and other project partners?
- Was there any linkage and coordination with other projects/ initiatives that your NGO is/ was involved in?
- Have there been any difficulties in working with UNDP and GEF systems? If so, were these difficulties resolved and how?
- Were you satisfied with the coordination and management of the project?

- Were you satisfied with the delivery of technical assistance and project funds?
- How was the overall experience of working with the project? What were the main lessons?

ELC holding companies: Grandis Timber Ltd and, if possible, another 1 or 2 companies recommended by the project team.

- What are the environmental and social challenges that your company face in operating ELC?
- In what ways do you think environmental and social impacts of ELCs can be minimized, and what are the measures undertaken by your company to address these impacts?
- In what ways has your company been involved in the project? If so, what activities were undertaken in collaboration with the project and how useful were these activities?
- Has the project influenced the way you do your business? If so, in what ways?

Focus Group Discussions:

With a group of 10 to 20 local community members, including 50% women, representing project beneficiaries in each of the three target communes:

(1) Krang Devay commune

(2) Trapeang Chour Commune

(3) Tasal Commune

- What are the project activities that the community has been involved? What role did they community play in these activities?
- How were women engaged in the project activities? How did their role compare with men during project implementation and in the achievement of project results?
- What tangible results has the community achieved from the project activities?
- How does these results compare with the situation of the community at the beginning of the project? Please specify the changes you have noted in terms of livelihood and income, land productivity, ecosystem services, technology and management practices, community knowledge and awareness, etc.?
- What percentage of the farmers have adopted sustainable land and water management practices as a result of the project? Among them, what percentage were women?
- Are there farmers within the community who have adopted sustainable land and water management practices without project support? How have they done it?
- What are the main driving factors for the local community to adopt sustainable land and water management practices?
- What are the main difficulties that the local community face in adopting sustainable land and water management practice?
- How likely is the community to continue with sustainable land and water management practices after the project closure? What challenges do you foresee in this regard?
- What government support will you need to continue with sustainable land and water management practices after the project closure?

- What training and technical assistance did the beneficiaries receive from the project? How did they help?

Community forest and community protected area groups:

(4) Damrey Chak Thlork Community Forest group, Krang Devay commune

(5) Reaksmey Samaki Community Protected Area group, Trapeang Chour Commune

(6) Tang Bampong Community Protected Area group, Tasal Commune

- What is the organizational structure of the CF/ CPA group? How many people are there in the CF/ CPA group? How many of them are women and what role do they play in the CF/ CPA group?
- What are the main objectives of your CF/ CPA?
- What factors have motivated you to form CF/ CPA?
- What benefits do you derive from your CF/ CPA?
- What support has the project provided to the CF/ CPA? How useful were the support that the CF/ CPA received from the project?
- What training and technical assistance did the CF/ CPA receive from the project? How did they help?
- How does the current situation of your CF/ CPA compare with the situation before the start of the project?
- Apart from the CoWES project, does the CF/ CPA receive assistance from any other sources?
- Do you foresee any challenges in the continuation of the CF/ CPA after the project closure?
- What support do you expect from the government to continue with CF/ CPA activities after the project closure?

Annex VII: Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form

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 the 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 it and how issues should be reported.
5. They 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 respects the stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.
6. They 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.

Terminal Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form

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

Name of Consultant: Ugen Penjor Norbu

Name of Consultancy Organization (where relevant): Individual Consultant

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

Signed at: Thimphu, Bhutan, on 11th November 2020



Signature

Annex VIII: Signed TE Clearance Form

Evaluation Report Reviewed and Cleared By:	
UNDP Country Office	
Name: <u>Rany Pen</u>	
Signature: 	Date: 21 st December 2020
UNDP-NCE Regional Technical Advisor	
Name: <u>Tashi Dorji</u>	
Signature: 	Date: <u>21st Dec. 2020</u>

Annex IX: Capacity Scorecards

Submitted as a separate file (MS Excel Worksheet).

Annex X: GEF Core Indicators

Updated GEF core indicators submitted as a separate file.

Annex XI: TE Audit Trail

Submitted as a separate file.